

1. Integrated Marketing Communications

Integrated Marketing Communications is a simple concept. It ensures that all forms of communications and messages are carefully linked together.

At its most basic level, Integrated Marketing Communications, or IMC, as we'll call it, means integrating all the promotional tools, so that they work together in harmony.

Promotion is one of the Ps in the marketing mix. Promotions has its own mix of communications tools.

All of these communications tools work better if they work together in harmony rather than in isolation. Their sum is greater than their parts – providing they speak consistently with one voice all the time, every time.

This is enhanced when integration goes beyond just the basic communications tools. There are other levels of integration such as Horizontal, Vertical, Internal, External and Data integration. Here is how they help to strengthen Integrated Communications.

- Horizontal Integration occurs across the marketing mix and across business functions – for example, production, finance, distribution and communications should work together and be conscious that their decisions and actions send messages to customers.
- While different departments such as sales, direct mail and advertising can help each other through Data Integration. This requires a marketing information system which collects and shares relevant data across different departments.
- Vertical Integration means marketing and communications objectives must support the higher level corporate objectives and corporate missions.
- Meanwhile Internal Integration requires internal marketing – keeping all staff informed and motivated about any new developments from new advertisements, to new corporate identities, new service standards, new strategic partners and so on.
- External Integration, on the other hand, requires external partners such as advertising and PR agencies to work closely together to deliver a single seamless solution – a cohesive message – an integrated message.

Barriers to Integrated Marketing Communications

Despite its many benefits, Integrated Marketing Communications, or IMC, has many barriers.

In addition to the usual resistance to change and the special problems of communicating with a wide variety of target audiences, there are many other obstacles which restrict IMC. These include: Functional Silos; Stifled Creativity; Time Scale Conflicts and a lack of Management know-how.

Take functional silos. Rigid organisational structures are infested with managers who protect both their budgets and their power base.

Sadly, some organisational structures isolate communications, data, and even managers from each other. For example the PR department often doesn't report to marketing. The sales force rarely meet the advertising or sales promotion people and so on. Imagine what can happen when sales reps are not told about a new promotional offer!

And all of this can be aggravated by turf wars or internal power battles where specific managers resist having some of their decisions (and budgets) determined or even influenced by someone from another department.

Here are two difficult questions – What should a truly integrated marketing department look like? And how will it affect creativity?

It shouldn't matter whose creative idea it is, but often, it does. An advertising agency may not be so enthusiastic about developing a creative idea generated by, say, a PR or a direct marketing consultant.

IMC can restrict creativity. No more wild and wacky sales promotions unless they fit into the overall marketing communications strategy. The joy of rampant creativity may be stifled, but the creative challenge may be greater and ultimately more satisfying when operating within a tighter, integrated, creative brief.

Add different time scales into a creative brief and you'll see Time Horizons provide one more barrier to IMC. For example, image advertising, designed to nurture the brand over the longer term, may conflict with shorter term advertising or sales promotions designed to boost quarterly sales. However the two objectives can be accommodated within an overall IMC if carefully planned.

But this kind of planning is not common. A survey in 1995, revealed that most managers lack expertise in IMC. But its not just managers, but also agencies. There is a proliferation of single discipline agencies. There appear to be very few people who have real experience of all the marketing communications disciplines. This lack of know how is then compounded by a lack of commitment.

For now, understanding the barriers is the first step in successfully implementing IMC.

Golden Rules

Despite the many benefits of Integrated Marketing Communications (or IMC); there are also many barriers. Here's how you can ensure you become integrated and stay integrated – 10 Golden Rules of Integration.

- (1) Get Senior Management Support for the initiative by ensuring they understand the benefits of IMC.
- (2) Integrate At Different Levels of management. Put 'integration' on the agenda for various types of management meetings – whether annual reviews or creative sessions. Horizontally – ensure that all managers, not just marketing managers understand the importance of a consistent message – whether on delivery trucks or product quality. Also ensure that Advertising, PR, Sales Promotions staff are integrating their messages. To do this you must have carefully planned internal communications, that is, good internal marketing.
- (3) Ensure the Design Manual or even a Brand Book is used to maintain common visual standards for the use of logos, type faces, colours and so on.

- (4) Focus on a clear marketing communications strategy. Have crystal clear communications objectives; clear positioning statements. Link core values into every communication. Ensure all communications add value to (instead of dilute) the brand or organisation. Exploit areas of sustainable competitive advantage.
- (5) Start with a Zero Budget. Start from scratch. Build a new communications plan. Specify what you need to do in order to achieve your objectives. In reality, the budget you get is often less than you ideally need, so you may have to prioritise communications activities accordingly.
- (6) Think Customers First. Wrap communications around the customer's buying process. Identify the stages they go through before, during and after a purchase. Select communication tools which are right for each stage. Develop a sequence of communications activities which help the customer to move easily through each stage.
- (7) Build Relationships and Brand Values. All communications should help to develop stronger and stronger relationships with customers. Ask how each communication tool helps to do this. Remember: customer retention is as important as customer acquisition.
- (8) Develop a Good Marketing Information System which defines who needs what information when. A customer database for example, can help the telesales, direct marketing and sales force. IMC can help to define, collect and share vital information.
- (9) Share Artwork and Other Media. Consider how, say, advertising imagery can be used in mail shots, exhibition stands, Christmas cards, news releases and web sites.
- (10) Be prepared to change it all. Learn from experience. Constantly search for the optimum communications mix. Test. Test. Test. Improve each year. 'Kaizen'.

Just a few ways to beat the barriers and enjoy the benefits of integrated marketing communications.

Benefits of Integrated Marketing Communications

Although Integrated Marketing Communications requires a lot of effort it delivers many benefits. It can create competitive advantage, boost sales and profits, while saving money, time and stress.

IMC wraps communications around customers and helps them move through the various stages of the buying process. The organisation simultaneously consolidates its image, develops a dialogue and nurtures its relationship with customers.

This 'Relationship Marketing' cements a bond of loyalty with customers which can protect them from the inevitable onslaught of competition. The ability to keep a customer for life is a powerful competitive advantage.

IMC also increases profits through increased effectiveness. At its most basic level, a unified message has more impact than a disjointed myriad of messages. In a busy world, a consistent, consolidated and crystal clear message has a better chance of cutting through the 'noise' of over five hundred commercial messages which bombard customers each and every day.

At another level, initial research suggests that images shared in advertising and direct mail boost both advertising awareness and mail shot responses. So IMC can boost sales by stretching messages

across several communications tools to create more avenues for customers to become aware, aroused, and ultimately, to make a purchase

Carefully linked messages also help buyers by giving timely reminders, updated information and special offers which, when presented in a planned sequence, help them move comfortably through the stages of their buying process... and this reduces their 'misery of choice' in a complex and busy world.

IMC also makes messages more consistent and therefore more credible. This reduces risk in the mind of the buyer which, in turn, shortens the search process and helps to dictate the outcome of brand comparisons.

Un-integrated communications send disjointed messages which dilute the impact of the message. This may also confuse, frustrate and arouse anxiety in customers. On the other hand, integrated communications present a reassuring sense of order.

Consistent images and relevant, useful, messages help nurture long term relationships with customers. Here, customer databases can identify precisely which customers need what information when... and throughout their whole buying life.

3. E-MAIL MARKETING:

What is Email Marketing?

Promoting a business by sending emails and newsletters is what we call email marketing. Today's marketers need to do more with less. They need to connect with their audience in a highly personalized way, while staying on budget. Marketers who are good at email marketing can connect with their customers in a highly targeted way. They will be successful in delivering ROI and revenue back to the business. No marketing category has the longevity of email marketing. While some marketing trends come and go, email remains the most powerful channel available to the modern marketer.

Why Should We Do Email Marketing?

Email is a tool that nearly everyone uses today, and it continues to grow and be more prevalent in the lives of people around the world. There are three times more email accounts than there are Facebook & Twitter accounts combined. Many of the top marketers from some of the most successful companies across the world believe email is the #1 channel for growing your business. As a marketer, you have many channels available to reach your audience, but with limited time and resources, you need to prioritize your efforts. Email Marketing is by far the most effective channel to attract, engage and connect with an audience to drive sales and revenue for your business.

How to Do Email Marketing?

In the subsequent chapters, we will be describing each stage of Email marketing in detail. After completing this tutorial, you will surely be able to start your Email Marketing Campaigns. Get your feet wet by setting up an email campaign. If you have a website, put a sign-up form on it. Collect some Emails through this sign-up form. So at the end, you can send some test emails to them.

Strategies to Grow Email List Multiple CTAs:

It seems like those who build lists design their web, blog post and calls-to-action. You cannot escape their calls to sign up. There might be a sign-up in a popover, a sign-up at the top of a blog post,

another one at the bottom. Basically, the design assumes that people will view the site differently and that in order to maximize the chances that a potential subscriber sees a signup form you'd best put sign up forms everywhere.

Give & Take:

Attaching something valuable to your email signup form is a surefire way to create interest in readers' mind. Basically, give something away for free, for the price of an email address (which we all know is worth way more than free to the site that gets it). For example, you can attach E-books, Cheat sheets, Email series, Video, Private blog content, and Early access to new features.

Handy Opt in Links:

Bear in mind that people can sign up to an email list in places other than an email capture form. You can get the link and share it in a huge number of different places like email signatures, social media messages, and guest blog bios. Depending on your email software, there is likely a landing page devoted to acquiring email signups. Once you have the link, keep it handy. You never know when you might have a chance to use it. How to get that Link? We will be discussing it shortly.

Disclose Your Social Strength:

Would you be more apt to join an email list, if you knew 80,000 other people were already signed up? The concept of social proof says yes, which is why you see many sites advertise the size of their email list on their signup form.

Create Remarkable Email Content Your content needs to be amazing, if you want people to stay subscribed and forward your emails to their friends, family, and colleagues that aren't already on your email list.

It is very important to organize all the email addresses that you have gathered. All you have to do is to combine all the emails you collected in one single mass Email List, so that in the end, you have got all subscribers in one single file. I prefer to use MS-Excel for combining the list. After combining the list, you may need to export it in text or a CSV file as required by your Mailing Client. You can convert an Excel worksheet to a text file by using the Save As command. Click the Microsoft Office Button Click Save As. In the save as type box, choose the text file format for the worksheet. For example, click Text (Tab delimited) or CSV (Comma delimited). Don't forget to do some sorting to avoid any invalid emails.

Formatting Emails

This is the main part to clean your list from bad, dead email addresses. There might be many wrongly typed email addresses in your list. Some typo errors, syntax errors and possible some bouncing email addresses, if you are dealing with your old email List. On an average, about 22.5% email addresses get deactivated, banned or deleted per year, so that must be the bad news, if you are one of the victim dealing with an old email list.

Validation

While reading this book you must be thinking that every part is not must to read. But sincerely this part is important enough to avoid being marked as a spammer or being blacklisted. If you are paying to top Email Marketing Clients like Mail Chimp, Aweber etc. then this part is not necessary. But believe me, if you have got millions of Email addresses or you are running some other Bulk Email Clients that are hosted on your server then you probably need these steps done before launching any email campaign. These I will be discussing in detail later in chapter "Service Providers"

Opt-in

An opt-in policy requires a potential customer to self-select the services they wish to subscribe to, and how any information they provide may be used. It is also referred to as permission-based marketing. As discussed in the previous chapter, there are formal ways to gather email addresses using a CTA. Cash rewards, coupons, and convenience appeal to many consumers, but often these benefits come at the cost of an undisclosed contract for use of personal information. Individuals may choose to share their data, but they should be afforded transparency over how their data will be used and with whom it will be shared.

Opt-out

An opt-out policy through which a customer can unsubscribe through the link attached in the email. Should you email people that never signed up nor have done business with you and tell them they can unsubscribe if they don't want to hear from you? The answer is NO. As I personally don't recommend you to start building an e-relationship by force-feeding recipients you're messaging and telling them they can opt out or unsubscribe. By doing it the right way, your brand will be protected

TYPES OF E-MAIL MARKETING:

Newsletter Email

Newsletter emails inform customers of current promotions, sales, and the newest offering. Newsletter emails are more than merely sales tools, they also help develop a long-term impact on readers. Mark Brownlow, in EmailMarketingReports.com, says that a newsletter email "should provide the readers with value, which means more than just sales messages. It should contain information which informs, entertains or otherwise benefits the readers."

Catalog and Video Email

Catalog email marketing is much like newsletter email, but focuses on images and short descriptions with pricing, rather than communicating through the use of short articles or dialogue pieces. Catalog emails can be compared to hard copy catalogs sent through the mail, but they do not require printing and shipping costs to be incurred.

Video email is another form of email marketing that is a hybrid of newsletter and catalog marketing--combining a narrative with images, video footage, and graphics. Video marketing requires more technical expertise than other email marketing tools.

Press Release Email

Press releases are a marketing tool underutilized by most small businesses. A press release is typically associated with print publication, such as newspapers and trade magazines, but can be used by small businesses to communicate with customers, informing them of a particular new inventory item or promotion. Unlike a newsletter or catalog, press releases focus on one message and are designed to inform readers and entice them to visit the business online or in person.

Invitation and Survey Email

Invitation email requests the reader to take action in responding to an event or sales promotion. Invitation email can be an effective marketing tool to get customers into a brick-and-mortar retail store or visit a business website on a specific date and time to take advantage of an offer.

Survey email is also interactive, encouraging customers to provide feedback that can be reviewed and used to define customer service roles and procedures. Survey emails generally award some form of small compensation to the participant, such as a coupon.

Thank-You Email

The lifeblood of a small business comes from good customer service, and thank-you marketing emails are compelling and rewarding to patrons. Customers feel real value when a business takes the time to respond to their experience and ensure that all expectations were met. Thank-you emails should be customized to the consumer and include current and future offers, along with a small token of gratitude, such as a discount on the next purchase.

4 VIRAL MARKETING:

Viral marketing or **viral advertising** is a business strategy that uses existing social networks to promote a product. Its name refers to how consumers spread information about a product with other people in their social networks, much in the same way that a virus spreads from one person to another.^[1] It can be delivered by word of mouth or enhanced by the network effects of the Internet and mobile networks.

Viral advertising is personal and, while coming from an identified sponsor, it does not mean businesses pay for its distribution.^[6] Most of the well-known viral ads circulating online are ads paid by a sponsor company, launched either on their own platform (company webpage or social media profile) or on social media websites such as YouTube.^[7] Consumers receive the page link from a social media network or copy the entire ad from a website and pass it along through e-mail or posting it on a blog, webpage or social media profile. Viral marketing may take the form of video clips, interactive Flash games, advergemes, ebooks, brandable software, images, text messages, email messages, or web pages. The most commonly utilized transmission vehicles for viral messages include: pass-along based, incentive based, trendy based, and undercover based. However, the creative nature of viral marketing enables an "endless amount of potential forms and vehicles the messages can utilize for transmission", including mobile devices.

The ultimate goal of marketers interested in creating successful viral marketing programs is to create viral messages that appeal to individuals with high social networking potential (SNP) and that have a high probability of being presented and spread by these individuals and their competitors in their communications with others in a short period of time.^[9]

According to marketing professors Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, to make viral marketing work, three basic criteria must be met, i.e., giving the right message to the right messengers in the right environment:^[21]

1. **Messenger:** Three specific types of messengers are required to ensure the transformation of an ordinary message into a viral one: market mavens, social hubs, and salespeople. Market mavens are individuals who are continuously 'on the pulse' of things (information specialists); they are usually among the first to get exposed to the message and who transmit it to their immediate social network. Social hubs are people with an exceptionally large number of social connections; they often know hundreds of different people and have the ability to serve as connectors or bridges between different subcultures. Salespeople might be needed who receive the message from the market maven, amplify it by making it more relevant and persuasive, and then transmit it to the social hub for further distribution. Market mavens may not be particularly convincing in transmitting the information.

2. **Message:** Only messages that are both memorable and sufficiently interesting to be passed on to others have the potential to spur a viral marketing phenomenon. Making a message more memorable and interesting or simply more infectious, is often not a matter of major changes but minor adjustments. It should be unique and engaging with a main idea that motivates the recipient to share it widely with friends – a "must-see" element.^[22]
3. **Environment:** The environment is crucial in the rise of successful viral marketing – small changes in the environment lead to huge results, and people are much more sensitive to environment. The timing and context of the campaign launch must be right.

Whereas Kaplan, Haenlein and others reduce the role of marketers to crafting the initial viral message and seeding it, futurist and sales and marketing analyst Marc Feldman, who conducted IMT Strategies' viral marketing study in 2001,^[citation needed] carves a different role for marketers which pushes the 'art' of viral marketing much closer to 'science'

Metrics[edit]

To clarify and organize the information related to potential measures of viral campaigns, the key measurement possibilities should be considered in relation to the objectives formulated for the viral campaign. In this sense, some of the key cognitive outcomes of viral marketing activities can include measures such as the number of views, clicks, and hits for specific content, as well as the number of shares in social media, such as likes on Facebook or retweets on Twitter, which demonstrate that consumers processed the information received through the marketing message. Measures such as the number of reviews for a product or the number of members for a campaign webpage quantify the number of individuals who have acknowledged the information provided by marketers. Besides statistics that are related to online traffic, surveys can assess the degree of product or brand knowledge, though this type of measurement is more complicated and requires more resources

Methods[edit]

Viral marketing often involves and utilizes:

- Customer participation and polling services
- Industry-specific organization contributions
- Influencer marketing

Viral target marketing is based on three important principles.^[28]

1. Social profile gathering
2. Proximity market analysis
3. Real-time key word density analysis

By applying these three important disciplines to an advertising model, a VMS company is able to match a client with their targeted customers at a cost effective advantage.

Benefits[edit]

For companies[edit]

Using influencers in viral marketing provides companies several benefits. It enables companies to spend little time and budget on their marketing communication and brand awareness

promotion.^[47] For example, Alberto Zanot, in the 2006 FIFA Football World Cup, shared Zinedine Zidane's headbutt against Italy and engaged more than 1.5 million viewers in less than the very first hour. Secondly, it enhances the credibility of messages.^{[48][49][50][51][52]} These trust-based relationships grab the audience's attention, create customers' demand, increase sales and loyalty, or simply drive customers' attitude and behavior.^{[50][51]} In the case of Coke, Millennials changed their mind about the product, from parents' drink to the beverage for teens.^[53] It built up Millennials' social needs by 'sharing a Coke' with their friends. This created a deep connection with Gen Y, dramatically increased sales (+11% compared with last year) and market share (+1.6%).^[53]

Benefits for Influencers[edit]

No doubt that harnessing influencers would be a lucrative business for both companies and influencers.^[54] The concept of 'influencer' is no longer just an 'expert' but also anyone who delivers and influence on the credibility of a message (e.g. blogger)^[49] In 2014, BritMums, network sharing family's daily life, had 6,000 bloggers and 11,300 views per month on average^{[55][56]} and became endorsers for some particular brand such as Coca-Cola, Morrison. Another case, Aimee Song who had over 3.6m followers on the Instagram page and became Laura Mercier's social media influencers, gaining \$500,000 monthly.^[55]

For consumers[edit]

Decision-making process seems to be hard for customers these days. Millers (1956) argued that people suffered from short-term memory.^[57] This links to difficulties in customers' decision-making process and Paradox of Choice,^[58] as they face various adverts and newspapers daily.^[59] Influencers serve as a credible source for customers' decision-making process.^{[49][41]} Nielsen reported that 80% of consumers appreciated a recommendation of their acquaintances,^[60] as they have reasons to trust in their friends delivering the messages without benefits^[60] and helping them reduce perceived risks behind choices.^{[61][62]}

Risks of using the wrong influencer[edit]

The types of viral marketing are stated below:

Pass-along

It is the most common and crudest type of viral marketing, because it encourages users to pass message to others. Basically, this strategy tries to form a chain by placing a message at the bottom of the email which prompts the readers to forward this message to others.

Many religious communities and commercial organizations use this strategy. They promise some miracle in your life if you pass the email to 10 others. The success of this technique relies on how interesting, exciting or believable the message is. Emails bearing short, funny clips of video, or pictures are spontaneously passed to others.

Incentivized viral

This type of viral marketing is used by most organizations in which they offer a gift or a reward for either passing a message along or providing someone else's address. In short, it calls the user to take action in order to be awarded. A customer base grows like this. This method can greatly increase referrals, and becomes most effective when the offer requires another person to take action.

Edgy Gossip/Buzz marketing

This type of viral marketing helps business get the attention of the public. This strategy involves ads or messages that create controversies that lead to gossip or a topic of discussion. For example: an actor leaking controversial or private information just before a new movie is released.

Gossip spreads like wildfire; incredibly fast from one person to another and often to another corner of the globe, too. Build a strategy that can create some controversy to become hot gossip, and spread it from one corner of the country to the other.

Undercover marketing

Undercover marketing includes a viral message that just appears to be a cool or unusual page, activity or piece of news, without any provocation to link or forward it to others. This is something that doesn't seem like anything is being marketed. That is the way the message gets passed – innocently to other people in a quiet way.

User-Managed Database

This organized form of viral marketing involves having users invite others to join their communities. In this method, users create and manage their own list of contacts through a database given by an online service provider. By doing this, they create a viral, self-propagating chain of contacts that grows naturally and encourages others to sign up, as well.

4.AFFILIATED MARKETING:

Affiliate marketing is a type of performance-based marketing in which a business rewards one or more affiliates for each visitor or customer brought by the affiliate's own marketing efforts.

The industry has four core players:^[citation needed]

- the merchant (also known as 'retailer' or 'brand')
- the network (that contains offers for the affiliate to choose from and also takes care of the payments)
- the publisher (also known as 'the affiliate')
- the customer
- Affiliate marketing is commonly confused with referral marketing, as both forms of marketing use third parties to drive sales to the retailer. The two forms of marketing are differentiated, however, in how they drive sales, where affiliate marketing relies purely on financial motivations, while referral marketing relies more on trust and personal relationships.^[citation needed]
- Affiliate marketing is frequently overlooked by advertisers.^[21] While search engines, e-mail, and web site syndication capture much of the attention of online retailers, affiliate marketing carries a much lower profile. Still, affiliates continue to play a significant role in e-retailers' marketing strategies.

Predominant compensation methods

Eighty percent of affiliate programs today use revenue sharing or pay per sale (PPS) as a compensation method, nineteen percent use cost per action (CPA), and the remaining programs use other methods such as cost per click (CPC) or cost per mille (CPM, cost per estimated 1000 views).^[20]

Diminished compensation methods

Within more mature markets, less than one percent of traditional affiliate marketing programs today use cost per click and cost per mille. However, these compensation methods are used heavily in display advertising and paid search.

Cost per mille requires only that the publisher make the advertising available on his or her website and display it to the page visitors in order to receive a commission. Pay per click requires one additional step in the conversion process to generate revenue for the publisher: A visitor must not only be made aware of the advertisement but must also click on the advertisement to visit the advertiser's website.

Cost per click was more common in the early days of affiliate marketing but has diminished in use over time due to click fraud issues very similar to the click fraud issues modern search engines are facing today. Contextual advertising programs are not considered in the statistic pertaining to the diminished use of cost per click, as it is uncertain if contextual advertising can be considered affiliate marketing.

While these models have diminished in mature e-commerce and online advertising markets they are still prevalent in some more nascent industries. China is one example where Affiliate Marketing does not overtly resemble the same model in the West. With many affiliates being paid a flat "Cost Per Day" with some networks offering Cost Per Click or CPM.

Performance/affiliate marketing

In the case of cost per mille/click, the publisher is not concerned about whether a visitor is a member of the audience that the advertiser tries to attract and is able to convert, because at this point the publisher has already earned his commission. This leaves the greater, and, in case of cost per mille, the full risk and loss (if the visitor cannot be converted) to the advertiser.

Cost per action/sale methods require that referred visitors do more than visit the advertiser's website before the affiliate receives a commission. The advertiser must convert that visitor first. It is in the best interest of the affiliate to send the most closely targeted traffic to the advertiser as possible to increase the chance of a conversion. The risk and loss are shared between the affiliate and the advertiser.

Affiliate marketing is also called "performance marketing", in reference to how sales employees are typically being compensated. Such employees are typically paid a commission for each sale they close, and sometimes are paid performance incentives for exceeding objectives.^[21] Affiliates are not employed by the advertiser whose products or services they promote, but the compensation models applied to affiliate marketing are very similar to the ones used for people in the advertisers' internal sales department.

Types of affiliate websites

Affiliate websites are often categorized by merchants (advertisers) and affiliate networks. There are currently no industry-wide standards for the categorization. The following types of websites are generic, yet are commonly understood and used by affiliate marketers.

- Search affiliates that utilize pay per click search engines to promote the advertisers' offers (i.e., search arbitrage)
- Price comparison service websites and directories

- Loyalty websites, typically characterized by providing a reward or incentive system for purchases via points, miles, cash back
- Cause Related Marketing sites that offer charitable donations
- Coupon and rebate websites that focus on sales promotions
- Content and niche market websites, including product review sites
- Personal websites
- Weblogs and websites syndication feeds
- E-mail marketing list affiliates (i.e., owners of large opt-in -mail lists that typically employ e-mail drip marketing) and newsletter list affiliates, which are typically more content-heavy
- Registration path or co-registration affiliates who include offers from other merchants during the registration process on their own website
- Shopping directories that list merchants by categories without providing coupons, price comparisons, or other features based on information that changes frequently, thus requiring continual updates
- Cost per action networks (i.e., top-tier affiliates) that expose offers from the advertiser with which they are affiliated with their own network of affiliates
- Websites using adbars (e.g. AdSense) to display context-sensitive advertising for products on the site
- Virtual currency that offers advertising views in exchange for a handout of virtual currency in a game or other virtual platform.
- File-Sharing: Web sites that host directories of music, movies, games and other software. Users upload content to file-hosting sites and then post descriptions of the material and their download links on directory sites. Uploaders are paid by the file-hosting sites based on the number of times their files are downloaded. The file-hosting sites sell premium download access to the files to the general public. The websites that host the directory services sell advertising and do not host the files themselves.
- Video sharing websites: YouTube videos are often utilized by affiliates to do affiliate marketing. A person would create a video and place a link to the affiliate product they are promoting in the video itself and within the description.

Publisher recruitment

Affiliate networks that already have several advertisers typically also have a large pool of publishers. These publishers could be potentially recruited, and there is also an increased chance that publishers in the network apply to the program on their own, without the need for recruitment efforts by the advertiser.

Relevant websites that attract the same target audiences as the advertiser but without competing with it are potential affiliate partners as well. Vendors or existing customers can also become recruits if doing so makes sense and does not violate any laws or regulations (such as with pyramid schemes).

Almost any website could be recruited as an affiliate publisher, but high traffic websites are more likely interested in (for their sake) low-risk cost per mille or medium-risk cost per click deals rather than higher-risk cost per action or revenue share deals.^[26]

Locating affiliate programs

There are three primary ways to locate affiliate programs for a target website:

1. Affiliate program directories,
2. Large affiliate networks that provide the platform for dozens or even hundreds of advertisers, and
3. The target website itself. (Websites that offer an affiliate program often have a link titled "affiliate program", "affiliates", "referral program", or "webmasters"—usually in the footer or "About" section of the website.)

If the above locations do not yield information pertaining to affiliates, it may be the case that there exists a non-public affiliate program. Utilizing one of the common website correlation methods may provide clues about the affiliate network. The most definitive method for finding this information is to contact the website owner directly if a contact method can be located.

Past and current issues

Since the emergence of affiliate marketing, there has been little control over affiliate activity. Unscrupulous affiliates have used spam, false advertising, forced clicks (to get tracking cookies set on users' computers), adware, and other methods to drive traffic to their sponsors. Although many affiliate programs have terms of service that contain rules against spam, this marketing method has historically proven to attract abuse from spammers.

E-mail spam

In the infancy of affiliate marketing, many Internet users held negative opinions due to the tendency of affiliates to use spam to promote the programs in which they were enrolled.^[27] As affiliate marketing matured, many affiliate merchants have refined their terms and conditions to prohibit affiliates from spamming.

Malicious browser extensions

A browser extension is a plug-in that extends the functionality of a web browser. Some extensions are authored using web technologies such as HTML, JavaScript, and CSS. Most modern web browsers have a whole slew of third-party extensions available for download. In recent years, there has been a constant rise in the number of malicious browser extensions flooding the web. Malicious browser extensions will often appear to be legitimate as they seem to originate from vendor websites and come with glowing customer reviews.^[28] In the case of affiliate marketing, these malicious extensions are often used to redirect a user's browser to send fake clicks to websites that are supposedly part of legitimate affiliate marketing programs. Typically, users are completely unaware this is happening other than their browser performance slowing down. Websites end up paying for fake traffic number, and users are unwitting participants in these ad schemes.

Search engine spam

As search engines have become more prominent, some affiliate marketers have shifted from sending e-mail spam to creating automatically generated web pages that often contain product data feeds provided by merchants. The goal of such web pages is to manipulate the relevancy or

prominence of resources indexed by a search engine, also known as *spamdexing*. Each page can be targeted to a different niche market through the use of specific keywords, with the result being a skewed form of search engine optimization.

5. CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT:

Customer engagement is a business communication connection between an external stakeholder (consumer) and an organization (company or brand) through various channels of correspondence. This connection can be a reaction, interaction, effect or overall customer experience, which takes place online and offline.^{[1][2]} The term can also be used to define customer-to-customer correspondence regarding a communication, product, service or brand. However, the latter dissemination originates from a business-to-consumer interaction resonated at a subconscious level.

Online customer engagement is qualitatively different from offline engagement as the nature of the customer's interactions with a brand, company and other customers differ on the internet. Discussion forums or blogs, for example, are spaces where people can communicate and socialise in ways that cannot be replicated by any offline interactive medium. Online customer engagement is a social phenomenon that became mainstream with the wide adoption of the internet in the late 1990s, which has expanded the technical developments in broadband speed, connectivity and social media. These factors enable customer behaviour to regularly engage in online communities revolving, directly or indirectly, around product categories and other consumption topics. This process leads to a customer's positive engagement with the company or offering, as well as the behaviours associated with different degrees of customer engagement.^[3]

Online customer engagements:

Although offline customer engagement predates online, the latter is a qualitatively different social phenomenon unlike any offline customer engagement that social theorists or marketers recognize. In the past, customer engagement has been generated irresolutely through television, radio, media, outdoor advertising, and various other touchpoints ideally during peak and/or high trafficked allocations. However, the only conclusive results of campaigns were sales and/or return on investment figures. The widespread adoption of the internet during the late 1990s has enhanced the processes of customer engagement, in particular, the way in which it can now be measured in different ways on different levels of engagement. It is a recent social phenomenon where people engage online in communities that do not necessarily revolve around a particular product, but serve as meeting or networking places. This online engagement has brought about both the empowerment of consumers and the opportunity for businesses to engage with their target customers online. A 2011 market analysis revealed that 80% of online customers, after reading negative online reviews, report making alternate purchasing decisions, while 87% of consumers said a favorable review has confirmed their decision to go through with a purchase.

CE behaviour became prominent with the advent of the social phenomenon of online CE. Creating and stimulating customer engagement behaviour has recently become an explicit aim of both profit and non-profit organisations in the belief that engaging target customers to a high degree is conducive to furthering business objectives.

Shevlin's definition of CE is well suited to understanding the process that leads to an engaged customer. In its adaptation by Richard Sedley the key word is 'investment'. "Repeated interactions that strengthen the emotional, psychological or physical investment a customer has in a brand."

A customer's degree of engagement with a company lies in a continuum that represents the strength of his investment in that company. Positive experiences with the company strengthen that investment and move the customer down the line of engagement.

What is important in measuring degrees of involvement is the ability of defining and quantifying the stages on the continuum. One popular suggestion is a four-level model adapted from Kirkpatrick's Levels:

1. **Click** - A reader arrived (current metric)
2. **Consume** - A reader read the content
3. **Understood** - A reader understood the content and remembers it
4. **Applied** - A reader applies the content in another venue

Engagement is a holistic characterisation of a consumer's behaviour, encompassing a host of sub-aspects of behaviour such as loyalty, satisfaction, involvement, Word of Mouth advertising, complaining and more.

- **Satisfaction:** Satisfaction is simply the foundation, and the minimum requirement, for a continuing relationship with customers. Engagement extends beyond mere satisfaction.
- **Loyalty - Retention:** Highly engaged consumers are more loyal. Increasing the engagement of target customers increases the rate of customer retention.
- **Word of Mouth advertising - advocacy:** Highly engaged customers are more likely to engage in free (for the company), credible (for their audience) Word of Mouth advertising. This can drive new customer acquisition and can have viral effects.
- **Awareness - Effectiveness of communications:** When customers are exposed to communication from a company that they are highly engaged with, they tend to actively elaborate on its central idea. This brings about high degrees of central processing and recall.^[26]
- **Filtering:** Consumers filter, categorise and rate the market from head to tail, creating multiple, overlapping folksonomies through tagging, reviewing, rating and recommending.
- **Complaint-behaviour:** Highly engaged customers are less likely to complain to other current or potential customers, but will address the company directly instead.
- **Marketing intelligence:** Highly engaged customers can give valuable recommendations for improving quality of offering.

The behavioural outcomes of an engaged consumer is what links CE to profits. From this point of view,

"CE is the best measure of current and future performance; an engaged relationship is probably the only guarantee for a return on your organisation's or your clients' objectives."^[31] Simply attaining a high level of customer satisfaction does not seem to guarantee the customer's business. 60% to 80% of customers who defect to a competitor said they were satisfied or very satisfied on the survey just prior to their defection

The CE metric is useful for:

a) Planning:

- Identify where CE-marketing efforts should take place; which of the communities that the target customers participate in are the most engaging?
- Specify the way in which target customers engage, or want to engage, with the company or offering.

b) Measuring Effectiveness: Measure how successful CE-marketing efforts have been at engaging target customers.

The importance of CE as a marketing metric is reflected in ARF's statement:

"The industry is moving toward customer engagement with marketing communications as the 21st century metric of marketing efficiency and effectiveness."^[32]

ARF envisages CE exclusively as a metric of engagement with communication, but it is not necessary to distinguish between engaging with the communication and with the product since CE behaviour deals with, and is influenced by, involvement with both.

2.ONLINE ADVERTISING:

online advertising is advertising on the Internet. Online advertising encompasses advertisements on search engine results pages, advertisements placed in e-mails, and other ways in which advertisers use the Internet. However, this chapter focuses on display advertising or rich-media advertising. Whether online or off, the main objective of advertising is to increase sales. Advertising also aims to increase brand awareness. Advertising is based on the simple economics of supply and demand. Advertisers aim to stimulate a consumer need and then satisfy that need. One of the greatest benefits of online display advertising is that the messages are not restricted by geography or time. Online advertisements are also much more interactive than offline advertising. While both online and offline advertising can be disruptive, interactive online advertising can be designed to be perceived as less so. Online display advertising began as simple hyperlinked images shown on a Web site and has since progressed to include video, sound, and many other modern technologies. Today, messages and interactions can be contained within the advertising display without ever taking consumers to a landing page.

How It Works:

1. Understand when best to use online advertising. Advertising, whether online or offline, has a number of objectives:
2. Building brand awareness
3. Creating consumer demand
4. Informing consumers of the advertiser's ability to satisfy that demand
5. Driving response and sales

Building Brand Awareness Making people aware of a brand or product is an important long-term goal for any marketer. Once customers know about the brand, the marketer has taken the first step toward gaining the customer's trust and patronage. The better known a brand is, the more business they can do. And the ultimate goal is to do more business and sell more of the product. Online, creative advertising or banner advertising is largely visual, making it an ideal channel for promoting brand collateral.

Creating Consumer Demand Consumers can't want what they don't know about. Advertising needs to convince consumers about what they should want and why they should want it. Modern online advertising provides a great way to communicate the USPs (unique selling points) of a product, thereby helping stimulate demand.

Satisfying Consumer Demand Once the consumer is aware of and desires a product, they need to find out how to satisfy that desire. If brand building has been effective, they will know that a particular brand exists. At this point, it is important for the marketer to show the consumer how their particular brand or product will best meet that need.

Driving Response and Sales All forms of online marketing need to drive traffic and sales in the long term. However, the immediacy of online advertising also drives traffic and sales in the short and medium terms. Unlike traditional media advertising, online advertising can turn the potential customer into an actual customer right there and

Types of Display Advertising:

There are many different ways to display messages online, and as technology develops, so does online advertising. Here are some of the most common.

Interstitial Banners Interstitial banners are shown between pages on a Web site. As you click from one page to another, you are shown this advertisement before the next page is shown. Sometimes, you are able to close the advertisement.

Pop-Ups and Pop-Unders As the name suggests, these are advertisements that pop up, or under, the Web page being viewed. They open in a new, smaller window. You will see a pop-up right away but will probably only become aware of a pop-under after you close your browser window. These were very prominent in the early days of online advertising, but audience annoyance means that there are now "pop-up blockers" built into most good Web browsers. This can be problematic as sometimes a Web site will legitimately use a pop-up to display information to the user.

Map Advertisement A map advertisement is advertising placed within the online mapping solutions available, such as Google Maps.

Floating Advertisement A floating advertisement appears in a layer over the content, but is not in a separate window. Usually, the user can close this advertisement. These are sometimes referred to as "Shoshkeles," a proprietary technology. Floating advertisements are created with dynamic hypertext markup language (DHTML) or Flash and float in a layer above a site's content for a few seconds. Often, the animation ends by disappearing into a banner ad on the page.

Wallpaper Advertisement A wallpaper advertisement changes the background of the Web page being viewed. Usually, it is not possible to click through this advertisement.

Banner Advertisement A banner advertisement is a graphic image or animation displayed on a Web site for advertising purposes. Static banners are graphics interchange format (GIF) or Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG) images, but banners can also employ rich media such as Flash, video, JavaScript, and other interactive technologies. Interactive technology allows the viewer to interact and transact within the banner. Banners are not limited to the space that they occupy; some banners expand on mouseover or when clicked on.

Advertising can be paid for in a number of ways, including the following:

- o Cost per impression (CPI) or cost per mille (CPM)
- o Cost per click (CPC) o Cost per acquisition (CPA)
- o Flat rate
- o Cost per engagement

Payment Models for Display Advertising As well as a variety of mediums, there are also a number of different payment models for display advertising.

Cost per Impression or Cost per: Thousand Impressions Cost per impression (CPI) means that the advertiser pays each time the advertisement appears on the publisher's page. The most common way of referring to this model is cost per mille (CPM), or cost per thousand impressions (the letter M is the Roman numeral for a thousand, c

mille). This is how a campaign is normally priced when brand awareness or exposure is the primary goal.

Cost per Click Cost per click (CPC) :means that the advertiser only pays when their advertisement is clicked on by an interested party. CPC advertising is normally associated with paid search marketing, also called pay-perclick (PPC) advertising. Banners can be priced this way when the aim is to drive traffic. It is also a payment method sometimes used in affiliate marketing, when the aim is to drive traffic to a new Web site

Cost per Acquisition In the cost per acquisition (CPA) model, the advertiser only pays when an advertisement delivers an acquisition. Definitions of acquisitions vary from site to site and may be a user filling in a form, downloading a file, or buying a product. CPA is the best way for an advertiser to pay because they only pay when the advertising has met its goal. For this reason it is also the worst type for the publisher as they are only rewarded if the advertising is successful. The publisher has to rely on the conversion rate of the advertiser's Web site, something that the publisher cannot control. The CPA model is not commonly used for banner advertising and is generally associated with affiliate marketing.

Flat Rate Sometimes, owners of lower-traffic sites choose to sell banner space at a flat rate, that is, at a fixed cost per month regardless of the amount of traffic or impressions. This would appeal to a media buyer who may be testing an online campaign that targets niche markets.

Cost per Engagement Cost per engagement is an emerging technology in which advertisers pay for the rollover advertisements, placed in videos or applications (such as Facebook applications), based on the interactions with that advertisement. "Engagement" is generally defined as a user-initiated rollover, or mouseover, action that results in a sustained advertisement expansion. Once expanded, an advertisement may contain a video, game, or other rich content. It happens without taking an Internet user away from her preferred Web page, and marketers only pay when an individual completes an action.

Co-Created content management:

Co-creation is a management initiative, or form of economic strategy, that brings different parties together (for instance, a company and a group of customers), in order to jointly produce a mutually valued outcome.^[1] Co-creation brings a blend of ideas from direct customers or viewers (who are not the direct users of the product) which in turn creates new ideas to the organization.

Co-created value arises in the form of personalized, unique experiences for the customer (value-in-use) and ongoing revenue, learning and enhanced market performance drivers for the firm (loyalty, relationships, customer word of mouth). Value is co-created with customers if and when a customer is able to personalize his or her experience using a firm's product-service proposition – in the lifetime of its use – to a level that is best suited to get his or her job(s) or tasks done and which allows the firm to derive greater value from its product-service investment in the form of new knowledge, higher revenues/profitability and/or superior brand value/loyalty.

The process of Co-creation

The process of co-creation essentially involves 2 core steps:

1. **Contribution:** Submission of contributions by the public to the firm
2. **Selection:** Selection of the most promising and appealing contributions/submissions

Types of Co-creation

Depending on the degree of control exercised by the firm/public over the contribution and selection activities, co-creation may be broadly classified into 4 categories:

1. **Tinkering:** Public exercises control over the contribution activity while the firm exercises control over the selection activity
2. **Submitting:** Firm exercises complete control over both the activities
3. **Co-designing:** Firm exercises control over the contribution activity while the public exercises control over the selection activity
4. **Collaborating:** Public exercises complete control over both the activities

Tinkering

Tinkering is a customer co-creation model that involves procurement of contributions from the public by the firm, a comprehensive and scrupulous examination of the contributions, selection of the most promising and enterprising contributions by the firm and finally implementation of the contributions. For example, Little Big Planet, a puzzle platform video game by Sony Interactive Entertainment allows the gamers to create their own levels in the game. The created levels can then be shared with other gamers or submitted to Sony. Owing to this "Create and Share" feature, this game has the tagline 'Play, Create, Share'. The most promising contributions are incorporated into the final game and the contributors are rewarded.

Submitting

In the case of submitting, the firm exercises control over the contribution activity by placing constraints on the basic design, contribution size etc. and also the selection activity by selecting the winning contributions.

Co-designing

Co-designing involves placement of constraints by the firm on the contribution activity and selection of the winning contributions by the contributors themselves. For example, Local Motors employs the co-designing model of customer co-creation to develop its vehicles. In 2010, Local Motors developed

a car named Rally Fighter in a record 18 months, which is about 5 times faster than what a conventional car manufacturing process takes. By empowering a community of over 2000 designers to submit their designs while still placing some constraints on the basic design, color schemes etc., Local Motors effectively utilized the co-designing model of customer co-creation. The winning design (By Sangho Kim) was chosen as the winning design by the designer community through voting.

An interesting bit of trivia about Local Motors is that it doesn't even have a design team. All the designing is done by the public itself.

Threadless, one of the leading T-shirt manufacturing brands in America also employs co-designing.

Collaborating

Also known as open sourcing, collaborating involves releasing the source code of the product and making it accessible to the general public. The released source code is then open to modification as per the requirement of the users. Examples like Mozilla Firefox, Apache and Linux are all based on collaborating.

Five types :

1 Co-creation workshops

Specific users (preferably so-called 'lead users') are involved in brainstorm sessions to generate ideas or involved in concept workshops to enhance ideas. Co-creation workshops are especially suitable to gain more insight in the needs of your customers or to find ideas that are relatively easy to implement on short or middle long term.

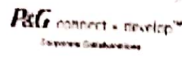


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2 Crowdsourcing

You define a question or problem for a large audience and offer a reward for 'the winning idea'. The interaction with the customer is minimal, since the ideas are developed by the customer themselves.

Crowdsourcing is applicable in three situations:



You have a concrete (technical) problem for which you want a solution. A good example is the "Connect + Develop" programme of P&G.

You are looking for inspiration through new ideas that will expand your employees' views. A good example is Elektrolux, who annually organise a successful contest for students.



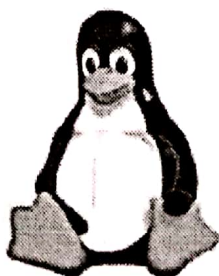
You want to generate a lot of free publicity around an upcoming product. You promise that the winning idea will be brought to market. Examples are the HEMA design contest, and the T-shirt maker Threadless who's entire business model is based on co-creation.

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3 Open source

A (large) number of volunteers are actively involved in development and maintenance of a product. Open source is often applied with the development of software. It is very suitable if you want to set a new technical standard.

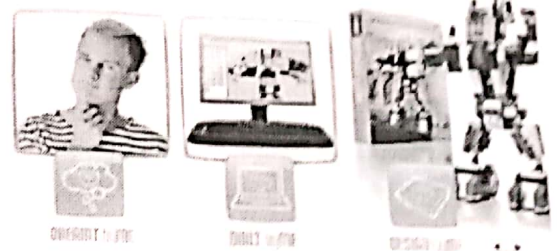
Examples of successful products are Linux and Firefox. Also the non-profit organisation Creative Commons stimulates this type of co-creation with great success.



4 Mass customisation

Customers can design their own product within the framework you define. This generally means that a customer can select different shapes, colours or materials for the product parts. This makes him willing to pay a premium price for the product. Mass customisation can accomplish a lot for your brand and positioning, and it can turn your customers into ambassadors.

Examples of successful products for mass customisation are NikeiD and Lego Factory.



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5 User-generated content

Customers create their own 'products' that they share through your system or platform. User-generated content is especially suitable for digital products and services. If you can create the right platform, it will spread rapidly and your platform can even become a brand on it's own.

Examples are YouTube, LinkedIn, Slideshare, Flickr and the numerous blogs on the Internet.



Three critical success factors for co-creation



Don't be afraid to share information.

There is direct relationship between the amount and the value of the information you share and the value of it and the ideas you get in return.



Be honest to (potential) customers.

A customer can remarkably sense whether you are telling truth or not. Honesty from your side will be rewarded with honesty from the customer.



Be sincerely interested.

When a customer feels you are sincerely interested in his or her opinion, every question will be answered and you will have access to a wealth of information and ideas.

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PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION NETWORKS:

Participatory development communication is the use of mass media and traditional, inter-personal means of communication that empowers communities to visualise aspirations and discover solutions to their development problems and issues.

Participatory communication is "the theory and practices of communication used to involve people in the decision-making of the development process. It intends to return to the roots of its meaning, which, similarly to the term community, originate from the Latin word 'communis', i.e. common (Mody, 1991). Therefore, the purpose of communication should be to make something common, or to share...meanings, perceptions, worldviews or knowledge. In this context, sharing implies an equitable division of what is being shared, which is why communication should almost be naturally associated with a balanced, two-way flow of information."^[citation needed]

- Strengthen a regional training capacity to improve the development support communication (DSC) skills of intermediate-level professionals so that they could improve the effectiveness of the rural development programmes in which they work.
- Initiate an example of a sustainable national DSC service to support rural development programmes and projects.
- Advance towards the creation of a group of DSC professionals in the region, by means of preparing a regional Post-graduate DSC Professional Diploma Course (through collaboration with the University of Zimbabwe in Harare).
- Advise governments and other development-related organisations about the requirements for effective DSC in Southern Africa, for future action.

TYPES OF PARTICIPATION:

Passive participation[edit]

The stakeholders of a project essentially act as "empty vessels" and receive information. Feedback is minimal if at all and participation is assessed through methods such as head counts.

Participation by consultation[\[edit\]](#)

Researchers or "experts" pose questions to the stakeholders. Input can be provided at different points in time but the final analysis and decision-making power lies in the hands of the external professionals whom may or may not take the stakeholders' decisions into consideration.

Participation by collaboration[\[edit\]](#)

Groups of primary stakeholders are formed in order to participate in discussion and analysis. Objectives are predetermined. This method incorporates components of horizontal communication and capacity building among all stakeholders.

Empowerment participation[\[edit\]](#)

Primary stakeholders are capable and willing to become involved in the process and take part in decision-making. Outsiders are equal partners, but the stakeholders make the final decisions as ownership and control of the process rests in their hands. Knowledge exchange leads to solutions.

SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITIES:

The first step towards creating a **social media community** is to build a foundation that will help you attract and keep followers. **Social media communities** are basically groups of users rallying around a common interest or goal (ideally, your business or product).

Social media communities are online properties in which members relate common experiences and interests. From micro-stock photo offerings like SnapVillage to colossal social networks like FaceBook to the ever-expanding blogosphere, communities online are as diverse as those found offline.

Just think of metropolitan areas where most neighborhoods are known for offering a different experience. When in New York you visit the theatre district to catch a show. For a deal on electronics in Tokyo, you visit Akihabara. For the emerging art crowd in Berlin, set your sights on Brunnenstrasse. Each of these neighborhoods can fill a specific need, so communities of like-minded individuals tend to form around them. Online communities work in the same way.

To understand these communities, look to understand the reason one would join. There are 3 main purposes contributing to the sprawl of social media:

#1 Communities of Interest.

As the name suggests, "Communities of Interest" tend to involve subjects that people find interesting. Take an automobile forum discussing all things "Ford Focus" or a blog like World Changing, which seeks solutions to the world's problems. Since these topics are typically created, maintained and populated by everyday people, they tend to be the most commonly visited with the time most spent. This "stickiness" is a goal for corporations who are trying to create and house a conversation around their product or message.

Some examples of communities of interest
facebook.com, myspace.com, LastFM.com, HondaTech.com

#2 Communities of Task

The structures found in "Communities of Task" focus on peer-to-peer reviews, classified ads or other quick-fix points of action or research. People who seek to fulfill a specific goal often visit these communities to connect with credible advocates or find tidbits of information. The information sought is as diverse as the people seeking it: from wedding planners to microwave ovens to pick-up trucks to bed and breakfasts. People in research mode tend to visit once or contribute to short burst of activity, however the more credible/useful the content, the more likely the user will visit again.

Communities of task should be of interest to the company wanting to sway purchase intention during the research phase of the consumer funnel. Housing these kinds of conversations can prove very influential but to remain credible, the delicate dose of brand messaging must not overtake unbiased consumer insight.

Some great examples of communities of task
autobytel.com, urbandictionary.com, wikipedia.com

#3 Communities of Vocation

"Communities of Vocation" focus on professional connections with specific vocational needs. Perhaps the most famous community of this type is LinkedIn.com, an online social network of more than 13 million professionals representing 150 industries. These professional communities tend to be very "templated" in nature, offering clear boundaries of communication and focused discussion.

FaceBook could be counted as a community of vocation in its earlier student-only days. It became a community of interest when the network opened to the general public and the backend became available to user-contributed application development.

New examples of communities of vocation are emerging everyday. FireFighterNation.com for Fire Fighters, TrueAviation.com for pilots, ydm.com for veterinarians. NatureNetwork for scientists of all varieties.

The hardest part in the development of an online community is earning credibility. Credibility is the currency of social media and the most successful platforms employed a humble-beginnings approach, maturing slowly to its "tipping point". Some communities out there don't make it into the popular eye, but still foster fierce loyalty within niche groups. No matter what the purpose of your social media platform, your strategy must focus on credibility for any level success to be achieved.

INTERACTIVE DIGITAL NETWORKS:

Interactive media normally refers to products and services on digital computer-based systems which respond to the user's actions by presenting content such as text, moving image, animation, video, audio, and video games.

Advantages

Effects on learning[edit]

Interactive media is helpful in the four development dimensions in which young children learn: social and emotional, language development, cognitive and general knowledge, and approaches toward learning. Using computers and educational computer software in a learning environment helps children increase communication skills and their attitudes about learning. Children who use educational computer software are often found using more complex speech patterns and higher levels of verbal communication. A study found that basic interactive books that simply read a story aloud and highlighted words and phrases as they were spoken were beneficial for children with lower reading abilities. Children have different styles of learning, and interactive media helps children with visual, verbal, auditory, and tactile learning styles.^[7]

Intuitive understanding[edit]

Interactive media makes technology more intuitive to use. Interactive products such as smartphones, iPad's/iPod's, interactive whiteboards and websites are all easy to use. The easy usage of these products encourages consumers to experiment with their products rather than reading instruction manuals.^[8]

Relationships[edit]

Interactive media promotes dialogic communication. This form of communication allows senders and receivers to build long term trust and cooperation. This plays a critical role in building relationships. Organizations also use interactive media to go further than basic marketing and develop more positive behavioral relationships.^[9]

Influence on families[edit]

The introduction of interactive media has greatly affected the lives and inner workings of families, with many family activities having integrated with technology quite seamlessly, allowing both children and parents to adapt to it as they see fit. However, parents have also become increasingly worried about the impact that it will have on their family lives. This is not necessarily because they are opposed to technology, but because they fear that it will lessen the time that they get to spend with their children. Studies have shown that although interactive media is able to connect families together when they are unable to physically, the dependence on this media also continues to persist even when

there are opportunities for family time, which often leads the adults to believe that it distracts children more than it benefits them.^[10]

Types[edit]

Distributed interactive media[edit]

The media which allows several geographically remote users to interact synchronously with the media application/system is known as Distributed Interactive Media. Some common examples of this type of Media include Online Gaming, Distributed Virtual Environment, Whiteboards which are used for interactive conferences and many more.^[11]

Examples[edit]

A couple of basic examples of interactive media (also known as a company in Azerbaijan) are video games and websites. Websites, especially social networking websites provide the interactive use of text and graphics to its users, who interact with each other in various ways such as chatting, playing online games, sharing posts that may include their thoughts and/or pictures and so forth. Video games are also one of the common examples of Interactive Media as the players make use of the joystick/controller to interactively respond to the actions and changes taking place on the game screen generated by the game application, which in turn reacts to the response of the players through the joystick/controller.^[12]

Technologies and implementation[edit]

Interactive media can be implemented using a variety of platforms and applications that use technology. Some examples include mobile platforms such as touch screen smartphones and tablets, as well as other interactive mediums that are created exclusively to solve a unique problem or set of problems. Interactive media is not limited to a professional environment, it can be used for any technology that responds to user actions. This can include the use of JavaScript and AJAX in web pages, but can also be used in programming languages or technology that has similar functionality.

One of the most recent innovations to use interactivity that solves a problem that individuals have on a daily basis is Delta Airlines's "Photon Shower".^[13] This device was developed as a collaboration between Delta Airlines and Professor Russell Foster of Cambridge University. The device is designed to reduce the effect of jet lag on customers that often take long flights across time zones. The interactivity is evident because of how it solves this problem. By observing what time zones a person has crossed and matching those to the basic known sleep cycles of the individual, the machine is able to predict when a person's body is expecting light, and when it is expecting darkness. It then stimulates the individual with the appropriate light source variations for the time, as well as an instructional card to inform them of what times their body expects light and what times it expects darkness. Growth of interactive media continues to advance today, with the advent of more and more powerful machines the limit to what can be input and manipulated on a display in real time is become virtually non-existent.

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CUSTOMER-LED MARKETING CAMPAIGNS:

Definition: A **marketing strategy** in which a company seeks to determine what products a **consumer** might want, and then moves the company to develop those products. It relies heavily on **market research**. ... This **strategy** can be used concurrently with an **asset-led marketing strategy**

Countless companies across industries claim to focus fully on serving their customers. Only recently however, has the balance really shifted, putting customers firmly in the driver's seat.

Whether they are consumers or business buyers, today's customers are often more tech savvy than the companies that serve them. They have increasing access to insightful, comparative information on suppliers and their offers; they now have the ability to express satisfaction or shout out their discontent to friends and peers and they are ready to switch providers when needed.

To serve today's generation of consumer and business customers, companies must accept that *customers* are now in charge, and winning their business means creating a *customer-led marketing culture*.

This simple notion is in fact driving a fundamental shift in the way companies must adapt to do business with today's customers. A customer-led marketing culture has various consequences for today's marketing leaders at both B2C and B2B companies. Here are a few:

Customers dictate the agenda

Companies should no longer expect customers to turn to them solely based on past successes and reputation. If they don't serve customers' evolving demands and behaviour they will simply be left aside. *Microsoft's* stubborn reliance on Window PCs and *Blackberry's* keen focus on e-mail devices hurt both companies as its users have clearly shown preference for newer, more sophisticated mobile computing devices. Under *StayaNadella's* leadership Microsoft recently changed course by starting to give Windows away to tablets and mobile devices makers in an effort to win back its client base. While it's a bold move for the software firm, customers will have the final say.

Customers set the terms of engagement

Thanks to changes in technology new use cases have emerged, allowing customers to choose how and under what conditions they do business with their suppliers. Airlines like *Air France KLM* now let customers interact with them over a range of channels - phone, ticket office, mobile messaging, Website, Facebook, Twitter or Mobile Apps. Depending on your given context and preferences you have multiple ways to get flight information and book ticket, manage trip preferences, get travel change notifications and obtain your boarding pass. Companies who don't offer the interactions and service levels that clients expect will see them migrate elsewhere.

Customers increasingly expect to collaborate in developing products

Today's information technology enables us to connect and communicate with others regardless of time or place. This has bred an always-on, social and collaborative culture among today's generation of clients. A few companies are already using such capabilities to give their clients a say in improving existing products and developing new ones. *Salesforce.com* with its Cloud-based CRM, marketing and customer service offer gives users dedicated channels to recommend improvements and additional features to its service platforms. Following careful scrutiny, certain ideas are integrated in their product roadmaps. The most popular new and improved features are announced publicly at *Dreamforce*, the company's yearly user conference.

Customers want products tailored to them

In today's age both consumers and businesses expect products and services that can be tailored to their particular needs and behaviour. For companies this means designing and bringing to market platform-based offers allowing each client to be fitted individually. Through its *NikeiD* service, the sporting goods provider gives its buyers the ability to customize a wide range of shoes and apparel to the desired colour, design and fit. Similarly, with its iPhone and iPad, *Apple* give users the choice of device memory, data connectivity and colour, as well as access to a growing range of Apps used to personalize each device to a growing range of needs. Following the *BYOD* movement, it has also included dedicated networking and security features for business users.

Customers expect companies to listen and learn

Today's generation of consumer and business people are increasingly willing and able to speak out about their experiences dealing with companies, both good and bad. Besides helping friends and peers, they expect companies to learn about their experiences to improve. Companies like *Oracle* moderate public forums like the *Customer Concepts Exchange* on *LinkedIn*. This allows them to hear what's really on their clients' minds in order to keep its enterprise offer relevant to their changing needs. Similarly, our mobile service provider *B&YOU* uses its *blog* and other social network pages to actively responds to each client's queries, complaints, while listening to feedback. Finally, third-party customer feedback sites like *Trustpilot* and *Feefo* now offer Web retailers the ability to easily collect, track and monitor clients review in order to learn about their experiences and improve.

Customers demand honest interactions with their chosen suppliers

In a world where customers are speaking out they demand to be treated with respect and for companies to take responsibility for their injustices. As *Amazon Prime* customers my family receives unlimited, next-day delivery on most items. That's why after three redirected deliveries from one of their courier services we logged a complaint with the Web retailer. With few questions asked, the retailer took swift action and they have since fulfilled every delivery commitment, even after reinstating the courier originally at fault.

Companies like *Salesforce.com*, *Nike*, and *Amazon* have been successful in instilling a customer-led marketing culture across their organization. However most companies are still trying to figure out this customer revolution that's charging straight towards them.

The challenge for marketing leaders at those companies is to create a competitive advantage using a deeper understanding of what their clients really value, while finding ways to give it to them better than the competition. Companies that are unable to do so will end up locked in a battle over transaction-based business from low-value clients.

As a business, it is important to operate within the boundaries of ethical and professional behaviour. As digital marketing takes center stage, knowing where to draw the line can be a bit blurred. Social media sites and platforms can be a bit risqué depending on the user. As an organisation that operates under a certain set of laws, how do you engage your audience while still maintaining distance from personal opinions?

What Exactly is Digital Marketing?

Digital marketing is the process of promoting a brand using a variety of online tactics. These tactics include having a website, blogs, social media, mobile marketing and more. Although similar to traditional advertising, the reach occurs almost instantaneously and is more engaged with the public. The advertising is more sophisticated and can be tailored to specific audiences.

There are a number of things to consider when dealing with ethics of digital marketing. There are a number of ethical traditions:

- Ethics of virtue

Personal character driven and decision driven

- Utilitarianism

Considering the greatest good. This is making a decision that is judged as ethical or unethical based exclusively on outcomes or consequences.

- Duty-based theory

Putting the consequences aside. This is when a decision is judged as ethical or unethical based solely on the intentions or reasons of the party making a decision.

When considering utilitarianism and digital marketing, the following apply:

- Digital and new media marketing use the utilitarian argument.
- Using egoism benefits one individual or organisation instead of all.
- There are a number of benefits, including targeted advertising, low search costs, more interesting and relevant websites.
- The costs include reduced privacy and fears of big brother.

In the bigger realm of things, it may be wise to follow standards of conduct based on the American Bar Association (ABA). They have specific guidelines that discuss advertising, rules for blogging, social media, and marketing activity. While the rules change based on state, having your general counsel develop a set of rules and regulations based on these documents can cover you in the event any legal matters come to light.

Here is a general overview:

- False statements

Don't do it. When advertising and using social media, it is important to be as transparent and truthful as possible. Users appreciate brands that can own up to their flaws, missteps and mistakes.

- False promises

Don't do it. You should be able to stand by every statement you make regarding promotions and advertising. If you are advertising a prize, make sure you stick to the terms and conditions. Any deviation could be a social nightmare.

There are a number of ethical issues in digital media, including:

- There are a number of vulnerable customers.
- Benefits vs. costs
- There is a lack of transparency.
- Ownership of information
- Concerns of trust and integrity

What are some Ethical Issues in Social Media?

Social media has a number of ethical issues that can harm the integrity of your digital marketing efforts:

- There is some confusion on what social media tools are. They are designed for content creation and communication. They are not specifically designed to be marketing tools.
- There is a lack of transparency of communicators
- Social media helps build relationships through real conversations. With social media, there tends to be a lack of trust.
- The benefits and costs of social media are sometimes skewed.
- Some people who use social media have aliases and are not authentic.

With so many ethical and legal issues present in the digital marketing space, how can companies successfully balance these issues in that space? There are a number of things that can be done to counteract ethical and legal issues for your organisation.

Firstly...

First, the company must be committed to being socially responsible for every move made through digital media. If not, the company faces legal implications. This could be as simple as having a disclaimer throughout your digital advertising pieces. Your marketing team should operate with the highest ethical standards, straying away from the risqué or questionable posts that could harm the brand.

In every promotion or contest, there needs to be a disclosure so your audiences will not feel as if they have been deceived. This is very simple. Either have a link that leads to the terms and conditions, or add a line at the bottom with pertinent information to make sure the organisation has operated with the best ethical judgement and the highest legal standards. Because brands are accountable for disclosing information to their audiences, it is wise to take the proper steps to remain protected. Here are a few suggestions:

- Media Kit

This should be provided to all the influencers and bloggers the company employs. It should include the best practices you follow as an organisation, along with other facts about the company. This way, your company will have legal standing in the event a blogger or influencer misrepresents the brand.

- Have an Authentic Network

This is key. If you have a strong network of influencers who are familiar with the brand and your ethical standing, you will not have to worry about whether or not they will misrepresent your brand.

- Media Audits

Your marketing team should be tracking your social content on a quarterly basis to ensure your posts are clearly labeled. If you find some of those posts are not in compliance, you can track the influencers and have them make the fix.

- Use the Word "Sponsored"

This is a quick and easy way to ensure your digital media is always covered. Using the word "sponsored" on all your digital campaigns and other media will alert your audiences it is a sponsored post from your brand.

- Open the Lines of Communication

When using digital media, it is best to maintain an open door policy and communicate with your audiences on a consistent basis. This not only helps build brand integrity, but can help in the event of a mishap. When audiences trust you, it is easier for them to forgive a mistake, rather than having disgruntled customers that make things worse by sharing their experiences on social media.

On the legal side, there are three main issues affecting digital marketers:

- Privacy and Data Collection

In order to be legally compliant, you must notify people prior to collecting their personal information, although the UK may have more permissive laws for current customers. It is important to list in your privacy policy the types of information you collect; how you share the information; the process in place that will allow those customers to review and change their information; and the effective date of the policy. If there have been changes to the policy, those dates must also be included.

Having a privacy policy on your site specifically stating that moving on through the site will be an agreement to collect their information is key. If you need to take it a step further, add a box that will solidify their agreement.

Cloud Storage and Security Methods

You must make sure all customers know you have protocols in place to secure their sensitive information. There should also be disclaimers on how this is done, and whether or not your information gathering process is SSL protected.

- Intellectual Property

This is by far the most complicated issue facing digital marketing. Protecting your intellectual property through trademarks and copyright is crucial in this day and time. It is just as important to make sure you have not used anyone else's trademark or copyright. How can you accomplish this?

- Register your trademark.
- Copyright your marketing language.
- Advertising

Under the FTC, all advertising and marketing must be above board with no elements of unfair or deceptive advertising. There is also an anti-spam law in effect in the US, which is called CAN-SPAM

which could affect your global digital marketing efforts. There are a number of guidelines under the CAN-SPAM act that should be followed for compliance.

Having an attorney working with your marketing team will assist in drafting ethics and legal policies for your organisation that will protect you in every aspect of your digital marketing efforts. Understanding the ethics and legalities of digital marketing can help your company avoid litigation and questions about your ethical integrity now and in the future.