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REVIEW ARTICLE

A CRITIQUE OF THE INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE
ADVERTISING OF COMMERCIAL BANKS SERVICES IN NIGERIA

*Ehikwe Andrew Egede

Department of Marketing, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Enugu, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Integrated Marketing Communications is the conglomeration of the various promotional tools put into a central message presentation to a target market population, with the objective of achieving consistent and reliable effects on consumers' choice of products. The programmes of IMC is a marketing communications plan that incorporates advertising, personal selling, sales promotions, public relations, publicity, direct marketing and word of mouth under an agency that is responsible for coordinating promotional activities, including the internet facilities. The difficulties associated with integrated marketing communications are on the implementations of the programme, between the use of an internal coordinating unit within an organisation especially in advertising and an external agency. Thus, the challenges of coordinating the different professional services in the promotion mix for coherence and consistency in messages presentations is paramount. The strategic impact of IMC is in the complementary and interdependency of the different communications and promotion tools required to stimulate and motivate the consumers. However the consumers often see and interpret the various messages from the perspectives of the problems to be solved, the needs for the products, and the perception of the situation. The use of integrated marketing communications is necessary in the different circumstances on the prevailing marketing requirements in the sale of particular products and the needs of a particular target market.

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INTRODUCTION

Integrated marketing communications is a new innovation in marketing communications that attempt to coordinate the different promotion tools under a central message about a product, and directed at a particular target market. The use of advertising and other promotions have been suggested to reflect the advertising as it was practiced alongside other promotion tools such as personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations, publicity and the internet. However, the new thinking is the coordination of these forms of promotion tools as a central platform for marketing communications and presented as a single message to the target audience, and commonly referred to as Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Berkowitz *et al.* (2000), Eztel *et al.* (2001), Nwosu *et al.* (1999), Nwosu *et al.* (2006), Belch *et al.* (2001), Kotler *et al.* (1999), Ehikwe (2005). The new challenges in marketing communications has been brought about by the sophistication of consumer tastes, the difficulties in stimulating consumer purchases, the increase in poverty levels of consumers, the multiplications and explosion in new products and the new interactive communications of the Internet have added to the problems of communications in marketing. Duncan (1994:26) argues on the need for IMC audit to articulate better position on the new marketing

communications as the concept of designing marketing communication programme, that coordinate all promotion activities including advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations and direct marketing, to provide consistent messages across all audiences. Campbell (1992:12) suggest that the fundamental changes in economic realities, new technology, more competition have posed serious challenges to advertising agencies that needs to employ consumer insight through identifying some critical and important facts about people especially consumers. In this way, advertisers will need to be more creative by watching, observing, and listening to people carefully, deeply and with empathy to learn what they think and how they feel about product brands, and by so doing, thinking how to combine these observations to discover the best way to connect your brand with your customer. Okigbo (1995:217) argues that the traditional functions of advertising notably to inform, educate, persuade and ultimately move to action consistent with the promotion objective have not changed. What has changed to warrant (or justify) the use of the qualifier "New" is the sophistication of the operations that now involve the admixture of various facets, especially psychology, marketing, public relations, strategic planning, or vision and the "Fourth Dimensions" the human factor also referred to with sixth (6th) sense. The strategies for actualising the objectives of integrated marketing communication (IMC) cannot be clearly stated as divergent views and opinions abound on how best to

*Corresponding author: Ehikwe Andrew Egede, Department of Marketing, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Enugu, Nigeria.

implement the programmes of IMC. The importance of having a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of the variety of marketing communications disciplines is paramount for the combination of these disciplines to provide clarity, coherence, and consistency, Schuttz (1993:17) and the American Association of Advertising Agency (4As). Belch *et al.* (2001:11) further added that Firms should develop total marketing communications strategy that recognises how all of a firm's marketing activities, not just promotions, communicate with its customers.

The concept of Integrated Marketing Communications has developed into the integration of conducting marketing activities as a unified system of operations that presents the product or service as synonymous with the customers or alternate consumers. The business transactions have to incorporate and integrate the understanding and reinforcing not just beliefs, habits, perceptions, needs, and wants of groups of buyers and prospects in their behaviours, but also focusing on production related matters such as products, sales, prices, distributions with promotions as the central link to all other marketing programmes in a firm, (Tofler (1970), Naisbitt (1983) Ries *et al.* (1972) and Percy (1997). In an attempt to discuss these details on integrated marketing communications, the presentation of this study has been put into the frame of abstract, introduction, conceptual framework, IMC process and strategy, benefits and limitations of IMC and the impact of IMC on marketing in organizations. The implications on the future of marketing and conclusions brought the discussion to a successful end.

Conceptual framework

The use of Integrated Marketing Communications has become the vogue in some organisations that seek to reach the consumers by relying on advertising as the main pivot for communications and promotions. Advertising is any non personal form of paid message by an identified sponsor Alexander (1965:9). The pertinent facts are that integrated marketing communication revolves around advertising agency as the communication arrow head of communications in organisations, but the wider dimensions of public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing and publicity may be difficult to be coordinated under advertising. However, each promotion element requires a form of advertising to effectively reach the target market. The challenges of informing, educating, persuading, entertaining and convincing consumers are within the domain of advertising and other promotional strategies, Ehikwe (2005). The post purchase information of reducing dissonance is that of advertising and also, the stiff competitive activities of competitors can only be adequately communicated to consumers by advertising. At the decline of products and possibly extinct, advertising is used to woo the consumers for the substitute or replacement product, but in the absence of any product the advertising fades or extinct with the product, yet complimentary messages are required to encourage the consumers for continuous patronages of the firm's other brands in the market place. In specific terms, Kotler *et al.* (1999:780) argue that the shift from mass marketing to targeted marketing (direct marketing) and corresponding use of a richer mixture of marketing communications channels and promotion tools,

poses a problem for marketers. Customers are exposed to greater variety of marketing communications and are likely to have problems with each communication source with possibly a variation of message emphasis, thus, the marketer, firm, organisation and the product brand may be seen in different perspectives with different appeals. The relevance of integrated marketing communications will be brought to bear on the consumers when these varieties of marketing communications are seen as one message, consistent and reliable. An integrated marketing communication is expected to present the firm, product and all related activities of the firm as one single entity. The firm's communications channels are expected to deliver a clear message consistent and compelling about the organisation and its products Schultz *et al.* (1993). However, when a firm or organisation fails to integrate their various communications channels, the result is a disorganised and misplaced communications, because mass advertising may say one thing, price promotions say another different thing, product label will yet say another and the sales literature is something else, with the website saying another thing altogether. The problems of different sources and channels would have negatively affected the different messages that is uncoordinated and become confusing to consumers. An integrated marketing communication is consistent with a coordinated, coherent and single message.

IMC process and Strategy

Integrated marketing communications involves the combination and fusion of various ideas and programmes from different promotions tools of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations and publicity under a central coordination and control with a single message that is consistent and reliable. There are two sharp divisions of communications that involves dealing with customers through mass selling to various publics and groups of prospective buyers by use of advertising, sales promotions, publicity and public relations, whereas personal selling, direct marketing and word of mouth are for customised interaction and interactive relationships between sellers and buyers. Duncan (1994:26) argues that the key to developing integrated marketing communications programmes successfully is to create a process that facilitates their design and use, thus, instituting an IMC audit analyses of the internal communication network of the company or firm, identify the key audiences, evaluate data bases, assesses messages in recent advertisements and their promotions tools. The process of designing IMC programmes is by instituting the planning that will make for easy implementation. Berkowitz *et al.* (2000:504) outline the process as determining the target audience, setting the promotions objectives and budgeting for it. There is the need to select the promotion tool, designing the promotion and schedule of promotions. Audience profiles and characteristics forms the primary process of instituting an IMC programme, and this requires knowing their interests, shopping habits, age, education, income and purchasing power (discretionary income) locations of abode, professions or occupation, family background and status and lifestyles. The communications and sources of information including television favourite programmes, most favourite read newspapers, journals and magazines, and the most and best website visits. The essence is to target the customers through the use of proper promotions

and favourite channels. The promotion objective is important to determine what is to be accomplished and measuring the extent of accomplishment. Thus, the various stages in a consumer's information absorption process have to be determined to create the focus of the objective. Lavidge *et al.* (1961:61) outline this process as awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption, while Strong (1925:9) suggests attention, interest, desire and action. The promotion objective may target any of this or a combination of the stages. An objective for creating awareness means that the focus of communication is for consumers to be aware or their attention drawn to the product. Thereafter, the pressure on the consumer may result to other stages being accomplished. The Budget for the promotions on Integrated marketing communication is yet another important process that could determine the success or failure of IMC programme. This is consequent on having enough money to support IMC or inadequate budget for it, and there is no favourite method as organisations adopt what is suitable to their needs. The task method, percentage of sales, zero budgeting, competition parity or matching the competitor's outlays, are some of the budget methods available at organisations' disposal.

The right promotion has to be selected to complement all other promotion decisions, and this may be based on the analysis of past performances and experiences in the use of promotion tools and the behaviour of the audiences or consumers. There may be use of single promotion tool as advertising or a combination of the various promotion tools or promotion mix. The other important considerations are the type of product or event to be promoted, the available channels and the characteristics of the channel including reach, penetration, spread, time available, viewer-ship, readership, listener-ship, the gross rating point (GRP), the cost per thousand (CPM) and other important factors for considering channels. The need to design the right message for the promotion is imperative in winning the audiences or consumers, and the creative ingenuity of the promotion message will be highly demanded. The most important requirement is the integration of the different designs for the different promotion tools into one central message, or all with same message through different channels and promotion element. In all the processes discussed so far, the most accurate factor is the timing or scheduling of the promotion programme on the right media at the right time. The arrangement and sequence of appearance will be a further demand of the creative department of the organisations be it advertising, public relations, direct marketing or sales promotions. The frequency, repetitiveness and degree of exposure will be necessary in scheduling any promotion programme.

The strategy

The implementation of the plan will have to follow some strategic approaches that are more effective than haphazardly done. The suggestion of Duncan (1994:26) on Integrated Marketing Communications audit that analyses internal communication networks such as knowing the key audiences, evaluation of customer data bases, assessment of recent messages in the advertisements, packaging, video news releases, signage and sales promotion pieces and direct marketing are important. The knowledge of the manager on these areas of IMC elements will enhance better and strategic

implementation of programmes. Schultz (1994:14), Brown (1993:4-5) submit that the combination of some factors are imperative of the success of IMC, such as management of advertising to build awareness, sales promotion could generate inquiry, direct marketing to provide additional information through direct mail to individuals, personal sales calls to complete the transactions and public relations can provide additional incentives to customers through use of gift items, while publicity can generate and create confidence or discourage conspicuous consumption. Strategically, most marketing managers of organisations tend to be inclined to any of the promotion tools as most effective or better than others, but it is paramount that no single promo tool works in all circumstances. As a strategy new techniques and formats create new ways for use of the television, radio, newspapers and other media are now becoming more fragmented to reach selective audiences rather than mass audiences. Generally, consumers are getting more reluctant with the traditional advertising messages and would want new shifts to more receptive and creative messages that can stimulate and motivate their interests.

Berkowitz *et al.* (2001:14) argue that companies now use whatever contact methods offer the best way of delivering the message to their target audiences. The outcome of this approach for multipurpose use of promotion tools has been the reasons that consumers are overwhelmed with communication and information glut, the need to customise information to the taste of consumers, adopting different strategies using common facilities of channel, agency, and media. Other reasons are the recognition of modern consumer power that leaves marketers and organisations at their mercy, the data base marketing with wide information communications technology (ICT) as dominant element in the marketing of any product or service. Belch *et al.* (2001:11) suggest that firms should develop total marketing communications strategy that recognizes how all of a firm's marketing activities, not "just promotions, communicate with its customers. Schultz (1993:17) further argues for broader perspective that consider all sources of brand or company contact that a customer or prospect has with a product or services. Every of an organisation's structures, activities, relationships with publics, status and share of the market, product dispositions in quality, quantity and price are all elements of communications with the customers. There is synergy in the composition and use of integrated marketing communications tools, as they play complementary role to each other. The effect of synergy is most felt at the media level with the use of the same media but different time frames to communicate the message to the consumers. The buyers' decision roles require that messages will be targeted at each stage of the role process and the individuals involved, such as the initiators, the influencers, deciders, purchasers, users and the gate keepers. Percy (1997) suggest that the integrated marketing communication philosophy is to measure and monitor purchase behaviour and then work backwards through the information processing model until other measurable points (attitudes, beliefs, cultural interest) are found and that can influence.

Corollary of the strategies

The consequence of implementing the integrated marketing communications strategies are diverse and interwoven with the

problems of warped and confused messages from different promotions tools released through the same media to the customers, the excess costs of implementation of the programme and coalescing the different promotions tools under a single agency management that may lack the expertise to effectively coordinate programmes. Schult *et al.* (1993) argue that marketers should build comprehensive data base of customers and prospects and think through what different time and place opportunities exist for the company to contact each segment of customers (loyal, switchers, and new prospects etc) what medium of communications mode, what message and tonality, and for what overall marketing objectives. The process is definitely cumbersome and difficult to implement. The need for a single advertising agency to handle and midwife the integrated marketing communications has been severally challenged for lack of skill to prosecute such a cumbersome and wide combinations of all promotions tools. Batra *et al.* (1998:103) argue that many clients have balked from giving their lead advertising agency these multiple responsibilities because of a perception that a single advertising agency might not have the best of skills in all these different areas, so that the client might get better expertise by mixing and matching skills, instead of relying on "one stop" shopping, while the client organisation still have a role to play in integrating the communications. There are suggestions that no single advertising agency can provide the expertise in all communication areas and such other professional might be rated as second-class practitioners. The spirit and zeal of competition inherent in different professional associations and practitioner might be reduced to low level or non-existent and there will be no rivalry to create motivations.

In any organisation the implementation of the strategies may be controversial. In a situation that budgets were proposed by different departments it will be difficult for any of them to concede the implementation to another colleague in another department for the purpose of integrated communications. In some circumstances, the programmes for public relations, personal selling, direct marketing and packaging may not be media related including the word of mouth. There are obvious difficulties for an advertising agency to coordinate such programmes that are not compatible with the media but are strictly below the line communications. In other related issues on implementations of these strategies for integrated marketing communications, the costs cannot be easily quantified because the same labour, budget, media, and message costs will still be carried out for different programmes of public relations, sales promotions, publicity, direct marketing and advertising. However, the messages will remain the same in theme, content, context and meaning, but may be different in structure for implementation. A public relations message that require the use of photograph cannot be substituted, a sales promotion with gift items in a park cannot also be substituted and the compilation of lists cannot also be avoided for a target market, and all these will retain their costs, whether or not there is need for message integration in purpose and meaning. There are reasons to suggest that activities may be duplicated and replicated in all the programmes when public relations, sales promotions, personal selling and direct marketing are carrying the same message, in the same way, using the same methods and appearing simultaneously and undifferentiated.

However, Kotler *et al.* (1999:780) suggests that companies do fail to integrate their various communications channels. The result is a Hodge Podge of communications to consumers. Mass advertising say one thing, price promotions will send different messages, product label yet another, and company sales literature will say same thing else, while the website is yet another. The problem is that these communications often come from different sources. However, the same message may be streamlined or harmonised, but the sources will remain fragmented or separated from one another though, coordinated at a central location that may not alter the implementation according to the features of the promotion tools in which they were originally prepared. There may be monotony of information, since all the various promotion tools are saying the something, in the same message content and through the same media channels. An undifferentiated message by all the promotion tools may cause redundancy and could be boring to the audiences or viewer-ship, listener-ships and readerships. The Internet provides a central source as information media and with the various promotion tools featuring the same message, there are tendencies, for competitors to falsify or forge the message using the same symbols, and this could destroy the entire message with minimum efforts.

Benefits and Barriers

In every system of operation there are pros and cons and integrated marketing communications cannot be an exception. The benefits related to IMC may be seen from message consistency, reliability and the ease of identification and association of the product with these messages, thus reducing the difficulties of consumers in their choice of products. Smith (2000:15) submits that the messages are more credible and reduces the risks in the minds of the buyers, which in turn, shortens the search process and helps to dictate the outcome of brand comparisons. There are reasons to suggest that information by use of IMC can be a reminder and update consumers in their search for products, and when presented in a planned sequence, such could help them through the stages of their buying process, thus, reducing their "misery of choice" generated by a wide range of competitive offerings. Integrated message could save money costs by eliminating duplication of graphics, photography as in advertising, exhibitions and sales promotions. The ease of identification of meanings in the messages could create long-term relationship with customers, as competitors can be known with minimum difficulties. The use of different agencies for promotion tools will be streamlined to a single source, that makes for better coordination, save costs, easy control, and better creativity, tactical and strategic planning. Belch *et al.* (2001:11) argue that consumers perception of a company and or its various brands are a synthesis of the bundle of messages they receive or contacts they have including advertising, pricing, packaging designs, direct marketing efforts, sale promotions, publicity, websites, point of purchase displays, type of the product or service and all other activities of the organisation that are visible to the consumers. Thus, the marketer is able to identify the most appropriate and effective methods of communicating and building relationships with the customers and other stake holders including employees, suppliers, investors, interests, groups and the entire publics. Duncan *et al.* (1998:1-13) suggests that a communication based marketing model

emphasises the importance of managing all corporate or brand communications as they create, maintain, or weaken the customer and stake holder relationships that drive brand value. The interrelatedness of various communications and promotions tools will certainly reinforce each other for effects, control, and better applications of methods. Advertising can complement sales promotions, highlight public reactions activities. Batra *et al.* (1998:72) put it succinctly that the different elements of the communications mix have to be used in a way that the strength of one are used to offset the weakness of another. Kotler *et al.* (1999:781) argue that integrated marketing communications builds brand loyalty and strong brand identity in the market place by tying together and reinforcing all the company's positioning, images and messages across all its marketing communications venues. Ehikwe (2005:13) suggests that the promotions of products require effective communications to be successful, and consumers will naturally react to what they hear, see, feel, touch, and belief before acting upon it. The integrated marketing communications provides these opportunities to consumers through the activities of public relations, sales promotions, personal selling, direct marketing, packaging and shop displays.

Barriers

The conceptualisations and design of integrated marketing communications programmes has been severally contested as difficult to implement, could be a possible wastes of scarce financial resources, duplication of communications efforts and activities, and the development of apathy in marketing communications by different promotions managers including sales promotions, personal selling, direct marketing, advertising and packaging. Managers are reluctant to implement it because of being subordinated to a colleague who may not be good or better in a particular promotion activity, and may simply act as a curtailment of privileges and priorities in the exercise of their managerial roles. Smith (2000:16-17) suggests a resistance to change, special problems of communicating with a wide variety of target audiences, functional silos, stifle creativity, time scale conflicts and lack of management know how as problems of integrated marketing communications. In specific terms, managers frown at their colleagues taking decisions on the budget implementations that they had prepared. The functional silos for example, creates problems of rigidity in structures with managers subjection to subordinates who are not superior in all aspects except by authority of coordination, and no manager wants to lose the power base. Conflicts of confrontation will be rampant and questionable loyalty may be at stake. This may rub off on the consumers, suppliers, stake- holders and publics who may want to take sides in such organisations politics. The isolation or hidden information may become the order of the day, incomplete data, disjointed flow of communication, for example, a public relations manager may be reluctant to report to a marketing manager and where such exists there will be obstructions in the work flow. In practical terms, a public relations manager cannot tolerate ideas from advertising manager, but both could cooperate in areas of creativity for promotions, and in the opposite or alternative results, there will be limitations to creativity and the organisations' promotions suffer. An individual cannot be an island to ones-self and

require support from subordinates and when such is not obtainable the system may collapse. The use of integrated marketing communications may not be necessary at every stage of the product life cycle because at the decline stage or extinct the need for public relations, sales promotions and publicity may not be important, but it is imperative that advertising and personal selling will be necessary and required to wound up the product life cycle. However, public relations may be used to encourage customers for the patronage of substitute or replacement products and at the same time showing appreciation to the customers for their cooperation and patronage while the business lasted.

Eztel *et al.* (2001; 497) suggest that integrated marketing communication to promotions is not universally accepted. The problems may arise from the urge to restructure internal communications to ensure that every one concerned is involved in promotion work, and this may stir conflict among subordinate. The appointment of a single manager for all marketing communications in an organisation may be restricted, and the need for research to gather data on audience may be expensive to create. The serious threat to integrated marketing communications may come from lack of support from top management that may not have the time and the threats to the seizure of their job functions could deny the organisations of a strong leadership for the implementation of an integrated marketing communications programmes.

Impact of IMC on marketing in organizations

The use of integrated marketing communications can be considered as selective in some organisations that embrace it and others that might not have embraced it for lack of direct impact on consumers who see all communications as one and the same thing about products. The messages from public relations, sales promotions, direct marketing and personal selling and advertising are considered as addressing the same issues about products and services. In specific terms, lack of expertise in all spheres of promotions, inadequate budget to implement programmes, and reluctance in management approval of IMC could impact negatively with poor implementations of IMC programmes, thereby confusing the consumers and other stakeholders. A switch to other products with clear promotion messages has been the result in some situations. Berkowitz *et al.* (200; 12-13) suggest that the use of integrated marketing communications could be the easiest ways for a company to maximise the return on its investment in marketing and promotions. Organisations do realise that integrated marketing communications help to avoid duplications, take advantage of synergy among various promotional tools, and develop more efficient and effective marketing communication programmes. The urge for adaptation to changing environment in consumers tastes, demographics, buying and shopping patterns, the use of media among others, necessitate that integrated marketing communications has made serious impact through intensive communications in the use of all promotions tools simultaneously. Batra *et al.* (1998:10) consider multiplicity of markets and media, objectives, as easily leading to fragmentation and dilution of message consistency and impact, unless steps are taken to integrate the various communications efforts. The marketers must spread their marketing communication resources over a much wider area of techniques

and media, and implement the multiple programmes of the various promotion tools through a large number of vendors and agencies. The use of agencies for central control of integrated marketing communications will make for better control. The arguments on how integrated marketing communications can be coordinated or carried out by use of internal organisations resources or outside agency have not been clearly defined, as each has the possibility of making negative or positive impact on product promotion. The use of internal resources could be expensive and lacks good and quality expertise that the organisation can afford but may not be the best, thereby imparting negatively on the programmes as much may not be accomplished by way of good results. An external agency may have the expertise but lack knowledge of the products and the customers of the firm or organisation.

The integrated marketing communications has been used for accomplishing training programmes on different promotion tools especially the interface between advertising and sales promotions, public relations and publicity, direct marketing and internet marketing and the interactive media and the traditional media. In general, a pool of professionals and experts are assembled in an agency responsible for coordinating integrated marketing communications, making it possible for organisations to have a reservoir of professionals that provides special knowledge in different aspects of promotions and marketing communications. The impact of integrated marketing communication can be felt at the top management level in an organisation during the consideration of budgets, annual reports, annual general meetings and conferences when top managers are responsible for the successful arrangements that require the use of various communications tools. The maximum mobilisation of customers need intensive marketing communications involving all promotion tools, especially at each stage of the product life cycle and possibly compel this on the buyers of product or service and into the minds of all buyers and get it accepted rather than resented or rejected.

Implications on the future of marketing

The growth of marketing depends on the patronage of products by the consumers and the consumers on their part can only buy what is known to them and this in turn depends on the management of marketing communication that incorporates all promotions tools and activities. Eztel *et al.* (2001:495) argue that the use of fragmented promotions tools will now be expected to collapse into a single promotion tool with a central message. All packaging, brochures, and trade shows will be standardised to present a unified image. The support for different promotion events including sports will be selective and standardised. Belch *et al.* (2001:11) emphasise on the corporate dimensions of firms that must have marketing communications institutionalised to incorporate the firms business practices and philosophies, mission, hiring practices (employment), philanthropies, corporate culture and ways of responding to inquiries, all have dimensions that communicate with customers and other stake holders for effective relationships. A greater implication is the reinforcement of the other marketing mix variables in the implementation of integrated marketing communication that forms the part of the marketing. The actualisation of effective and efficient

integrated marketing communications must be compensated and complemented with the successful use of the right price, the right product and the right place or distribution (Smith 2000:20). In a further submission advertising may move people to buy products but this could be jeopardised if the products are not in place. The promotion and distribution or place might win people closer to the products but unless the price is right the customer may reject it or rescind action on purchase. In particular the product must match the promise contained in the promotion messages if the customer is to be encouraged for a repeat purchase. Smith (2000:20) submits that a customer only buys a bad product but once, thus, suggesting that organisations or firms may have to make challenging investment decisions in the areas outside the control of the marketing or promotions manager, including product quality, design, development, value, equipment and welfare, that may require the opinion of experts or consultants for actualisation. Integrated marketing communications must keep abreast of these factors to update and incorporate them into the messages.

The battle for the minds of customers aptly describes the ferocious intensity of marketing communications that is focused on the various consumers and the message that has the incisive penetration may win the control and exert a greater influence on the consumers. The implications on this is that promotion managers must brand the product for easy recognition and position it in front of the minds of consumers to compel cognition and action. The use of intensive and extensive integrated marketing communications may be necessary to achieve this, and get the product firmly established in the minds of consumers and control a large or reasonable share of the market and as well as also have a "share of voice" (Smith 2000:19), and for a share of the amount spent on advertising against the total market expenditure on advertising. Inter media relationships is a major challenges in integrated marketing communications with the traditional media comprising of television, radio, newspapers, magazines and journals, the video and cable network services of the broadcast media have been integrated in use to actualise the activities. The Internet is also a medium that requires integration to complement the traditional media. There is advertisement of each of this medium in another or the other medium as advertisements for customers to know about the product and the particular medium. Television, radio and newspaper advertisements are required to direct customers to the websites of firms and organisations websites on the Internet. This is an extension of the synergy in integrated marketing communications. The control of information on the Internet by consumers or customers poses serious challenges to marketers in areas of promotions, with all the different promotions tools of personal selling, sales promotions, direct marketing, public relations and even word of mouth appearing on a website that may not be visited by the desired customers or target customers. The promotions must provide extra incentive to attract visitors to the website, and once on the website there must be need to hold the visitors to read all that are on the site. A site that is not visited will have total loss in the integrated marketing communications that may have all the aspects of communications featured on the same website, and having different websites may create identity problems, confusion in the minds of customers and a potential source for forgery or fake by competitors.

The measurement of the effectiveness of the Internet as a promotion tool is difficult, as visits to a website may not compel action or even recognition of what appeared on the site. Belch (2001:507) outline some factors including 'hits' that may indicate a particular number of requests for a site; 'viewers' as those who view a site (visit and view (sic)), 'clicks' that indicates number of visitors that click through a banner advertising, 'impressions' or 'view pages' as times viewers view a page. In online measuring, there are recall and attention, non-response (exposed to advertising but fail to click on it), survey research, panels and tracking as getting information about various actions and interplays on the Internet. There are also the push and pull technologies reminiscent of that of other promotions, with the pull exerting pressure on supply of products by the consumers and the push is the flow of products through the channels particularly the market intermediaries. This is represented in promotions by push and pull messages. An important development in promotions is the use of grape vine, word of mouth, unsolicited messages that help to spread product messages and other promotion information about a company and its product through the practice of viral marketing (Eztel *et al.* 2001:499). This may not involve the efforts of the firms and most of the smaller firms in an industry without the resources to compete in promotions with the bigger firms enjoy comparative advantage.

Conclusions

Integrated marketing communications has received recognition and wide discussions in marketing literature to suggest that modern promotion may be completely inclined to this model in future promotions. The synergy from the promotions tools makes it more effective as a resilient means of marketing communications that has a central message. Internet is a veritable media for integrated marketing communications with the advantage of demonstrating and having all promotions tools displayed at one website.

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