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**Title:** Building the IMC Agenda

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## MKT – INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

### Assessment 2 – Building the IMC Agenda

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### Executive summary

This report discusses and illustrates the integrated marketing communication and while identifying targets markets i.e. consumers. Suppliers, customers etc. directed to IMC programs. It covers communication models and the IMC program objectives as well those creative approaches for positioning strategy. This paper can be useful in determining the importance of integrated marketing communication.

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## Introduction

Integrated marketing communication (**IMC**) is a communication model that ensures that all forms of communication and messages are well connected to each other. IMC means putting together all promotional tools to work in harmony. Promotion belongs to other Ps of the marketing mix. It should be noted that, if all the communication tools are put together they work better in harmony rather than when they work separately (McQuail & Windahl, 2015). This report aims at identifying the mix of promotional communication tools, understanding the communication process used by Australian medical association to pass information to its new and prospective consumers using an integrated marketing communication program. It will also develop the objectives of using the IMC program in reaching its consumers. And draw illustrations from (Belch et al. (2018) communication model and how it has been applied to the Australian Medical Association.

## Communication model

### The receiver/decoding

A receiver is a person whose message is meant to reach or passed to by the sender. The creator of the message (sender) shares his thought to the destination (receiver) through a medium of communication (Swart, 2010). The receiver will then transform the message from the sender into thoughts (Swart, 2010). This happens through the influence of the receivers' field of experience (Levinson, Lesser & Epstein, 2010). Field of experience is his perceptions, attitudes, and values brought to a communication situation.

### The channel messages

A message contains communicated information or that meaning the source want to share with the receiver (Swart, 2010). The sender must put messages across by use of transmittable form to the appropriate channel. The message contains a literal meaning or a conscious and symbolic meaning subconscious (Levinson, Lesser & Epstein, 2010). People who are trained are in semiotics the study of the nature of meaning) and cultural anthropology is used by marketers to understand the meaning subconsciously and consciously (McQuail& Windahl, 2015). In Australian Medical Association, most of the medical errors committed are as a result of lack of communication or

failures in communication (Levinson, Lesser & Epstein, 2010). There are errors are experienced in post-discharge (Shen & Bissell, 2013). The errors that result from physicians and patients and healthcare providers who take charge after discharge happens due to lack of communication and leads to suboptimal care transitions (Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2011). The AMA greatly values communication with its patients, families/caregivers during the discharge process using the following guidelines;

By getting the right information from the patients, family/caregivers in order to enhance patients' needs, goals, care, and treatment.

Using the language understood by the patients and the understanding communication impaired patients during the planning of discharge.

Giving understood instruction during discharge in order for the patients to comply with the most critical orders.

### **Channel**

Channel is the medium in which communication travels from the sender to the receiver and vice versa. It exists in two forms. Personal channels and non-personal channels. Personal selling involves word of mouth and personal selling (Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2011). Non-personal channels selling involve broadcast media and print media. AMA gives instruction to patients in both print and electronic form as well as online platforms like portals (Levinson, Lesser & Epstein, 2010). AMA also has used the internet in communicating with medical students and the physicians in sharing information quickly and teach millions easily (Levinson, Lesser & Epstein, 2010). Social networking helps physicians express themselves freely and enable them to be the active professional online presence (Shen & Bissell, 2013). When online, physicians are supposed to cognizant to patient's privacy and confidentiality which should be maintained in all environments (Belech & Blech, 2009). They should also use privacy settings to avoid personal information from being leaked and accessed when using social media for networking (Levinson, Lesser & Epstein, 2010). They are supposed to maintain appropriate boundaries of the patient-physician relationship when online interaction with patients occurs (McQuail & Windahl, 2015). The physicians should

maintain the required professional boundaries by being conscious of what is personal and professional content online (Urban& Mothusiwa, 2014).

### **Noise**

The noise is referred to anything that distracts the process of communication. The source of noise includes white noise (signal transformation), situational factors (distractions), clutter (competitive messages), lack of common ground (improper encoding e.g. using a sign, symbol or words that are unfamiliar or different meaning to sender-receiver (Belech & Blech, 2009).

### **Response/feedback**

Response refers to a set of reactions the receiver has after seeing, hearing or reading a message. The response may be nonverbal or verbal actions. Feedback is the part of the message recipient's response that is communicated back to the sender (Belech & Blech, 2009). Feedback takes various forms which help sender to understand and monitors how the message is being encoded and received.

### **Developing Communication Objectives**

IMC communication objectives include doing the following:

#### **1. Determining the target market**

This means clearly selecting and defining the target audience in order to send messages that are going to be delivered effectively to the right people.

#### **2. Determining the IMC campaign purpose and objectives**

Once the market/audience is defined as the next thing is setting successful marketing campaigns is to define what accomplishment is needed with its IMC efforts (Belech & Blech, 2009). IMC helps to accomplish a number of objectives which many marketing campaigns may not accomplish.

#### **3. Setting S.M.A.R.T goals.**

Specific areas to be improved must be targeted

Measurable: when setting goals, they should be measurable i.e. suggesting indicators for progress.

Assignable: select who will be doing it

Realistic: State how realistic is your goal and how it can be achieved with the available time and resources. All activities to be accomplished are well defined by S.M.A.R.T goals. S.M.A.R.T goals ensure effective communication between employees and their managers enabling one directional focus towards results (Urban & Mothusiwa, 2014).

Time-related: when do you want to achieve the result?

#### **4. Defining the message**

Messages campaign can be revisited and redefined to suit the style selected. This will help getting the communication right (Ainin, Parveen, Moghavvemi, Jaafar & Mohd Shuib, 2015). Part of message is a call to action. For instance, as customer continue engaging with the product sales cycle, a need for call to action into web arises to stimulate feedback.

#### **AIDA Model**

Awareness: paid searchers ads allow clicks to a website and to view the description to products and product comparative reviews (Mapheto, Oni & Matiza, 2014).

Interest: A white paper describing how a product is offering unique solution to a problem in business is downloaded.

Desire: demonstration of product request

Action stage: Price quote proposal request.

#### **5. Selecting promotion communications approaches and tools**

There are choices that shape marketers to consider marketing communication methods.

Budget: the resources and budget for the marketing campaign that are available to enable the campaign should be determined (Huczynski, Buchanan, & Huczynski, 2013). A large budget will help in sales promotion, mass-market advertising, broader reach etc. small budget may force



the organization to rely on the existing in-house labor and tools like a company website, email marketing, social media capabilities etc. Despite the size of the budget, marketers should ensure the biggest impact of advertising and promotional campaign with the available budget (Seric, Saura & Descals, 2011).

Timing: there are IMC approaches and strategies that take longest period of time than others. The good examples include Email and web promotion activities which can be executed rapidly, mostly with in-house resources. Longer lead time is likely to be for conference presentations and events (Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2011). It is important to choose tools that are able to make the biggest impact in the specified time.

Audience: good use of IMC enables to reach customers at their comfort. The targets' segment behaviors and the media habits are the guide to marketer's choice of marketing communication (Barker, 2013). For instance, presence in the media could be chosen as your IMC strategy if your target audience visits particular bloggers, websites, magazines, or social media to get information (Mapheto, Oni & Matiza, 2014).

The kind of messaging to use in each component of IMC using AIDA Model includes;

Advertising: awareness-building messaging

Public relations: education messaging to prospective customers

Personal selling: stimulating action

Sales promotion: focuses on inducing buying at the point of sale

Direct marketing: provides information that induces prospective customers to want to know more etc.

## **6. Determining the promotional mix: the tools required, time to use, and how**

After marketers select those methods of communication they have to decide on which tools are useful, time and ways of use (Mapheto, Oni & Matiza, 2014). Promotional mix is so crucial in that it amplifies and reinforces the message (Batra, & Keller, 2016).

## **7. Campaign Execution**

This provides with the information on how to create marketing plans and communicate effectively.

## **8. Results test**

This involves tracking and measuring of success done by managers to monitor progress and know areas of adjustment.

In summary, the major communication objectives for AMA include:

- i) To promote and protect the medical profession in Western Australia
- ii) To foster and sustain consultation and communication within the medical profession
- iii) To preserve, maintain, promote and advance the intellectual, philosophical, social, political, economic and legal interest of its members and of the medical profession in general.

### **Developing Creative approaches**

The Cognitive response approaches. This includes cognitive responses which are that that occurs to people while reading, viewing or hearing a communication (Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2011). It is a method for examining consumers' cognitive processing of advertising messages (Barker, 2013). It measures consumers' cognitive response in terms of hearing, or viewing, or reading communications (Demiray & Sever, 2009). It examines the types of thoughts stimulated by an advertising message (Barker, 2013). Consumers write down or they report through word of mouth their reaction to messages (Seric, Saura & Descals, 2011). In its implementation of medical strategies and reconciliation in the discharge process, AMA uses the following strategies for patients to properly use their medication after they are discharged:

- 1). All discharge medication, prescription and over the counter drugs are reconciled with those administered during patient's hospitalization.
- 2). They also ensure that an accurate list of drugs also those to be discontinued and those to be taken after hospital discharge, with dosage and time for each drug is well communicated to patients (Han, Niyato, Saad, Başar & Hjørungnes, 2012).

- 3). Patients with complex drugs timetables are encouraged through administration by multidisciplinary teams for reconciliation including pharmacists (Batra, & Keller, 2016).
- 4). Medication instructions are clearly stated for the patients, family and caregivers to avoid misuse of drugs.

### **Elements of Integrated Marketing Communication**

#### **Media**

A combined campaign uses the full range of media communication to perform specific roles. Advertising is meant to raise awareness of a product and create necessary follow-up (Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2011). Information on Pressstrengthens advertising by increasing the advertising messages. Direct mail or email would provide follow-up tools for the advertising campaign and also offer detailed information to prospects via brochures or links to a website (Demiray & Sever, 2009). Telemarketing and sales support material, such as sales and product guides, help the sales force to follow up the strongest prospects (Batra & Keller, 2016). Newsletters and email campaigns help to maintain contact and build relationships with prospects until they are ready to buy.

#### **Consistent Messages**

The consistency of message is one of the most important elements of integrated marketing communication. The copy style and content should be consistent across all media (Seric, Saura & Descals, 2011). When prospects read an advertisement, visit a website, pick up a leaflet or take a call from a telemarketing specialist, they should perceive the same product descriptions and benefit statements in each communication (Urban & Mothusiwa, 2014).

#### **Design Consistency**

Design consistency also is important. Using the same colors, photographs and other visual elements helps to reinforce the important campaign messages and links the various campaign elements together. As an added bonus, design consistency can help reduce campaign costs by specifying standard elements and reusing visual material across all media (Šerić, Gil-Saura & Ruiz-Molina, 2014).

**Reinforcement**

Reinforcement is a key element. Integrated marketing communication ensures that all the elements of a marketing campaign work together to achieve objectives and deliver results (Mapheto, Oni& Matiza, 2014). A campaign to improve sales through a retail network, for example, would include retailer training guides, templates for local advertising and direct marketing, sales incentives for the retailer sales force, and advertising that drives business to the retail network (Mapheto, Oni & Matiza, 2014).

**Sales Alignment**

In business-to-business marketing, the purchasing process can be lengthy and complex, involving many different decision-makers and influencers. Integrated marketing communication helps your sales team to provide the information that decision-makers need at each stage of the purchasing process (Mapheto, Oni & Matiza, 2014). In a typical scenario, the buying team establishes its requirements, prepares a specification and a short list of potential suppliers, evaluates proposals, and makes a final assessment of the most suitable suppliers. An integrated campaign aligns the communication program with the purchasing process at each stage to ensure success.

### *Conclusions*

Integrated marketing communication abbreviated as IMC is the communication model ensuring all forms of communication are put together to produce the most effective results. The examples of a model of communication include sender, receiver, message, channel, noise, feedback and the response. Integrated Marketing communication helps small businesses to do better outcomes from campaigns and reduce marketing costs. American Association of Advertising Agencies defines combining tools like sales promotion, social media, advertising, telemarketing, and direct mail is essential for consistency, clarity and maximum communication impact. IMC is majorly reliable due to better results, creativity consistency, cost savings, and customer preference.

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