

How to Bolster Advertising Success through Integrated Marketing Communication

by Carol Dunitz, Ph.D.

There was a time when mass marketing your skills and expertise was enough to secure a steady stream of work. Those days are over. The shotgun approach simply doesn't deliver the results you need. You must take careful aim at your intended target. That's where integrated marketing communications takes its bow.

Follow the Yellow Brick Road. More than 75% of companies with three hundred plus employees have embraced the doctrine of Integrated Marketing Communications and small to medium size companies are rapidly following suit. To make Integrated Marketing Communications part of your corporate identity requires a strong commitment from senior management coupled with a basic vision. With commitment and vision, you can put market resources in place.

Your Customer Database. Start developing a successful program by analyzing your database. See just what different customers require and respond to. Do extensive profiling and segmentation of your customers. Understand them. Know their buying habits. Then focus on specific customers and prospects who use your services. This customer-driven approach is cost effective and delivers better results. You discover who your prime prospects are in order to tailor communications to their special needs.

Integrate marketing and sales. Use your new insights to shape marketing, sales, and communication strategies. Encourage those in sales to attend strategy meetings. They have their eyes and ears in the marketplace. Invite everyone in your company to make contributions and become involved.

Differentiate yourself from the competition. If there are no real differences, create perceived differences. Develop a customer contact strategy. Build long-term relationships with customers you already have. It is five to eight times more expensive to obtain a new client than maintain an existing one.

Pick a Judge. Someone must take responsibility for judging and evaluating what's going on. Don't do things simply because they've always been done that way. Integrated Marketing Communications is about twenty-first century selling and marketing. It offers the promise of increasing success.

Get the Word Out. What tactics should you implement? There are a multitude of vehicles you can use. Advertising is the most popular vehicle. However, it may not be so effective for service-oriented businesses. Consider trade shows, direct mail, and public relations. Disseminate your

message through sales promotions, telemarketing and websites. You may find multimedia presentations and special events add strength to your communication, too.

Participate in Social Media. Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter, Ning and countless other online resources offer unbridled potentials for reaching prospects you are looking. Use the research you have done through Integrated Marketing Communication to identify who you want target via social media.

Doing all these things will be in vain if you do not track the responses you get. The responses are there to evaluate. Analyze the feedback. Use it continually to shape your database. It will help you on the next go 'round.

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