

Four Steps to a Successful Integrated Marketing Campaign

By Lomit Patel

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The key factor to a success marketing campaign today is integration. Integration of traditional and online marketing as well as various marketing tools in a well executed campaign. Integrated marketing done properly gives your campaign a life of its own.

Integrated marketing is basically the coordination of several marketing tools that in many cases are already in place. They just need to be integrated by pulling in the same direction, saying virtually the same thing, helping to clarify instead of confusing the customer. Everything in Integrated Marketing is designed for leveraging the synergy of the combined efforts of all your marketing vehicles and working toward a common goal!

For example, a direct mail marketing campaign can go just so far. But, if during that campaign, your prospects get a dedicated landing page on the website to go to for more information, a follow call up from the telemarketing team, read articles about you in the media, get invited to a special event you are sponsoring, if they see your company exhibiting at a trade show, if they see your ads in publications, and get a special discount coupon via email - that is when your direct mail campaign becomes a integrated marketing campaign.

Therefore, if your website is saying one thing, and your designer came up with print ads that say something else, and your direct mail is off on a third tangent and your telemarketing is doing its own thing -- that kind of marketing is not integrated and it will not work. The bottom line is that Integrated Marketing is cost-efficient, focused, comprehensive, measurable and ROI oriented.

Here are the 4 key steps to developing an effective integrated marketing plan for getting the biggest bang for your buck.

1. Research

The first step is to do a thorough inspection of your company, your target audience and your marketing environment. It is very important to really understand who your customers are and why they chose your product or service rather than your competitors. It's very important to learn what your customers' value in your product or service and what motivates them to do business with you. This will help you determine what your unique selling propositions are, which you would use to communicate in your integrated marketing message.

You should use a variety of primary and secondary research methods like surveys, focus groups, interviews, observation studies, online research, as well as reports from Forrester and Jupiter. By

getting valuable information on your potential customer's state of mind, lifestyle and media usage, you have the best insight into which combination of tactics and marketing ammunition will bring about the best results.

2. Setting Objectives

You need to set objectives in order to determine what the goals of the integrated marketing campaign are. There are three main objectives in an integrated marketing campaign: create awareness, lead generation, and/or increase sales. Some integrated marketing campaigns use a combination of all of these objectives. It is very important to set quantifiable objectives with a timeline, for example increasing sales by 10% in 3 months for product X.

You should also include your budget under your objectives because your strategy will be influenced by your budget. Also in today's marketing environment the measurement of the Return On Investment (ROI) is a key factor in the success of a marketing campaign. Therefore, the budget will play a key role in determining the ROI of your marketing strategy.

3. Strategy

The integrated marketing strategy has two important components: Marketing Mix Vehicles and Creative Strategy. Some of the popular marketing mix vehicles are internet, word of mouth, personal selling, direct mail, advertising, sales promotion and public relations. The key point to remember is that all methods have their advantages and disadvantages, and therefore the best vehicles to use in a campaign are determined by your research, budget, as well as the pros and cons of the most cost-effective vehicle for reaching your potential customers.

The creative strategy is based on communication your key benefits and/or unique selling proportions. You want to get a consistent and cohesive benefit message delivered throughout all your different integrated marketing mix vehicles to your potential customers. The key is to get the benefits across as quick as possible in your copy. The more your benefits can appeal to the emotional needs of your prospective customers and address what the fact "how your product/service can help them", the better your chances of converting them into a paying prospect.

4. Measurement

In today's marketing environment, marketers need to justify their budgets on different marketing campaigns. Integrated marketing campaigns are no exception. The most important ratio to calculate for your campaign is the Return On Investment (ROI).

The ROI is perhaps the most important ratio in calculating the success of a marketing campaign today. It is the percentage of return on funds invested in the integrated marketing campaign by the company. In short, this ratio tells management whether or not all the effort put into the marketing campaign has been worthwhile. If the ROI percentage were less than the rate of return on investment, then the marketing campaign would be considered a financial failure. The ROI is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Return on Investment} = \text{Net Profit from Marketing Campaign} / \text{Total Marketing Investment}$$

Apart from the ROI, you should also measure your marketing goals set at the start of the campaign to see whether you reached them or not. This is also very important because you will be able to learn valuable lessons from your integrated marketing campaign that can be applied to help your future integrated marketing campaigns be successful.

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