



CHAPTER 6

**New media
and other IMC
options**

Advertising and promotion define the two components of marketing communication, regardless of the medium used to deliver the message. Advertising-like messages are designed to 'turn' the target audience is toward the brand, building brand awareness and positive brand attitude, and promotion-like messages aim to 'move ahead' the brand by stimulating an immediate brand purchase intention.

In our discussion of advertising and promotion in the last two chapters we talked about each in terms of the traditional mass media generally associated with them. In this chapter we turn to some of the other ways in which advertising-like messages and promotion-like messages can reach their target audience. This will include the so-called 'new media' as well as other more non-traditional media, personal selling, and public relations.

In November of 2005, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on ten trends they felt were reshaping the advertising industry (Vrancia, 2005). The first is mobile marketing, which we shall address later, where adverts as text messages are sent directly to individual cell phones. Elaborate online campaigns now marry brand pitches with high-tech entertainment. For example, they describe a scenario where someone opens an e-mail that presents a fictional newspaper with a headline reading: 'Another slaying at Datadyne HQ'. There is a link that sends you to a video of an autopsy, and the camera pans down to a tag on the toe of the body with the person's name. A video game from Microsoft's Xbox is then advertised, with an invitation to send the link to a friend. If the link is forwarded, the person's phone rings and a recorded message from the video game's heroine announces, 'The job is done'. An e-mail then arrives from the heroine with a picture of another dead body, but with their friends name on the toe tag.

Product placements are now finding their way into the plots of entertainment programming. Innovative ways are being used to involve consumers in games or contests. Packaging and design are becoming more important. Adverts are now appearing in videogames. Spending on video game advertising was expected to grow from US \$100 million in 2004 to more than US \$500 million by 2007 (Interactive Advertising Bureau, 2004). Niche marketing is being directed to specific cultures and beliefs, with one executive of a firm that deals with predicting trends suggesting that 'the culture is the new media' (Vrancia, 2005).

New ways that are targeting consumers will permit customizing advertising, if not to individuals, at least to some common household denominator. Advertising is incorporating innovative new ways of delivering adverts, everything from single-advertiser issues of magazines to adverts with microchips embedded in them allowing for sound. And finally, as a result of all the changes in media, companies are looking outside of traditional marketing communication agencies, working with more groups, and giving assignments to smaller firms. This, of course, makes integrated marketing communication (IMC) even more important for effective communication of a brand's message; and, unfortunately, more difficult (Figure 6.1).

It is interesting to note that most of these trends in advertising involved non-traditional media; and those that do involve using more traditional media do so in very unique ways.

Figure 6.1
Advertising industry
trends. *Source:*
Adapted from the
Wall Street Journal,
21 November, 2005

1. Sponsoring content and sending text messages directly to cellphones
2. Elaborate interactive e-mails integrating advertising-like messages and high-tech entertainment
3. Weaving product placement into plots of entertainment programming
4. Engaging consumers in games or contests
5. Attention to importance of product and package design, even for low- and mid-priced brands
6. Advertising in video games
7. Marketing to a specific culture and its beliefs
8. Better targeting: 'addressability'
9. Innovative ways of presenting advertising in print
10. Using more specialized agencies

■ New media

There is no question that technology is changing the way in which people live. Inevitably this means new opportunities for marketing communication and how it might be used in an IMC campaign. As this section is being written, the world of Internet advertising has moved well beyond banner adverts; and mobile marketing has begun to make an impact. As you read this, things may have moved well beyond what we are about to discuss; just as what we are talking about here would not have been a part of a textbook written just 5 years ago.

Nevertheless, the really important point to bear in mind is that while 'new media' will continue to evolve and new means of delivering messages will be introduced, those messages will still be made up of text, audio, and visuals. Media changes, but how the mind processes the message remains the same. The strategic planning process remains the same. New media is only that; new ways of delivering a message to a brand's target audience that may or may not make sense as part of the brand's IMC program.

Internet

Global spending for advertising on the Internet was around US \$18 billion in 2005, up over 28% from the previous year. This compared with around US \$147 billion for television advertising, up about 4% (*Wall Street Journal*, 28 August 2006). Estimates are that online expenditures could grow to US \$150 billion by the year 2015 (Guth, 2005b). Much of this growth is expected to come from web video adverts. While currently

accounting for only a small proportion of web-adverts (around 2% in 2005), it is expected to grow significantly over the decade.

Yet, while Internet advertising shows strong growth, overall advertising spending has not experienced much growth over the same. If budgets experience the kind of cuts seen in the late 1990s and early 2000s, online advertising is likely to get hit just as hard as more traditional advertising (Guth, 2005a). Another potential roadblock to growth is the dislike of pop-up adverts. Users dislike pop-up adverts more than any other format, yet it is also the fastest-growing type of online advertising (Oser, 2004).

Despite the fact that the Internet is huge, the top 50 web companies account for nearly all Internet advertising spending, with most going to Yahoo, Google, AOL, and MSN. Like other media, this is largely a function of size, and the number of visitors they deliver. Daily user visits in 2005 ranged from 2.9 million at Google to 4.0 million at Yahoo (Angwin and Delaner, 2005). Google is testing the idea of offering diversified advertising, which would put them in direct competition with newspapers and online classified listing services. They now automatically scan the e-mail of their Gmail users (a free service Google offers), making money by charging advertisers each time a user clicks on their advert. Advertisers bid against each other in an online auction to have their adverts appear when a certain word appears in a search query.

Widgets, which are small computer programs that allow people to incorporate professional-looking content into their personal web pages on desktop computers, are seen by many major marketers as the next generation of advertising on the Internet. They see sponsoring widgets as a promising way to reach consumers because they integrate advertising onto their web pages. Widgets are considered a better approach than banner adverts and less annoying than video that takes over the screen. As of this writing, widgets are the only way a brand can get inside My Space pages. Reebok, for example, created a widget that allows users to display customized RBK shoes for others to critique (Steel, 2006).

Some other ways in which the Internet is being used to deliver online advertising include delivering advertising-like messages via video games; online radio where listeners can respond to an advert by clicking on a box at the station site to be directed to the advertised brand's Web site; entertainment programming created for the Web that weaves product endorsements into the storyline; the ability to stop video and click to purchase clothing worn by the actors; and in-text advertising, appearing on some mainstream journalistic Web sites, where a pop-up advert appears when the cursor is moved over a keyword.

Streaming video is also used to offer mini-movies where a brand features prominently. These videos are often cutting edge, and can quickly create an incredibly strong 'buzz'. BMW, on their BMWfilms.com site (separate from their home page), offer short streamed films produced by well-known producers and directors, and with well-known actors (Silberer and Engelhardt, 2005).

In addition to advertising on the Internet, promotion-like messages and specific incentive promotions are delivered on the Web sites such as

Fatwallet.com send out daily early-morning e-mail alerts for online bargains; sites like GottaDeal.com provide information about mail-in rebate; and sites such as CouponMountain.com and CouponCraze.com make it possible to print out coupons for both store and online retailers.

Mobile marketing

The new millennium saw an expanding use of Web-enabled mobile handsets. This was especially true in Scandinavian and Asian countries. While banner adverts appeared on cell phones as early as the year 2000 on the Pacific Rim, it did not immediately catch on in other areas because major carriers in the US and Europe feared it would not be acceptable to their customers. A recent study (Katsukura et al., 2005) reported that in the early 2000s, for example, roughly 55% of people in Japan had signed up for Internet access on their cell phones compared with only 12% in the US. But by the mid-2000s, major cell phone networks in the US (Sprint Nextel and Verizon) and the UK (Vodafone Group) had introduced advertising on their wireless information and entertainment services (Yuan and Bryan-Low, 2006). This was encouraged by advances in phone technology. Early cell phones were designed solely for calling, not downloading. But cell phones now offer large colour screens and data connections making them much like small computers.

The Mobile Marketing Association (2005) in the UK has defined mobile marketing as: 'The use of the mobile medium as the communications and entertainment channel between a brand and an end user. Mobile marketing is the only personal channel enabling spontaneous, direct, interactive and/or target communications, any time, any place.' But as pointed out by Vittet-Philippe and Navarro (2000), mobile marketing involves much more than simply mobile telephoning. The key is the target audiences' willingness to receive adverts on their mobile devices.

Advertising on mobile devices such as cell phones appeals to marketers because they can tightly targeted their messages, as well as control message environment and time of exposure. Additionally, the potential exists for better tracking of message exposure, and the construction of a database. Much like direct marketing (which is discussed in the next chapter), effective mobile marketing must be driven by consumer data (Peltier et al., 2003).

An interesting application of mobile advertising involves one of the oldest forms of advertising, outdoor. Outdoor advertising, in fact, has become the second fastest-growing form of advertising, behind the Internet. Billboards now have the ability to electronically beam information to cell phones.

■ Sponsorships and event marketing

Sponsorships play an important role in IMC, and involve a company or brand providing support for an event, organization, cause, or even a

particular individual. In return, the company has the right to display its brand name or logo, linked to the sponsored activity or individual, and to use the sponsorship in their other marketing activities. This makes sense for the company's brand because it enables them to be presented in a favourable environment where it has the potential of benefiting from an already favourable attitude toward the sponsored activity. Of course, the sponsored activity or individual must be viewed positively by the brand's target audience. Otherwise, it makes no sense.

Event marketing is similar to sponsorships, differing only in that with event marketing a company supports a specific event rather than an on-going relationship. In effect, event marketing is a one-off sponsorship. For example, supporting a Tsunami Relief Concert would be event marketing, compared with sustained support of an organization dedicated to helping victims of natural disasters, which would be sponsorship. Sponsoring the World Cup would be event marketing; supporting a particular team throughout the season, sponsorship. In Europe especially, brands are major sponsors of football teams. In fact, worldwide most sponsorships involve sports (Meenaghan, 1998).

Unfortunately, while there are obvious potential benefits to sponsorships and event marketing, there is very little evidence that they have a measurable effect upon sales or a company's stock price. With sponsorships, there is always the risk of negatively perceived over-commercialization, or a negative association resulting from problems tied to the sponsored activity or individual.

The Olympic Games, perhaps the most 'sponsored' event in the world, illustrate these potential problems. In the run-up to the games, one is inundated with messages from 'official sponsors' of the games, as well as tie-ins with specific athletes that are participating in the games. If there are incidents that lead to negative publicity with a sponsor or Olympic athlete, it could dampen enthusiasm for the games. A disappointing performance by a country's team could re-bounce negatively upon a sponsoring brand. Many studies have in fact shown very little positive lift from Olympic Games sponsorships (Crimmins and Horn, 1996; Kinney and McDaniel, 1996; Miyazaki and Morgan, 2001).

Nevertheless, if well conceptualized, sponsorships and event marketing can make a positive contribution to IMC. The key here is the same as with all other marketing communication: establish brand awareness and effectively build positive brand attitude. With brand awareness, the event or individual should have a clear association with the product (ideally), or the category need should be immediately linked to the brand name or logo.

To facilitate building positive brand attitude, there must be a clear association between the sponsored activity or individual and the primary brand benefit. Beer and sporting events make sense together because beer is associated with sports, and those attending sporting events are likely to be beer drinkers. The positive emotional benefits associated with sporting events by their fans will transfer to the brand. Tea and sporting events would not make sense. Nor would high-fashion brands like

Channel or Gucci make sense sponsoring sporting events, but a sportswear brand like LaCoste, perhaps. LaCoste would certainly fit with golf or tennis, but not formula one racing or NASCAR. The brand manager must ask if there is a good 'fit' between the brand and the event; just as the event manager should ask if there is a good 'fit' between the event and the brand (Gwinner and Eatin, 1999).

■ Product placement

Product placement may be defined as the reference to or actual inclusion of a product or service within some context in return for payment or other consideration. That context may be anything from movies and television programs to video games or even books. While generally referred to as product placements, in actuality, of course, one is talking about *brand* placement. Nonetheless, we shall use the more common term, product placement.

There are many issues surrounding the use of product placement, including ethical concerns and whether or not they are effective. Rossiter and Bellman (2005), for example, take a strong stance against the use of product placement, going so far as saying they are 'ethically contemptible'; because there is no guarantee the audience will understand an attempt is being made to persuade them. Even if the audience does understand, they argue it is unethical because there is an *intention* to deceive on the part of the marketer.

Sutherland (2006) expresses concern that regulatory agencies such as the Federal Communications Commission in the US and the Independent Television Commission in the UK are paying less attention to product placements, even as their use increases. His point is that product placements could warp the public image of what brands are popular (among other things) because people are not likely to make the connection between a brand appearing in a movie or video game and the fact that the marketer paid to have it there. He fears a 'slippery slope' where this lack of attention by regulatory bodies will see us move from the correct 'communication in camouflage' to 'persuasion by proxy' to 'cash for comment'. It was not until the mid-2000s that the European Parliament's culture committee gave approval for product placements. Yet despite this, not all the EU countries are keen to adopt it. In the UK product placement has long been a controversial issue, and even with EU approval adoption is not expected in the near term. Even though many US television shows are seen in the UK, product placement in that programming is pixilated (digitally blurred out) (Hall, 2007).

Beyond the ethical concerns, there is an issue of whether or not product placement works. There are certainly many anecdotal stories about the effectiveness of product placements. An oft-told story concerns the 1986 movie *Top Gun* where Tom Cruise is wearing Rayban Aviator sunglasses. It is said that this led to a turn-around in the company's fortunes, which

before the release of the movie was in financial difficulties (Fischer, 1996). Nevertheless, there are few empirical studies of product placement, and those that have been conducted are not encouraging (Johnstone and Dodd, 2000).

Assuming product placement can be effective, *how* the brand is placed will have an obvious impact. If a brand is clearly seen being used by a celebrity or specifically talked about, the potential effect will be greater than if it is simply part of the background (Semenik, 2002). If well placed, the most likely effect will be raising brand awareness and salience. But even this will require *conscious* attention to the brand.

The likelihood of product placement positively effecting brand attitude for significant segments of a brand's target audience is much more problematic. Even though the actual cost of a product placement in absolute terms is likely to be less than that for other forms of marketing communication, it is difficult to predict whether or not any positive effect will offset the cost of the placement. The key to effectiveness is the number of people *consciously* aware of the brand and positively associating it with the environment within which it is placed. While there may be implicit processing of the brand's placement, this will have *no* effect upon brand attitude or behaviour (Percy, 2006).

To be effective, product placements must stimulate explicit positive associations in memory with the celebrity or environment linked to the brand, and within the correct emotional context. If this occurs, the placement should contribute to brand attitude, because the audience may feel as if it has had a personal experience with what is going on. But this is a lot to ask of all but the most rabid fan of the principle actor or setting involved.

In any event, product placement does have the potential to build brand awareness and contribute to brand attitude. But it must be seen within a context consistent with the brand's positioning, attended to consciously, and positively linked to the appropriate emotional and explicit memories, as with any other effective marketing communication.

■ Packaging

Packaging is a critical element in IMC. Even though there is evidence that marketers are coming to realize that packaging is an important part of a brand's identity (Walczyk, 2001), the powerful role packaging can play in building and reinforcing positive brand attitude and equity is often underestimated by managers (Southgate, 1994).

In a study among brand managers, Chareonlarp (1997) identified a number of key emotional and psychological benefits associated with packaging. Basically, the findings may be summarized as the ability to attract attention and providing an expression of a brand's image: in other words, brand awareness and brand attitude, the key communication objectives for all marketing communication. And as with all other forms

of marketing communication, the visual elements of a package, its 'message', should differentiate it from competitors.

Well-designed packages can attract attention at the point-of-purchase, a critical attribute for any product where the brand purchase decision follows from recognition brand awareness. Studies by the Point-of-Purchase Advertising Institute (2000) have shown that over 70% of brand awareness decisions in supermarkets are made in the store. A package, if effectively linked to the brand in the consumer's mind as a result of other marketing communication for the brand (especially advertising), and if visually impactful and unique relative to competitors, will be easily recognized at the point-of-purchase. Given the large number of package facings in a store vying for attention, packaging must be able to 'cut through' the competitive clutter.

But there is much more packaging must do. It should help reinforce the brand's image and key benefit. For many products the package is always there when the product is being used, providing an on-going reminder of the brand and an opportunity to reinforce its primary benefit. Products ranging from cold remedies to breakfast cereal to toothpaste to washing-up powder are used *from the package*. In a sense, packaging operates as post-purchase advertising. Rossiter and Bellman (2005) capture this idea in their definition of packaging, suggesting it may be thought of as 'take-away or leave-behind' communication vehicles. The advert shown in Figure 6.2 for Wyke Farms cheddar offers a very good example of how a product's package can be used to reinforce the brand's benefit. The advert underscores the brand's key benefit: it's *Just Delicious*. The package clearly reinforces this benefit. Every time the package is seen or handled, from the store to the refrigerator to serving, the consumer is reminded that Wyke Farms cheddar is 'just delicious'.

■ Trade shows and fairs

Trade shows and fairs fall somewhere between promotion and personal selling. Promotional incentives of some kind are often used to encourage attendance at trade shows and fairs, they are advertised through various media, and direct contact is made with customers and potential customers at the company's booth. Literally every industry has a trade show of some kind. They can be especially important for small marketers unable to advertise, and they play a significant role in the marketing communication for industrial companies. It has been estimated that between 20% and 25% of an industrial marketer's communication budget is spent on trade shows (Gopalakrishna and Williams, 1992).

Because of the personal interaction afforded by trade shows and fairs, they offer marketers a number of opportunities (Shipley et al., 1993). They provide a chance to identify and meet new customers, as well as entertain old ones. New products can be introduced, and existing products demonstrated. They also help raise the salience of a company and to enhance its image: brand awareness and brand attitude. The key advantage is that

At Wyke Farms in Somerset,
we have been making the
finest farmhouse Cheddar
to the same recipe for
over 100 years. *Why?*



Because it's Just Delicious.
Find out more about our Grandmother's secret
award-winning recipe at www.wykefarms.com

Figure 6.2

A very good example of how a package can be used to reinforce a brand's benefit, in this case 'Just Delicious'. *Courtesy: Wyke Farms*

this may be all done in a relatively short period of time, and among nearly all of one's existing and potential customers. But as with all other forms of marketing communication, the trade show or fair, as well all of the advertising and promotion associated with it, should be consistent with other on-going IMC efforts.

There is some debate about the effectiveness of trade shows and fairs, even though there is no question that they provide a good opportunity for marketers and customers to meet in an environment where the one is imparting information and the other seeking it. Some have shown that they generate awareness and interest, leading to sales (Gopalakrishna and Williams, 1992), while others have questioned their value altogether (Sashi and Perretty, 1992).

Many define effectiveness in terms of leads generated that result in sales (Sharland and Balogh, 1996). This is certainly in line with one way managers who are heavily involved in trade shows and fairs look at it (Blythe and Rayner, 1996). Yet Shipley et al. (1993), as well as others, have found that the non-selling aspects of trade shows and fairs are highly valued by the managers involved with them. The problem would seem to be that there frequently are no set criteria for success, and this is complicated by no good measure of cost effectiveness. Additionally, when assessing trade shows and fairs managers are apt to look at them in isolation rather than as part of an overall IMC program.

■ Personal selling

In this section we are not so much interested in personal selling as such, but rather with the role of the salesperson in delivering and reinforcing a brand's positioning and marketing communication. How to be an effective salesperson is a subject for another book (e.g. Cialdini, 2001).

Personal selling may be looked at in terms of direct contact with consumers or a link to resellers or dealers in business-to-business marketing. In fact, personal selling is often the primary (if not only) form of marketing communication for industrial marketers. In either case, the message delivered must be consistent with that of the overall marketing communication program. It will differ from most other forms of marketing communication in an IMC program because the message moves *directly* from the marketer to an individual member of the target audience, providing an opportunity for interaction and modification of the basic message to address specific target audience concerns.

Rossiter and Bellman (2005) talk about personal selling in terms of six basic types: regular retail selling, small business selling, trade selling, high-end retail selling, technical selling, and telemarketing. The first two they describe as 'passive', where the sales exchange is largely initiated and controlled by the customer. The other four are 'active', initiated by the salesperson and where both the customer and salesperson are involved in controlling the exchange (see Figure 6.3). It is only these

Passive selling	Where the sales experience is initiated and controlled by the consumer
Active selling	Where the sale is initiated by the salesperson, and both customer and salesperson are involved in controlling the experience

Figure 6.3
Passive versus active personal selling

‘active’ types of selling where marketing communication messages are involved.

The principal advantage of personal selling, from a marketing communication standpoint, is that it involves a two-way interaction between the salesperson and the customer, unlike the one-way communication of other marketing communications (with the exception of that involving interactive media). Personal selling provides an opportunity for customizing the message for an individual customer, and as mentioned above, the opportunity to adapt the message during the customer–salesperson interaction. Because of this, attention to, and involvement with, the message is likely to be high. Personal selling also offers a chance to demonstrate product benefits that might be difficult or even impossible to effectively convey with other forms of marketing communication.

The key advantage of personal selling in marketing communication unfortunately leads to its primary disadvantage, especially for IMC. Because of the flexibility and multiple delivery sources (the different salespeople) it is difficult to maintain message consistency. And given the nature of personal selling, relative to other ways of delivering a message, it is expensive and has a low reach. These advantages and disadvantages associated with personal selling in IMC are summarized in Figure 6.4.

Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-way interactions and the opportunity to adjust message during presentations • Opportunity to customize message • Ability to demonstrate product
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to maintain message consistency • Expensive relative to other forces of marketing communications • Low reach

Figure 6.4
Advantages versus disadvantages of personal selling

Integrating personal selling into the development of IMC strategy can be difficult, for in many companies the sales force is not part of the

marketing department, especially for consumer packaged goods. As Dewshap and Jobber (2000) point out, in packaged goods companies retailers are the brands for the sales force, unlike for marketing managers where the product is the brand. The focus is different, and they have separate budgets. Nevertheless, personal selling must be considered part of IMC planning, using a message that is consistent with a brand's other marketing communication.

In recent years there has been a realization that retaining existing customers is a more profitable strategy for the sales force than seeking new customers (not that a company should quit trying to gain new customers). This is what *relationship marketing* is all about. It also means that, with more long-term relationships in mind, there is a greater opportunity for personal selling to be used in reinforcing a brand's message.

While the ultimate objective of personal selling is to convince the target customers to stock or purchase the brand, like all marketing communication the message must address brand awareness and brand attitude objectives. With personal selling, the brand awareness objectives will be recognition. For brand attitude, there is a key difference. As already discussed, one has the opportunity of adjusting the message to maximize interest in the brands' benefit for a specific target customer.

Much personal selling is directed to the trade or in straight business-to-business situations, where the purchase motive is likely to be negative and an informational brand attitude strategy required. Additionally, the purchase decision is likely to be high. This means the salesperson must understand the target customer's *initial attitude* toward the brand because that understanding will be critical to framing the message for acceptance. The personal, interactive nature of personal selling allows for a certain amount of probing to ensure a good understanding of how the target audience sees the brand.

Interestingly, in these high-involvement cases, even if objectively a brand can deliver its key benefit better than the target customer believes it can, the salesperson should not try to convince them it will. They are not likely to believe the stronger claim, even if it is true. As long as the prospect is generally positive about the brand, talk about the benefit at the customer's level of belief. Research has shown that if when used a product turns out to deliver a benefit better than anticipated, overall brand attitude will *increase* (Kopalle and Assunção, 2000). This results from the difference between the anticipation and actual delivery of the benefit.

But one must be careful here in the case of the trade. While getting the trade to stock a brand will likely involve negative motives, and an informational message strategy to 'close the sale', this may not be the case for the brand. When talking about the *brand itself* and its key benefit, if the purchase decision by consumers for the brand reflects positive motives, the message about the brand must incorporate a transformational strategy consistent with its overall marketing communication brand attitude objective. In other cases, especially when personal selling is direct to the consumer (e.g. with high-end luxury goods), when the motive driving

the purchase decision is positive, the message strategy should be transformational. Here one need not be as concerned with the target customer's initial attitudes toward the brand, and the salesperson should feel free to present the brand in the best possible light.

■ Public relations

Where public relations, or as it is more commonly referred to, PR, fits within IMC is not an easy question to answer. Part of the reason is that neither academics or practitioners seem to offer a consensus as to the role PR plays with regard to an organization and its marketing activities. Rossiter and Bellman (2005) talk about PR as a 'general term now for all forms of manufactured publicity', but that does not get us very far. Many would argue, for example, that 'publicity' is only one part of PR. Is the advice a PR agency provides corporate management 'publicity', or the speeches they write for a CFO to give to the financial community? What about help with employee relations, or lobbying activities?

From a marketing standpoint, the word 'publicity' is perhaps a good choice. But many PR practitioners would like to distance themselves from any association with 'marketing'. They like to see what they do as more concerned with enhancing the image and reputation of an organization. The Institute of Public Relations defines PR as 'the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics'. While this definition would seem to distance PR from consumers and marketing, with an emphasis more upon the organization, obviously one of a company's most important 'publics' is the consumer. And as we saw in Chapter 3, an organization's image and reputation cannot be separated from the marketing of its products or services.

Regardless of how one chooses to define PR, it plays an important part in the marketing communication mix, and the messages it delivers to various 'publics' must be consistent with the message delivered by more traditional marketing communications. While some PR activities are clearly outside of the normal strategic planning for IMC, whatever activities are undertaken on behalf of an organization should take cognizance of the overall marketing communication program for that company's brands. While in this chapter we are only concerned with those areas of PR that have a direct effect upon marketing issues, we must still keep this in mind. Regardless of the PR activity, to the extent that it reflects upon the image and reputation of an organization or its products, it should be consistent with the overall IMC program.

Public relations strategy

One might think about public relations strategy in terms of being either *proactive* or *reactive*. *Proactive* PR involves planned activity designed to

draw positive attention to a company and help build a positive image. This could include such things as cause-related marketing or 'green' marketing. The BP (British Petroleum) campaign from the mid-2000s focusing upon alternative energy sources is a good IMC example. Not only was PR involved in its traditional role, but corporate advertising was also used to underscore the company's activities in seeking energy alternatives to petroleum. *Reactive* PR results when a company experiences negative publicity and must deal with 'damage control'. This reflects what in social psychology is known as impression management, where one seeks to protect one's self by maximizing positive associations while minimizing negative associations.

Advantages and disadvantages

There are both advantages and disadvantages to using PR in marketing. Advantages include such things as low cost, the ability to reach very specific target audiences, avoiding 'clutter', and message credibility. (see Figure 6.5) Compared with other forms of communication, PR is much less expensive to use both in an absolute as well as relative source. Primarily, this is because there are no direct media costs involved. By its nature, PR activity can be directed to very specific target groups, and has the ability to reach highly segmented publics effectively. Because PR messages are not delivered via traditional media, they avoid the clutter associated with advertising-like messages. And because they are not seen as 'advertising', PR messages are likely to be seen as more credible.

Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low cost • Reach highly specific targets • Avoid clutter • Message credibility
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of control over message • Target audience may not link message to brand

Figure 6.5
Advantages and disadvantages of PR

On the other hand, there can be disadvantages associated with using PR. Perhaps the greatest potential problem with PR is the lack of control. There is rarely a guarantee that a message will be exposed; and if it is, that it will necessarily be presented in the way the company desired. Also, owing to the fact that PR is not seen as 'advertising', the target audience may not make the desired link between the message and the brand or company.

Marketing public relations

In the mid-1990s it was estimated that 70% of PR activities were related to marketing (Harris, 1993). It was at this time that Thomas Harris introduced the term marketing public relations (MPR) to describe PR activities in support of marketing objectives. There is every reason to believe that the proportion of PR activities that could be described as MPR is even greater today. Harris specifically defined MPR as 'the process of planning, executing, and evaluating programs that encourage purchase and consumer satisfaction through credible communicators of information and impressions that identify companies and their products with the needs, wants, concerns, and interests of consumers'. In a sense, MPR helps define and communicate a brand's positioning, and Harris' definition outlines just this point.

When we discuss positioning in Chapter 11, we will see that effective positioning requires linking a brand with a need (defined as *category* need, a perceived need for a product in a particular category); and also linking the brand with a desired benefit. MPR, by identifying a company and its products with particular needs is helping to provide the link between a category need and the brand; and by identifying a company and its products with a want, links the brand with a desired benefit that satisfies that want.

This understanding of PR as MPR becomes even more important for companies that utilize source or endorser branding strategies. With such branding strategies, the company name is part of the brand name and acts as an endorser or guarantor for the product, as we have seen. When Nestlé adds its name to its Crunch bar, in a very real sense it is contributing Nestlé's image and reputation to the brand. The potential importance of MPR here is obvious. Any PR that helps build and nurture Nestlé's image and reputation enhances the image of the Crunch brand. On the other hand, PR for Mars is unlikely to effect the image of Snickers unless one knows that it is made by Mars. Snickers is what is known as a 'stand-alone' brand, as discussed in Chapter 2.

In any event, MPR must be seen as consistent with a brand's overall marketing communication, and ideally reflect the same visual and verbal 'feel'. This is why MPR must be considered within IMC strategic planning. When these objectives are achieved, the link between the MPR messages and the brand will be easily recognized, and help build positive brand attitude. The coordination between MPR and other elements of a brand's marketing communication is critical.

Some of the ways in which MPR can contribute to achieving a brand's overall communication objectives is through such activities as: media relations, corporate communication, sponsorships, events, and perhaps its most important activity, publicity. Maintaining good *media* relations helps to ensure a more likely acceptance for things like company press releases and feature stories, but it requires an on-going nurturing of editors and journalists. *Corporate communication* involves much of what was discussed in Chapter 3, and includes not only corporate advertising and directed communication to specific stakeholder groups, but also things

like internal communication and company newsletters. Both *sponsorships* and *events* may be initiated as part of MPR, just as discussed earlier where they were more directly involved in brand marketing communication.

Publicity is what most people think about as PR, and it is by far the most frequently engaged in PR activity. In fact, publicity in one form or another is likely to be involved along with most other forms of MPR. Often people think of publicity as 'free advertising', especially since it uses mass media to deliver its message. An argument can certainly be made that MPR is (or should be) an advertising-like message, but it is certainly not free. There may not be an actual media cost, but there is an on-going cost for media relations in order to ensure the message will be broadcast and given favourable exposure. There are also costs for developing the message, and overall management. And of course, unlike advertising, there is no control over the content or when and how the message will be delivered.

Publicity does have the advantage of being seen as more objective than advertising because it is generally viewed as 'news' or information rather than an attempt at persuasion. While it is likely to reach far fewer people than other forms of marketing communication, it will likely be more persuasive among those who are reached. A Nestlé program for Nescafé provides excellent example of what we have been talking about. In 2002 they were involved in co-founding the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative, a group to work with local farmers in developing sustainable approaches to growing coffee. As a part of this program, in addition to providing technical agriculture assistance to farmers, they were also involved with improving worker housing, health care, and education. Out of this effort they are marketing Nescafé Partners' Blend, which is, as the label says, 'coffee that helps farmers, their communities, and the environment.' It is also reflected in a Web site, growmorethancoffee.co.uk. Figure 6.6 illustrates one way they are reinforcing the program with advertising, and the strong package reflecting the message.

■ Buzz marketing

While not exactly PR as such, buzz marketing is the term given to a new trend in word-of-mouth brand communication that emerged in the mid-2000s in an effort to better reach younger consumers. Companies were created to actively enlist the help of 'ordinary people' in talking about specific brands. One such company in the US (BZZ Agent) recruits people from the Internet to talk about their client's brands to friends and family. They are given free samples of the product, along with an outline of things they might say. For example, 3000 of these 'bzzagents' may be given a sample of a new perfume fragrance and asked to wear it, and to encourage people to talk about it. While they are encouraged to identify themselves as part of a marketing campaign, the 'buzz' created nevertheless has more credibility than traditional advertising because it is coming from someone who is known.

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

After decades of civil war and natural disasters in El Salvador, farmers have united and gone back to what they do best: growing delicious coffee. 'Maria's story' by René Hernandez

MARÍA ARACELI REYES, 42, IS A MEMBER OF THE CAFEMOR COOPERATIVE IN EL SALVADOR

A TIME OF TROUBLE

'I'm one of the 57 members of the Cafemor cooperative. My grandfather Bernardo Domínguez used to be president of the Association but he died in 1991, a victim of the 12 year civil war which ended in 1992.

It was a terrible period – we had to abandon our farm, leaving our four hectares of land behind. We lived a long time in the capital, San Salvador, where we sold vegetables in the street to help support the family.

In 1993 I married Jaime Nolasco, a forestry technician. We have two children: Jaime is 11 and Elias is 6. My new family and I returned to Morazan. My mother offered to pay me to look after her farm and I hired three men to help me and managed them like a true farm owner. The foreign experts from the project who were working with our cooperative advised us on our farming techniques and gave us an agricultural package as a gift, which included fertiliser.

EXPERT HELP

The gift was really important, as most of us couldn't afford to buy the fertiliser. Now the cooperative has the Fairtrade certification things are improving as we are guaranteed a minimum price for our coffee.

With Fairtrade, the cooperative receives an extra five dollars per quintal (a quintal is a local measure of 48kg) to invest in social work. We were only able to achieve certification by working together to fulfil the criteria. That's why we farmed the cooperative to move things forward together. The experts helped us to organise ourselves and find other alternatives to survive should the coffee crop fail, such as rearing chickens and growing fruit trees on the farms.



‘The experts have helped us to help ourselves: in unity there's strength.’

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

I now have 100 chickens on my farm and orange, lemon, avocado and mango trees which I'll be able to harvest in a year's time. Today you'll see smiles on the faces of my children and I, but five years ago we were desperate. We didn't believe we'd be able to continue working on the farms, but necessity united us and the experts have helped us to help ourselves: in unity there's strength.

These days, we are also able to help the schools and health units in the communities. We've already been able to give school equipment and rucksacks to 250 students from the poorest families in the region. There's still lots to do, there are still children who receive their lessons beneath a tree. My motto is to serve and help. Today I am so happy because I feel we are moving in the right direction.'

EL SALVADOR

The tiny Central American nation of El Salvador, with its population of 6.4 million, has been in constant upheaval for a quarter of a century.

Following the 1980 assassination of Archbishop Romero, the country erupted into a civil war, which claimed the lives of 70,000 people.

In 1992, the UN brokered a ceasefire, which helped the country get back on its feet, only to be brought to its knees again by Hurricane Mitch and a series of earthquakes which claimed the lives of thousands.

With an economy traditionally dependent on the production of coffee, the country's finances have been held subject to the fluctuations in the price of the world's second-most widely traded commodity

– and when the market turns downwards, it is the country's poorest people who are hit the hardest.



Figure 6.6

An excellent example of publicity reinforced by advertising where Nestlé talks about a joint program with they were involved in initiating with coffee growers in El Salvador. Courtesy: Nestlé, published in *Good Food Magazine*

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Sustainable agriculture is one approach to bringing some stability to the region's farmers. This means helping meet farmers' and their communities' social, economic and environmental needs so that, in the long run they can become more self-sufficient and can build sustainable businesses. To discover more about sustainable coffee growing and how it can help communities like Maria's please visit growmorethancoffee.co.uk

Nestlé has stated its commitment to sustainability and in 2002 they co-founded the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative, a group that works closely with farmers to develop sustainable approaches to coffee growing. NESCAFÉ assists communities like Maria's in growing other crops, which help the farmers through times when there are fluctuations that affect the coffee price. The company also provides farmers with expert agricultural specialists who are on hand with advice to ensure the coffee crop is of good quality.

NESCAFÉ first started providing technical assistance to farmers over 30 years ago and now the three pillars of sustainability (social, economic and environmental) have been applied together to individual communities with a particular focus on smallholders who have been affected by changes in coffee prices.

A great example of this is in El Salvador where NESCAFÉ gives technical and financial support to a number of cooperatives to help their farmers become sustainable in the long term. So far NESCAFÉ has provided improved housing for workers at the mill, given technical agricultural assistance to farmers and built a learning centre and clinic which will be visited regularly by a doctor. An educational project involving 700 pupils is also underway. In addition, farmers have been given chickens to breed and help with growing fruit and vegetables for their own consumption and to trade at the local market to make extra money.

NESCAFÉ also recognises the important role that Fairtrade plays in guaranteeing smallholder producers a fair price for their product.

The beans harvested by four coffee cooperatives in the El Salvador programme are independently Fairtrade certified and will be used in the production of NESCAFÉ Partners' Blend. When you purchase this product it will make a direct and positive difference to the lives of farmers like Maria.

NESCAFÉ has created a comprehensive website, growmorethancoffee.co.uk, which contains more information on Maria's life, NESCAFÉ's ongoing commitment and vision for PARTNERS' BLEND, plus information on how buying the product can provide the farmers of the El Salvador project with a sustainable lifestyle.



Look for this Mark on Fairtrade products



Guarantees
a better deal
for Third World
Producers

fairtrade.org.uk

© 2005 SOCIÉTÉ DES PRODUITS NESTLÉ S.A., VEVEY, SWITZERLAND.
TRADE MARK OWNED

Figure 6.6 (Contd.)

The figure is a collage of promotional materials for the Got2B brand. At the top left is a stylized graphic of a city skyline with a sunburst effect and the text "ST. BÖ. SSEL" written vertically. Below this is a photograph of several Got2B hair care products, including bottles of shampoo, conditioner, and styling spray. To the right of the products is the MTV Music Television logo. At the bottom is a newspaper clipping from the Swedish magazine "MTV". The headline of the clipping is "MTV-reporter med stil" and the sub-headline is "Shire Raghe assisterar Kikki Berg i livsstilsprogrammet 'Strössel'". The main text of the clipping discusses the brand's success and features a photograph of Shire Raghe and Kikki Berg.

Figure 6.7

A good example of a campaign to create buzz for a brand. Courtesy: OMD and Henkel Got2B

A campaign for Henkel Got2B provides a good example of how buzz can be used in the launch of a new product with only a small media budget. Aimed at young people, the brand produced a commercial jointly with MTV, using one of their well-known VJ's as a spokesperson. This provided a strong, credible source for the brand's message, and put them in a perfect position to generate interest and word-of-mouth among teens and young adults (see Figure 6.7).

In other ways companies are using their web sites to encourage entertaining interactions to generate positive word-of-mouth about their brand. There are even auditing services that track 'buzz' about a brand on blogs.

Summary

In this chapter we have looked at alternative ways of delivering advertising-like and promotion-like messages. More and more, marketers are looking at non-traditional ways of delivering their message. While still a relatively small portion of the money spent on marketing communication, the so-called 'new media', especially the Internet, has shown dramatic growth. This growth, however, has been largely limited to the very largest Internet providers like Yahoo, Google, AOL, and MSN.

Advertising-like messages delivered through the Internet now go well beyond simple banner adverts or home pages, and are they being more targeted for interactive. Keywords used in searches and e-mail can now trigger related adverts. Promotions too are delivered over the Internet, with some web sites devoted only to online promotions. Mobile marketing enables advertisers to send messages directly to cell phones and other wireless mobile devices. With prior permission from cell phone users, messages can be highly targeted and exposure tracked. It is even possible to direct messages to cell phones from outdoor billboards.

Other alternative ways of delivering marketing communication include sponsorships and events, although there is little evidence that they offer a good return on investment. Nevertheless, when used within an IMC program they can help in building brand awareness and positive brand attitude. Product placement is another area of increasing use, but one that has aroused ethical concerns. There is also some questions as to their likely effectiveness. One non-traditional medium that does offer real potential, yet too often overlooked by managers, is packaging. For many products, especially fmcg, packaging offers an excellent opportunity for reinforcing not only the brand name but also the brand's primary benefit. Trade shows and fairs provide a very personal way of delivering a brand's message, and are widely used, especially by industrial marketers.

Personal selling is an area that is often overlooked in terms of IMC, yet it offers a good opportunity for reinforcing a brand positioning and message. The key is that the message must be consistent with the IMC message for the brand. It has the obvious advantage of personal interaction with consumers, which opens up the potential for customizing the message. But this obvious advantage can also lead to problems, because it is difficult to maintain consistency.

PR too should be considered as part of an IMC program. But it must fit within the overall brand communication strategy, even when it is addressing specific corporate communication issues. This idea has been talked about as MPR. It has the advantage of not being seen as advertising, but also the potentially serious problems associated with a lack of control over message content and how it is delivered.

Review questions

- 1 How is new media involved in IMC?
- 2 Do you feel the Internet or mobile marketing will emerge as the stronger new medium for IMC?
- 3 How would you use mobile marketing as part of an IMC program?
- 4 Discuss the ethics of product placement; and discuss their effectiveness.
- 5 Why is the package an important venue for advertising-like messages?
- 6 What are the strengths and weaknesses of trade shows and fairs for consumer packaged goods brands? What about for business-to-business marketers.
- 7 What role does personal selling play in an IMC campaign?
- 8 How can public relations be used successfully in IMC?
- 9 What is the biggest weakness of public relations in terms of IMC, and how can this be overcome?
- 10 Find examples of buzz marketing, and discuss whether or not you think it works for the brand.

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