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5. INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS: METHODS AND TOOLS

Snapok L.A., Master's degree student, group 376701

Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics, Minsk, Republic of Belarus

Liakh Y.V. – Senior Lecturer

Annotation. The article considers the concept of integrated marketing communications as a strategic approach to creating a unified and consistent message for the consumer through a combination of various marketing tools. The advantages and features of using BMI are analysed, and ways of combining various communication channels to achieve a synergistic effect are investigated.

Keywords. Integrated marketing communications, marketing communications, advertising, Public Relations, product placement, event-marketing, synergetic effect, product promotion, sales promotion, direct marketing, sponsorship, branding.

The concept of integrated marketing communications (IMC) arose in marketing theory in response to the increasing complexity of the promotion of goods and services in the modern market.

The concept of integrated marketing communications is an approach to managing a company's marketing communications through combining elements of a promotion package in order to ensure seamless and coordinated communication with consumers and other stakeholders, as well as to achieve a synergistic effect [1].

Integrated marketing communications help to build more effective and full-fledged communication with the target audience and improve the marketing strategy of the enterprise.

Combining various marketing communication tools allows you to get a synergy effect when the joint use of individual marketing tools allows you to achieve greater results than when using them separately.

The synergistic effect is achieved by merging the unique advantages of each marketing tool, which allows the IMC to rethink communications and present them to the consumer as a whole stream of information coming from a single source.

In the IMC, all means and tools of communication are subordinated to the promotion strategy and are aimed at achieving the marketing goals of the producer in particular and their corporate goals in general. The way in which they will be used to achieve the goals of the company's market activity is determined by the promotion strategy. Integrated marketing communications are needed to implement the following tasks [2]:

- improving the effectiveness of marketing communications;
- strengthening brand loyalty;
- accelerating the promotion of leads in the sales funnel;
- promoting sales;
- improving competitiveness;
- implementing complex communication tasks.

The characteristics of integrated marketing communications include strategic orientation, consistency, multidimensionality, customer focus, consistency, continuity, seamless, measurability, and feedback.

However, it is important to note that IMC are not limited to communication with consumers. They also include interaction with other stakeholders such as partners, suppliers, employees, shareholders, investors and the general public. Effective management of the IMC requires an integrated approach and attention to all aspects of the company's interaction with its environment.

Integrated marketing communications perform the following functions [3]:

- strategic – integration of existing and new public relations by managing all communication activities aimed at creating and maintaining the reputation of the organisation;
- image – function is provided by the participation of corporate identity and strategic integrators in all communications;
- reputational – provides the communication power of the company's intangible assets;
- marketing – provides solutions to the company's marketing tasks related to planning, market adaptation and marketing of products, conquering new market segments and retaining existing ones;
- management – ensures coordination of external and internal communications of the company, forming not only favorable relations of the organisation with the environment, but also harmonising corporate culture, production climate and relationships in the team.

IMC include the following main elements of communication: advertising, PR, sales promotion, personal sales, direct marketing, sponsorship, product placement, branding, event marketing and others [4].

Advertising is a set of tools that provide information to the consumer by sending messages, as well as maintain or change the behavior of the end consumer in order to promote goods and services at all stages of

the purchase decision-making process and increase the attractiveness of products and services of companies to the target audience.

The main purpose of advertising is to influence the customer in such a way that when buying, they choose the advertised product.

Depending on the various characteristics, several different types of advertising are distinguished [5 p. 78]:

- the type of sponsorship – corporate, corporate, cooperative, advertising of individuals and the state, social and political;

- the type of target audience – aimed at the business sector, aimed at the individual consumer;

- segment coverage – mass, selective, point;

- the size of the territory covered by advertising – local, regional, national, international, global;

- the subject – commodity, prestigious (image), personality advertising, territory advertising;

- the life cycle of the product – informative, admonitory, comparative, reminiscent, reinforcing;

- impact on the consumer – visual, auditory, visual-olfactory;

- means of advertising – TV advertising, radio advertising, outdoor advertising, print advertising, etc.

Within the framework of the IMC, advertising can be used to solve such tasks as forming a need for a product category, raising awareness of the trademark, forming an image of the product, improving attitudes towards the brand, and forming an intention to make a purchase.

Public Relations (PR) is a set of actions and activities aimed at improving the image of a company or its products by forming a favorable public opinion about them, usually through the media [5 p. 80].

The purpose of PR is to create an effective communication system between a social entity and the public, contributing to the optimisation of interactions with significant segments of the environment.

The main areas of PR include the following ones:

- publicity is the non-personal and unpaid stimulation by the sponsor of demand for a product, service or business organisational unit through the dissemination of commercially important information about them in print media or a benevolent presentation on radio, television or from the stage;

- sponsorship and charitable activities are voluntary activities of citizens and legal entities for the selfless transfer of property, including cash, to citizens (legal entities), the selfless performance of work, the provision of services, and other support;

- internal PR is an activity aimed at creating a positive image of the company in the eyes of its staff, aimed at creating, maintaining and developing a corporate culture;

- anti-crisis PR communications in a crisis situation for the company, aimed at minimising the resulting and possible losses.

Sales promotion is a system of short-term incentive measures and techniques aimed at encouraging the purchase or sale of goods and taking the form of additional benefits, amenities, savings, etc. [5 p. 85].

This is an activity for sales growth «here and now». This type of communication is often used when you need to sell goods quickly or attract new customers – promotions at points of sale, discounts, coupons, promotions like Black Friday, bonuses and gifts, games and competitions for customers.

Direct marketing (Direct sales) is any targeted communication with customers or representatives of the business community in order to receive a response in the order form, request additional information, visit a store or other place of sale of certain goods or services [5 p. 91].

The main purpose of direct marketing is to complete the transaction instantly or immediately gain interest from a potential customer. Usually, only one communication channel is used for this: an email or a phone call.

Among the channels and forms of direct marketing, there are such as [5 p. 92]:

- personal sales – direct interaction with the client in order to organise a presentation, receive answers to questions and orders;

- catalog sales are the use of product catalogs sent to customers by mail or distributed in stores;

- mail marketing is the mailing of letters, booklets, promotional materials and other things to potential buyers at addresses from the mailing list;

- telephone marketing is the use of the phone as a tool for direct sale of goods to the buyer;

- direct response television marketing is selling through advertising television or radio programs using feedback elements;

- mail marketing is an order by mail, mailing letters, brochures, press releases to potential customers according to a specially compiled list;

- direct mail – catalog trading, based on newsletters, as well as TV and radio advertisements;

- Internet marketing.

Product Placement (PP) is the placement of a certain product, trademark or service in movies, TV and radio shows, newspapers, magazines, the Internet, computer games, cartoons, literature, etc. - in all «products» that are addressed to the average consumer. In other words, PP is a native, unobtrusive informing of the consumer about the object of promotion in the storyline of a story or a work of art [5 p. 104].

There are three types of PP placement – a visual type (demonstration of the visual characteristics of the product), a verbal auditory type (mention of the product by the actor himself or «voice-over») and a non-verbal auditory type (demonstration of sound, which is an integral property of a product).

Sponsorship is the attraction of company funds to any social project in order to achieve the necessary advertising effect [5 p. 105].

Depending on the spheres of public life, there are several types of sponsorship: sponsorship of culture and art; sponsorship of scientific activities; sponsorship of social projects; sponsorship of sports.

Depending on the composition of the target audience, the sponsor company's communication activities may have a number of directions:

- formation of marketing communications with target market groups;
- development of communications to create a favorable public opinion about the sponsor company from the position of PR technologies;
- development of communications aimed at the company's own staff in order to form its favorable image.

Branding is the process of forming a brand image over a long period through the formation of added value, an emotional or rational «promise» of a trademark, or a non-branded product that makes it more attractive to the end consumer, as well as the promotion of a trademark on the market.

The main goal of branding is to create an image of the company that will evoke positive emotions, associations, a sense of belonging to a particular group and, eventually, a desire to buy from potential customers.

The following types of branding are distinguished [6]:

- grocery or consumer branding;
- personal branding;
- corporate branding;
- territorial branding.

Event marketing is a type of marketing that promotes a brand and its products through public events. The most popular types of events in event marketing include the following [7]:

– conferences are major business events where business representatives discuss current topics in their industry;

– seminars and master classes are educational events for a limited number of participants, the main purpose is training and retraining;

– VIP-events – events for particularly important people associated with the company: influential shareholders, sponsors, ambassadors, honorary clients;

– forums for industry leaders – events to discuss global issues related to the economy, the social sphere and other socially significant topics;

– presentations – at such events, the company presents new products to customers, potential buyers and partners, the main task of such an event is to interest the audience, clearly demonstrate the advantages of the product and increase sales.

– exhibitions – events for the demonstration and sale of products of one or more industry brands;

– online events – conferences, presentations, concerts and many other events can be held in a virtual space if the company does not have the opportunity or desire to organise an offline event.

It can be noted that the methods and tools of integrated marketing communications play a key role in the successful implementation of marketing strategies of companies. Gradually, the number of elements and tools of the IMC is expanding. Internet promotion has become widespread – it is the creation of pages on social networks, single-page sites, contextual advertising. SEO optimisation, banner advertising, mailing lists, etc. are used to attract users to the site.

However, it should be mentioned that the approach to communication should be focused, coordinated and focused on achieving the overall goals of the brand. Using a variety of communication channels, as well as constant monitoring and analysis of results, will help create an effective communication strategy that helps attract and retain customers. It is also important to keep in mind the constant development and adaptation of communication methods to the changing demands of the market and the needs of the audience.

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