

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This review of literature offers the readers a continued exploration of the problem area by reviewing past research and books. The theories which were the foundation for this thesis are presented as well as modern studies and past theories concerning each research question. Finally, the conceptualization and the frame of reference end this chapter.

2.1 Historical Background of IMC

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is a simple concept. It ensures that all forms of communications and messages are carefully linked together. It is used for describing the holistic approach towards the marketing communication. It ensures the consistency of messages and it includes online and offline channels for marketing. E-marketing campaigns from search engines, podcast, email, affiliate, blogs, webinar and internet TV are included in online marketing channels and offline marketing channels include traditional print like newspaper and magazines, mail orders, industry relations, radio, billboard and television.

Many companies including education institutions try to adapt IMC to enhance the management and integration of their marketing communications program given today's competitive marketing environment and increased managerial expectations related to marketing. However, the concept of IMC and even its term is so recent and "modern" that it is not yet popularly accepted worldwide which explains the lack of an established

definition and common understanding of the whole concept. IMC aims to affect the perceptions of value and behaviour through directed communication. IMC is one of the best communication developments of the last decade, according to experts. With its numerous competitive advantages, it is said that the implementation can have significant and positive effects on brand outcomes as well as increased market orientation. IMC have grown popular for its effectiveness in marketing. Due to media fragmentation and increased customer segmentation as well as easier access to consumer databases and computational resources, the trend is to allocate budget away from the traditional one-way mass media advertising. According to Rowley, the marketing communication mix is the combination of different channels or tools that are used to communicate a message. (Rowley, 2000) But it is significant to treat IMC as a strategic issue and should therefore be considered in accordance with the nature of strategy and strategic decisions. Features commonly linked with approach are first that the strategy is connected to the overall and long-term direction of the company or organization. Next, strategic decisions are concerned with creating a competitive advantage. Last, the strategic decisions are linked to the companies or organizations scope of activities, how the owners want their company to be like. (Holm, 2006)

During the 1980's many companies began taking a broader perspective of marketing communication and seeing the need for a more strategic integration of their promotional tools. The decade was characterized by the rapid development of areas such as sales promotion, direct marketing, and public relation, which began challenging advertising's role as the dominant form of marketing communication. Therefore the practice of IMC can trace its inception to the early 1980s when collegiate textbooks began to emphasize the concept of marketing communication. (Coulson-Thomas,1983)

established himself as one of the first researchers to outline the broad spectrum of marketing communication channels. Although an element of interdependence was recognized between the different communication elements (such as advertising, marketing and public relations), the idea of integration was not considered a plausible approach to developing more effective campaigns at that time.

In 1991, the concept of IMC gained greater attention when seminal research in this field was conducted by faculty at the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University (Schultz and Kitchen, 1997). The concept was relatively quick to be adopted by advertising and public relations agencies, as it served to further validate their value to corporate America (Wightman, 1999). The theory of IMC became grounded in the belief that there should be 'one basic communication strategy for each major target audience. This one strategy is then used as the basis for executing each communications function (advertising, PR, sales promotion and so on) throughout a variety of communications channels' (Duncan and Everett, 1993, p. 31). At the time, (Tortorici 1991) declared that IMC was one of the most effective ways an organization can maximize its return on investment relative to marketing communication expenditures. However, significant debate ensued as to whether or not IMC was a management fad (Cornelissen and Lock, 2000) or theoretical concept (Schultz and Kitchen, 2000).

Communication is the core of Integrated Marketing Communication and it is a process where individuals share meanings and remains as one of the most human of activities. Communication is not something you do to a person but something you do with a person. It is a transactional process between two or more parties where meaning is exchanged using symbols. Communication is intentional, it is a transaction, and it is

symbolic. It was as early as in the beginning of the fifties that the framework for the communications process was established and it is still used today. The source of information sends a message to the transmitter that produces a signal suitable for the channels used or in other words encodes the message. The channel is then used to transmit the message from the transmitter to the receiver. The receiver then reconstructs or decodes the message and the destination is the person the message is intended for. (Holm, 2006). Marketing communications is all about the organizations making sure that customer are aware of the products that the organizations offer. A marketing communication mix is created to follow the marketing communications strategies and to meet the organizations objectives. Different marketing communication objectives can be to increase sales, maintain or improve market share or create a competitive advantage. To reach these objectives different communication channels are used to convey the organizations message, with the help of different promotional tools such as advertising, personal selling, public relations, sales promotions and direct marketing. (Rowley, 1998)

Developing effective integrated multi-channel marketing communication strategies allows companies to reach greater returns as a result of synergistic marketing efforts to further enhance the marketing communications. This can be done by using an appropriate mix of communication channels reaching the consumer at different times in different ways. This leads to a successful marketing communication effort as consumers who interact with a company over multiple channels tend to be more loyal and profitable. The understanding of the customers and their preferences is vital to become a successful multi-channel marketer, as well as utilizing the information to create an effective marketing communications campaign using the multi-channel approach. The results of

this integrated multi-channel communications effort can yield very positive results. It is important that companies synchronize all marketing communications so they are both consistent and persistent, that applies to both the messaging and graphical elements amongst the channels.

A program for the integrated marketing communications is developed by the company by using all the market mix elements like product place, price and promotion (what is IMC, 2009). This Technique integrates all the marketing tools, various approaches, and other resources within a company to maximize the impact on the consumer mind that results in maximum profit at the minimum cost. IMC appears to be a simple concept but when it comes to apply it effectively and perform the operation then it becomes a complex task. An efficient and an adaptable marketing strategy are required by the IMC. This can be devised by performing the research on the significant customer information. A step by step approach must be applied for the successful integrated marketing plan. The steps include:

- Analysis of situation.

It takes into consideration various issues that may be faced by a company like: market competitiveness, its profitability, and various political and other legal situations.

- Identification of the target market

This step is used to carry out effective examination and at the same time it evaluates the purchasing behavior of the consumer.

- Strategies

After the analysis of the circumstances and securitization of the target market, organization makes use of the information that has been gathered and is used to determine the strategies that can be used for the purpose of the marketing and of the sales for its products and services.

- Tactics

After the formation of the strategies and tactics are applied by the organization so that there could be proper evaluation and assessment for the purpose of carrying out the adjustments for the future purposes.

It is very important to understand the context in which IMC emerged as a discipline in order to better understand its later evolution. As we will see in this Chapter, the theory of IMC was born twenty years ago, in a very different context.

2.2 Drivers for IMC

In the first chapter of their 2004 book, Heidi and Don E. Schultz underline the main drivers of IMC. According to the authors, three shifts occurred in the mid-1980s and have been key drivers in the development of IMC:

1. “The development and diffusion of digital technology across the entire spectrum of business operations”: computer technologies developed in the 1990s made it possible for companies to fully understand their consumer,

2. “The increasing emphasis on brands and branding as the major competitive differentiating tool”: in a world where anything can be copied and duplicated, and where Private Labels explode their sales, the brand is the “new form of competition”.

3. “The increasing focus on globalization as marketers spread across the traditional geographic boundaries”: in a world where brands are “able to operate in real time twenty-four hours a day around the globe”, brands need to rethink their communications across national boundaries to “Create unified, consistent and integrated brand strategy while remaining responsive to the unique needs of individual markets and cultures”. Only IMC can bring some clarity and help finding a balance between global consistency and local differences.

Many authors have been writing about the changes that lead to the emergence of IMC. For example, Kiely points out four main factors. (1) a decrease in the effect of advertising through the mass media due to more diversified and fragmented social change, (2) an increase in the number of advertising channels due to the introduction of digital communication and other diversified multimedia, (3) an increase in the number of advertising agencies due to the diversification and specialization of the entire area of marketing communications, and (4) an increased expectation by clients of their ability to better estimate the efficiency of their advertising budgets.

In -“A Multi-Country Comparison of the Drive for IMC”, Philip J. Kitchen and Don E. Schultz observe: “IMC is very clearly a reaction by advertising agencies and their

clients as a result of being affected by a multitude of factors such as new forms of information technology including development and usage of database, media fragmentation, client desires for interaction/synergy, and global and regional coordination.” IMC would be nothing more than a reaction to a changing market environment.

As we have seen in this first Chapter, at the beginning of the 21st century, IMC seems to be more relevant than ever. Today, not only the context allows the concept to be better understood, but also it creates a climate of receptivity. The dramatic changes of the past twenty years elevate the concept to a much superior level: the one of the need. IMC is an imperative in the complex context brands are now evolving in.

Most marketers today will agree that their approach needs to evolve, and most of them would like to rethink the way they market. IMC is here, as an answer, but still as a very theoretical answer.

2.3 The objectives and benefits of IMC

The primary goal with IMC is to affect perception of value and behavior through directed communication. Communication, the sending and receiving of messages, is the foundation of all our relationships. IMC was one of the first processes to handle and nourish relationships and now sees a greater acceptance in the world of marketing. (Duncan, 2002)

- Although Integrated Marketing Communications requires a lot of effort it delivers many benefits. It can create competitive advantage, boost sales and profits, while saving money, time and stress.
- IMC wraps communications around customers and helps them move through the various stages of the buying process. The organisation simultaneously consolidates its image, develops a dialogue and nurtures its relationship with customers.
- This 'Relationship Marketing' cements a bond of loyalty with customers which can protect them from the inevitable onslaught of competition. The ability to keep a customer for life is a powerful competitive advantage.
- IMC also increases profits through increased effectiveness. At its most basic level, a unified message has more impact than a disjointed myriad of messages. In a busy world, a consistent, consolidated and crystal clear message has a better chance of cutting through the 'noise' of over five hundred commercial messages which bombard customers each and every day.
- At another level, initial research suggests that images shared in advertising and direct mail boost both advertising awareness and mail shot responses. So IMC can boost sales by stretching messages across several communications tools to create more avenues for customers to become aware, aroused, and ultimately, to make a purchase.

- Carefully linked messages also help buyers by giving timely reminders, updated information and special offers which, when presented in a planned sequence, help them move comfortably through the stages of their buying process... and this reduces their 'misery of choice' in a complex and busy world.
- IMC also makes messages more consistent and therefore more credible. This reduces risk in the mind of the buyer which, in turn, shortens the search process and helps to dictate the outcome of brand comparisons.
- Un-integrated communications send disjointed messages which dilute the impact of the message. This may also confuse, frustrate and arouse anxiety in customers. On the other hand, integrated communications present a reassuring sense of order.
- Consistent images and relevant, useful, messages help nurture long term relationships with customers. Here, customer databases can identify precisely which customers need what information when... and throughout their whole buying life.

Finally, IMC saves money as it eliminates duplication in areas such as graphics and photography since they can be shared and used in say, advertising, exhibitions and sales literature. Agency fees are reduced by using a single agency for all communications and even if there are several agencies, time is saved when meetings bring all the agencies together - for briefings, creative sessions, tactical or strategic planning. This reduces workload and subsequent stress levels - one of the many benefits of IMC.

2.4 Key features of IMC

IMC is all about building and taking care of customers and consumer interest and relationships. Effective implementation requires a strong control and coordination of marketing communications programs in these new relationships. (Eagle, Kitchen, 2000) Reid et al (2005) continue and suggest that IMC should be more strategic than execution. The focus should not only be on advertising and sales promotion messages, but instead concentrate on two-way communication. IMC should also be result driven and not adapted just for the sake of it. In the right hands, and with a proper implementation and use, IMC can be the way to more efficient and effective marketing communications. Shimp (2000) has listed the following key features of IMC:

- Affect Behaviour

IMC aims to affect the behaviour of the target audience, not only targeting brand awareness or enhancing customer attitudes but also encouraging some form of behavioural response. In other words, the main objective of IMC is to move people to action.

- Start with the Customer

IMC considers the customer first when determining and deciding the most appropriate communication methods. This is called “outside-in” approach in opposite to the “inside-out” approach where the company decides the communication methods first.

- Use any and all forms of contacts

IMC makes sure that the message is delivered to customer through the use of the best and most effective forms of communication. By using IMC all sources of brand and company contacts are potential message delivery channels.

- Achieve synergy

Synergy is an essential part of IMC, with all communications speaking with a single voice, it is very crucial to ensure coordination o achieve a strong brand image and move people to action. Failure to do so can result in confusion among message receivers.

- Build relationship

To ensure success in marketing communication, building a relationship between the brand and the customer plays a vital role. IMC is the key to build relationship. A good relationship increases loyalty and entails repeat purchases. It is much more effective for companies to keep existing customers than to continuously search for new ones.

In other words, when adapting an IMC approach companies considers and uses all forms of contacts, all message delivery channels, all customers and prospects and every brand contact point while they plan and implement their marketing communication strategies. (Kitchen et al,2004)

2.5 Marketing Communication Mix

- The tools of IMC

As stated earlier, more and more resources are allocated away from the traditional mass- media advertising and used on other communication tools. This allocation of communication budgets is deeply connected to the appearance of, and is a major part of, IMC. (Holm, 2006)

- The classic tools

It is very seldom that companies only use one tool of marketing communication. Companies have used a mix of tools for a long time but that does not mean that they are practicing IMC. The difference when using IMC is the strategy behind the use and how the mix is coordinated. Duncan (2002) lists the different tools or functions as advertising, public relations, sales promotion, the personal connection (direct response and personal sales) and experiential contacts (events and sponsorship).



Figure 2:3.1 Marketing Communication Tools

Source: Adapted from Duncan, 2002, author's own construction

- Advertising

Mass media advertising, or the awareness builder, consists of “non personal, one-way, planned messages paid for by an identified sponsor and disseminated to a broad audience in order to influence their attitudes and behaviour.” (Duncan, 2002, p. 506) Advertising is the most common of all the IMC tools and is equal to marketing for many people. It is a very broad tool and the primary objective is to create awareness.

- Strengths

Advertising adds value to a brand or company by creating awareness. Creative ideas, information and brand positioning are all ways to create awareness and add value. Advertising is also very cost-effective, it can reach many people per add making the cost per person relatively low. The company can also decide exactly where and when the advertising will be done, thus having complete control over it.

- Limitations

When utilizing advertising it is hard to pinpoint the target audience making some of it go to waste. It is also a one-way communication; the company sends a message to the market that does not allow a two-way dialogue. Advertising is also seen as having low credibility because it is a paid message. Another major limitation is that advertising is everywhere, it turns into a clutter. When there is so much of it, people criticize it and build up a resistance toward it.

- Personal sales

Personal selling is defined as “two-way communication in which a seller interprets brand features in terms of buyer benefits.” (Duncan, 2001, p. 617) Also called the face-to-

face function, it involves one-to-one marketing using face-to-face communication. Before, personal selling was focused primarily on sales, but now has to focus on solving customer problems and adding value.

- Strengths

The primary strength is two-way communication, it can build trusting relationships. It is also accountable and measurable, it is easy to see if the personal selling is effective or not. The ability to tailor the sales messages to the different customers makes personal selling flexible. The salespeople work with customers all the time and they can build up good relationships and create a rich customer database.

- Limitations

Personal sales is not very cost-effective, salaries are not the only cost connected to it. Personal sales can also overemphasize on making a quick sale instead of building lasting relationships. The flexibility of personal sales is strength but can also be negative. Inconsistent messages can be created making the customer unsure of the offering.

- Public relations

Also called the credibility builder, public relations seek to affect the public opinion as well as company stakeholder. It can be a concept, a profession, and a management functions as well as a practice. Public relations can create goodwill and a positive understanding between an organization and its stakeholder. Marketing public relations is defined “the use of non-paid media to deliver positive brand information designed to positively influence customers and prospects.” (Duncan, 2002, p. 543)

- Strengths

Public relations can be used to create awareness by using effective media relations. Opposite of advertising, public relations is used to build credibility. Instead of being a paid message it involves third-party endorsement making it more believable. And because of the third-party involvement there is no charge for the time and space the messages occupy making public relations very cost-effective. It can also break through all the existing message clutter that hit people every day by having a higher credibility and if done in a creative way. People that normally cannot be reached with advertising and other tools can be reached by public relations, for example business executives who read more newspapers than watch television.

- Limitations

Companies have little or no control over public relations because of the third-party involvement. Public relation impact is not easily measured so it is difficult to see if it is effective or not. Another limitation is that the same public relations cannot go on forever; it is difficult to create a frequency of mention in the same media vehicle.

- Sales promotion

Sales promotion, or the value added function, is a communication tool that encourages people to action by adding value. It is “a short term, added-value offer designed to encourage and accelerate a response.” (Duncan, 2001, p. 569) Sales promotion can be coupons, price reductions, rebates to name a few and is used to persuade the customer to buy or motivate in other stages of the decision process. Important to know is that it works in the short term.

- Strengths

Sales promotion can be used to increase the distribution, by securing shelf space and lowering the risk for members of the distribution channel. When having too many goods at hand, sales promotions can control the inventory level and balance demand. Another strength is that it can respond to competitive offerings, by adding value to the own brand.

- Limitations

Too much sales promotion with overemphasis on low prices can give the impression of low-price brand. The low price or give-away also attracts the people that always search for the best deal, not a long-term relationship. It can increase sales but is not necessarily cost-effective. Sales promotion is also considered to be a short cut to increasing sales, not by convincing people of its good value but rather by “buying the sales”.

- Direct response

Also called the dialogue builder, direct response or direct marketing combines a sales message with demand creation and fulfillment. One definition is “a closed-loop, interactive, database-driven messaging system that uses a broad range of media to create a behavioural response.” (Duncan, 2001, p. 600) Telemarketing and direct mail are two examples of direct response.

- Strengths

One major strength is that it can be highly targeted; only the target audience is communicated with and that reduces waste. It is also interactive and a two-way

communication making it more personal and can lead to behavioural responses. Direct response can also lead to immediate results and that is easily measured.

- Limitations

The cost of direct response is very high making it important that the communication is correctly targeted. It also suffers from clutter; people are bombarded daily with “junk mail”. Customers can also not see, touch, or try a product before ordering, that can decrease the customer satisfaction. In the past it has also been more sales oriented than relationship oriented and that has given direct response a bad image.

- Events and sponsorships

Event marketing and sponsorship are not the same but they overlap and have many things in common. They are designed to create involvement and are effective to bond customers to a brand or company. Event marketing is used to involve target audiences, increase awareness, reach hard to reach audiences and gain publicity. Sponsorships have increased over the year and both differentiate and add value. The definition is “the financial support of an organization, person, or activity in exchange for brand publicity and association.” (Duncan, 2001, p. 640)

- Strengths

Events and sponsorships can build good relationships by associating with something positive such as cause or sports team. It can emotionally bind customer to the company or the brand and create involvement. Companies can also gain goodwill from events or sponsorships.

- **Limitations**

The two major limitations of events and sponsorships are the small target audience and the lack of control. The event and sponsorships, even if it is large, only reaches a small amount of the target audience. The company also has little control of the sponsored event as well as the design and management.

2.5.1 Internet (the new tool)

With the technological development new ways of doing old things always appears. The advances in technology has led to one of the most dynamic and revolutionary changes in the history of marketing, the dramatic changes in communication using interactive medias such as the Internet. Interactive media allows communication on a two-way form instead of one-way communication such as advertising. And two-way communication plays a major part of IMC. (Belch, Belch, 2001)

- **Internet characteristics**

The development of the Internet has been rapid and the usage spreads all over the world. It has become the fastest growing technology in history and it does not seem to be slowing down. Internet is a series of connected computers that allows communication and information exchange and has grown into an excellent tool for marketing communicators. It combines the characteristics of mediums such as newspapers and magazines but it is much more versatile. According to Duncan (2002) the most important characteristics for the Internet are:

- It shifts the power from the companies to the customers
Customers can collect all the information they want and compare before deciding on which company to choose.
- It is accessible to the majority of the population
If people do not have Internet access at home, they can go online at work or at school. Libraries and Internet cafes also offer Internet connections.
- Provides an extensive range of information
The Internet has information on almost every subject there is, including companies, brands, and their products.
- Allows for unsurpassed speed and coverage
With the increase of broadband and high-speed connections information over the Internet travels almost instantaneously.
- Reduces the cost of selling and acquisition
The cost of opening an Internet business is far less than opening a traditional offline business.

- **Internet objectives**

The Internet is not only a communications medium but also a direct-response one allowing companies to share information as well as buying and selling. Objectives can range all the way from creating awareness to persuading customer to action. Belch and Belch (2001) list the following Internet objectives:

- Disseminate information

The Internet or particularly a website can provide in-depth information about a company. Using the Internet companies can share information much quicker and cheaper than through other mediums or tools.

- Create awareness

For companies seeking to create awareness, the Internet is a great way to accomplish that. It is quicker, cheaper, and the companies are more in control compared to traditional media. It is especially useful for smaller companies with limited budgets.

- Gather research information

The Internet can also provide companies with useful information, information from both customers and competitors. It can be used to establish and maintain relationships, create databases, and research the marketplace.

- Create an image

Companies can also use the Internet to reflect a desirable image. It is important that the image portrayed on the Internet and the overall company image match and that has been difficult to some companies.

- Stimulate trial

Websites and Internet is also effective stimulating trials. Electric coupons are offered and one-click ads make it easy to customer to reach the sites and ultimately buy from them.

- Improve customer service

Another important objective is to improve the service towards customers. That can be done by providing information, answering inquiries and registering complaints. That leads to better relationship with the customers.

- Increase distribution

Distribution can also be increased by the use of Internet. Relationships between companies and the cross-promotion of each other products/services can direct new customers to your company.

- Internet strengths and limitations

Using the Internet has a lot of advantages and strengths for both company and customers but also disadvantages and limitations. It offers distinct advantages over the traditional mediums but it is not the solution to companies' communication problems. (Belch, Belch, 2001)

- Strengths

The ability to target specific groups with major waste is a major strength of the Internet. The messages sent can also be tailored and designed to meet the needs and wants of the target audience. Because of the interactive capabilities the Internet increases the customer involvement, feedback and satisfaction. That in turn leads to bigger sales potential. The plethora of information people can find on the Internet is almost endless, and it is also the quickest way to gather information. Internet and websites also nourish creativity, as the technological development opens new door all the time.

- Limitations

One of the biggest disadvantages of the Internet is the problem to measure. The Internet can collect a lot of research numbers but with low reliability. The growth of the Internet makes the characteristics of the target audience change quickly, and thus decreases the targeting potential. Customers can also get lost in the jungle of websites on the Internet and lose interest due to all the clutter from competing sites. It is easy to create and design a website but to support an appropriate website cost lots of money such as time and money. The increasing number of Internet scams appearing makes the customers more suspicious and therefore many people still consider the Internet not to be safe.

2.6 Marketing Mix of Colleges and Universities

According to Philip Kotler “Marketing Mix is the set of controllable variables that the firm can use to influence the buyer’s response”. The controllable variables in this context refer to the 4 ‘P’s [product, price, place (distribution) and promotion]. Each firm strives to build up such a composition of 4‘P’s, which can create highest level of consumer satisfaction and at the same time meet its organisational objectives. Thus, this mix is assembled keeping in mind the needs of target customers, and it varies from one organisation to another depending upon its available resources and marketing objectives. Let us now have a brief idea about the four components of marketing mix.

Product: Product refers to the goods and services offered by the organisation. A product does not have to be tangible- an insurance policy can be a product, a course that universities are providing to the students also a product. There is no point in developing a

product or service that no one wants to buy, yet many universities decide what to offer first, and then hope to find a market for it afterwards. In contrast, the successful universities will find out what students need or want and then develop the right courses and right teachers with the right level of quality to meet those needs now and in the future. The perfect product must provide value for the customer. This value is in the eye of the beholder- we must give our customers what they want, not what we think they want.

Price: Price is the amount charged for a product or service. It is the second most important element in the marketing mix. Fixing the price of the product is a tricky job. Many factors like demand for a product, cost involved, consumer's ability to pay, prices charged by competitors for similar products, government restrictions etc. have to be kept in mind while fixing the price. In fact, pricing (tuition fee) is a very crucial decision area in the universities as it has its effect on demand for the courses that we are offering to students and also on the profitability of the universities.

Place: Universities designed various courses to be sold to the students. They must be made accessible to the students at a place where they can conveniently make go. Therefore the place where students learn courses must be accessible in the right place, at the right time and in the right number of vacant seats. The physical layout of your building also play vital role to win the heart of students. University should provide good learning environment to the students.

Promotion: If the courses are designed keeping the students needs in mind, is rightly priced tuition fee and made accessible at good location and convenient to them

then the students is not made aware about its price (tuition fee), features, availability etc, its marketing effort may not be successful. Promotion is the way a university communicates what it does and what it can offer students. Therefore promotion is an important ingredient of marketing mix as it refers to a process of informing, persuading and influencing students to make choice of the courses that have been offered by university to be enrolled. It includes activities such as branding, advertising, PR, corporate identity, sales management, special offers and exhibitions. Promotion must gain attention, be appealing, tell a consistent message and above all else give the students a reason to choose your university rather than someone else's. Promotion does not just mean communicating to your customers. It is just as important to ensure your internal stakeholders are aware of the value and attributes of your university facilities and course that are being offered. This means communicating effectively to your staff/fellow employees so that they can be knowledgeable and share expertise with their students.

2.7 Marketing Mix Must also be balanced and Integrated

A well planned and carefully executed marketing communications programme cannot, on its own, guarantee success. This is dependent on a balanced marketing mix. A great advertisement may succeed in getting people to go out and ask for a particular product but the overall plan fails if, say, the place is wrong. Too much 'pull' and not enough 'push'. Perhaps less investment in advertising ('pull') and more investment in sales training ('push') or simply more direct investment in distribution (new delivery vehicles, more drivers, better serviced vans, bigger stocks, smaller minimum orders, quicker deliveries etc) might enable the right goods to get to the right place at the right time. If the goods are not there when they are needed, then 'the success of advertising'

fails. Similarly, the promotion and the place might work to bring a potential customer close to buying a particular product but the price might just put the product out of reach. Finally, the product (or service) must match the achieved. A customer only buys a bad product once.

2.8 IMC Challenges for Colleges and Universities

There are several challenges inherent in adopting and applying IMC in colleges and universities. Perhaps the greatest obstacle is that most staffs who are working in the colleges and universities as well as including many marketing practitioners do not fully understand the process of IMC and the value of implementing such a process in their colleges and universities. There is a tendency to consider marketing as a cost factor rather than as a driver of value across the academia institution. Until the links between IMC, academia institutional branding and customer value are recognized and understood, the true promise of IMC will remain unfulfilled.

Another issue with IMC is that it is not intended to be a short-term approach; therefore, a long-term perspective and academia institutional commitment are critical to its success. However, in a society that emphasizes quarterly growth earnings and rapid return on investment, such long-term strategies are often not given serious consideration. To substantiate the value of IMC over the long term, longitudinal measures of the impact and effects of IMC will need to be developed.

Finally, there exist many levels and dimensions to integration that pose individual and collective difficulties. 'To be implemented, IMC requires the involvement of the

whole organization and its agents from the chief executive downward. It needs consideration from the highest strategic level down to the day-to-day implementation of individual tactical activity' (Pickton and Hartley, 1998, p. 450). To encourage such involvement, consideration should be given to designing compensation systems to recognize and reinforce the relationship building efforts that are critical to the success of IMC. Integrated marketing communication cannot simply be a recommended strategy in colleges and universities; it must be practiced by each staff member, who should be rewarded accordingly.

2.9 Role of IMC in colleges and universities

IMC had once been a term that could only be spoken in the most hushed tones in academia. But during the past several years, the resistance to the concept of marketing in academic fields seem to be dissolving. This acceptance has been helped in part by publications on the topic from several prominent academics such as Derek Bok (2003) and David Kirp (2004). Kirp's most recent work, 'Shakespeare, Einstein, and the Bottom Line: The IMC in academia has sparked an interest in not only understanding market forces but also how institutions have effectively (and others not so effectively) applied marketing and communication techniques to propel their institutions forward in the twenty-first century.

2.10 Competitive Nature of the Higher Education Market

In the past decades, the number of colleges and universities has grown up rapidly all over the world, including branch campuses. If a single factor could be attributed to why marketing in higher education has evolved (or devolved, depending on one's

perspective) it would likely be the proliferation of college ranking systems. As the cost of college education escalated in the 1980s, students and parents began to ask the question, 'How do I know I am getting my money's worth?' 'When organized higher education failed to provide a credible answer, World Report filled the vacuum. Thus, were born the dreaded college rankings that rather than focusing on learning and outcomes, transformed reputation and prestige into synonyms for educational quality.

The World Report rankings are 'widely considered the gold standard of college rankings.. However, these rankings are scorned by many higher education administrators who believe the various institutional outputs measured (such as selectivity factors) are not as important as certain educational outcomes (such as quality of the learning experience and the tuition fees). The single best way to build your brand, as every president of every college and university in the country knows, is to make an impression where it really counts: the home country News and World Report rankings. The official line from the magazine and the colleges is that the rankings are just one tool students should use to find the right school. But everybody knows the truth: Parents and students obsess about them. Consequently, so do universities. Brian Kelly, editor of U.S. News & World Report, defends the rankings and stresses the magazine reviews its methodology several times a year. He also declares the magazine has no intention of stopping the ranking system. 'The rankings allow people to sort through a baffling array of choices,' Kelly said. 'It's a starting point. This should not be an end point of the college search' (Vaznis, 2007). A multitude of factors in the ranking process could potentially be influenced through effective IMC to include peer assessment as well as retention, graduation and alumni giving rates.

2.11 IMC of Siam University IMBA Department

Siam University's international programs are absolutely low with quality accreditation. However the low cost of the tuition fee does not mean low quality of education. Siam University has been prepared to provide students with these kinds of skills and information. This curriculum deals with standard business concepts in accounting, marketing, general management, economics, research, trade laws, culture, tradition and aspects unique to different nations and government around the world. The international programs of Siam University offered all courses in English according to be the international course curriculums and standard with most popular used textbooks. All the subjects are taught by both foreign professors and teachers from native English spoken countries and Thai faculties with international education backgrounds.

International programs of Siam University had offered very complete price of tuition for every program. The bachelor's degree programs are priced at second lowest. And the master's program is also ranking top low. The location of Siam University was always believed available at the right place of the area of Thonburi area, the southwest part of Bangkok. It is convenient for both local and international students to access the education. The University is a fully accredited higher education institution. Its graduates enjoy the privileges accorded to state University graduates. Its academic standard is accepted by the Civil Service Commission of Thailand.

The paper base brochures and posters are the main marketing promotion tool in current promotion. Show boards in business districts are also applied in domestic market. Joining the international educational exhibition is the main tool as public relations in the international market. Therefore Integrated Marketing Communications is taken as a simple concept in Siam University. The management of universities ensures that all forms of communications and messages are carefully linked together. At its most basic level, IMC, is consider as integrating all the promotional tools, so that they work together in harmony.

Promotion is one of the Ps in the marketing mix. A promotion has its own mix of communications tools. All of these communications tools work better if they work together in harmony rather than in isolation. Their sum is greater than their parts - providing they speak consistently with one voice all the time, every time. This is enhanced when integration goes beyond just the basic communications tools. There are other levels of integration such as Horizontal, Vertical, Internal, External and Data integration. Here is how they help to strengthen Integrated Communications. Horizontal Integration occurs across the marketing mix and across business functions - for example, production, finance, distribution and communications should work together and be conscious that their decisions and actions send messages to customers.

While different departments such as sales, direct mail and advertising can help each other through Data Integration. This requires a marketing information system which collects and shares relevant data across different departments. Vertical Integration means marketing and communications objectives must support the higher level corporate objectives and corporate missions. Check out the Hall Of Fame later for more about

missions. Meanwhile Internal Integration requires internal marketing - keeping all staff informed and motivated about any new developments from new advertisements, to new corporate identities, new service standards, new strategic partners and so on. External Integration, on the other hand, requires external partners such as advertising and PR agencies to work closely together to deliver a single seamless solution - a cohesive message - an integrated message.

The only position related to the marketing and communication function was the 'public information specialist' role, which would seem to be limited to the practice of public relations. As institutions have grown their enrollment and program offerings, they have also become increasingly fragmented internally. Typically this has resulted in functions becoming compartmentalized and departments operating without any knowledge of the other parts of the institution. Individuals within Siam University tend to view themselves as part of a distinct department competing for limited organizational resources rather than as part of a comprehensive system working toward common objectives.

Such a fiefdom mentality is a major barrier to effective IMC. Rather than establish a concerted, integrated marketing communication strategy, it is more typical to develop separate offices to address admissions marketing, media and public relations, alumni and development, athletic marketing, publications and creative services to include website initiatives. Such a mindset must be overcome if the development of a true brand orientation, critical to IMC, is to occur.

2.12 Related Research and Publication

Edmiston (2009), An examination of integrated marketing communication in US public institutions of higher education. The findings were as follows: IMC does exist in US public IHEs. In addition, the organization needs to recognize the value of branding, and how each marketing communication action potentially increases or decreases institutional brand equity. To achieve the most effective IMC, marketing and communications staff should adopt both informal and formal outreach efforts. Campus ‘influencers’ should be enlisted to support both the planning and promoting of IMC initiatives. In addition, it is critical that metrics are established to evaluate the outcomes, not simply the outputs, of marketing communication.

Schultz and Schultz (2004) IMC The Next Generation. This publication contends that the IMC reciprocity approach is ‘to refer to brand relationships, which are defined as the relationships that exist between buyers and sellers through the exchange of value for products or services over time’ (p. 129). They illustrate the reciprocal approach of IMC with an example of a US-based educational services provider who offered a traditional classroom experience as well as Internet-based distance education. This particular organization sought and acquired new students through various promotional methods ranging from traditional advertising to Internet marketing. The organization had an excellent enrollment record, but customer retention had not achieved an acceptable level.

Using the reciprocal approach, the organization initially examined the value of the customer to the educational institution via the three primary components of its revenue stream: (1) the number of enrollees, (2) the length of time the students were enrolled, and

(3) the revenue and profit per month (on average) for each student enrolled. The student population was divided into several segments relative to revenue and profitability.

Turning to the other side of the equation, the value of the educational institution to the customer, it was interesting to note that of those students who de-enrolled, 40 per cent based their decision to leave on some type of dissatisfaction with the institution itself. Thus, the question became, 'Could those reasons for dissatisfaction be addressed with marketing communication so that the vulnerable students would be identified and the expected attrition of other students prevented?' (p. 138).

Further analysis of the 15 major reasons for student dissatisfaction revealed that eight of them could potentially be resolved through marketing communication actions. 'Three key solutions were then identified: improvements in communication, provision for improvements in the operating systems, and development of direct systems solutions that could be implemented by local managers' (p. 139). Potential loss recovery was determined for each of the marketing-related solutions; as a result, the organization prioritized its efforts toward the solutions with the greatest financial impact.

Although this is a simplified example, it still serves to demonstrate the potential institutional and financial gains inherent in IMC and effective management of customer and brand relationships in the educational marketplace.