



Integrated Marketing Communication Strategies of Apple and Samsung

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Abstract -In today's Modern Marketing Organisations Marketers strive to present a concise message across different mediums and platforms. Integration was the key to success, Continuity and Uniformity, simple strategies that changed the Marketing Science forever. Implementing an integrated marketing communications strategy can provide a competitive advantage for a successful business. However, many companies still employ a linear direct marketing process in which products are developed, messages created and incentives are added to the mix. The products are then pushed through various media or a sales force to consumers. A consumer-controlled communication landscape has emerged with a faster dynamic consumer learning process. The outcome is declining efficiency rates and increased costs from traditional direct marketing activity. Thus companies now need an integrated marketing communications approach that combines traditional media, online channels, PR, affiliate partnerships, products, people and social networks to be successful. This paper attempts to explain the various integrated marketing communication strategies adopted by the two leading brands Apple and Samsung.

Integrated Marketing communication is an approach to achieve the objectives of a marketing campaign through a well-coordinated use of different promotional methods that are intended to reinforce each other. Integrated marketing communication involves a strategic marketing process specifically designed to ensure that all messaging and communication strategies are unified across all channels and are centered around the customer. IMC is used practically to allow one medium's weakness to be offset by another medium's strength, with elements synergized to support each other and create greater impact.

Integrated Marketing Communication Model

Marketers are beginning to understand that their brands live in the connections, and that they must seize the opportunity by creating an integrated communications strategy. The objective of marketing communications is to enhance brand equity by moving customers along a customer experience path to purchase that leads to advocacy for the brand. The IMC goal is to deliver the right message to the right audience at the right time in the right place. It is critical for marketers to architect an effective integrated marketing communications plan that delivers clear, consistent and compelling messages.

Marketers must explore new methods to leverage all elements of the communication mix and blend traditional, digital and social media into a single, cohesive, holistic approach.

Don Schultz, Professor of Integrated Marketing Communications at North-western University suggested that companies could coordinate their marketing resources and supply customer's value-added information to create engagement and build long-term relationships. Start by using what he call ABCD resources -Audience, Brand (Product/Service), Content, Delivery. The organization is then supposed to find the optimal mix based on the type industry and competitive position in the customer market.

New Marketing Resources



Audience – a key ingredient is to use extensive data and analytics to understand the target segment of the organization. Creating pen-portraits of the core customers including demographic and lifestyle information will help to optimize the organization's media targeting strategy.

Brand - The product or service must have a unique selling proposition to provide a competitive advantage. It must deliver superior value for the audience and be clearly differentiated on features, service or price when compared to the competitors offering.

Content – with most competitors using the same linear marketing strategies targeting the same consumer segments, content can now become a point of competitive differentiation. When an organisation supplies value-added content it should provide consumers a reason to engage with that particular brand and connect their products or services.

Delivery – Next the organisation is then need to connect new digital media channels with traditional channels to create a push-pull system. Consumers must become engaged with the media employed or content delivery of the organisation will be unsuccessful. To achieve this ensure the content is linked to the brand positioning to make the emotional connection with the product or services.

Traditional measurements systems do not work well with integrated marketing, but most companies have all the data and just need to align it. Problematic areas can include breaking down internal silos and defining measures of success –site traffic, new sales, revenue per customer, return on capital, NPS (Net Promoter Score) etc.

The customer experience now occurs during the interaction with the company's products, online channels, customer service and content. If companies can optimize the synergy between the ABCD resources and employ an integrated marketing communications strategy they can drive improved returns from their marketing investment.

Steps in Developing Integrated Marketing Communication Plan

An integrated marketing communication plan uses the same thematic message in different types of promotions. The idea behind the message remains consistent whether consumers see a magazine ad or the company's web page. An integrated marketing communication plan may leverage its multiple promotion sources. A print ad might direct consumers to enter a contest or sign up for personalized savings on a web site. Product packaging could play a role in an integrated marketing communications plan as well. This is often seen with rewards programs that allow consumers to "earn points" through purchases and participation in an online community.

Analysis

Before an organisation develops its message, it must determine to whom it is going to be communicating. One of the first steps in developing an integrated marketing communications plan is identifying the customer. A customer analysis determines what makes the target consumer unique. This includes demographic characteristics, such as age, education level, gender, income, and geographic location. Once the marketer knows who he is going to target, he will also need to determine how he is going to reach his audience. An analysis identifies the media an audience is likely to use,

including specific magazines, newspapers and television shows.

Identity

Once a marketer determines who his customer is, he would want to create a unique identity for his brand or company. The identity that the marketer creates will be more effective if it appeals to an important need or value. Creating a unique identity, or "positioning," is important, because it distinguishes the product from the competition. The message in a company's integrated marketing communications plan will embody this unique identity. Another way to think of positioning is to equate it with the main selling point.

Goals

A comprehensive integrated marketing communications plan will state specific objectives. For example, an objective of the marketing campaign might be to increase awareness by 25 percent. A second objective might be to reach the target audience twice a week during the campaign's first quarter. The plan's goals should be specific and measurable. The organisation will want some way to determine whether the plan was effective. The marketer might solicit feedback from members of the target audience to measure his objectives.

Budget

Since most forms of advertising and promotion involve spending money, one needs to determine how much. Many plans specifically state the amount that will go toward advertisements, promotional contests and online social media. Part of the budget will need to account for the unexpected. If the competition of the organisation matches its efforts, it may need to adjust the frequency of its promotions. The organisation might need to adjust the message and brand identity to counter the competition. Many budgets account for a year of promotional activity.

Techniques for an effective integrated marketing communication strategy

Blurring Lines between Advertising and Public Relation

The lines between the common marketing communication practices of advertising and PR are becoming increasingly blurred as more companies use a combination of approaches or integrated marketing to get their messages across to their target audiences. It makes sense to leverage all of the communication tools, says Lin Gensing-Pophal, author of "Marketing With the End in Mind." And, as traditional media--newspaper, television and radio--have received increasing competition from other low-cost options for communicating with consumers, including media relations and online communication efforts, marketers are understanding a variety of options available to them.

Thinking Outside Box

Marketers are becoming increasingly creative in their efforts to reach their potential markets. Although techniques, including skywriting, are actually quite old, similar non-media communication techniques are catching on. These may include such things as bus or vehicle wraps, street painting, floor clings that show up in stores and malls and even in health care settings--and posters on the back of restroom doors. The combination of these types of activities with more traditional media provides an integration of messages that can achieve better results.

Social Media

Social media represents even more opportunities for leveraging integrated marketing strategy to increase awareness and preference for products and services. The use of tools, including Twitter, Facebook or MySpace, to connect with various audiences, combined with blogs, websites and other online tactics have exponentially broadened the reach, and lessened the cost, of communicating with the masses.

Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy of Apple

The Foundation Apple is always working to be ahead of technology by putting emphasis on R&D, as well as its Marketing Communication Strategies. Focus on creating brand loyalty and importance of customer satisfaction is communicated through these methods. Corporate Culture Apple is one of the largest corporations in the world, but one of its main strategies is to run like a small business.

This is done by using small teams and shifts Brand Focus Apple uses a Minimalist approach to its design in products and puts forth this brand image when communicating its strategy. Simple, but eye popping commercials with clear message. Close attention to detail, i.e. typeface, colors Constantly improving and updating products by simplifying rather than making use more complicated. As mentioned before, Apple's close attention to detail is how it thrives in marketing communications. This is especially evident in consumer experience at every touch point: products, shopping in Apple stores, and online.

Consumer Experience Products are easy to use, especially on start up with step by step instructions right on the screen. "Team work" image put forth by Apple "Geniuses" in the stores rather than "work in silos" method. Rigorous employee training that includes a secret manual explaining exactly how to interact with customers (banned words, role playing, selling without coming off as a pushy salesperson).

Online shopping via App Store, iTunes, or apple.com is simple, easy, and personalized for customers. Communication Tools Many methods of Advertisement Direct Marketing (App Store, iTunes, Updates) Focuses on Brand loyalty

Press Integration Tools Promotional Tools Press releases and introductory meetings for new products (creating excitement).

Use of logo in product placement limiting music/ media to be available by iTunes purchases only Advertisement-Commercials, Magazines, Billboards Apple iD-requiring registered information to download apps/media, use products, and update apps/ iOS are a way for Apple to understand who is using their products and what uses they are using them for. Software updates and App Store updates allow Apple to have an idea of who is still using the products, and who utilizes the importance of simplifying and fixing bugs.

iCloud is a tool for consumers to simplify use of multiple apple products, but also gives Apple an Idea of who is loyal to the brand, and what different products are being used. Trade shows- This how Apple thrived in its earliest days Marketing Mix Product- Simple, Sleek, Elegant, Innovative, but easy to use.

When it comes to price, high priced products give image of quality and durability- but how Apple continues to work with customers after purchase is what justifies price for most consumers. When the place of purchase is considered, Apple retail stores located in malls and high end shopping centers. Large Cities. Internet. Promotions- Advertisement, (Commercials, Magazine, Billboard) Internet, and Press releases.

Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy of Samsung Galaxy S II

In today's Modern Marketing Organisations Marketers strive to present a concise message across different mediums and platforms. Integration was the key to success, Continuity and Uniformity, simple strategies that changed the Marketing Science forever. Integrated Marketing Communication for Samsung Galaxy SII is been architected since its launch.

Days before its release dancers with boxes written "Letters from The World" and the Samsung Logo paraded across Barcelona-Spain to promote the new Galaxy phone. That also created Buzz within the city about the launch. By using the World Mobile Convention 2011, in Barcelona-Spain, to launch the phone, they earned lots of Public Relations from the media about the Galaxy SII and favouring the new trends showed on the Convention.

On its release TV Advertisements, Billboards, Radio, Magazine Ads, Website, Micro-Sites, Kiosks, In-store Banners, Sponsorships, YouTube Videos all worked together to promote Samsung's message across different media platforms all showcasing the new Samsung's product. Going deeper and unveiling Samsung's IMC strategy we can identify Major Communication Elements present on this campaign.

Mass Communication with Mass Media Advertisement (TV, Magazine,Radio), Target Communication especially in the Sporting Market with the Sponsorship

of the London Olympic Games 2012, In-Store Communication with banner ads, and sales force using branded t-shirts, One-to-One Communication with Kiosks' and Micro-websites promoting the "Letters from.." concept that interacted with customers. On this Promotional Mix we could see: Advertising, Direct Marketing, PR, Sponsorship, Sales promotion and E-Marketing. Based on the campaign published by Samsung, the Sender, initially the intent was to create Awareness about the product to inform consumers about the Galaxy SII. As the campaign progressed the customer, the Receiver, got the message the campaign aimed to move down the Buying-Readiness States to last stage, the Purchase state.

The Strengths of the Galaxy S II actually go back to their Marketing Orientation defined by Kotler, Adam, Denise and Armstrong (2009) as the Product Concept where the company will favour quality, performance and innovation features. One of the weaknesses of Samsung is that their costs are relatively high as compared to the competition. Also the fact that Samsung operates in a very competitive market, another weakness is lack of penetration in the Business Mobile market being outperformed by Blackberry and even Apple. Opportunity for the Galaxy S II is that the current market is operating in a Full Demand environment for smart phones and portable devices. Full Demand market is defined when their volume of business and operation is close to current capacity. The Threats of the Galaxy S II are the competition. While Samsung faces a good quarter for Q1 this year with 60 million units sold worldwide.

The Samsung Galaxy S II is the sequel to the critically-acclaimed Samsung Galaxy S Android smartphone. Products are delivered in layers to consumers, for Samsung the first step is to identify the Core Benefit of its product. As a famous marketing jargon says that "a consumer who buys a drill bit is actually after a hole, the drill bit is just the tool to get it" (Pride, Elliot, Rundle-Thiele, Waller, Paladino and Ferrell, 2007).

Based on this Marketing Principle we can point out that Samsung's core product with the Galaxy SII is Fast Communication.

Reason why people have mobile phones, to communicate instantly rather than waiting a few days for a letter to arrive or travelling themselves to speak with someone. Nevertheless, in today's Modern Marketing Organization the Core product is never the real focus for Marketers when creating a campaign. Marketers when promoting a product tend to highlight the Actual Product and the Augmented Product as their Unique Points of Sale. In this case Actual Product can be defined as a Mobile phone, with the latest Android Operating system, 4.3 inches of AMOLED screen, 8MP Camera and 32 GB hard drive. Samsung's logo is on the

back of the phone, on the packaging and even on the charging cables. It looks modern and stylish with a black colour and a dark leather case.

The Augmented Product starts when you turn on your phone, first thing it will ask you is: to become a Samsung Member, in order to upgrade your phone free of charge and get free prizes if you wish to join on their website. Then if you already don't have a Google Account it will ask you to create one, giving you instant access to more than 500 000 applications on the Google Market. This latest part of the product, the Augmented Product, goes deep into the consumers mind, as consumers measures the "coolness" of a smartphone by the quality and the amount of applications that a phone has. Therefore this Post-Purchase Evaluation will be based more on the last 2 layers of the product, Actual and Augmented, which are the focus of marketers.

The Classification of Galaxy SII is a Shopping Product by definition as consumers buying cycle for a smartphone goes through a selection process, comparison with competitors; evaluate price, quality and style in order to make a purchase decision.

However it might be considered a Speciality Product by some tech-savvy clients, or a luxury item in a few emerging countries where prices are much higher than regular phones, but that is in a few cases only the majority of buyers will see as a Shopping Product.

CONCLUSION

Samsung and Apple adopted various communication tools and techniques to reach the customers in their market effectively. Integrated marketing strategies take advantage of a combination of communication tools and media to spread a message. By combining various tools, marketers are able to ensure that their audience is reached and can leverage the various tools in ways that are most effective. Integrated marketing draws upon the power of traditional advertising and public relations efforts, as well as the use of new, online communication tools that include social media. Thus it is must for the organisation to have an effective communication strategy to create a better impact in the minds of the target audience.

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