

## **AN INNOVATIVE TREND IN MARKETING: INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Integrated Marketing communication has become very popular in the contemporary scenario of Marketing. It is basically a Marketing concept that combines and unifies all the forms of Marketing Communications and delivers consistent messages with one voice, one theme and one strategy to the Target Audience. It is playing a crucial role in promotions of products and services. IMC has become an essential component of Marketing Communications. It has an advantage over Conventional Marketing Communications. The present study is to know the benefits of IMC and the factors that influence the growth of Integrated Marketing Communications.

**Keywords:** innovative trend, IMC, accountable marketing, advertising etc.

## **Introduction:**

In the wake of fierce competition, heightened technological advancements and changing social trends, the business environment is witnessing a profound change. As a result the concept of Marketing is also changing by adopting innovative methods and practices. A new trend that has emerged recently is Integrated Marketing Communications. The aim of IMC is to bring uniformity, consistency and cohesiveness across all the spheres of Marketing Communications. IMC is a comprehensive Marketing plan which ensures integration and coordination of all the communication channels like Advertising, Direct Marketing, Personal Selling, Sales Promotion and Publicity, Public Relations etc. to provide more clarity, consistency and maximum impact. The other names of IMC are New Advertising, One to One Marketing, Whole Egg Orchestration, 360 branding, Total Branding etc.

The concept of Integrated Marketing communication revolves around the Integration of Marketing Communications. The IMC approach looks Marketing Communications Channels from an integrated perspective and not in isolation wherein the Independent Marketing Promotion tools differ in their communications leading to dissonance and confusion among customers. In Conventional Marketing the Promotion tools compete with each other rather than compliment and are not effective in achieving the common goals of an Organization. These channels operate independently and deliver inconsistent and incompatible messages. Whereas; IMC helps in serving customers diligently by improved experiences by combining different tools of Marketing Communications and give utmost importance to the common organizational goal. In the light of Integrated Marketing Communication, the advertising helps in instilling brand preference among customers and caters to the customer by informing them about the products, Sales promotion intensify the sales and encourage retailer to increase the stock. On the other hand, publicity helps the brand in building credibility and prestige and gaining acceptance among the customers. While the concept of Point of Purchase Merchandising raises the prospect of in store buying of the customers within the premises of the store. Apparently each marketing communication tool is performing a different activity but in reality they all are contributing to the larger goal of Promotions. The unique characteristic of IMC is its ability to add value to Marketing communications by making them more unified, cohesive and consistent.

In a Broader context, the concept of IMC should not only be practiced in relation to marketing communications. But, its philosophy should be reflected in the entire Marketing strategy concerning Product, Price, Place and Promotion of an Organization. The area of marketing communication is too important to be left alone to the conventions of Promotions and Communication. The customer builds a perception about the brand on the basis of several factors. The customer comes in contact with the brand through several of facets of Marketing. The customer experiences a brand from personal selling while interacting with sales men, the website conveying product information and through advertising. So, it becomes imperative for marketing companies to deliver consistent messages and occupy a distinct image in the minds of the customers. Thus, Communication occurs at every stage of Marketing and goes beyond the traditional sources of promotions. The relevance of integrated marketing communication is very well illustrated in Titan's IMC campaign.

## **Case in Point Titan Builds an Integrated Image:**

Titan conveys the image of being India's leading manufacturer of premium watches through its various marketing contact points. The Product speaks about individuality through all its finely engineered and carved watches - be they the world's slimmest, cased in solid gold and precious stones, or shaped by award winning designers. Titan's designer packaging with embossing and engraving, materials including metal and wood, finishes from Brush to Glassy, personalized story cards etc. also compliments the choice of the watch. The watches are only distributed through exclusive 'World of Titan' showrooms displaying classy and unconventional layout formats and offering value added services like gift vouchers and gift packing. Titan's customers get excellent personal service. Titan's after-sales service network extends worldwide and offers service like standby watch, home delivery, extended maintenance guarantee, etc. Even these watch centres experiment with new retailing formats. Titan's advertising and music score too have gone down India's hall of fame for their uniqueness and

popularity. To further add exclusivity, Titan has roped in Amir Khan as its brand ambassador, who doesn't do too many advertisements like other celebrities.

**Source:** Advertising and Promotions: An IMC Perspective by KrutiShah and Allan D'Souza, 2010page no 41

### **Literature Review:**

Kitchen P.J and Schultz D. E. have shed light on the concept of integrated marketing communications as an emerging form of marketing communications. In a research paper entitled "A multi country comparison of the drive for IMC", S. Selvabaker in a Research paper Entitled "Media Fragmentation – Issues and Challenges", speaks about the fragmentation and proliferation of newer media options. Media Fragmentation is considered as an important development in the field for the promotions and marketing. The Research paper includes emergence of media options like growth in private satellite channels, the growth of regional media and advertisings. It also covers Customer relationship paradigm and the concept of Mass customization. The researcher has highlighted the issues pertaining to choosing the best medium from multiple media options with limited ad budgets. It stresses that Advertising through internet and other unconventional media will play an important role in promotions and marketing communications. Kruti Shah and Alan D'Souza through a book "Advertising and promotions an IMC perspective", have explained the concept of integrated Marketing Communications and its importance in the light of the changing socio-cultural trends and Market dynamics. They opine that conventional methods of promotions are losing their relevance and believe that innovation and creativity in promotions will play significant role in the success of the marketing. D.P.S Verma and HemaIraneyin the research paper "Consumer Attitude towards advertisement messages", discuss about the consumers perceptions in relation to s advertisement messages and issues of Ad Clutter. They believe that the attitude of consumers plays dominant role and equips marketers in constructing effective advertising. In a research paper "Innovative Marketing practices for evolving consumers." DrVaishaliAgarwalhas emphasized on the advantages and applications of innovative Marketing practices like Viral Marketing, Digital Advertising, Blogs, permission marketing, Ambient media, Mobile Advertising, E-Stores, Product placements. Dr. S. Raghunathareddy in a research paper "Marketing challenges in 21<sup>st</sup> century" has explained changing nature of Marketing and puts light on the concept of Segment Marketing, Niche Marketing, and Micro marketing. The researcher tries to address the issues of advertising, consumer behavior, technological changes and its impact on Marketing as a whole. The Research paper "The Paradigm Shift in Marketing" case studies by Dr. K.S. Jaiswal and Neetusinghdescribes the emerging trends in Marketing viz., Innovations in product developments and also highlights the importance of Relationship Marketing

### **Objectives of the Study:**

1. To know the concept of Integrated Marketing Communications.
2. To know the factors those drive the Integrated Marketing Communications.

The Factors that influence the growth of Integrated Marketing Communications are as follows.

### **Decline in Conventional Advertising:**

Over a period of time the conventional advertising has become less effective and more expensive. It is not reaching the substantial numbers of customers. Due to ever-growing competition, the products are attaining parity in terms of their designs, features, quality, specifications and other functional attributes. The Real Product differentiation has reduced to a larger extent. It has become difficult for advertising to attract and persuade customers effectively in the present scenario. On the other hand, the budget allocation for the consumer and trade sales promotion is getting increased because of aggressive pricing competition, growing influence of big retailers, growing awareness of consumers about the changing dynamics of Market and their price consciousness are leading Marketing firms towards sales promotion and influencing the concept of Integrated Marketing Communications.

### **Growth of Newer Media Avenues:**

Along with traditional media channels, the innovative and unconventional forms of media are compelling the companies to adopt IMC as an indispensable function of their Marketing programme. Emergence of these media channels has increased the options and methods of advertising. Further, the alternative media like digital Television, electronic magazines, Online journals, Newsgroups, Blogs, Mobile Communications, Sponsorships, Product demonstration, Special events are gaining ground and setting their foothold in the Media Industry. The growth of Online Marketing and Mobile Marketing has brought the paradigm shift in the field of Marketing. Successful Marketing companies cannot ignore these media options. The unique characteristics of these media channels like personalized targeting, more informative, goal oriented, round the clock availability, Tailor made messages and Customizable offers have brought a large section of customer into its field thereby decreasing the Traditional media consumption. Moreover, the unconventional media like wall painting, cinema vans, weekly markets, fairs and festival are used to reach out to the customers living in the rural regions and remote places.

### **Influence of Accountable Marketing:**

In recent times, the concept of Accountable Marketing has become popular trend wherein organizations are demanding greater accountability and control of their marketing activities. They are keenly interested in knowing the effectiveness of their marketing and communication plan. In conventional Marketing though it is possible to measure the performance of advertising and other communications it does not produce the exact and immediate results. It often reaches to the disinterested audience and leads to wasteful expenditure. However, the process of Forecasting and evaluation the marketing communication in traditional Marketing is quite unfeasible and difficult. The customers' response can be measured accurately and more precisely by way of using Modern, Innovative and effective methods of Marketing. IMC plays an important role as it aligns and synergizes different communication channels, avoids duplications and disseminate consistent messages to the audience.

### **Database Marketing:**

The developments in the technology have led to the emergence in Database Marketing. It helps companies in sharpening their Marketing efforts by conveniently gathering, storing and retrieving the most intimate information of the customers. This helps them in gaining deeper understanding of customers' interests, likes, dislikes and preferences. With the help of Database Marketing, the marketers can make tailor made and customizable offers for the prospective customers. As the modern day customer has become more demanding and choosy who want customized, interactive and permission based communications. Because of these benefits the contemporary organizations are decreasing their budget of Mass communications. In a world with a growing heterogeneity among customers; Integrated Marketing Communication is a viable alternative which leads companies to effectively monitor and control customers' movements across all the areas of business

### **Relationship Marketing:**

Relationship Marketing helps organizations to build a customer centric culture, helps in building connectivity with the market, customers and process, while promoting the culture of customer delight and ecstasy; it becomes instrumental in the implementation of an Integrated Marketing Communications. The main purpose of Relationship Marketing is to build long term relationship among customer. It is a holistic concept of Marketing wherein the main thrust is given to the life time value of the customer by way of customer retention and customer satisfaction. Relationship Marketing identifies high value customers and builds relationship with customer in a very personalized way. Relationship Marketing includes all the Marketing communications, the customers receive and experience while coming in contact with the organization. So, it is required that they should build a positive associations about the products, services and Organization. Thus, Philosophy of Relationship Marketing contributes in branding by enhancing the brand image and Brand Identity.

### **Conclusions:**

The organizations that aspire to implement IMC must have a profound knowledge and in-depth understanding about the functions, strengths and weaknesses of each Marketing Communication tools. The function of Advertising, Sales promotions, Publicity, PoP Merchandising etc. serves different purpose but collectively they support and complement each other thereby creating a magnifying effect on the Promotions. The rationale behind Integrated Marketing Communications is to create synergy of all the forms of Marketing Communications, avoids duplications and incompatibility by choosing the best suitable promotional tool.

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