

Talking to Heidi: Choosing the right communication mix



American College

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Executive Summery

When considering about the young women who are highly educated and independent (Heidi), there are some critical and significant feature or characteristics with them. Some of them are the latest information they possesses regarding the products in the market, the way they deal with the latest fashions in the society, their growing personality in all the contexts in the society and their attitude regarding the self-confidence they have. When analyzing all these specific and unique characteristics they possess, it is clear that a greater attention should be laid down when offering a product or service targeting this segment.

Things that should be considered before the communication mix

If a certain company wishes to offer a specific revolutionary skin cream for this segment of young women, there should be a specially designed communication mix for reaching this marketing segment. When deciding a good communication mix for young women in the market, it can be done as an ongoing process with a proper consideration regarding several factors. (Arens, William, 1998)

- **Identify the target audience-** when offering any kind of a product, the thing which should be in first and foremost is identifying the target audience. Here, in the context of offering a new skin cream to young women, it should understand the nature of the market of young women. Here the company should clearly distinguish the target audience and the target market separately as we are not talking to the target market but the target audience. Therefore the communication mix should completely be focused on the target audience but target market. At the same time the company should do an image analysis regarding the target market of the product which assesses the target audience's image regarding the company, its product and its competitors. Here the company should identify the target customers, their needs, their roles, their knowledge, their level of loyalty and their perceptions.
- **Determine the communication objective-** When creating a good communication mix; any company should clearly determine their objective of communication. Here

the company should identify the stage/position that the customers are currently operating in the “*Buyer Readiness Stage*”.



Here, the company should identify the stage in which the target customer is currently operating and decide the step that should be taken into action through the communication mix in order to go for the next step in the “*Buyer Readiness Stage*”.

- **Design the appropriate message**-After determining the stage that the target customer is currently operating, the company should develop a good proper message to convey the basic idea regarding the product which is intended to offer. In this step company should pay a greater attention regarding the content, structure and the format of the message which is expected to communicated.(Arens,William,1998)This message should possesses the features described under the “AIDA” model;(appendix 01)

A-Attention

I-Interest

D-Desire

A-Action

- **Selecting the media**- Here the company should determine the channel through which they hope to convey the message to the target audience. Mainly there are two major types of channels a company can use to convey their message.(Zinkhan, George Watson, Richard,1996)
 - a. **Personal Channels**- Here, two or more people in the marketing force of the company conveys the idea regarding the product to the target customers by meeting them face to face. This can be categorized under three major categories.
 - i. **Advocate**- here the company sales force contacts the customers in the target market directly. In the context of skin creams this will be little bit difficult because of the large number of customers involved.
 - ii. **Expert**- Independent experts or famous persons in the society make statements and comments regarding the product to the target customers. This may be possible regarding the context of skin cream. Therefore company can use a famous beautician or a famous actress for this purpose.

- iii. **Social channels-** Here, word of mouth marketing, marketing through the neighbors and friends of the target customers are used as the way of conveying the message regarding the product to the target customers.
- b. **Non-personal channels-** Here, the company reach large number of its target customers through Mass Medias such as radio broadcasting and telecasting. This may be a very effective method of promoting the products such as skin creams because of the large number of customers.
- **Selecting the message source-** Company should select a appropriate source for conveying the message
- **Collecting the feedback-** After implementing the process of conveying the message to the target audience, it is essential to collect the feedback regarding the effectiveness of the communication process. This will result in creating a pool of information that will help in eradicating the errors and mistakes happen during the last time and in avoiding those errors in the next step.

Putting these steps into action will ensure the effective implementation of communication mix not only in the market of skin cream but also in any other market.

Appropriate tools for communication mix

After paying a considerable attention over the above mentioned factors, the company can go ahead with its communication mix/strategy. When a designing a communication mix for aproduct like skin cream, it should determine the most appropriate marketing tools that can be used under its marketing campaign. For this purpose following marketing tools can be applied.(Zinkhan,GeorgeWatson, Richard,1996)



1. **Advertizing-** This can be defined as any paid form of presentation and promotion of ideas regarding a certain product or service by an identified sponsor. Here the company has to pay some rental or and a commission for the telecasting/broadcasting firm for the advertisement. As this is for all the persons in the target market, this can be considered as a non-personal form of media. In the context of skin creams, this will be a good media to convey the information regarding the product to the target market

customers because this type of medias have the ability to address an infinite number of customers at once. At the same time this will be helpful in competing with the rival firms especially in an oligopoly market such as cosmetics industry. As the young women who are the target market of the skin creams are tend to be with TV and radios, advertizing will be a good source of communicating to that market.

2. **Sales promotion-** This is mainly focused on encouraging both the customers and intermediaries for purchasing and selling the relevant product. This is two types in nature. If the promotion is focused on encouraging the end customer for purchasing the product then it is considered as “Consumer Promotion”. This may be effective regarding a product like skin creams especially at the introductory level of the product life cycle. This will help in compelling the customers who are attached with other rival firm’s products to test in this product too. As an example here, the company can implement a special package of skin creams that will offer extra pack of skin cream when buying two packs.

If the sales promotion is mainly focused on encouraging the intermediaries of the product then it is called as “Trade Promotion”. In the context of skin creams, this will not be very effective method of promotion as the ability of the intermediaries to encourage customers to buy the product is in a very low position. But trade promotion will be very effective in the context of goods which need clear explanation regarding the ingredients, usage and other related tasks of the product.

3. **Personal Selling-** Here, the sales force of the company makes one-to-one relationships with the customers and gives information regarding the product with the purpose of gaining sales. This also will be helpful in the context of goods which need certain technical knowledge to operate and goods that are complex in nature. But in a market like skin creams, this will not be much effective.
4. **Public relations and publicity-** This deals with creating good relationships with the various public groups of the company for getting favorable publicity, building a good co-operate image for the company and heading off unfavorable rumors and stories regarding the company. Most of the companies in today’s market use CSR campaigns with the purpose of this public relations and publicity.
5. **Direct marketing-** Direct connections with certain customers are used to encourage the sales of the considering product. This is very important method of communication because of the higher degree of immediate response and long-lasting customer relationships. Here company can use E-mail, Online marketing and direct mail for this

purpose. As most of the young women are busy with their lifestyle they don't have enough time to do shopping or watch TV. Under this condition, this will be a good method of reaching those young women in the skin cream market.

6. **Interactive marketing-** Online activities and programs are designed to encourage the customers, raise the awareness and to improve the company image. As most of the young women in present go out for work, this will be an effective method of reaching them because they can connect to the internet at any time and get the information regarding the product online while sitting on her desk. Therefore this can be used effectively for promoting the goods such as skin creams. At the same time Social networking sites will also be a good source for this because most of the young people tend to deal with these kinds of social networking sites and therefore this will be very effective in reaching that set of customers.
7. **Events and experiences-** Under this method the company organizes some events and activities which are focused on creating daily or special brand related interactions. Through this kind of events company wishes to make familiarize the product with the customers and to increase the level of loyalty. As an example, for a product like skin creams, company can organize a company-sponsored seminar on beauty culture and promote their products along with that seminar through interactive activities that are related with company's brands.
8. **Word of mouth marketing-** This is the most effective and latest method of conveying information to the target audience. The major advantage under this method is reliability because any customer is willing to believe in the information that was told by another customer rather than any other source of information. Therefore if the company can create a good image in customers mind regarding the product, then it will automatically spread among the other customers and they will probably buy that product without any hesitation because of the higher level of reliability.

Benefits of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

When a company is catering for a target market such as young women, it is necessary to convey its message to that target audience through an effective mode of communication. But when considering about the day to day lifestyle of today's young women, it has become more complex and busy. (Schultz, Tannenbaum, Lauterborn, 1994)

Therefore they don't have much time to spending front of the TV or listening to the radio. At the same time the sales force also difficult to reach each and every customer in the market. On the other hand all most all the people still don't have the access to the internet. As a result of all these issues, it is crystal clear that a company is unable to succeed in their communication mix by limiting to one or two modes of communication. In this situation the concept "*Integrated marketing Communication (IMC)*" comes into action. This strategy will be very helpful in the context of skin creams of which the target customers are very busy, stylish, independent and knowledgeable young women.(appendix 02)

Integrated Marketing Communication can be defined as the coordination and integration of all the marketing communication tools, functions and sources in a company into a single program that make a considerable effect on the end customers than using those tools and functions separately.(Schultz,Tannenbaum,Lauterborn, 1994)Here all the marketing tools in the company such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations and publicity, direct marketing and word of mouth marketingare used as a single unified force to influence the end customers. The simple thing which is happening here is carefully integrating and coordinating all the communication channels in the company to deliver a clear, consistent and compelling message regarding the company and its products.

In the context of a product like skin cream, Integrated Marketing communication has a greater importance over it rather than using all the marketing tools separately.

- **Effective impact over the end customer-** In the traditional method company gives different ideas through different modes of communication. But under the Integrated Marketing Communication it gives the same message through all of the communication tools. Then there is a higher impact over the customer as he/she get the same message through each and every media.
- **Ability to concentrate on the target audience properly-** If the company uses one or two modes of communication for delivering the information to the customers, then it will be difficult to reach all the customers in the target market because there may be some customers who are not familiar with medias that are used by the company. But under the Integrated Marketing Communication we gives the same message trough several medias and therefore most of the customers in the target market would be covered by at least one of those medias.

- **Ability to focus on all the “Touch Points” of the customers-** When a company uses one or two modes of communication, then it will touch only a limited number of customer touch points. Therefore it will have a limited impact over the end customer. But under the Integrated Marketing Communication it makes a huge effect over the customer as it touches all most all the customer touch points.
- **From “General-focused Marketing” to “Data-based Marketing”-** If the company uses a limited number of communication modes it will not ensure that the customer gets enough information regarding the product or service. But under this Integrated Marketing Communication, it will provide a wider range of information to the customer and results in “Data-based marketing”.
- **Shortens the search process/effort of the customer-** Under the Integrated marketing Communication, customer gets more information from several sources/medias. Therefore he/she is no need to spend much time and money on the search process. At the same time this will reduce the risk in customers mind because Integrated Marketing Communication is intended to give a very clear, consistent and compelling message about the product and the organization to the end customer.

By using this kind of Integrated Marketing Communication strategy, it will do a huge impact over the customers rather than using communication Medias separately.

Conclusion

For the success of the marketing campaign of any product in any kind of an organization, there should be a proper planned communication mix in order to create a good position in customers’ mind by delivering a clear and consistent message about the product. In this context, first of all the company should think about the nature of its target market, their preferences and their needs through latest customer insights. Then it should select the most appropriate marketing tool which is most suitable for reaching that specific customer segment. In most of the situation this is better to be an Integrated Marketing Communication strategy rather than a single mode of communication. Putting these kinds of steps into action will result in the success of the entire marketing campaign of the organization/company. Then

the success of marketing campaign will obviously result in increasing the turnover of the company and eventually the profit and the long-term survival of the company.

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Appendices

Appendix 01



Appendix 02

