

Integrated marketing communication

Concept of marketing communication

Marketing communication involves sharing of meaning, information and concepts by the source and the receiver about the products and services and also about the firm selling through the devices of promotion via, advertising, publicity, salesmanship and sales promotion.

In marketing the source is the marketer who desires to promote the product. Marketer delivers a message to a receiver, who is the target market segment. Message is received and integrated by consumers and if their predisposition becomes favorable, they decide to purchase. Feedback is the reverse flow of communication to the marketer.

Marketing communication may be distorted particularly when a message passes through a number of channels. Noise is a major injurious. Noise can arise due to faulty transmission, faulty reception. Competitive communication constitutes the most serious noise.

The **Marketing Communication** refers to the means adopted by the companies to convey messages about the products and the brands they sell, either directly or indirectly to the customers with the intention to persuade them to purchase.

A marketing communication tool can be anything from: [advertising](#), [personal selling](#), [direct marketing](#), sponsorship, communication, and promotion to public relations.

Meaning of Marketing Communication:

Marketing communications refer to the strategy used by a company or individual to reach their target market through various types of communication. Marketing communication includes advertising, direct marketing, branding, packaging, sales presentations, trade show appearances etc.

Concept of Marketing Communication Mix:

Marketing Communication Mix is the “Promotion” of the Marketing Ps and covers every method and medium of communicating with your target audience. In many ways, the marketing communication mix is the heart of your marketing strategy around which everything else in sales and marketing is predicated.

If business consists of creating value and creating customers. Marketing Communication covers exactly how you are going to create customer by taking your value message to the market.

Marketing Communication Objectives:

Marketing communication objectives are long-term goals where marketing campaigns are intended to drive up the value of your brand over time. In contrast to sales promotions, which are

short-term inducements to buy, communication goals succeed when you persuade customers through consistent reinforcement that your brand has benefits they want or need.

(i) To Increase Awareness:

Increased brand awareness is not only one of the most common marketing communication objectives; it is also typically the first for a new company. When you initially enter the market, you have to let people know your company and products or services exist.

This might include broadcast commercials or print ads that depict the image of your company and constant repetition of your brand name, slogans and jingles. The whole objective is to become known and memorable.

Established companies often use a closely related goal of building or maintaining top-of-mind awareness, which means customers think of you first when considering your product category.

(ii) To Change Attitudes:

Changing company or brand perceptions is another common communication objective. Sometimes, misconceptions develop in the market about your company, products or services.

Advertising is a way to address them directly. In other cases, negative publicity results because your company is involved in a business scandal or unsettling activities.

BP invested millions of rupees in advertising to explain the company's clean up efforts to the public following its infamous Gulf of Mexico oil in mid-2010. Local businesses normally don't have that kind of budget but local radio or print ads can do the trick.

(iii) To Influence Purchase Intent:

A key communication objective is to motivate customers to buy. This is normally done through persuasive advertising, which involves emphasis of your superior benefits to the user, usually relative to competitors. It is critical to strike a chord with the underlying need or want that triggers a customer to act.

Sports drink commercials showing athletes competing, getting hot and sweaty and then taking a drink afterward are a common approach to drive purchase intent. The ads normally include benefits of the drink related to taste or nutrients.

(iv) To stimulate Trial Purchase:

Two separate but closely related communication objectives are to stimulate trial use and drive repeat purchases. Free trials or product samples are common techniques to persuade

customers to try your product for the first time. The goal is to take away the risk and get the customer to experience your brand.

Once you get them on the first purchase, you have to figure out how to convert that into a follow-up purchase. Discounts on the next purchase or frequency programs are ways to turn one-time users into repeat buyers and, ultimately, loyal customers.

(v) To Drive Brand Switching:

Another objective closely tied to stimulating trial use is driving brand switching. This is a specific objective of getting customers who buy competing products to switch to your brand. Tide detergent is normally pitted against “other leading brands” in comparative ads intended to motivate brand switching.

The advantage with this goal is that customers already buy within your product category. This means need is established. You just need to persuade them that your product or service is superior and induce them to try it out.

Importance of marketing communication

1) Develop a strategic vision

The first point in the list of [Importance of Marketing Communication](#) is that it helps the management of the company and [marketing managers](#) develop a strategic [vision](#) about leveraging on the various marketing opportunities and platforms and device the plans that make the company come up with the new and innovative methods to promote the offerings to the customers.

It makes the company curate a distinctive identity in the market and in the minds of the customers as the [brand](#) that craves out the marketing and promotional ways that are not only strategic in nature but have an edge in the ways to communicate about the features and attributes of the products and services.

2) Create [brand awareness](#)

The concept of branding is totally related to the promoting the objectives and vision of the brand and company as a whole but understating the Importance of Marketing Communication helps in the creating and providing the required impetus to the brand awareness in an indirect manner as the [strategy](#) and the creative artworks of the marketing communication starts with leveraging on the strong legacy of the brand followed by the features and unique selling propositions of the products and services.

3) Expresses [competitive advantage](#)

There are way too many brands in the market offering the similar line of products and services giving the customers quite many options and alternatives to pick and choose from and many a time the customers go for the products and services offered by the competitors.

Hence, understanding the Importance of Marketing Communication helps the company to promote its offerings in a unique and innovative manner by selecting various marketing and media channels such as print advertisements, television commercials, radio spots, digital marketing, interactive marketing, and PR amongst others that enables to showcase the features and nature of the offerings in a positive light giving a tough competition to the arch-[rivals](#) of the company and it works as a pull factor for the customers.

4) Fosters goodwill

Next in the queue of the Importance of Marketing Communication is that it helps the company to foster the goodwill in the market as when the communication strategy is on a consistent and continuous basis, the facet of trust gets ingrained in the minds of the existing and prospective customers as they are steadily witnessing the communication and messages from the company and its offerings and gives them a perspective that the company is genuine and authentic in its offerings.

Another aspect to this point is that the marketing communication also involves participating in various activities related to the corporate social responsibilities and in the benefit of the society that helps the company to command the goodwill from its patrons and stakeholders

5) Attracts talent

The genuine and innovative marketing communication and messaging strategy not only attracts the new set of customers but also attracts the talent for the company that is willing to get associated with the company as employees, vendors, investors, agencies, and other business associates that helps the company to grow from strength to strength and attain its aims and objectives in the highly successful manner.

6) Enlightens the investor community

In continuation to the above point and harping on the Importance of Marketing Communication, yet another benefit to the company is that it enlightens the investor community about the strengths, core [values](#), fundamentals, vision, approach, and objectives of the company along with its competitive advantages, unique selling propositions, and the features and attributes of the products and services offered to the [target market](#).

And once the investors are impressed and satisfied with the values and objectives of the company they are ready to invest in the company and that helps the management to achieve their financial goals that will further provide the impetus to the business [operations](#) and result in the higher sales and elevated profits.

7) Boosts profits

As the thumb rule of business strategy states that the marketing and sales departments work as the backbone of each other and when they both join forces, the profits of the company are on an all-time high owing to the increased sales and market share as compared to the competitors in the market as the marketing communication is strategic, innovative, and creative in nature plus is well aligned with the overall business objectives of the company.

8) Improved communication with the customers

In order to attract the new set of customers and retain the existing ones on a long-term basis, it is important for the marketing communication to be transparent, consistent, crisp, direct, and helps to solve the problems of the customers.

And when the management of company and marketing department duly understands and grasps the Importance of Marketing Communication, there is an automatic improvement in the communication with the customers and their level of trust in the brand, its offerings, and the overall company is increased in manifolds with the company able to accomplish its desired goals and objectives as well.

9) Come up with innovative marketing and promotional ideas

Understanding the Importance of Marketing Communication helps the management and the marketing department to try and come up with the innovative marketing and promotional ideas that do not only convey the brand messages in an inventive fashion but also gives the brand an edge of creativity as compared to their competitors in the market.

Marketing Communication mix

Advertising

Advertising is an effective way of grabbing your customers' attention, as it uses mainly mass media platforms to deliver its message. The American Marketing Association defines advertising as "Any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identifiable sponsor." It can be highly targeted through mailings to local communities, or be visible for all to see on billboards or TV. When planning your advertising, ensure that your message is targeted as effectively as possible to your customers. For example, if you sell cosmetics, don't put out advertisements during football games. This is widely used by companies to reach out to geographically distributed consumers in a large scale. It could be through TV ads, paper and print ads, billboards, radio announcements etc. to reach out to a mass audience. While such a promotional tool is quick and seen as legitimate by the consumers, it is very expensive and also happens to be a one-way communication with your potential customer. Organizations can advertise in a number of ways, such as on television, radio, magazines, newspapers, billboards and online. It's an effective way to reach large quantities of people, but it can be very expensive as well.

Personal Selling

Personal selling is the second most common component in the communications mix. One-on-one personal attention provided by a trained sales person is often the difference between a customer choosing one brand over another. Sales professionals focus on communicating thorough knowledge of their company's products and services and offer suggestions on how products can solve problems or meet specific needs. Personal selling stresses building relationships with customers and turning leads into sales. This is very effective in building customer relations and helping the consumer move from awareness and knowledge stage to conviction and action. Your marketing personnel need to use their people skills and learn to listen to the audience so that the consumer's requirements are addressed. You get immediate feedback and increase sales potential.

Promotion

Promotions tend to be short-term activities geared towards encouraging customers to try your product for the first time, or to buy more than they might normally. Tactics include free samples, discount coupons, or multi-buy offers such as "buy one, get one for free." Free samples and coupons can be accurately targeted at your customers through channels such as direct mail to households, or as cut-outs in local newspapers. Through discount coupons, contests, daily deals and other offers, you can promote your product sales and create short-term marketing effects.

Direct Marketing/Internet Marketing

Targeting specific audiences with a brand message is the goal of direct marketing. Traditionally, direct marketing has been in the form of coupon mailers, catalogs and postcards. However, the boom in digital access to consumers through email, Twitter and Facebook has expanded a company's reach into consumers' homes and offices. Internet marketing allows businesses to establish connections, recruit a following and make easy sales often at a lower cost than traditional means. In fact, this part of the promotions mix requires less financial outlay than other forms, and often yields an immediate response. Internet and powerful mobile technologies have rapidly increased company efforts to market their products and build customer relationships via social media, websites, mobile apps, e-commerce, online promotions etc.

Public Relations

Public relations, or PR, is the long-term process of building public awareness through communicating regularly with your various target markets. At its heart is the aim of building goodwill towards your company and products or services so that customers will think more favorably of your company and be more likely to make a purchase. At its simplest, it may take the form of press releases to key trade and consumer publications, often centered around newsworthy events, such as product launches or celebrity endorsements. Don't be fooled in thinking PR is free, though; good PR can be expensive, but can also deliver powerful returns on investment, provided clear goals are set in advance. You can use company news, promotional events, sponsorship programs etc. along with other promotion tools to reach out to prospective

customers. Such a campaign is very cost-effective and economical while reaching out to a larger audience.

Packaging

Effective packaging can be a valuable part of your marketing communication mix — even if you're only presenting yourself as a professional. Packaging is not simply about wrapping your product in a protective cover to keep it safe or clean, but can be used as a platform to enhance the branding of a product or a company. Good design can add significant value to your packaging, helping your product or service to stand out from the crowd either visually, or in terms of bringing added convenience to your customers.

Event Sponsorship

Event sponsorship is the element sometimes left out of the five-element communication mix. Many models include it within advertising. Event sponsorship occurs with a company pays to have a presence at a sports, entertainment, nonprofit or community events. The sponsorship may include a mix of benefits including booth representation during the event to hand out samples, gifts and literature, name mention during the event and ad spots connected to the event.

Factors affecting marketing communication Mix

Budget Available. For many companies, the budget available to market a product determines what elements of the promotion mix are utilized. The budget affects a promotion's reach (number of people exposed to the message) and frequency (how often people are exposed). For example, many smaller companies may lack the money to create and run commercials on top-rated television shows or during the Super Bowl. As a result, they may not get the exposure they need to be successful. Other firms such as McDonald's may come up with creative ways to reach different target markets. For example, McDonald's targeted college students with a special promotion that it filmed live in a Boston University lecture.

Stage in the product life cycle. The stage in the product life cycle also affects the type and amount of promotion used. Products in the introductory stages typically need a lot more promotional dollars to create awareness in the marketplace. Consumers and businesses won't buy a product if they do not know about it. More communication is needed in the beginning of the product life cycle to build awareness and trial.

Type of product and type of purchase decision. Different products also require different types of promotion. Very technical products and very expensive products (high involvement) often need professional selling so the customer understands how the product operates and its different features. By contrast, advertising is often relied upon to sell convenience goods and products purchased routinely (low involvement) since customers are familiar with the products and they spend relatively little time making purchase decisions.

Target market characteristics and consumers' readiness to purchase. In order to select the best methods to reach different target markets, organizations need to know what types of media different targets use, how often they make purchases, where they make purchases, and what their readiness to purchase is as well as characteristics such as age, gender, and lifestyle. Some people are early adopters and want to try new things as soon as they are available, and other groups wait until products have been on the market for a while. Some consumers might not have the money to purchase different products, although they will need the product later. For example, are most college freshmen ready to purchase new cars?

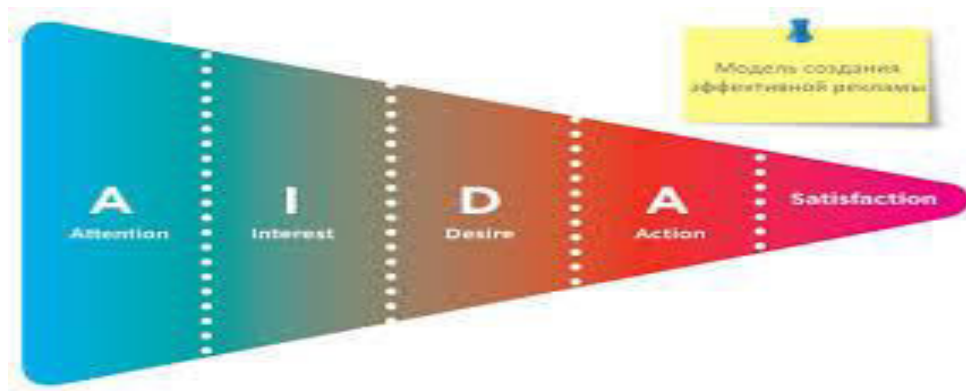
Consumers' preferences for various media. We've already explained that different types of consumers prefer different types of media. In terms of target markets, college-aged students may prefer online, cell phone, mobile marketing, and social media more than older consumers do. Media preferences have been researched extensively by academics, marketing research companies, and companies to find out how consumers want to be reached.

Regulations, competitors, and environmental factors. Regulations can affect the type of promotion used. For example, laws in the United States prohibit tobacco products from being advertised on television. In some Asian countries, controversial products such as alcohol cannot be advertised during Golden (prime) time on television. The hope is that by advertising late at night, young children do not see the advertisements. The strength of the economy can have an impact as well. In a weak economy, some organizations use more sales promotions such as coupons to get consumers into their stores. The risk is that consumers may begin to expect coupons and not want to buy items without a special promotion.

Availability of media. Organizations must also plan their promotions based on availability of media. The top-rated television shows and Super Bowl ad slots, for example, often sell out quickly. Magazines tend to have a longer lead time, so companies must plan far in advance for some magazines. By contrast, because of the number of radio stations and the nature of the medium, organizations can often place radio commercials the same day they want them to be aired. Social media and online media may be immediate, but users must be careful about what they post and their privacy. Uncontrollable events can affect a company's promotions, too. For example, when a disaster occurs, TV stations often cut advertisements to make way for continuous news coverage. If there is a crisis or disaster and your company is in the middle of a promotion being advertised on TV, you will likely have to scramble to reach consumers via another medium.

Models of marketing communication

AIDAS MODEL



This is one of the oldest and most popular models of marketing communications. This hierarchical model was first proposed by St. Elmo Lewis in 1900 for personal selling with stages: attract attention, maintain interest, create desire and get the consumer to act. In 1911, Arthur Fredrick Sheldon revised the model by changing the first step to 'favourable attention' and adding a fifth step, 'permanent satisfaction'. The revised model was called AIDAS -favourable Attention, Interest, Desire, Action and permanent Satisfaction. The various stages in the buying process of the AIDAS model are:

- 1) ATTENTION: To get the attention of the target customer.
- 2) INTEREST: To create interest in the product by giving product information (or special features) and how it can help satisfy the needs and wants of the individual.
- 3) OUTCOME: Whether the potential buyer develops a favourable or unfavourable opinion about the product.
- 4) DESIRE: Create a desire in the customer to possess the product. This is done by emphasizing the benefits of the product and how it will satisfy the needs and wants.
- 5) ACTION: Demand action from the customer i.e. convince them to make a purchase. A simple method to get action from the customer is to provide a toll free number or contact person for more information.
- 6) SATISFACTION: The customer is satisfied after the purchase.

EXAMPLE: Air Deccan used this model of marketing communication successfully in its marketing campaign.

DAGMAR MODEL



'Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results', abbreviated to DAGMAR, was proposed by Russell H. Coney in 1961. Coney suggested that achievement of a hierarchy-of-communications objectives leads to actual purchase. He suggested that marketing goals and advertising goals were different. Marketing goals are measured in terms of sales whereas advertising goals are measured in terms of the customers' movement along the hierarchy. The various stages in this model are as follows:-

- 1) AWARENESS:- In this stage the customer becomes aware of the product.
- 2) COMPREHENSION:- The customer is aware of the product characteristics and its uses. He is also familiar with the brand name and brand logo.
- 3) CONVICTION:- This stage refers to the emotional decision of preferring one brand to another.
- 4) ACTION:- In this stage the purchase is made.

The DAGMAR model assumes a high-involvement "learn-feel-do" hierarchy. As advertising and marketing goals are deemed distinct, advertising goals can be defined specifically tracked and measured. The long-term effects of the advertisement can also be studied. With the help of the DAGMAR model, the effectiveness of the advertisement can be measured in terms of its ability to move the customer along the hierarchy. The model enabled marketers to define the target market or audience for the commercial. As the advertisement had to be based on the objectives, creative people involved in the process of designing tend to feel that their creativity was being stifled. The implementation of DAGMAR is also very costly, as extensive research is required for setting quantitative targets and

measuring

them.

Example:- General Motors(GM) used the DAGMAR approach to identify advertising goals.

LAVIDGE AND STEINER MODEL

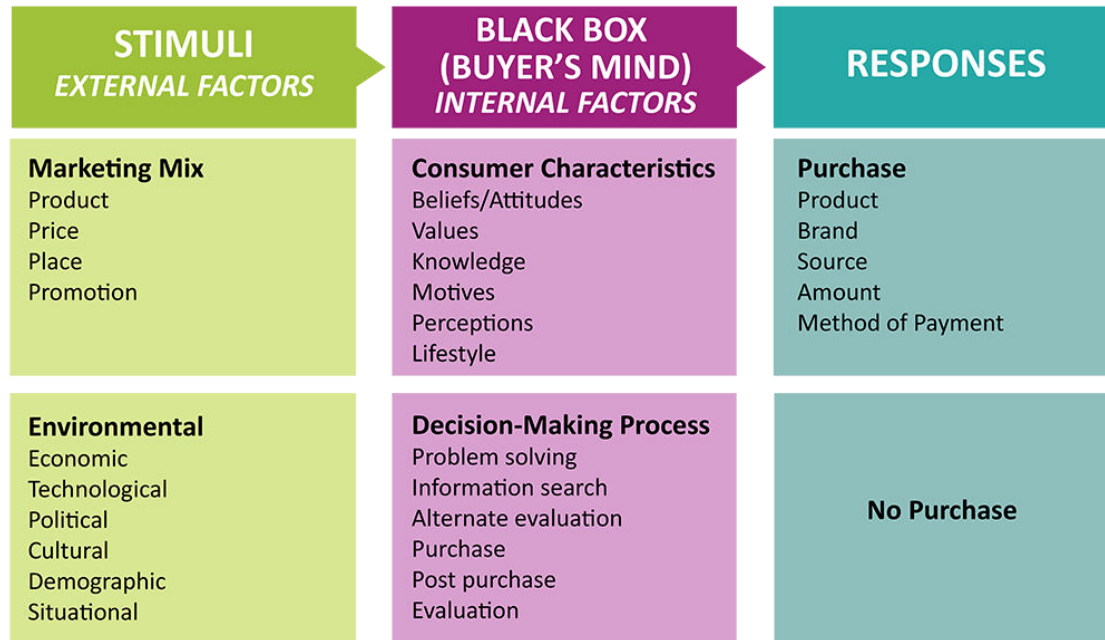


In 1961 ,Robert J.Lavidge and Gary A. Steiner proposed a new model for marketing communications,which ysed hierarchy of effects but included persuasion as an important factor in the model.This model considered the long-term effectsof advertising too.According to the Lavidge and Steiner Model*,a customer who is totally unaware of the product goes through the following six steps before making a purchase:

- 1) AWARENESS: In this step,the customer becomes aware of the existence of the product.
- 2) KNOWLEDGE: The customer comes to know about the features and uses of the product.
- 3) LIKING: The customer develops a favourable attitude towards the product.
- 4) PREFERENCE: Here,the customer develops preference for the said brand over other competitive products or substitutes.
- 5) CONVICTION: This step involves a desire to buy the product.The customer is convinced of a good purchase.
- 6) PURCHASE: The customer makes the actual purchase.

EXAMPLE: Hyundai Motors Limited used the model successfully while launching its small car, Santro, in India.

BLADE BOX MODEL



Marketing theory of consumer buying behavior in which what goes on within the human mind (the black box) is ignored, in favor of discovering which inputs (stimuli) produce the desired output (buying response).

The stimuli (advertisement and other forms of promotion about the product) that is presented to the consumer by the marketer and the environment is dealt with by the buyer's black box. The buyer's black box, comprises two sub components - the buyer's characteristics and the buyer decision process.

The buyer's characteristics could be personal, social, cultural and psychological. These are internal to the buyer and the marketer cannot hope to bring much change into this

The buyer's decision making process consists of the following steps:

- a) Problem recognition: The consumer identifies the need for a product
- b) Information search: Once the need has been recognised, the consumer will look for more information on the various products that satisfy the need. For example, if the consumer is looking for a cellphone-he might want to get in-depth knowledge of various phones available in the market
- c) Evaluation of alternatives: The set of all phones are then compared upon certain parameters that the user will desire in his product. For example the user might compare phones on style, design, features, aesthetics etc.
- d) Purchase decision: Based on the above parameters, the user ranks the products and then buys the one which fit all criteria
- e) Post purchase behaviour: The user might want to revise his views on the product or criteria of selection based on the product's performance.

The black box model considers the buyer's response as a result of a conscious and well-informed decision making process in which he is not impulsive.