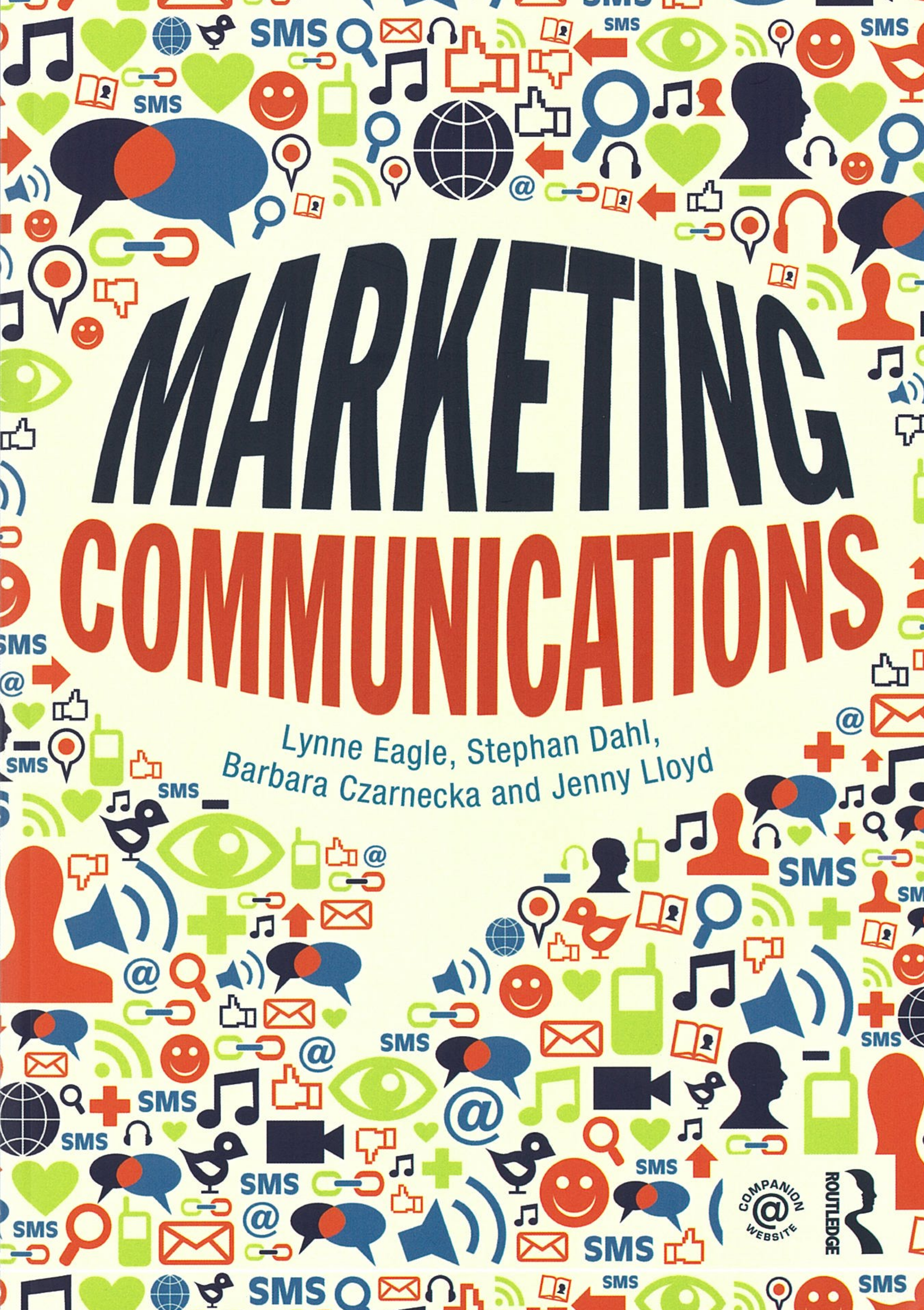

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Lynne Eagle, Stephan Dahl,
Barbara Czarnecka and Jenny Lloyd

COMPANION WEBSITE

ROUTLEDGE

Marketing Communications

With the proliferation of digital and social media, there has never been a more dynamic time to engage with marketing communications – and never has the integration of marketing communications (marcoms) principles into a strategic marketing plan been more challenging. Even the best product in the world won't sell without the right reach to your potential customers and the right message to engage them.

This textbook applies a uniquely practical approach to the topic so that, whilst a structured overview of planning, development, implementation and evaluation of marketing communications is in place, the detailed cases made available by the Institute for Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) show how actual challenges faced by professionals in the field were addressed. This book will help you to develop the skills you need to turn theory into the right integrated communication plan, in order to succeed in an increasingly competitive environment.

Aided by a veritable wealth of pedagogical features, *Marketing Communications* will be essential reading for both students and professionals in marketing, communications and public relations. This textbook also benefits from a companion website which includes: a comprehensive instructor's guide, PowerPoint slides, testbank questions and answer checklists.

Lynne Eagle holds a PhD from the University of Auckland in her native New Zealand. She is currently Professor of Marketing and Associate Dean – Research for the Faculty at James Cook University in Australia.

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Jenny Lloyd holds a PhD from the University of the West of England, UK where she currently holds the post of Associate Head of the Department for Undergraduate Marketing.

Marketing Communications contributes to a wider understanding of how digital and social media is now a crucial basis for any successful marketing plan. Students and industry professionals can benefit from the practical approach of the book, and its supporting real-life industry case studies, while also facing the ethical issues that surround social media.

Jo Bates, Lecturer, University College Birmingham, UK

This text is a truly holistic approach to marketing communications learning, with the provision of unique opportunities to implement the presented concepts and frameworks in practice.

Natalia Yannopoulou, Senior Lecturer, Newcastle University Business School, UK

Marketing Communications

Lynne Eagle, Stephan Dahl, Barbara Czarnecka and Jenny Lloyd

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2015
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Eagle, Lynne.
Marketing communications/Lynne Eagle, Stephan Dahl,
Barbara Czarnecka, Jenny Lloyd. – First Edition.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Communication in marketing. 2. Advertising. I. Title.
HF5415.123.E24 2014
658.8'02–dc23 2014002230

ISBN: 978-0-415-50770-7 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-0-415-50771-4 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-77886-0 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman and Helvetica
by Florence Production Ltd, Stoodleigh, Devon, UK

MIX
Paper from
responsible sources
FSC
www.fsc.org
FSC® C013604

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

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Acknowledgements

While the authors assume the full responsibility for the content of this book, important parts of it could not have been written without the help and support of the following people and organizations.

For providing the case studies for this textbook, we would like to thank:

- World Advertising Research Centre (WARC)
- Institute of Practitioners of Advertising (IPA)
- Design Business Association (DBA)
- Account Planning Group (APG)
- Meg Carter (www.megcarter.com).

We would also like to thank Michal Czarnecki for his volunteering work with requesting permissions to reproduce the images and figures for this book.

1 Marketing communications as a strategic marketing tool

CHAPTER CONTENTS

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Environmental turbulence: the effect of new media forms 3
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LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

- Provide an overview of the role of marketing communications within the overall marketing mix
- Provide a brief overview of the development of, and controversy surrounding, the concept of integrated marketing communications (IMC)
- Review the major barriers to successful integration of marketing communications
- Discuss the marketing communications challenges presented by services and social marketing compared to tangible products
- Debate the impact of new and emerging media forms on traditional marketing communications activity

Introduction

Marketing communications does not occur in isolation, but rather is part of a wider overall **marketing mix.**[1] It has traditionally been portrayed under the term **promotion** as a part of the '4Ps of marketing management', as shown in Figure 1.1.

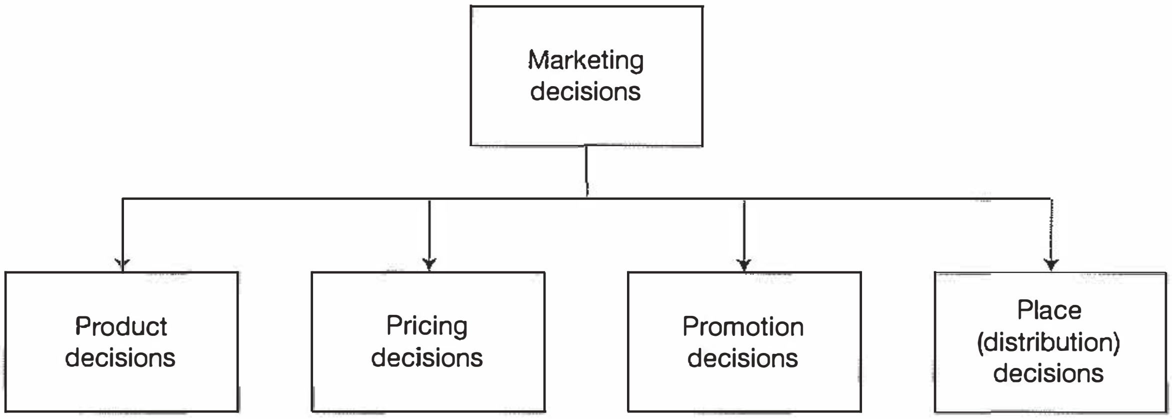
Marketing decisions
Product decisions
Pricing decisions
Promotion decisions
Place (distribution) decisions

Figure 1.1 Traditional marketing management decisions[2]

Promotion in its turn is usually shown as in Figure 1.2, with separate functions that reflect the reality of distinct, independent organizations performing specialist functions without significant coordination of their activity. Thus it is possible for **advertising** to attempt to project an exclusive, **quality-based image** while at the same time **price-based sales promotions** could be used; the two communication activities projecting very different images to consumers and often occurring without linkages to other marketing activity, including packaging.[3] This separation of function and activity ignores the fact that consumers integrate information, including **marketing communications** and information from other sources including the media and via retail outlets where a manufacturer may have limited control over marketing communications. This will occur whether the marketing or advertising organization makes a conscious effort to integrate **messages** from sources under their direct control or not, with the result that messages can be put together in unexpected ways – which may even be harmful to the brand.[4]

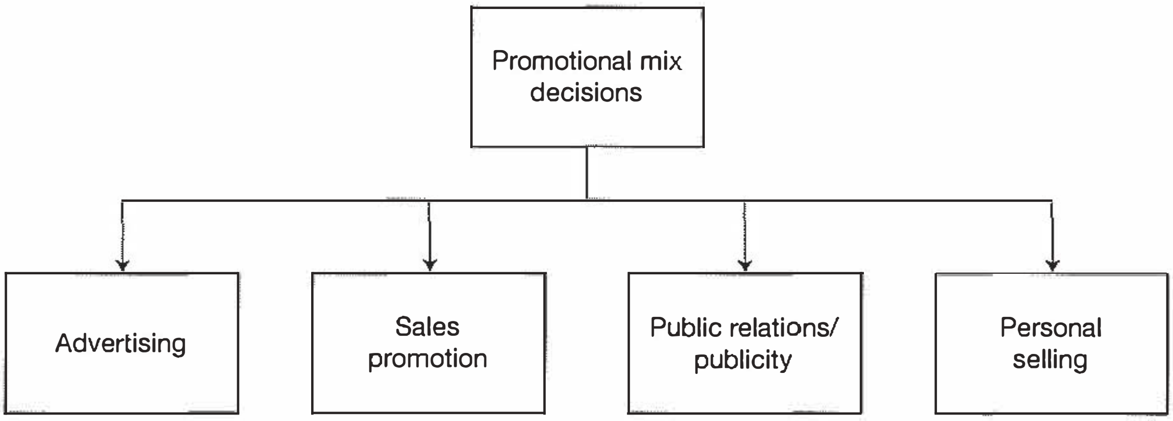
Promotional mix decisions
Advertising
Sales promotion
Public relations/ publicity
Personal selling

Figure 1.2 Traditional promotional mix decisions[2]

To be fully effective, **integration** starts at the initial strategic planning level and is far more than just ensuring a common look or feel to messages sent via different **channels**. Figures 1.1 and 1.2, however, are overly simplistic in that they do not reflect the complexities of the processes involved. Even within the promotional mix decision process, Figure 1.2 implies that each of the four subsets are separate activities and does not capture instances where there may be considerable overlap between the functions, such as when advertising may be the vehicle by which sales promotion activity is communicated, or the use of the **Internet** for far more than just advertising messages.

THINK BOX

Marketing communications and product types

Using Figures 1.1. and 1.2, map out the marketing communications activity of:

1. a 'fast moving consumer good' (FMCG) **product** such as bread;
2. a soft drink such as Coca-Cola or Pepsi against bottled water and energy drinks;
3. a durable product such as a refrigerator;
4. a service provider such as an airline or an organization offering packaged holidays.

In what ways are their marketing communications strategies likely to be similar and in what ways are they likely to be different – and why?

Environmental turbulence: the effect of new media forms

Most importantly, the functions shown in Figure 1.2 do not reflect the reality of communication vehicles today, particularly interactive media forms. Among these are **hybrid media** forms such as **advergames** that reflect a blurring between entertainment and persuasion in which branded products or services are frequently an integral component of a (usually) Internet-based game.[5] The aim is to offer entertainment, interaction and emotional connection between the game and the brand featured within it in a way that traditional **mass media** cannot do.[6] Figure 1.2 also does not capture the way **social media** function (see Chapter 9 for a detailed discussion). In addition, the effects and effectiveness of the growing use of **product placements** in television programmes and in movies (see Chapter 10 for a discussion of hybrid media forms) have yet to be determined across product and service categories.

The **promotional mix** shown in Figure 1.2 needs to be re-conceptualized to show the changing nature of the marketing communications vehicles that may be considered. Direct and database communication methods need to be considered as a distinct form of communication, as do Internet-based and **interactive media** forms. New communication forms will continue to evolve and any diagrammatic presentation of the promotional mix options is likely to be subject to regular revision. However, with this must come a greater understanding of what the message receiver does with the various messages received; this area remains significantly under researched.[7]

Successful **campaigns** are not always dependent on large advertising **budgets** and the use of mass media such as television, as the following example shows. This case won the best small budget category and an overall silver award at the 2008 IPA Effectiveness Awards.

MINI CASE: RADLEY

> *Source*: Institute of Practitioners in Advertising: Best Small Budget & Silver, IPA Effectiveness Awards 2008. Case material provided by the World Advertising Research Centre (WARC) www.warc.com.

Radley is a relatively small brand of handbags with a small advertising budget in a fragmented and fickle fashion market. It has a small base of loyal purchasers but faced major challenges in increasing **market share**, particularly given the **perceptions** of their bags being functional and good quality but not stylish.

Share of voice was unlikely to be more than 3 per cent, so a truly original idea was needed to help the brand stand out from its much larger competitors such as Dolce & Gabbana and Gucci. The focus of the creative activity from 2007 onwards was chosen as:

"Truly Radley Deeply"

Distinctive advertisements such as those shown on page 5 ran in colour newspaper supplements, weekly women's magazines such as *Grazia* and fashion magazines such as *Vogue*.

As new designs were introduced, they were supported by distinctive advertisements, all linked by the common "Truly Radley Deeply" line. Two examples are shown on page 6.

A major initiative was the development of a feature window display in branches of the John Lewis department store chain, the first time such a campaign had been approved by the chain.

Sales increased three times faster than the overall handbag market and the value of the company itself tripled.

The total advertising budget was £800,000, with the advertising directly credited with increasing the value of the company by at least £3.75 million. The campaign paid for itself 5.7 times, one of the highest returns on marketing investment achieved.

Questions to consider

Try to evaluate this case using the material covered in this chapter, particularly Figures 1.1 and 1.2. Also think about how Radley might change their marketing mix in the future, including how they might use electronic media.

Specifically focus on the following questions:

1. Discuss the arguments for and against continuing to run this style of advertising.
2. Assume you are one of Radley's major competitors:
   a. how would you counter their marketing communications?
   b. what are the arguments for and against undertaking a similar store promotion with another **retailer** (e.g. Harvey Nichols, Debenhams, House of Fraser)?
3. If you were the marketing manager of one of these department stores, what would you recommend be done regarding promoting Radley and/or its competitors in store?

Justify each of your answers.

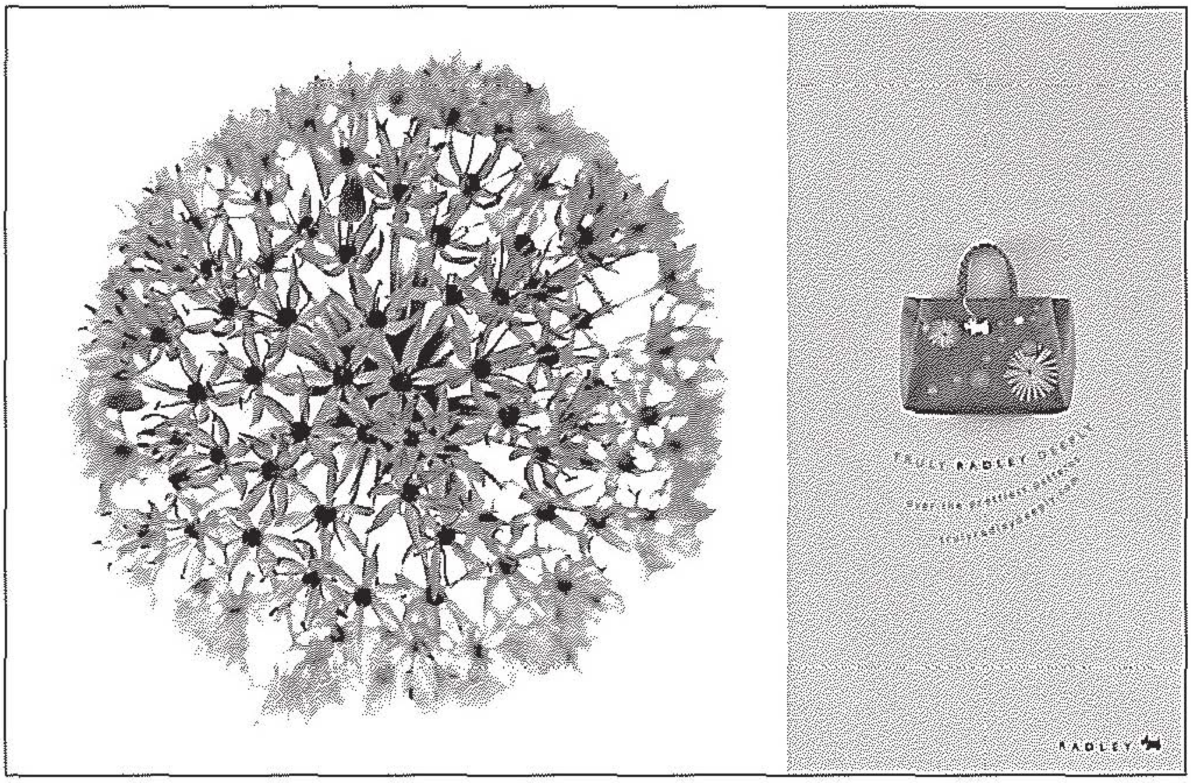
TRULY RADLEY DEEPLY
over the prettiest patterns
trulyradleydeeply.com
RADLEY

Photo 1.1a

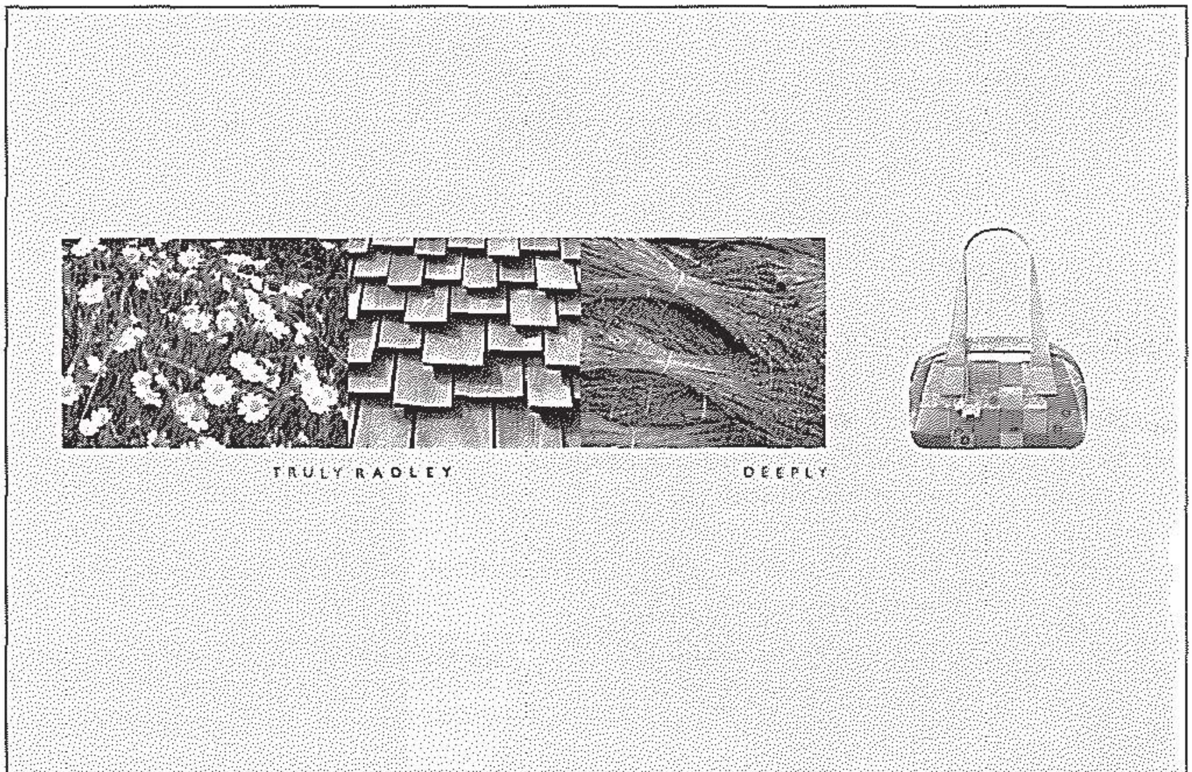
TRULY RADLEY
DEEPLY
radley.co.uk

Photo 1.1b

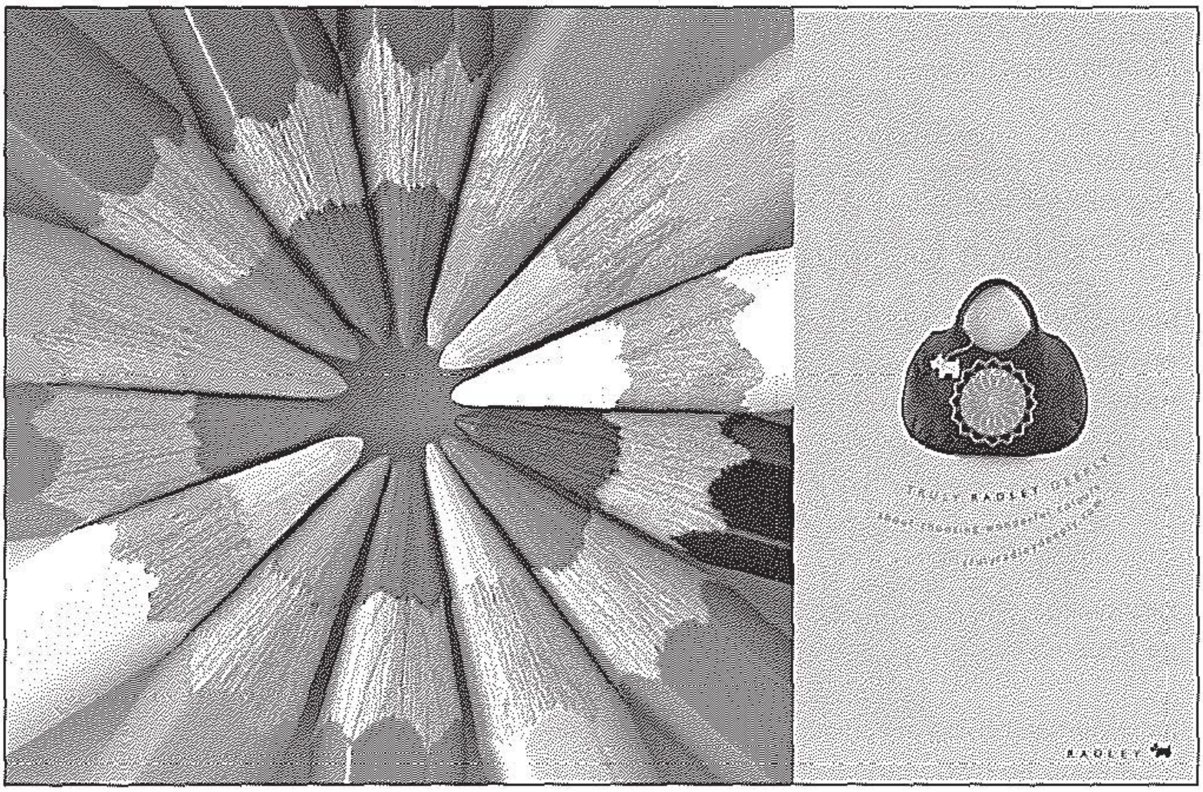
TRULY RADLEY DEEPLY
about choosing wonderful colours
trulyradleydeeply.com
RADLEY

Photo 1.2a

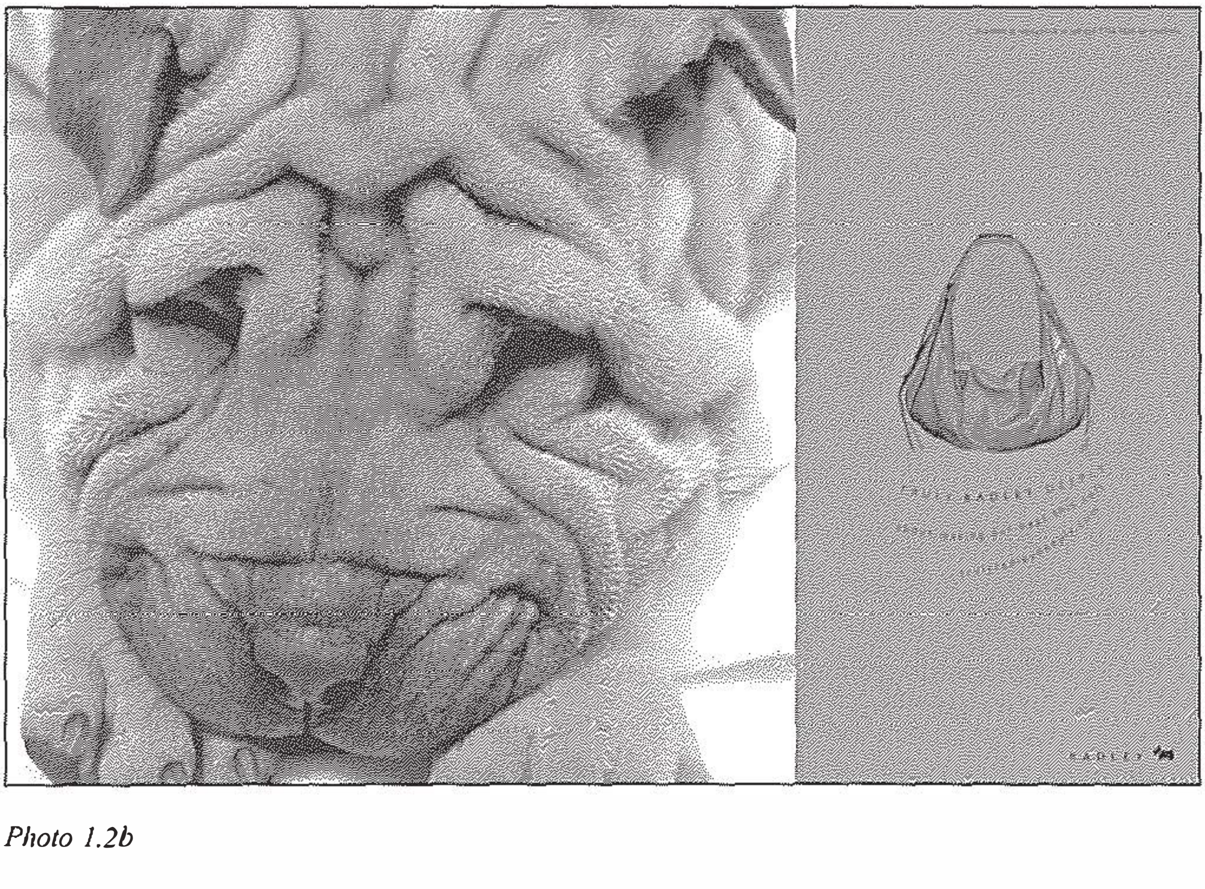
TRULY RADLEY
RADLEY

Photo 1.2b

Changes to marketing communications over time

As the academic literature shows, much of the emphasis up to the early 1980s was on how individual communications forms worked, with emphasis on mass media communication, particularly television advertising, which was seen as being somewhat passively received by consumers. A re-examination of the role and effectiveness of advertising as a marketing communications tool began in the late 1980s, and accelerated through the early 1990s. Long standing assumptions about 'what advertising does' were questioned and rephrased as what people did with the advertising to which they chose to pay attention.[8] Mass media began to **fragment**, with increasing numbers of television channels, radio stations and print media competing for a share of advertising alongside less prominent media such as cinema and a range of **outdoor** advertising options.

This was followed by the emergence, and growth, of new media forms, particularly those using **electronic technology** such as the Internet.[9] These new media changed consumers' access to, and control over, marketing communications in major markets. At the same time, there was an increasing awareness that most markets were not homogeneous, but rather made up of distinct segments with diverse interests, **attitudes** and media usage habits.[10]

Concerns were raised regarding the **impact** of clutter within mass media, i.e., many advertisements competing for a share of attention[11] and attempts to stand out from competitors and rise above the clutter which, to some observers, seemed to lead to less emphasis on product or service attributes, and more on providing entertainment, at the risk of being different rather than relevant to the consumer.[12] Unsurprisingly, a greater emphasis on determining the **return on investment** from marketing activity also occurred, leading to a focus on the measurement of the impact of marketing communications activity which continues in the current era.[13]

These pressures lead to considerable interest in the way in which marketing communications activity occurred and the way in which synergies could maximise their individual and combined efforts under the banner of **integrated marketing communications (IMC)**. This inevitably led to considerable debate as to whether IMC was merely a management fad,[14] whether it offered anything new or merely reflected best practice and calls for a precise definition as to what IMC actually was.[15]

One of the most widespread definitions is:

> a concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communications disciplines, e.g. general advertising, direct response, sales promotion and public relations – and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency and maximum communication impact.
>
> (American Association of Advertising Agencies
> quoted in Duncan and Everett)[15] (p. 31)

It is also suggested that a key addition to the above definition is **synergy**,

> meaning the individual efforts are mutually reinforcing with the resulting effect being greater than if each functional area had selected its own targets, chosen its own message strategy, and set its own media schedule.[15]
>
> (p. 32)

Brands are rarely created by marketing communications alone, however it is recognized that marketing communications, which primarily centred around conventional advertising in the past but now functions through an increasingly diverse range of channel options, is important in positioning the brand in consumers' minds.[16]

The question implied but rarely explicitly stated in the advertising/marketing communications literature is as follows. Marketing communications can be considered to have a positive effect on brand equity/evaluation *if* the brand's value and changes in that value over time are measurable and *if* marketing communications can be shown to be a major contributor to that change.

While a significant role for integrated communication in influencing brand equity is claimed by several authors, usually on the logical grounds of ensuring consistency of messages to customers and synergy of efforts,[17] actual evidence of a cause–effect relationship appears to be somewhat elusive. The influence of IMC on brands and branding is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

THINK BOX

Sales promotion

Assume you are the marketing manager for an electronics company. Your marketing communications has historically been centred on high quality and technical **innovation.** Your sales are now sluggish and your advertising **agency** has recommended a major price discount-based sales promotion.

Discuss the positives and negatives of this move, the likely impact on sales and on the way consumers perceive your brand.

What action might your competitors take if you maintain your current marketing communications approach OR if you change to a price discount-based **strategy?** Use Figures 1.1 and 1.2 to map out what information you would need to determine which option is likely to be the better choice. Justify your decisions.

While it would appear self-evident that no-one would argue against integrating communication,[18] there is clear evidence not only that integration was rarely operationalized in the past,[19] but there is evidence that some sectors of the communications industry, most notably public relations, actively opposed integration on several grounds, including that some public relations activity focussed on corporate rather than specific brand issues.[20] The move by traditional advertising agencies to embrace IMC principles appears to have originated from the recognition that communication agencies were losing budget share as funds were increasingly moved from traditional marketing communication activities to a range of newer forms and competition increased among potential providers of expertise for these new activities.[21] Expenditure allocations across media have changed significantly over time as shown in Table 1.1.

MINI CASE: ADVERTISING RIP?

In 1994, the 'death of advertising' was predicted,[22] with claims that direct marketing, sales promotions and new media would draw advertising budgets away from **traditional media.** As Table 1.1 shows, there has been a reallocation of budgets across media, but traditional media remain strong communications vehicles.

Table 1.1 United Kingdom: advertising expenditure currency: £, million

Year	*Total*	*News-papers*	*Magazines*	*Tele-vision*	*Radio*	*Cinema*	*Outdoor*	*Internet*
1999	11302	4474	1922	3672	464	123	595	51
2000	12495	5014	2020	3950	534	128	697	153
2001	11896	4896	1980	3525	487	164	678	166
2002	11941	4808	1873	3690	492	180	702	197
2003	12374	4864	1832	3722	526	180	786	465
2004	13372	5107	1901	3955	545	192	848	825
2005	13866	4906	1892	4097	521	188	897	1366
2006	14045	4695	1828	3905	480	188	933	2016
2007	14947	4680	1758	4016	497	207	976	2813
2008	14420	4118	1584	3819	454	205	939	3300
Change: 08–07	**–3.5%**	**–12.0%**	**–9.9%**	**–4.9%**	**–8.5%**	**–0.9%**	**–3.8%**	**17.3%**

Source: The Advertising Association, World Advertising Research Centre (WARC). Reproduced with permission.

1. Why might the 1994 prediction have been overly pessimistic about traditional media?
2. Why have some traditional media continued to increase advertising revenue while others have declined?
3. What do you believe the likely pattern of advertising spend might be in the next 5 years and the next 10 years?
4. Do you believe that advertising as we currently know it will eventually die?

Justify your responses to each question.

Barriers to successful integration of marketing communications elements

It was evident from the early 1990s that a focus on integrating communication activity would change the roles and accountability relationships between marketers and their specialist communication suppliers,[10] with a number of barriers to effective and efficient integration evident. These included organizational structures, the need for functional specialists to broaden their appreciation of other communication roles and of emerging technologies, turf battles, and issues surrounding who should ultimately coordinate or control activity.[23]

Several studies have focussed on attempting to prove how a specific discipline, such as public relations, exhibit marketing or **trade shows** added value,[24,25,26] or on attempting to challenge perceptions regarding the strategic versus tactical use of activities such as sales promotions.[27] A number of more macro-focussed studies have shown managerial support for the principles of IMC.[28] There is also evidence that there is a correlation between levels of integration and sales, market share and profitability, however the direction of the relationship and the factors underpinning it remain unclear.[29]

There is a need to revisit traditional ways of measuring return on investment (ROI) from individual IMC components and their combined influence; this has been seen as a major problem since IMC began to receive major focus from both practitioners and academics.[30] This is not necessarily due to unwillingness to engage in research, but rather the complexities of determining the effects of any individual marketing communications device, such as advertising or public relations, and of then identifying the synergistic impact of all communication forms used.

These effects are likely to vary according to the specific market conditions, making generalized principles difficult. In addition, external and largely uncontrollable factors such as relevant news media coverage may also impact on communication effectiveness.[31] Further, there may be time lags between exposure to marketing communications and purchase initiation.[32] Current techniques for evaluating ROI are discussed in more detail in Chapter 16.

Linking communication data to actual purchases, or other measurable behavioural outcomes such as reduced dangerous alcohol consumption or reductions in road traffic accidents as would be expected from **social marketing** activity (see p. 12 for a discussion of the latter) is also problematic. Historically, primarily transactional data (e.g. sales) has been collected, emphasizing a product rather than consumer focus; while there is a growing awareness of the importance of developing and maintaining long-term customer relationships, the ways in which that relationship might be measured requires further investigation.[33]

This is particularly acute in relation to new media forms and to the overall issue of the contribution of marketing communications to brand equity[34] and to performance-based remuneration, which has become a common component of **client**–communication agency supplier relationships.[35]

An added problem is that of determining exactly what contribution was made by each marketing communications element. For example, a purchase decision may be made in store, or the purchaser may take leaflets away to read before returning to the store, visiting other stores – or making the final purchase **online**. What was the individual or collective contribution of each piece of marketing communications? How to measure return on investment from marketing communications investments remains one of the major challenges facing marketers.

THINK BOX

Measuring the impact of marketing communications

A person may see an advertisement for a package holiday on television, hear part of the sound track on the radio, seek more information on the Internet, but then go to a conventional retail outlet such as a travel agency (where they will see point-of-sale material such as posters, DVDs and brochures) to examine and compare different options. For products such as electronic goods, a similar process may be followed, with the added option of being able to possibly trial the product in store and compare it to competing brands on offer.

How do you then measure the impact each of these communication elements had on final purchase decisions?

In relation to the previous Think Box, it is common practice to use the same or similar images across media so that the main message is consistent across different communication elements ('imagery transfer').

Retailer influence, product, services, business-to-business and social marketing

The IMC literature has tended to focus on products, particularly those in the **fast moving consumer goods (FMCG)** sector, yet there are a number of significant sectors that warrant more detailed examination as their characteristics are substantially different from FMCG goods and thus the decision processes (and thus the communication needs) of the **target markets** may also be different.

Retailer influence

The growth in retailer-owned **house brands** that compete alongside **manufacturer brands** also warrants consideration as these brands may hold up to 20 per cent of overall retail sales and are often in the top three brands of 70 per cent of supermarket product categories.[36] There is no data on how market share or house **brand strength** varies across product categories. The strength of house brands varies across countries; 2002 data suggests that house brands accounted for almost 20 per cent of retail grocery revenue in the UK, 27 per cent in Belgium, 24 per cent in Germany and between 16 and 21 per cent in the US retail grocery market,[37] with steady growth reported.[38] Within the UK's three largest supermarkets, it is suggested that retailer house brands may account for 50–60 per cent of sales.[39] In terms of specific product categories, data from the mid-1990s indicates that house brands accounted for 61 per cent of supermarket wine sales, 51 per cent of dry pasta, 47 per cent of jam and 41 per cent of potato chips.[40] More recent data from the UK indicates that nearly 40 per cent of total retail sales in 2012 were represented by sales of house brands.[41]

House brands tend to receive little promotional support and what is provided is generally price-based; the impact of this on manufacturer-brand promotional activity has not been researched.[42] Indeed, the impact of the retailer environment and promotional activity on manufacturer-originated IMC programmes, irrespective of the presence or otherwise of house brands remains yet another area in need of research investment.

MINI CASE: HOUSE BRANDS

Imagine you are the **Brand Manager** of a large multi-national fast moving consumer goods company. You have been asked to write a report on the potential threat house brands present to your own brands across various countries.

1. What may account for the difference in popularity of house brands across countries? What are the implications for manufacturers whose brands are sold in these countries?
2. What are the pros and cons of your own company producing house brands for a major retailer? This house brand would be priced lower than your brands and sold alongside them.
3. What marketing communications strategy do you recommend if your major competitor produces the retailer's house brand instead of you?

Services

The IMC literature has tended to over-emphasise tangible products rather than **services**, in spite of the fact that service provision now dominates most developed economies[43] and the significant differences between service and products which may make it difficult to project and maintain a consistent image. Services are intangible, less readily standardized than products, perishable (airline seats cannot be stockpiled for future use) and often depend on the customer or end-user as part of the production process (the benefits of belonging to a fitness centre are not dependent just on the provision of facilities, but also on the effort of the client). There is a need for further research into IMC in this area.

Business-to-business

Also under-researched is the role of IMC in the business-to-business sector which tends to rely on more rational/ less emotional buying processes and longer-term relationships between buyer and seller, together with a greater complexity in product or service characteristics and group rather than individual decision making,[44] yet there are few studies comparing the marketing communications tools and processes that may be effective for this sector.

Social marketing

A key area in which there needs to be a review of the role of marketing communications is social marketing, a **concept** that has existed since the early 1970s[45] but which has received renewed focus internationally in the last few years.[46,47] Social marketing is not a specific **theory** per se, but rather a process, that draws on the theories and concepts of commercial marketing (such as market segmentation and exchange theory) to develop interventions aimed at improving health and well-being of entire populations[48] (such as encouraging physical activity) or specific segments within populations (such as anti-smoking interventions). While health-related issues are a major focus, social marketing also encompasses activity such as environmental protection, disaster preparedness, sustainable transport, recycling and energy conservation.

Thus, there is no specific 'sales' point as for tangible goods and services. Additionally, the factors such as attitudes and beliefs underlying **behaviours** are complex and may be resistant to change, particularly in relation to addictive behaviours such as smoking. There are few studies[49] that have specifically examined the use of IMC principles within social marketing and this remains yet another area in need of research investment. Interestingly, one study into advertising for environmental issues suggests that there is a lack of integration in this area.[50]

The current focus on health-related issues is due to recognition of three major factors. Firstly, the high cost of preventable illnesses to the economy (estimated at 19 per cent of GDP (gross domestic product) for England)[51] approximately 1 million deaths per annum in the USA are claimed to be caused by **lifestyle** and **environmental factors**.[52] Secondly, many governments have specifically advocated the adoption of the principles underpinning social marketing in order to more effectively promote public health issues, acknowledging that existing information-based communication strategies in the expectation of consumers then making informed and rational choices has been ineffective.[53] The third factor is the recognition that there is a limit to the amount of **legislation** that can be introduced to enforce behaviour change.[54]

MINI CASE: CHANGING BEHAVIOUR

There are numerous examples of people being aware of health risks from their behaviours (such as unprotected sex, excessive sunbed use and unwise alcohol consumption). Attempts to address these problems have often resulted in increased awareness levels – but not in behaviour change.

1. Explain why this problem might occur.
2. Select a health-based marketing communications campaign and critique it.
3. Outline what research might be needed to understand the problem and to identify strategies that might be successful in changing behaviour.

ETHICAL ISSUE TO CONSIDER

Considerable effort and expenditure is needed to treat health problems brought about by unwise lifestyle and behaviour choices made by individuals. For example, an unhealthy diet, lack of physical exercise, smoking or excess alcohol consumption have all been shown to link to potentially serious health problems.

1. What role do marketers play in reinforcing consumption decisions that might not be in the best interest of people's long-term health?
2. What actions should marketers take to minimise any harm that may result from their activity?
3. What role is there for legislation versus personal choice?
4. How would you respond to the suggestion that people whose health is affected by poor consumption or lifestyle decisions should not expect others to pay for their treatment?
5. How would you respond to the suggestion that there should be increased taxes on products such as alcohol or foods deemed to be of low nutritional value in order to treat those whose health has been affected, even if it was their personal choice that led to their subsequent health problems?

A number of these issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Summary

As we have shown, IMC offers considerable promise, but there are a number of areas in which there is inadequate research to fully understand the concepts and processes involved in a rapidly changing environment. Further, the communication theories that are commonly used to underpin the development of marketing communications campaigns have been developed using traditional mass media as part of a four-sector promotion mix as shown in Figure 1.2. Their relevance to the complex range of new media forms is open to question and there is a clear need to revisit many long-standing assumptions and question their application to these new media forms. This is the subject of Chapter 2.

Review questions

1. Define what is meant by 'integrated marketing communications' (IMC).
2. What are the advantages of employing an integrated approach to a marketing campaign?
3. Is integrated marketing communications as simple as ensuring that there is a common 'look' to all forms of communication? Justify your response.
4. What are the potential barriers faced by marketers when seeking to implement an integrated approach to their marketing communications campaigns?
5. Could it ever be argued that all aspects of marketing communications should not be integrated?
6. Assume you are the Marketing Director for a FMCG company with multiple divisions and products that carry several different brand names. How can you ensure that all marketing communications activity is coordinated?
7. Cornelissen and Locke, suggested in 2000[14] that integrated marketing communications is merely a management fad. Critically evaluate this view.
8. Critique the suggestion that the Internet is just another media tool.
9. Many social marketing texts suggest that planning social marketing communications campaigns should use the 4Ps in the same way as planning product marketing communications campaigns. Critique this suggestion, using examples to illustrate your answer.
10. 'Brands are rarely created by marketing communications alone.' Discuss this statement with special reference to the role that IMC might play in the communication of brand values.

Recommended reading

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CASE STUDY 1.1

Graduates Yorkshire recruitment

Campaign designed by Honey Creative

Source: Design Business Association, www.dba.org.uk. The case won a bronze medal in the 2009 Design Effectiveness Awards. Case material provided by the World Advertising Research Centre (WARC) www.warc.com.

As the following case shows, successful marketing communications does not depend on large budgets. This case illustrates how an integrated marketing communications approach led to very successful outcomes for a regional recruitment organization.

Introduction

Graduates Yorkshire (GY) is the leading recruitment brand primarily aimed at graduate employers in the Yorkshire and Humber region. GY's parent company is Yorkshire Universities, a membership organization owned by all ten Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in the Yorkshire region. Working in partnership with the university careers services, GY operates an online recruitment service matching primarily but not exclusively graduates from Yorkshire universities with Yorkshire employers. Previously known as Graduate Link, it's a web-driven service managed out of Sheffield, Leeds and York.

The brief incorporated five strands:

- Create a brand that is capable of smoothly transitioning the service from a free one to a service that levies a fee on what it does. In other words, the resulting brand had to reflect a professionalism and gravitas that would set it apart from the competition and that establishes the business as the authority on graduate recruitment in the region.
- Provide strategic and commercial consultancy to help facilitate the brand's migration from a university 'internal service' to a stand-alone social enterprise model.
- Formulate a communications strategy that is flexible enough to enable GY to engage with a wide range of stakeholders: for example, business leaders to graduates; universities to local enterprises.
- Validate or generate a new name (formerly known as 'Graduate Link').
- Apply new branding across all touch points including: website, marketing communications (including new digital platform), advertising, exhibitions and recruitment tools.

Overview of market

Each year in Yorkshire, around 40,000 new undergraduates leave the region's HEIs rising to around 55,000 when postgraduate qualifications are included. Many of these graduates leave the area to return home or to work but, three years after graduation, research shows around half of all graduates from Yorkshire universities are settled in the region. The area also sees an influx of graduates from other regions each year as many return home after studying away.

In Yorkshire, the majority of graduate employers are SMEs and Public Sector Organizations. Nationally, prior to the recession, the graduate recruitment market has seen a steady year-on-year growth; however, various agencies are reporting between a 5 per cent and a 12 per cent decline in the availability of graduate jobs since the beginning of 2009.

In terms of competitors, GY is unique as there are no major commercial graduate-specific services operating solely to serve the Yorkshire region. The national competitors to GY – such as Prospects – offer very few vacancies within the region. For local recruiters, the nearest competitors include agencies who cannot match GY on price and the 'MyJobs' group which is a generic job site with regional variations that tends to host a lot of agency vacancies.

Outline of design solutions

All of GY stakeholders had a strong affinity for the existing Graduate Link brand, so any change had to be done well and managed effectively. Therefore Honey used the re-branding process to enable GY to engage key stakeholders in the design process to build ownership and buy-in.

Working closely with the client, Honey helped develop the business and marketing strategy, starting with a robust process for change. With these in place, we were able to create a unique and flexible brand identity that reflects the business and which enables GY to communicate clearly with a broad range of very different audiences from graduates to employers and local development agencies and Government.

Clearly with a name like 'Graduates Yorkshire', the resulting brand identity had to have a regional 'edge' that was achieved by basing the logo on the shape of Yorkshire itself, with dots representing graduates and businesses being drawn together on their respective journeys. For the graduate, that journey begins as a student, moving through graduation through to prospective employee. The service has been designed to follow this journey and offer benefit at each touch point. The role of design was to communicate the brand's offering across this life cycle.

However, at the outset it was clear that the business model could eventually be taken into new regions, both in the UK and overseas, so it was important that the identity was sufficiently flexible to allow for expansion into new areas without compromising on its integrity.

Honey developed the brand's multi-channel marketing campaign that could last for several years with a 'Put Yourself in the Picture' theme, this enables graduates to picture themselves in their dream job and employers to picture the ideal candidate for their graduate position.

The identity has now been rolled out across all marketing communications, including corporate literature, website, exhibition materials, direct mail and advertising.

In respect of the website, as this is central to all GY activities, it was particularly important to get this right both visually and technically. In this respect, Honey developed the site to engage with the different users from the start, the home page directs employers and graduates to different areas of the site with tailored information for each. All this whilst maintaining the consistent brand message.

This exercise culminated in a launch event that saw every member of careers staff gathered at an event in Leeds. This event was a watershed moment, and culminated in the 'reveal' of the new brand on a large exhibition stand. Delegates were given bags full of GY branded gifts that continue to be prominent in offices around the region today. Honey also ran a workshop at this event explaining design rationale, and further helping to root the new brand in the consciousness of this key group of stakeholders.

Increase in sales

The period immediately following the re-brand, April to September 2008, saw impressive trading results, in terms of client wins, incoming revenue and growth in the customer base:

- From a standing start, GY enjoyed total growth in sales from zero to **£1,036,000** in the two years since its launch and a **210 per cent** growth in sales from year one to year two.

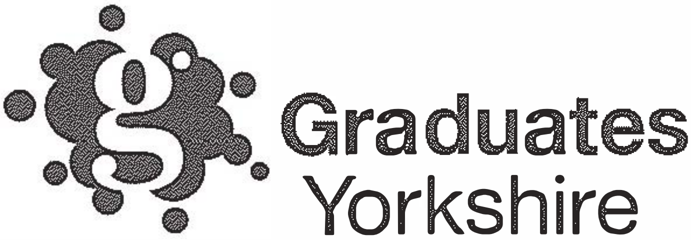
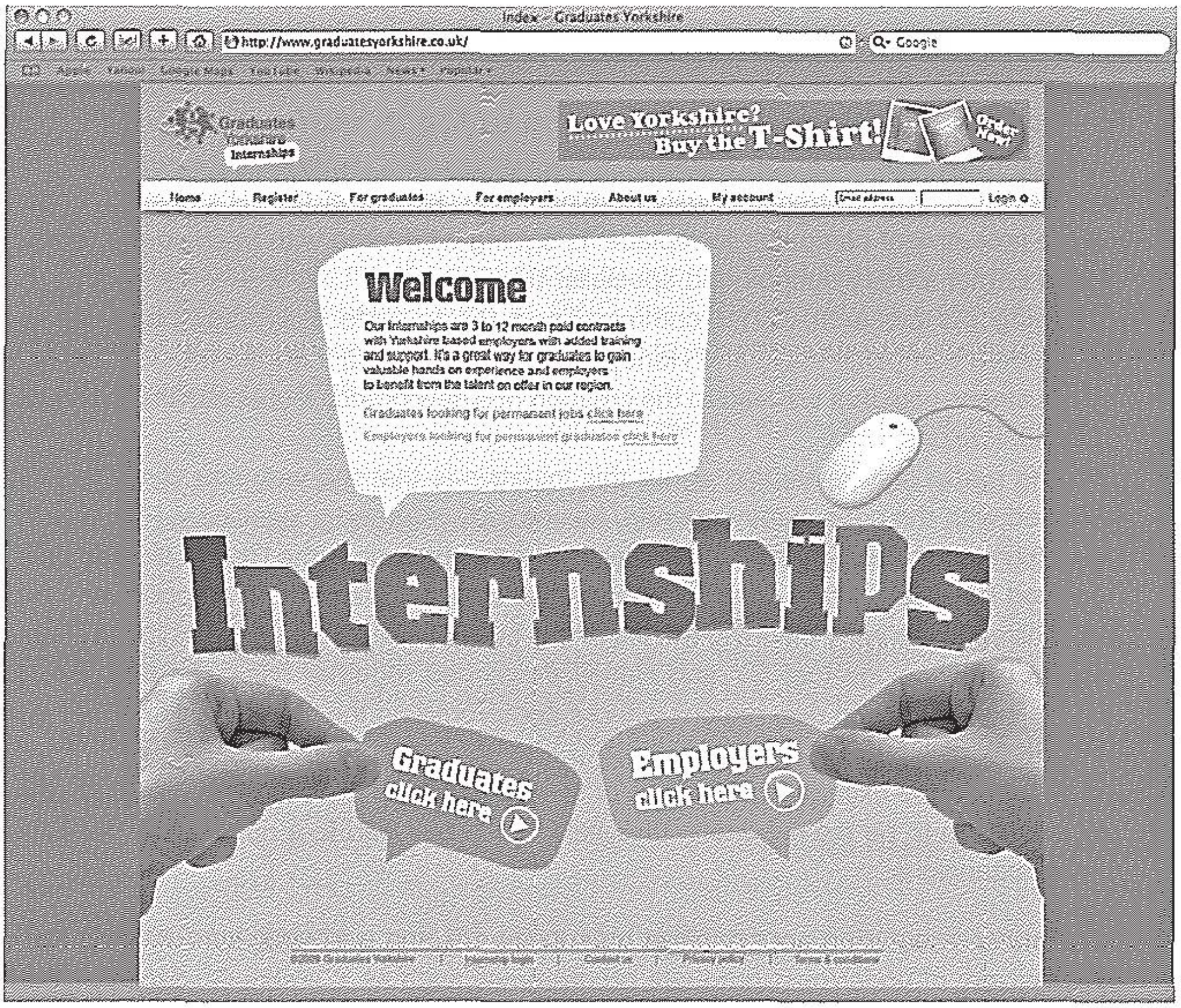

Graduates
Yorkshire

Photo 1.3a


Index – Graduates Yorkshire
http://www.graduatesyorkshire.co.uk/
Google
Graduates Yorkshire Internships
Love Yorkshire? Buy the T-Shirt!
Order Now!
Home
Register
For graduates
For employers
About us
My account
Login
Internships
Graduates click here
Employers click here

Welcome

Our internships are 3 to 12 month paid contracts with Yorkshire based employers with added training and support. It's a great way for graduates to gain valuable hands on experience and employers to benefit from the talent on offer in our region.

Graduates looking for permanent jobs click here

Employers looking for permanent graduates click here

Photo 1.3b

- Forecasted sales for year three (2009/10) is up **44 per cent**.
- A revenue was achieved against the soft launch in October 2007 when the new brand identity was applied to the existing web technology and original copy.
- In April 2008, an **88 per cent** uplift in sales was achieved in the six months following the full re-branding of the website, working with a new technology and enhanced web 'look and feel' design by Honey.
- A revenue has been delivered through the creation and delivery of internship programmes designed for third parties such as local governmental bodies and businesses

– the reason GY was awarded the contract was because they, clients such as local governments, were so impressed with the quality of the overall branding and the design of marketing and web materials.

- A further income has been generated this year through the provision of consultancy services in the year 2008/09. The reason behind the decision to diversify in this way was the prediction that the recruitment market would be adversely affected by the downturn – so additional revenue streams would need to be found – and the realization that GY's intelligence on the youth market could be translated into a valuable resource for local employers. Building on the now trusted GY brand, Honey created a set of sales tools that clearly articulated GY's insights into the youth market. Their first target was the Government Office for Yorkshire & The Humber (GOYH) who immediately commissioned GY to undertake a research programme to establish what perceptions graduates and the younger employment market had in respect of working for local governmental offices. Local students were recruited to undertake the research, the results of which were tremendously illuminating in respect of GOYH's need to undertake a recruitment campaign to replace its ageing workforce with fresh young recruits with a contemporary outlook and specialist training.
- Following the research GOYH commissioned GY to write a strategy paper on the recruitment campaign itself, and Honey is now working with them on the development of a business plan that will lead to the creation of a new brand, e-channel and marketing communications.
- What is particularly rewarding about this initiative is that the very first client that GY targeted with the consultancy offering, has already returned a significant ROI.
- Meanwhile, plans to franchise the business to other regions in the UK are already being received positively with a contract about to be signed. This particular opportunity was recognized in the early planning stages of the business which means that the branding and web technology that GY and Honey developed together has been designed to enable expansion into new regions without compromising the brand 'look and feel' and integrity.
- As a result of the exceptional success of the relationship between Honey and GY, they are now seen to be the experts in their field which has lead to a number of interesting brand extensions:

    - further franchising opportunities both in the UK and overseas;
    - delivery of under/post-graduate programmes such as 'Careers Guidance', 'Graduate Enterprise' (providing advice on setting up a business) and, most recently, an internship proposition that will support graduates and businesses. This latest initiative is expected to drive a revenue over the next three years.

This was all achieved thanks to the smart and powerful design and multi channel branding created by Honey.

Martin Edmondson, CEO,
Graduates Yorkshire

In summary, GY has gone from a standing start with an original database of 5,000 graduates that took eight years to build, to a database of 23,500, demonstrating a 370 per cent increase. The website is now getting 400,000 hits per month and GY has converted four new clients.

On a lighter note, £480 has been made from sales of GY branded 'Made in Yorkshire' t-shirts that have become a bit of a legend in the region! (40 × £12 t-shirts sold and a new order of 100 t-shirts has been placed.)

This period saw a number of unprecedented achievements for GY. Historically the client base had been SMEs and some public sector, with minimal blue chip business. In this period GY won large contracts with HBOS, Asda and signed a deal with NHS Yorkshire and Humber to advertise all their graduate level roles (up to 2,000 jobs). This was down to the improved brand kudos and credibility. These relationships have continued to develop and GY is now seeing repeat business from them.

Improvements in staff morale and changes in staff behaviour productivity

As the business goes from strength to strength, employees are becoming increasingly aware of the power of their brand and are looking for every opportunity to bring it to the forefront of everyone's mind:

> The new brand gives me the confidence to approach HR Directors from some of the region's biggest companies such as PWC, the UK's largest graduate employer, and succeed. We are no longer just another place to advertise roles but the place graduate employers in Yorkshire need to be seen.
>
> John Cusworth, Business Development Manager

> I have always been really proud of the work we do. Now I'm really proud of the brand we've created too, and love to show it off whenever possible!
>
> Natalie Emmanual, Client Services and Operations Manager

> Graduates Yorkshire is a brand with a real personality. I spend a lot of my time on the road taking our 6ft long stand (or the 'beast', as it's affectionately known) to universities and events across Yorkshire. I get to see first-hand how people react to us, how we've gone from being a well kept secret to a company identifiable by our green trade mark, and how our new branding seems to warm people to us and encourage them to approach us more easily.
>
> Imogen Hesp, Marketing Officer

Changes in perception

When GY moved from a free service to a business that levied a fee on what it did, it managed to retain most of its original clients. This was because although GY was now being perceived as a commercial entity, it was still regarded as part of the 'university family'. It is fair to say that Honey's design played a large part in this by delivering a brand identity that was immediately engaging and approachable.

> Graduates Yorkshire is a fantastic, reliable and efficient way for local employers to meet their recruitment needs in the most effective manner. I would have no hesitation recommending this site to other employers, keep up the good work.
>
> Faresh Misuri, Graduate Employer, Blueberry, Leeds

GY is now perceived as the market leader – and leading voice – in regional graduate recruitment by other regions and other Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and there has been recent interest from two other UK regions for the provision of similar services – which will probably be delivered in a franchise form managed by GY.

Post re-brand, GY's standing with Yorkshire Forward – the local RDA – is such that GY tendered and won an innovative, high profile Internship Programme in 2009.

Finally, the re-brand has given GY and its stakeholders the confidence to launch a focussed NPD programme, with a view to launching GY Consulting and a Graduate Placement scheme in 2009/10 all designed by Honey.

Research resources

The project team used:

- published data
- quantitative and qualitative research
- focus groups.

Other influencing factors

The service existed in exactly the same format as it is now before the re-branding programme – the only real change being that the services provided are no longer free.

Immediately following the re-branding, the spend on advertising was reduced by 35 per cent so the successes have been almost entirely as a result of the re-branding and the optimization of the web technology developed in conjunction with Honey.

CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

Drawing on the material in the chapter, discuss the following questions:

1. Critique this case. What were the challenges faced by the campaign and how well do you believe that campaign addressed them?
2. Use Figures 1.1. and 1.2 to review the activity. Are there elements of the marketing communications mix you believe should have been used differently? What changes to the combination of communications forms do you recommend be considered for the future? Justify your answers.
3. Specifically focus on the brand identity created – how would you recommend that this be maintained or reinforced in the future? Justify your response.
4. What factors may impact on the future success of the GY organization? What **contingency** plans should be put in place and why?
5. How would you expect their competitors to respond? How should GY prepare to respond to competitor activity?
6. Could the same principles be used in other regions within the UK, either by GY or other organizations? Justify your response and develop guidelines for organizations in other regions that might consider this approach.

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