

SHUNU SEN'S VIEWS ON INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Integrated Marketing is the combination of marketing disciplines, functions and processes into a one-point agenda of fulfilling consumer needs. Integrated Marketing Communications is the concept of marketing communications planning that takes into account the strategic rules of a variety of communication disciplines – advertising, direct response, sales response and public relations. It combines all these to form a single message for the consumer.

...one message for one brand across the 5 Ps...

In an Integrated Marketing Strategy, the integration of the 5 Ps of marketing happens in a way that it integrates the marketing mix elements to promote and protect the company/brand image. Often, one misses putting together the various elements in one strategy or one message. As a result, we have number of brands that do not exist any more, or are not as successful as they were.

Let us consider the different elements of the marketing mix. A television commercial or a press advertisement may reach out to a much larger audience than targeted – an audience that may not entirely be relevant to the brand. It is therefore important to identify the consumers and the non-consumers.

...with different promotions for non-users and consumers...

There are alternatives to reach very specific group of audiences. For example a new product demonstration could be specifically targeted at the loyal users. Similarly specific promotions like sampling can be targeted at light users or potential users. In all of this public relations can play a key role in developing relationships with the brand public. It is obviously critical to define the brand public precisely.

...inviting feedback on all occasions...

Feedback is critical to continue and maintain relationships with consumers. One of the great successes in the United States today is feedback through internet. Other forms of feedback are coupons, guarantee cards and also consumers who we directly interface with. Unfortunately, very few such forms of feedback are documented and made use of. The key to greater success in business and is going to be relationships.

Some examples will help illustrate the point:

The Body Shop, has built a strong brand by positioning itself as the '*protector of the environment.*' This has been

achieved primarily through communication with its brand public and excluded conventional theme advertising. It established a new style amongst women and particularly amongst those who were conscious of their own rights. Anita Rodderick, owner of Body Shop became a personality. Extensive distribution network was backed by significant press and TV coverage.

Campaigns can be successful if one has a good understanding of the audience and has a well-thought through programme. It may not necessarily entail theme advertising.

Another example is of '**Cabbage Patch**' dolls - building a new brand with a limited promotion budget (approximately less than US\$0.5 million). In the competitive toy market, fashion kept changing as kids did not want the same toys over Christmas. So manufacturers were forced to introduce different toys and it was very, very difficult to break into this kind of market

...sponsorship and publicity may even preclude the need for theme advertising...

About six years ago Cabbage Patch dolls made a tremendous name for itself in the US toy market. It was a market where the children want high-tech toys and no one wanted to go back to a doll! Cabbage Patch dolls designed a well-thought out promotional campaign, which included sponsoring Cabbage Patch dolls among school children and children at hospitals. They managed to secure publicity in the media and were successful in creating media hype. As a result everyone wanted a Cabbage Patch doll - even Madonna had a Cabbage Patch doll!! Sales exceeded all expectations and it was named the top toy of the year.

Now let us look at an Indian example of Motorola Paging. Motorola Pagers are the market leaders for pagers. Motorola was not only selling pagers -- it was selling a brand of pagers and a brand of paging. Telecom market was a market where selling was extremely difficult. They wanted to launch new concept called paging and they had a series of product launches lined up. They also wanted to dispel a whole lot of myths about paging.

We must keep in mind that India is the only country in the world where paging and cellular phones came in together. The gap between the two was 20 years in the US and about 10 years in the rest of the world. Nowhere in the world did the two come together like it did in India and this led to problems.

The campaign commenced by announcing the launch of this new concept at a press conference. They secured substantial media coverage saying that paging services

were now available in India. It was followed by roadshows all over the country explaining the benefits of paging. The focus was face-to-face communication. The work was done not clearly knowing who the target audience was because of the confusion of paging and cellulars being launched simultaneously. Subsequently they also introduced the concept of the Hindi pager, which is a Motorola innovation, followed by South Indian language pagers, with a lot of media support. Further roadshows in the cities of Bangalore, Chennai, Trivandarum, Hyderabad followed. For the first time, two years after the launch of the product, they did some advertising in the conventional market.

...continuously re-profile your consumers...

An important part of their communication was myth busting. Research showed that consumer perceptions on paging had many myths. There were people who saw it as a beeper, you could use pagers only to call back-specified numbers, knowledge of English was essential, usage only for corporates, etc. The use of pagers among children was almost unknown. Motorola in fact had a project to assess whether they could give pagers to children in Delhi – it was too late – they were already using cellulars.

Series of attempts were made by Motorola to try and talk to the consumer through advertising, mass media which tried to re-profile the kind of buyers. They tried to increase the usage, addressed the issue of languages, the size of the message on the pager, a contest which told people where the paging could be used. The communication was not limited to the brand public, it also continued with people within the organisation. There was formal communications and sales workshops were conducted with sales people.

It was a fairly comprehensive communication programme and generally speaking, Motorola continues to be a market leader despite competition.

Let us now consider another example of communication. Indian Airlines has begun to realise that consumer preference has built up rapidly for private carriers. Thus Indian Airlines launched a number of programmes to try and maintain consumer loyalty, create consumer pull, tackle consumer grievances and create a two-way channel for communication.

...customer loyalty programme provides a good database

The first and the simplest is the *Flying Returns* programme which they share with Air India and is a loyalty programme. For people who are not members of the Frequent Flyer programme, they have developed another programme called *Travel Wise* which is a sales promotion programme which encourages repeat flying. This aims at getting people to fly certain sectors repeatedly on Indian Airlines. Then

there is *Access*, a programme to expedite consumer grievance process. Finally there is *Dialogue*, an ambitious programme to initiate a two-way communication process and build a long-term relationship.

What then are the challenges of the 21st century? There are pressures of increased competition and that makes it more important for us to see where the markets are, how it is segmented and how best you can get to them effectively. Certain things are happening:

- first is **Micro Markets**. Markets are breaking down into smaller and smaller segments.
- **Mini-media**. We don't have to talk about just Zee and STAR and Doordarshan any more. There are a large number of regional, vernacular and specialist media.
- **Shifting Demands**. At the other end of the scale is the consumers who wants different things at different points of time and that leads to several other challenges.

In this scenario, IMC could ensure that the money you spend to develop consumer relationship is focussed, prioritised and effective. There are no easy answers to this and it is not an easy challenge. Consumer relationships in more and more businesses will have to be developed with both the brand and the company. Hence one has to focus on where one wants to go, prioritise and make sure communication is effective.

QUESTION & ANSWER

Comment

Castrol is doing a lot of segmentation and re-designing markets & is actually focussing on segments and developing products which are segmenting the market further and further. For e.g. we have developed a lot of products which are specialists in a sense. Till about 2 years back, despite the fact that India has the second largest scooter market in the world, we didn't have specialist scooter oil at all. It was general oil used for scooters, autorickshaws & motorcycles and by actually developing specialist oil, we've created a segment and we have an advantage over other oil companies. We have realised that by segmenting this market, we have gained market shares that are really impressive. We traditionally had low market shares in this segment and it is only after we launched this oil in 1996 called **Castrol Super TT** developed in sachet packs did we make gains.

How do we seek feedback from consumers for a ...

It is not easy to track and communicate with consumers of consumables such as soaps, drinks etc. The only thing you can do is really try and understand...possibly look at write-

category like spirits where soliciting a customer is disallowed legally? How can we get consumer feedback ?

ins for recipe books and cocktails and build in perhaps some sort of incentives, nothing to do with buying another bottle but something to do with writing in for the book itself can win you a book of Bacardi recipes or go to the West Indies. But in doing that you should get a large number of people who are buying your brand to write back to you. And then you have to be really imaginative to see how you can keep the communication going. It's not easy at all but remember that every single satisfied customer of your product would influence 20 people more.

Nothing is better than a sampling exercise. It is not merely important to communicate but also evaluate what is happening. Once you have names, addresses and telephone numbers, it is easy to communicate specially in a high interest product. Don't get worried about the fact that initially the going may be tough but the communication will flow. You spent lakhs and crores of money on advertising without clearly determining what actual effect it may have. Direct communication will worry the hell out of you because you can quantify your response. It is measurable and you can actually make point of contact with the concerned audience.

How do you create a demand when market research clearly reflects a mindset that is closed to a product?

Attempting to create a market and an audience for a product points towards segmentalisation of the market... a complete programme needs to be adopted and past experience has shown that these programmes are generally successful.

Comment

Digital Medium is the medium of the future. Not only does it get you to reach a much larger and wider audience, it reaches to a specifically targetted individual who chooses to access your website. In a business like pharmaceuticals, companies cannot solicit consumers as it is the doctor we are reaching out to. However, at the same time we know that if consumers were aware they could push their physicians on the kind of medication they would like to have. It is not so much about disseminating information and receiving feedback but building in cookies to excite the browser.

What are your views on 'Corporate Advertising'? And can you enunciate the difficulties that companies run into while

Not very polite. The objective of undertaking a corporate advertising campaign must be very clear. Most corporations when they advertise don't really know why they are doing it or if they do they are not very focussed on it.

An important reason for corporate advertising has always been a forthcoming announcement on the company in the financial markets. Corporate advertising may not be the

*into while
evaluating
corporate
advertising?*

best method and it is also very expensive. Most corporate advertisements for some reason are poor, poorly executed, poorly conceived and they do not meet the objective of corporate advertising. Often the objective is poorly stated. Having said all that there are some great examples of corporate advertising but to me corporate advertisement must add to the bottom line, either increase shareholder value or increase profitability of the business. If it has not increased your market value it has not done much good.

*Does corporate
reputation have
impacts on
brands or vice
versa?*

I really do not think that the reputation of HLL has any effect on brands. There is no connection between the two. But when you have a brand, which is also a company, say IBM, the two are interlinked, but the real consumer is not really concerned. A financial analyst may be. A brand's success very often may have nothing to do with corporate reputation. By and large, there is no linkage at all.

(Excerpted from the presentation made by Shunu Sen, Quadra Advisory, at PR Pundit's workshop – The Contemporary Portfolio, held in Mumbai on March 17, 1999)