

CHAPTER 12

Finalizing and implementing the IMC plan

The planning process discussed in the last chapter yields all of the information needed to put together the integrated marketing communication (IMC) plan. The overall context for the plan is provided by the brand's marketing plan, the target audience is identified, and an understanding of how they make brand decisions established. The creative positioning and objectives are determined, and a set of media options appropriate for delivering the message selected. Now it is time to put it all together.

In this chapter we shall look at how the knowledge gained through the IMC strategic planning process is used in finalizing a plan for the actual IMC campaign, and how to implement it. Finalizing a plan requires identifying the touch points in the decision process where marketing communication is likely to have the most significant effect on a brand decision, the communication tasks required at each of these touch points, and media appropriate for accomplishing these tasks. Once this is determined and the plan detailed, it is time to implement the plan. A creative brief is prepared to establish the parameters for message execution, and the appropriate media selected to optimize the delivery of the message. The manager is then in position to deliver an effective IMC campaign for the brand.

■ Finalizing the plan

Once the strategic planning process is complete, the manager is in a position to begin finalizing a plan for implementing an IMC campaign. Based on the understanding of how purchase decisions are made in the category, in conjunction with target audience objectives and the communication strategy, the manager must decide whether or not the brand's marketing communication goals:

- 1 Can be satisfied with a *single* message directed at one primary target audience, using one primary type of marketing communication (e.g. advertising, direct-mail, brochures, etc.) or
- 2 If a number of communication tasks should be considered, directed at one primary target, but to different roles in the decision process; different messages to different targets; and/or utilizing various types of marketing communication directed to different times or places in the decision process.

If the brand's communication objective can be satisfied by a single message and one primary medium based on what was learned from the strategic planning process, the manager can proceed directly to selecting the most appropriate medium and to finalizing a creative brief for the development of the message (creative briefs are discussed later on in this chapter).

It is important to understand that even if all that is necessary is a single message delivered through one primary medium, this is still IMC. If a brand has gone through a strategic planning process such as the one described in Chapter 11, and all potential options were considered, but

in the end one message delivered to the target audience through one primary medium satisfies the brand's communication objective, we would argue this is still an IMC program. It only means that at this particular point in time, this is all that is needed. Of course, this is rarely the case, but it underscores the importance of seeing IMC as a *planning process*. IMC is an ongoing process. Market dynamics could change, and different messages in other media might become necessary. The brand will be ready to respond to these changes because the manager has been through an IMC planning process.

When a more detailed plan is required, which again is almost all of the time, it will be necessary to first determine the important touch points in the decision process where marketing communication can be most effective, second establish the communication tasks needed at each of these touch points, and finally select the appropriate media to deliver the message.

Identifying touch points

In the last chapter a behavioural sequence model was introduced, underscoring the need to understand consumer brand decisions as a *process* involving multiple stages with potentially several people involved, playing different roles in that process. Finalizing a consumer decision model like the behavioural sequence model (BSM) makes it possible to organize all of the available knowledge about how brand choices are made in a category into a usable form for strategically integrated communication planning. An effective IMC plan can only be achieved if it is based on the decision process for a brand.

This understanding is extremely valuable because the manager must be able to identify those places in the decision process where marketing communication can have a positive impact upon brand choice. One might think about these places where marketing communication may influence the brand decision as touch points. It will be these *touch points* that provide the framework for the IMC plan.

Many of those who are interested in IMC have pointed out the importance of a solid understanding of the consumer in the effective implementation of IMC programs. In fact, it is important to look carefully at how consumers behave and see the world *before* it is possible to develop an effective IMC plan. The BSM is an ideal way of gaining this insight. It is indeed this insight into the consumer, more than anything else, which will help identify the touch points for effectively implementing an IMC program.

In order to help pull this together and demonstrate how one goes about identifying the important touch points in a decision process, consider the hypothesized BSM shown in Figure 12.1 for a word-processing system. Suppose a company is marketing an innovative new word-processing system, and has developed this BSM of how companies go about deciding upon introducing new systems into their operations. Given this understanding of the decision process, what does it suggest about how

Need arousal	Brand consideration	Purchase	Usage
Users of current system/managers as initiator Dealers or outside consultants as initiator	Users/managers as influencers Dealers or outside consultants as influencers Manager as decider Senior management as decider	Manager or purchasing agent as purchaser	Users/manager as user

Figure 12.1
Decision roles for an hypothesized BSM for a word processing system

best to positively effect the decision with marketing communication? Let us think through this process, which is in effect what a manager would be doing in finalizing an IMC plan. It is obvious that in the real world this would be a complex decision process, with multiple potential target audiences, but for this example we shall utilize only the generic decision stages. As we look at the BSM, there is no doubt that more than a single message in one medium will be needed. Can one really imagine that a single advertising campaign, let alone a single promotion of some kind, would be able to do the job? Of course not.

Looking at the *need arousal* stage we see that a number of people might be involved. At the simplest level, the users of the current system in an initiator role might be complaining to their manager that they can't get the increasing workload out on time. On the other hand, the manager in charge may be dissatisfied with the quality of the work, as the result of seeing or hearing about better alternatives. The need of the users or managers may be aroused without marketing communication if the work is falling behind, but if a brand wishes to help stimulate need, some form of marketing communication will be required. Since it is a *new* system being marketed, it will be necessary to communicate with both those involved as initiators within a company and those in the trade, which will be asked to carry and sell the new system. At the very least there will be two target audiences participating at the need arousal stage who must be aware of the new system, and begin to form a positive attitude towards it.

Once initial interest has been aroused, at the brand evaluation stage the potential user and the trade will begin to form attitudes about the

various alternative systems available. The same individuals who were involved as initiators will also probably fill the role of influencer as well. But, others could also play a part. Consultants may be called in, and at some point during the evaluation senior management will become involved. At this stage, managers and senior management will assume the role of decider.

Does it make sense to use the same message for everyone involved? While the message to the trade (both consultants and distributors), users, and managers should be basically the same (and certainly reflect the same look and feel), the medium of delivery will likely vary. Messages to senior management will certainly be different. Management is not interested in the technical aspects of the system, but they are interested in 'value' issues. There would appear to be a number of different marketing communication opportunities as this stage in the decision process. Additionally, if the brand does not already have a database in place, it would be a good time to begin. If there is one, it should be updated during this stage.

At the *purchase* stage, the manager or perhaps a purchasing agent, will be involved in the actual purchase. What message, if any, might we wish to deliver at this stage that differs from earlier material? The trade may wish to follow-up with an incentive promotion; the brand may wish to send direct mail to those the trade has indicated have shown interest in the new system.

Finally, what should be done during the *usage* stage? At the very least, it would make sense to do something to reinforce the manager's choice of the new system. Some form of direct mail would be appropriate, but so too would general advertising that reinforces overall brand image. This positioning affects not only the manager, but also those who are actually using the new system.

Even using only the four generic decision stages in this example, one can see that there are a number of potential touch points where marketing communication can help inform brand choice. The task of the manager is to now identify the communication tasks that will be necessary to address these touch points, and then to set priorities in terms of what is essential for brand success, and what else might be helpful. Then, from this set of communication tasks the manager determines what will be affordable given the budget. In other words, the foundation has been laid for an effective IMC plan.

Identifying communication tasks and media options

The important touch points in the decision process reflect where marketing communication will have the best opportunity of positively influencing the decision in favour of a brand. The manager must next consider the communication tasks necessary for each touch point. This means identifying the relevant target audience at each stage in the decision process and what marketing communication is expected to accomplish at each stage.

Finally, in the development of the IMC plan, the manager must identify what appropriate media options are available to deliver the message.

Communication tasks

At each touch point in the decision process there may be a number of potential target audience roles involved. These must be carefully considered, and those most likely to be responsive to marketing communication at that point identified. At the same time, the manager must decide exactly what is required of marketing communication at each touch point in order to positively influence the decision process. Together, these decisions identify the communications tasks required.

Target audience What specific members of the target audience should be addressed at each stage, and what roles are they playing? It would be rare indeed for all of the potential target audience members in all of their roles to be included. This is where the manager must begin making choices. Which target audience members in what roles are critical? These become the primary target audiences at that stage. One may also identify secondary or even tertiary audiences, in the event that there is enough in the budget to consider them after all the primary target audiences for each stage is addressed.

Communication objectives Next, the manager needs to translate the appropriate communication effects into specific communication objectives for each stage. For example, brand awareness is always an objective, but what kind (recall versus recognition); and is it necessary to raise or simply maintain the awareness? With brand attitude, is it necessary to educate the target audience? Does the message at that point need to interest the target audience in the brand, stimulate enquiry, give them a good feeling, or underscore a unique feature? Should brand purchase intention be a commitment to call and make a reservation or place an order; or to ask for more information? Should the target audience request the brand specifically, say from an investment broker or health care provider; or pick the brand on their next visit to the store?

What is needed here is a clear, concise interpretation of the proper communication effects required to meet the overall communication objectives for the IMC campaign. This can be a very involved process, drawing together all of the knowledge and understanding that came out of the strategic planning process. To illustrate, let us look at just some of the possible communication tasks associated with each stage of the generic decision model.

What communication effects are likely to be relevant to need arousal? Since this is the stage when someone begins to think about possible purchase or usage of a brand, raising brand awareness will be a primary objective. An initial favourable brand attitude will also be needed, especially for low-involvement decisions. It is clearly not enough for people to simply be

aware of a brand at this initial stage. Some tentatively positive attitude will also be required if the brand is to remain a contender in the decision process. But the manager must also consider category need here. It may not be necessary, but one should always ask if the target audience is both experienced *and* active in the category.

At the brand evaluation stage one must be concerned with both brand attitude and brand purchase intention effects. For low-involvement decisions, the tentatively favourable brand attitude built during need arousal must be reinforced, providing again what Maloney (1962) called 'curious disbelief', leading to a positive intention to try. For high-involvement decisions, it is essential that enough appropriate information is provided at this stage because the target audience must be both informed *and* convinced. At the same time, if dealing with positive motives, one must be concerned with nurturing the appropriate feelings as well. Authentically reflecting the emotion involved in decision processes involving positive motives implies more than just a favourable attitude. A positive intention to buy or use the brand is needed, and this will follow from a favourable evaluation owing to the correct emotional associations.

But deciding to choose a brand does not guarantee it will actually be purchased or used. So at the actual purchase stage it will be necessary to ensure that the positive brand attitude is reinforced, and that the brand purchase intention is actually carried out. During usage, messages should help continue reinforcing brand attitude and encourage re-purchase or continued use of the brand. All of these decision stage-communication effects relationships are summarized in Figure 12.2.

Decision stage	Communication effect
Need arousal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of category need • Raise brand awareness • Tentative brand attitude
Brand consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build positive brand attitude • Convincing benefit claim for high-involvement strategies • Establish authentic emotional link for transformational strategies
Purchase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce positive brand attitude • Ensure positive brand purchase intention
Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce positive brand attitude • Encourage repeat brand purchase intention

Figure 12.2
Decision stage-
communication
effect relationship

Media options

Once the manager has determined the communication tasks, it is necessary to identify appropriate media options for delivering the message at each

touch point in order to accomplish the task. This is where the manager specifies exactly what media options are available to reach the target audience, consistent with the primary communication objective for the task. How can recognition awareness be sustained? Should print advertising, billboards, or coupons be used? Will broadcast advertising or direct mail be appropriate? To facilitate purchase, should the brand use in-store banners or special displays? What about incentive promotions? This may be a good place to point out that if multiple media are used in an IMC campaign, it is done because of the specific appropriateness of the various media to the communication tasks, *not* from any sense of 'synergy' (Dijkstra, 2002).

IMC planning worksheet

The touch points identify those stages in the decision process where IMC can positively effect the brand decision, communication tasks establish what marketing communication must accomplish at each of those points, and media options are selected that are appropriate for those tasks. A good way of summarizing this is with an IMC planning worksheet along the lines of the one shown in Figure 12.3.

Touch points for decision stages	Communication tasks		Media options
	Target audience	Communication objectives	

Figure 12.3
IMC planning worksheet

The first column lists is the touch points that were identified from a BSM or some other model of the consumer decision process for the category. In the next two columns the specific target audiences and their role, and the communication objectives making up the communication tasks, are listed for each touch points. The last column provides those media options appropriate for the corresponding communication tasks. Summarized in this way, the manager may objectively review the various communication tasks likely to positively influence the brand decision along with appropriate media options for each, and consider what would best fit the brand's overall objective and budget.

To illustrate what we have been discussing, let us consider the case of Acuvue, and look at what was involved in the development of the IMC plan for the introduction of disposable contact lenses. This is a particularly good case to consider because it involves a somewhat complex decision process where both the patient as consumer and their doctor or eye care professional are involved. Figure 12.4 offers an overview of the eyeglass lens decision process, and illustrates the interrelationship between patient and doctor considerations. This model reflects what was learned from a BSM, and from it comes the significant touch points. You can see that both the patient and doctor are involved together in making the decision to use disposable contact lenses, and this will clearly require a carefully IMC program.

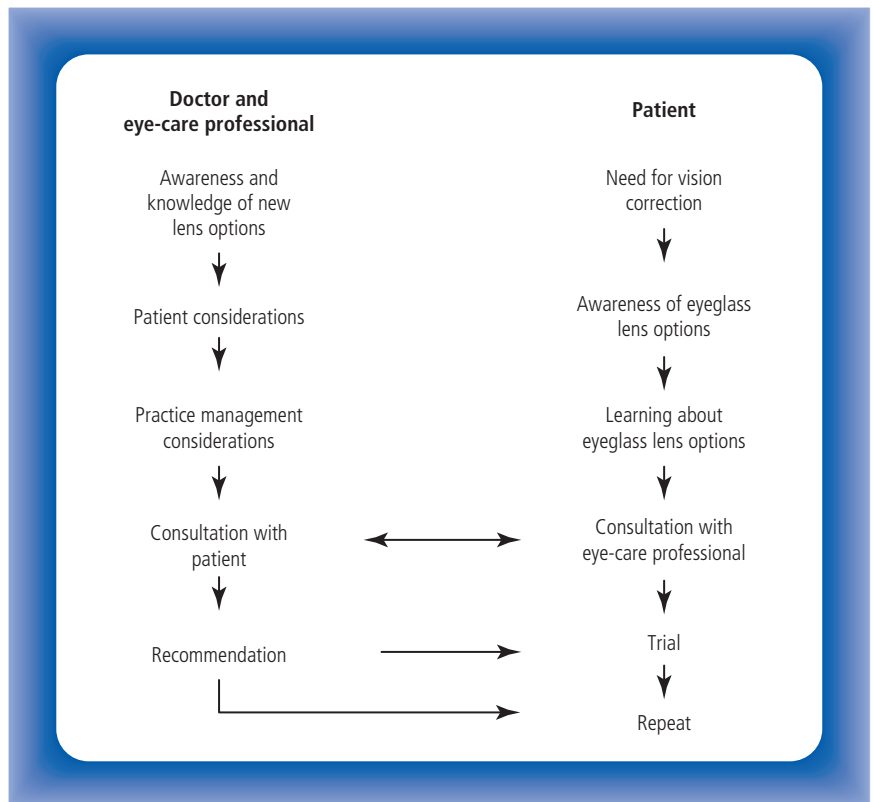


Figure 12.4
Overview of
prescription lens
decision process

Using the IMC planning worksheet just described, the manager can summarize the communication tasks and media options available for each touch point, as we see in Figure 12.5 for patients and Figure 12.6 for doctors. What these worksheets suggest for the IMC plan are discussed below.

Looking at the first touch point for patients, *Awareness Need and Options*, although family members and friends could play an important role as initiators and influencers, the primary target audience will be those who currently wear prescription eyeglasses or contact lenses. At

Touch points	Communication tasks		Media options
	Target audience	Communication objective	
Awareness of need and options	Current prescription eyeglass and contact lens users as initiators and influencers Doctor and eye-care professional as initiator and influencer	Create awareness of disposable contact lenses Build brand awareness and initial brand attitude	Broadcast and print advertising Direct mail to doctors, advertising in professional journals, professional conferences
Learning about options	Current prescription eyeglass and contact lens users as influencers and deciders	Strengthen brand awareness Build brand attitude by providing information to convince	Print advertising Point-of-purchase (for doctor's office) Direct mail Internet
Consultation and decision	Current prescription eyeglass and contact lens users as influencers and deciders Doctors and eye-care professionals as influencers	Strengthen positive brand attitude Stimulate brand purchase intention	Point-of-purchase (for doctor's office) Incentive promotions via direct mail, point-of-purchase or Internet
Usage and reinforcement	Current prescription eyeglass and contact lens users as users and influencers	Brand purchase intention Maintain brand attitude	Broadcast and print advertising Direct mail

Figure 12.5
Patient IMC planning worksheet

this first touch point in the decision process, category need must be initiated. But because only one brand is available (Acuvue), creating awareness and initial interest in disposable contact lenses will correspond to brand awareness and initial brand attitude. The best way of accomplishing these communication objectives will be with traditional advertising in broadcast and print. At the same time, for the doctor's role in the *patient's* decision, it will be necessary to build brand awareness along with a clinical understanding of its performance in order to stimulate interest in looking more deeply into them. Obviously, the doctor must feel comfortable in bringing disposable contact lenses to the attention of their patients or recommending them. Much of this initial awareness and attitude will follow from the patient advertising, but must be reinforced by more targeted communication through advertising in professional journals, direct mail, and at professional conferences.

At the *Learning about Options* touch point, the most logical point for the patient to seek information about disposable contact lenses is from their doctor or eye-care professional. This will require providing them with brochures or other merchandising material not only for point-of-purchase

Touch points	Communication tasks		Media options
	Target audience	Communication objectives	
Awareness of needs and options	Doctor and eye-care professional as initiator and influencer Sales force as initiator and influencer	Create awareness of disposable contact lenses Build brand awareness and initial brand attitude	Broadcast and print advertising (to patients) Professional journals, direct mail, professional conferences Sales force collateral and merchandising kits
Learning about options	Doctor and eye-care professional as influencer and decider	Build positive attitude for both disposable contact lenses and brand	Professional journals Professional conferences Direct mail
Practice management considerations	Doctor and eye-care professional as influencer and decider Sales force as influencer	Build positive brand attitude Link brand to practice	Point-of-purchase merchandising program Joint program through channels marketing
Acquisition and review	Doctor and eye-care professional as purchaser, user and influencer	Build positive brand purchase intention Reinforce positive brand attitude	Incentive promotions Direct mail Professional journals Patient advertising in television and print

Figure 12.6
Doctor and eye-care professional IMN planning workshop

(the doctor's or eye-care professional's office), but also for possible inclusion as statement stuffers or self-contained mailers for the doctor to send to patients. Additionally, on-going advertising, especially print where there is more time to process, will continue to build brand awareness and attitude. Also, toll-free numbers and the Internet offer opportunities to provide more information.

To facilitate the actual purchase at the *Consultation and Decision* touch point, the patient must consult with the doctor and try the product. Again, this will require good point-of-purchase material and possibly a promotion to reinforce positive brand attitude and purchase intention. At the final patient touch point, *Usage and Reinforcement*, it will be necessary to reinforce confidence in the decision, building and sustaining positive category and brand attitude. Here traditional advertising with television and print can reassure the patient, and give them the comfort of feeling part of a much wider group of users than may actually be the case. Direct mail can also help reinforce the decision, perhaps also including an incentive to continue using.

Now that we have considered the patient along with the doctor's participation in their decision, let us briefly look at the two touch points dealing specifically with the doctor and eye-care professional, where it is important to reinforce for them the positive business side of the decision. At the *Practice Management Consideration* touch point, independent of satisfying the patient's needs, doctors must be attentive to the impact of what they dispense in their practice. A key concern, of course, is patient demand. A program to acquaint them with the patient IMC support can address this issue. Additionally, educating them regarding the brand's potential contribution to their business practice can be accomplished via merchandising programs, direct mail, sales calls, and professional seminars. Also, positive brand attitude can be built by using some form of channels or tactical marketing to specifically associate the practice with the brand. At the last touch point, *Acquisition and Review*, promotion incentives can be offered to stimulate brand purchase intention, along with continued reinforcement of brand attitude via patient and trade advertising in television and print.

This example not only underscores the often complex nature of the decision process, but also how many communication tasks can be involved in putting together an effective IMC plan. The IMC planning worksheet offers the manager a good way of looking at all of the options available. It suggests what will be needed to meet communication objectives, and the media options that can be used. In effect, it provides an outline for completing the IMC plan.

This does *not* mean that the manager now has the 'answer'. What is provided is a summary of the best reading of everything known coming out of the strategic planning process, and what the brand hopes to accomplish with its marketing communication program. If the budget was large enough, it would be possible to proceed directly to implementing everything outlined in the worksheet. Unfortunately, that is rarely the case. Realistic budget constraints will no doubt limit what may be accomplished. But using the worksheet as a guide, it will be possible to make more efficient *and* effective decisions on which communication tasks to implement in order to most effectively drive brand success. It will be these decisions that inform the final IMC plan.

■ Implementing the plan

Once the communication tasks required have been identified and the IMC plan completed, it must be implemented. This means creating the advertising and promotion called for, and determining how best to deliver it. In previous chapters we have considered what is necessary to create effective marketing communication. But before *any* marketing communication can be created, a creative brief is required. This is what ensures the executions created reflect the IMC plan. We shall deal with this next, and then look at how media is selected to address the communication tasks identified in the plan.

The creative brief

It is the creative brief that ensures that the results of the strategic planning process inform message execution, and that everyone is on the same page. In fact, all of the key people involved in the planning and execution of an IMC campaign should ideally be part of the development of a creative brief. This would include account executives, planners, and creative from the agency, as well as brand management from the company; or, whatever individuals in comparable positions are involved if the brand is not using a traditional advertising agency. The reason it is so important to include all of those playing a key role in the process is that once completed, the creative brief provides the consensus of how the message will be executed, and the benchmark against which the resulting advertising and promotion will be evaluated.

The creative brief format outlined in this section includes all of the points that are essential to an effective creative execution. Many companies and advertising agencies have their own way of writing a creative brief, but most will in some fashion or other cover the 10 key areas discussed here. Overall, one might think of a creative brief in three sections: one that helps define the task at hand, one that is principally concerned with the creative objectives, and one that is concerned with executional elements.

Task definition

The first four points of the creative brief deal with task definition: Key market observation, source of business, customer barrier/insight, and target audience. The purpose of these points is to help answer why the IMC program is being put together. What is the brand hoping to accomplish, who in the market are being addressed with this creative, what do they already know, think, or feel about the brand, what is the message trying to effect? All of this information should be available from the marketing plan and strategic planning process. The four points that help define the specific task are:

- 1 *Key market observation* – What one point can the brand make about the market that will help the creatives understand and believe in the rest of the brief? There is no need to be exhaustive, just provide the basics.
- 2 *Source of business* – Where, specifically, is the business expected to come from? One is not looking for general descriptions here, but specific sources (e.g., current holders of long-term bonds, people unhappy with the restrictions on their current brand, etc.).
- 3 *Consumer barrier/insight* – What one thing is known about the potential target audience that may need to be overcome, or that may help reach them? What do they know, or think they know about the brand or product category; how do they feel about it; how interested are they in it; how do they distinguish between different brands?
- 4 *Target market* – What is the most vivid description that can be offered of the types of individuals to whom this communication will be directed? This description must go further than a simple listing of

demographics or even lifestyle characteristics. It is important to provide enough information for the creatives to be able to picture in their mind's eye whom they are addressing. Copywriters like to imagine they are talking directly to an individual, and specifically in their decision role (Kover, 1995).

Objectives and strategy

The next four points deal with communication objectives and strategy. What one is seeking to do here is help provide creatives with the best orientation possible, including the *one point* that, if communicated, will achieve the desired objective. Also, provide the evidence available to convince the target audience.

- 1** *Communication objectives and tasks* – What is the specific communications objective for this creative, and where does it fit within the total IMC program? Here is where to designate the primary objective (category need, brand awareness, brand attitude, brand purchase intention), and what communication tasks are to be accomplished.
- 2** *Brand attitude strategy* – What is known about the way consumers make decisions? Is the decision high or low involvement, and is the behaviour positively or negatively motivated? This positions the strategy into one of the four strategic quadrants of the Rossiter-Percy Grid.
- 3** *Benefit claim and support* – What is the *primary* consumer benefit and why? Identify the benefit claim that is most strongly associated with the relevant motivation, and provide the evidence that supports this choice. Anything that could be used in the communications to demonstrate or communicate the correctness of the benefit claim should be included. For example, if it is understood that consumer motivation is likely to centre upon incomplete satisfaction, pointing out comparative advantages and how they should be presented might be appropriate.
- 4** *Desired consumer response* – What is it that the target audience should know, think, feel, or do as a result of the communication? This should be a brief summary of what is expected to happen.

Executorial elements

The last two points in the creative brief deal with the actual execution, providing guidance on what sort of communication this should be and what information must be included. These last two points are:

- 1** *Creative guidelines* – What tactics are appropriate for the type of brand awareness involved, and for the strategic quadrant chosen?
- 2** *Requirements/mandatory content* – What are the requirements, either creatively, legally, or corporately, that must be included? Here, for example, is where the logo treatment is spelled out.

Now that we have detailed each of these points, there is one thing to always keep in mind when putting together a creative brief. It is important

to create a balance between there being enough information for clear guidance and providing so much information that the creative people working on the assignment are placed in the position of working out their own communication priorities from the information provided. Generally speaking, there are two areas where it is hard to give too much information – target market and support for the benefit claim. But for the rest, keep it to the bare essentials. There is a reason it is called a creative *brief*. It should be *complete* on one page (an example is shown in Figure 12.7). If more detail is desired, creatives should be referred to the marketing plan and results of the strategic planning process.

Product	Job	Date
Key market observations Consumer research identifies dissatisfaction with maintenance of contact lenses		
Source of business Current contact lens and prescription eyeglass wearers		
Consumer insight Residual concern over the idea of disposable lenses		
Target market Adult contact lens and prescription eyeglass wearer; doctors and eye-care professionals		
Communication objectives and tasks Seed category need and build awareness and brand attitude that communicates to the target the advantages of disposable lenses		
Brand attitude strategy High involvement informational brand strategy driven by problem-solution and incomplete satisfaction motives		
Benefit claim and support Acuvue disposable lenses are available. Support: no more solvents and cleaning		
Desired consumer response Accept the viability of disposable contact lenses and interest in looking into Acuvue lenses		
Creative guidelines Address potential concern over the idea of disposable lenses		
Requirements/mandatory content See your doctor or eye-care professional		

Figure 12.7
Patient creative
brief for disposable
contact lenses

Selecting the best media options

In developing the plan, the manager includes all the media options appropriate for each communication task. To implement the plan, it is now necessary to select the *best* media options from that set, and develop

a media plan. This will require the manager to identify a primary medium for each task, along with potential secondary media that might be appropriate. Once this has been done, the difficult task of allocating the available budget to the various communication tasks must be dealt with. While it is beyond the scope of this book to go into the details of media planning, we would like to offer one last planning worksheet to help visualize what is required in allocating the IMC media budget.

But before dealing specifically with these issues, we should look more broadly at media allocation for advertising-like versus promotion-like messages. The IMC planning worksheet helped identify whom the brand wanted to reach, and with what type of marketing communication, in order to satisfy the communication objective. This all bears significantly on IMC media strategy. Depending upon the communication tasks, either an advertising-like message, promotion-like message, or both, could be appropriate.

While mass media for advertising-like messages is often the best way to satisfy many communication tasks, when it is *not* the best solution, it is unlikely to figure in the media strategy at all. Of course, this is not a hard-and-fast rule, but it is a good rule of thumb. The reason for this lies in the general reach objectives of advertising and promotion. As we have seen, most of the time promotions are aimed at a more highly targeted audience or a narrow reach. Given the broad-based reach of mass media, it is unlikely to be efficient in support of a more narrowly based target audience.

Yet as we have seen, many promotions simply are not very efficient *without* corresponding or prior advertising support. This can be a real problem. But the key here is that with things like specialized print media, local radio, and cable television, traditional mass media can be adapted to more targeted audiences and narrower reach. When broad-based, mass markets are not the target, for effective IMC media planning the manager must begin to think of traditional advertising media in a more narrow way.

Media for advertising-like messages

While almost any medium can serve as a means of delivering an advertising message, those traditionally considered are mass media such as television, radio, newspapers and magazines, outdoor, and increasingly the Internet. As noted in the last chapter, when looking at the effectiveness of individual media in meeting brand awareness and brand attitude communication objectives, as a group, these traditional mass media tend to be more effective in satisfying brand awareness objectives than the more narrowly targeted media typically used for promotion.

In fact, the *best* overall media, period, is television (Barlow and Papaziou, 1980). It is the best way for achieving any of the communication objectives. It has also been shown in study after study that when television is compared with other mass media such as radio or magazines, messages delivered by television do a better job driving sales. There are several reasons for this. To begin with, television employs words and pictures, movement, and sounds. Radio offers words and sound, but no pictures or movement. Magazines offer words and pictures, but no movement or

sound. Television offers high reach, and can combine it with high-effective frequency. This is very difficult for either radio or magazines. Newspapers generally have the same problems as magazines.

Does this mean one should always consider television when selecting media for advertising? The general answer is yes. However, for many reasons television may not be a viable choice. Nevertheless, when possible, television should be the medium of choice for mass advertising, *except* for high-involvement, informational strategies.

Media for promotion-like messages

Are there such things as promotion media? Of course, only they are not usually thought about in terms of media. But in IMC planning it is important to think of any way in which an advertising or promotion message can be delivered as a medium within the overall media strategy. Promotion media would of course include mass media (as a group), but also such things as direct mail, FSIs (free standing inserts) and point-of-purchase. Again, each of these vehicles could be (and often all are) used to deliver an advertising-like message, but with the exception of mass media, the others are primary means of delivering a promotion. New media is not yet considered truly a 'mass' media, nor necessarily a 'promotion' media. Nevertheless, it can be appropriate depending upon the communication task. The best media for delivering the six consumer promotions introduced in Chapter 5 are discussed below (Figure 12.8).

Promotion	Media options
Trial promotions	
Coupons	Direct mail FSIs Internet
Sampling	Point-of-purchase Direct mail
Refunds and rebates	Mass media Point-of-purchase FSIs
Repeat purchase promotions	
Loyalty and loading devices	Direct mail Point-of-purchase
Premiums	Mass media Direct mail Point-of-purchase
Sweepstakes, games, and contests	Mass media Point-of-purchase

Figure 12.8
Media for basic
consumer incentive
promotions

Coupons: There are many ways of delivering coupons, but the most effective are direct mail and FSIs; and increasingly, through the Internet. Direct mail and the Internet offer greater flexibility in targeting, but FSIs are about half the cost. Coupons may also be offered at the point-of-purchase.

Sampling: The two best ways of delivering samples are at the point-of-purchase or with direct mail. Sampling in-store or at a central location is perhaps the least expensive way of sampling, and for many products it is the only effective way. Direct mail is somewhat limited by the type of sample one can mail, but with a good mailing list it has the advantage of being able to better target delivery.

Refunds and rebates: The primary medium for a refund or rebate promotion is mass media. The reason for this is that refunds and rebates must be 'announced' and explained. This is ideally accommodated with an advertising-like message. The next most likely means of handling a refund or rebate would be at the point-of-purchase or through an FSI.

Loyalty and loading devices: Depending upon the specific promotion, direct mail or point-of-purchase are the most likely media for a loyalty or loading promotion. Loyalty programs are perhaps best suited to direct mail, while most loading promotions are best delivered at the point-of-purchase. While loyalty and loading devices do not necessarily require advertising, it is often useful to include mass media announcements or explanations of the program, especially if they are aimed at a broad-based target audience.

Premiums: Much like refunds or rebates, to be successful a premium promotion will generally require mass media advertising to generate awareness and interest. This is especially true if the premium is aimed at a broad-based target audience. More narrowly targeted premium promotions utilize direct mail or point-of-purchase. Point-of-purchase can provide a good recognition cue for a brand's advertising, if well done, by including specific elements from the advertising (Keller, 1987). Regardless of the primary medium, any premium promotion will also want to utilize in-store merchandising.

Sweepstakes, games, and contests: Again, here is a situation where mass media is going to be required to announce and explain the promotion, unless it is aimed at a more targeted audience where direct mail will work. Also, as with premiums, point-of-purchase display will generally be needed.

Selecting primary and secondary media

In the last chapter we saw that the media selected for an IMC program must be able to facilitate the processing requirements of the communication objectives (visual content, time to process, and frequency). The principal difference between primary and secondary media in an IMC campaign is that primary media must be able to satisfy *all* of a brand's communication objectives while secondary media are selected to reinforce specific tactical concerns.

In effect, the primary medium selected should be the single most effective option, and capable of doing at least an adequate job on its own without using other media (always assuming that the budget is sufficient). The

key consideration in selecting primary media is that it addresses the combined requirements of both the brand awareness and the brand attitude objective.

Secondary media are used in IMC programs for three reasons (Rossiter and Percy, 1997). There may be important segments or niches that are not effectively reached by the primary medium. Secondly, it may be that one or more of the communication objectives would be more effectively satisfied with another medium. For example, while print should be the primary medium for a high-involvement informational product because of the need for sufficient time to process the message, television would do a better job of driving up awareness. This would be especially true with a new product introduction. Third, there could be specific tactical reasons for including other media at certain times during a campaign. Promotion, for example, as we have just seen, will likely use a secondary medium other than the primary medium carrying the advertising.

Next, we shall briefly review the primary and secondary media likely to be selected for the four basic types of advertising addressed in Chapter 4: consumer-oriented brand advertising (COBA), retail advertising, business-to-business (B2B) advertising, and corporate image advertising. While these are not hard-and-fast rules, they do reflect the general nature of the media appropriate for meeting overall IMC objectives.

COBA: For most widely distributed consumer products, the primary medium will be television. This is because television is generally the overall best medium for generating exposure and facilitating the processing of the message (except, of course, for high-involvement informational messages). A wide variety of secondary media are used to boost reach and provide support for specific communication objectives. For example, in a classic study Grass and Wallace (1974) showed that print, when used as a secondary media, can increase image transfer for a brand by using key visual elements from television.

Retail advertising: Most retail advertising has two jobs. It must advertise the store itself (image advertising) as well as the products it sells (brand advertising). The primary medium is likely to differ, depending upon the job. Retail store image advertising requires brand *recall* as well, and short-term brand purchase intention (visiting the store). This means that any local high-frequency media could be considered for the primary medium (e.g. broadcast or newspaper), which may then be supplemented by an appropriate secondary media.

Retail product advertising takes two forms: advertising for the store's own products, or re-advertising other brands the store carries. The primary medium used will vary, depending upon the specific characteristics of the retailer and its market. Because of the wide range of brands a retailer is likely to carry, newspapers are a good primary medium for re-advertising. In advertising or promoting its own products, local television and newspapers are effective.

B2B advertising: The key factors in selecting a primary medium for B2B advertisers are the size of the target audience and the decision-makers

involved (the target audience itself). With a small target audience, under 100 decision-makers, it is unlikely that any mass-media-based advertising would make sense. Personal selling should be all that is necessary, backed up with collateral material (brochures or pamphlets) for the sales call. As the target audience size increases, the reach of particular IMC options will help determine what is appropriate. Generally speaking, this will mean specialized print media. Trade publications will serve as the primary medium for lower-level decision-makers in the target audience, with direct mail or relevant business magazines for upper-level decision-makers. To the extent that any secondary media are needed, it is likely to simply be more targeted uses of other specialized print media.

Corporate image advertising: With corporate image advertising, the primary medium will vary with the size of the company. For smaller companies, or those with very localized target audiences, beyond the carry-over from the company's product-oriented marketing communication (primarily stimulated through logo or slogan associations), local public relations and sponsorships can be effective. Larger companies should be looking to drive *recognition* of the company name, and to build positive attitudes towards the firm. This means the primary medium should be television or print, with secondary media as appropriate.

Recall from Chapter 3 that in addition to corporate image, corporate *identity* is an important part of IMC. All companies must address their identity through IMC options appropriate for relevant internal and external communication; and public relations should be used whenever there is a positive story worth relating. As Rossiter and Percy (1997) have pointed out, it is incredible how many companies use corporate image advertising while ignoring the image-transmitting aspects of direct-contact media. As they put it, this is like a large-packaged goods brand running a great advertising campaign that is offset at the point-of-purchase by a terrible package.

Allocating the media budget

Once the primary and secondary media are selected the final step in finalizing a media plan to implement an IMC campaign is to determine how to allocate the media budget. Just as the IMC planning worksheet provides the manager an opportunity to summarize the critical considerations necessary for developing the IMC plan, we can also use a worksheet to help organize the information needed to help optimize the allocation of the media budget. Figure 12.9 illustrates what this might look like for the patient part of the disposable contact lens case discussed earlier. What it does is bring together from the touch points the various communication tasks that are to be accomplished and the various media options that will be needed to get the job done. This information comes directly from the IMC planning worksheet, and it looks at those media options in terms of primary versus secondary options. Across the top we have filled in the communication tasks that were identified, and down

	Communication tasks					
	Build category and brand awareness	Create category need and initial brand attitude	Provide incentive to consider	Seek positive brand purchase intention	Act as intention	Reinforce decision
Primary medium television						
Secondary media						
Magazines						
Newspapers						
Internet						
Point-of-purchase						
Direct mail						

Figure 12.9

Media allocation worksheet for complementary patient IMC plan

the side are the various media options that were selected as appropriate for each task. Actually, *specific* media should be included here (e.g. cable TV, newspaper, brochures, etc.), but for our example we are using general types of media. In this example, broadcast advertising has been chosen as the primary media, reinforced by various secondary media. Because the communication tasks reflect what needs to be done at the various stages of the decision process, it also serves as a timeline. The shaded areas indicate times when a particular option is not needed.

What the worksheet shows is that Acuvue should be using television advertising ongoing as the primary medium to stimulate category and brand awareness, and attitude for disposable contact lenses. Additionally, a number of secondary media have more specific roles for particular communications tasks. While television would do a generally good job in satisfying all of the communications tasks, because this is a high-involvement informational decision we know additional information will

be needed to convince the patient, and time to process it. Here is where newspapers and magazines can play a role, along with point-of-purchase merchandising material such as brochures and posters, direct mail, and the Internet. All of the secondary media provide an opportunity for delivering both advertising and incentive promotions (where and if needed).

Not shown here because this is the patient worksheet, but advertising to the doctor or eye-care professional will also find its way to the patient during consultation. For example, it will inform the doctor's recommendation, and it may include such things as flip-charts for the doctor to use in explaining disposable contact lenses. This, of course, underscores the importance of consistency for everything in the IMC campaign.

Looking at the summary worksheet, the manager now knows what is needed in order to accomplish the communication tasks in terms of primary and secondary media, and it only remains to set priorities and allocate the budget. The boxes in the worksheet would, of course, contain media costs for each task. One of the real advantages of using a worksheet like this is that it permits the manager to see at a glance where, and importantly *why*, the budget is being spent. If adjustments must be made, for example because there is simply not enough money to deal with all of the communication tasks, or if budget cuts are needed over the course of the campaign, any adjustments can easily be considered within the context of the overall IMC program.

Summary

The IMC plan is created out of the planning process. The target audience has been identified and an understanding of how they go about making decisions establish. This understanding helps the manager identify those touch points in the process where marketing communication is most likely to have a positive effect on the decision. The overall communication objectives that were established in the planning phase inform specific communication tasks that must be accomplished at each touch points in order to achieve that positive effect on the decision. Media options must then be selected that are compatible with the communication objectives in order to deliver the message.

In putting the plan together, it is helpful to look at the component parts in a way in which an assessment of all the options available may be considered. An IMC planning worksheet is one way of getting at this, where for each touch point identified the specific target audience and communication objectives associated with the communication tasks needed, along with the media options appropriate to deliver the message, are summarized. The ability to consider all of the opportunities to positively affect the brand purchase decision with a worksheet like this simplifies the manager's task in putting together the final plan. It enables the manager to optimize the IMC program for selecting those communication tasks that are essential, and then to decide what trade-offs must be made among the remaining opportunities because it is rare that the budget will be large enough to accommodate everything.

All of the ingredients are then in place to implement the plan. Based on the plan, the creative brief will be developed. It is important that when building the creative brief that everyone

involved with the brand's marketing communication be involved. The creative brief distills the plan to its essence, providing the direction for creative development. Everyone must be in agreement on that direction because the brief becomes the basis against which the final creative executions are evaluated.

The final step in implementing the plan is to select the best media for delivering the message. The IMC plan identifies the set of media options appropriate for each communication task, and now the manager must select the primary and secondary media that will best accomplish the job. But just as the manager must in almost all cases make trade-offs among the communication tasks, in the same way it is unlikely that every appropriate medium can be used. Trade-offs will be necessary because of budget constraints. Again, a worksheet can provide a useful way of summarizing the options a manager has to consider in order to more easily evaluate those options and make the best media budget allocation decision.

■ Review questions

- 1 How does the manager go about identifying touch points for the IMC plan?
- 2 How does an IMC planning worksheet help the manager in finalizing the IMC plan?
- 3 In Figure 11.4 (from the last chapter) the decision stages for a lamp purchase was illustrated. What are the important touch points likely to be?
- 4 Complete an IMC planning worksheet for these touch points.
- 5 What is necessary to implement the IMC plan?
- 6 What are the most important points to make in a creative brief?
- 7 Develop a creative brief for the introduction of a new 'healthier' soft drink.
- 8 What are the important criteria in media selection for the final IMC plan?
- 9 How do secondary media contribute to the effectiveness of the IMC plan?
- 10 How can a media budget allocation worksheet help the manager implement the IMC plan?

References

- Barlow, W.E. and Papaziou, E. (1980) *The Media Book*. New York: The Media Book, Inc.
- Dijkstra, M. (2002). *An Experimental Investigation of Energy Effects in Multiple-Media Advertising Campaigns*. Tilburg University, The Netherlands, Published Ph.D. Thesis.
- Grass, R.C. and Wallace, W.H. (1974) Advertising communication: Print vs. TV. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 14(5), 19–23.

- Keller, K.L. (1987) Memory factors in advertising: The effect of advertising retrieval cues on brand evaluation. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14(3), 316–333.
- Kover, A.J. (1995) Copywriters' implicit theories of communication: An exploration. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21(4), 596–611.
- Maloney, J.C. (1962) Curiosity versus disbelief in advertising. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 2(2), 2–8.
- Rossiter, J.R. and Percy, L. (1997) *Advertising Communication and Promotion Management*. New York: McGraw-Hill.