

**Integrated Marketing Communication**  
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**Lecture - 16**  
**Role of Persuasion in IMC**

Welcome back friends, and this is almost the last part we have reached in terms of developing our understanding of the relationship of communication with consumer behavior. During this process, we have established the importance and role of communication in consumer decision-making.

Consumer behavior we try to understand because we want to understand consumer decision-making and the process because we want to influence that with the help of communication. And now, this section is about persuading the consumer. Persuasion is an art. Persuasion is, it requires strength; it requires effort. It is effortful.

You see, convincing someone is easy, or I should not say very easy, but convincing you can do with the help of arguments, you can do with the help of you know lots of creativity in as far as your messages go and the person says yes, the thing is good, okay. You have developed an attitude of that person towards the product or the service. Persuading the person to move out and go for that product.

So, McDonald's 20 rupees' burger, done, very good. But the consumer goes there and consumes that burger and rest of the food with the family and keeps going there that is effortful. A movie is coming. James Bond movie is coming; Batman movie is coming, fine. Spiderman movie is coming, okay. You have lots of communication. That is good. But people going out watching that movie is effortful.

When you generate a web series trial, people watch the first serial, then pursuing them to keep on watching that series is effortful. You launch an ice cream. People eat it for the first time. It is a humungous success. Baskin Robbins, you remember, was highly successful in India. Where is Baskin Robbins now? I am not sure. Not sure.

Several products, and I have been promising you that I would not be referring to product failures too much here. Because I know that it is not just because of communication that products become successful, but lots of customer acceptance is required. But what we are talking about here is persuasion. So, taking the customer there. And let us look into the elements of how to

persuade consumers systematically.

Through the understanding, we have developed by looking at the two perspectives we have discussed earlier. Psychological and sociological. And let us consider information processing and perceptual defense here, which is very important; you see, all the information is not readily acceptable to the customer. Take yourself. Think of yourself. You see so many advertisements.

You like those, you discuss those, do you accept everything there? Do you start changing your purchasing habits because of those advertisements? No. Why do you stick to the product we are still using although the advertisement for the other product is beautiful and you like it? Because there is a perceptual defense. So, the first thing which comes as an obstacle is cognitive consistency.

Cognitive consistency impetus. That is why you know the customer would change or would not change her attitude or shake her belief. For example, a particular kind of rice, which a homemaker purchase all through. You keep on banging on India Gate basmati rice or whichever way. Would she easily change that? For example, a homemaker purchases Wah Taj for her family.

Would she change it so quickly even though other advertisements are excellent? Would she change that? And not even in the case of highly credible product offerings. For example, branded jewelry. Did people leave their goldsmiths and traditional shop so quickly? Or have they left them? No, they are still using that. How many people, even though Bajaj scooters, stopped manufacturing those?

How many people stopped riding those scooters even though they were not there in the market. You see, even if a product is discontinued, it is still challenging for you to bring in a new product for them, to change their habits or usage. So, this cognitive consistency impetus is the first thing that comes as a blockhead, and this has to be understood by the marketer because your messages would be catering to this element.

You would have at the back of your mind; marketers would have this element in their thought process that message would be attracting the attention, developing a recall, but not so quickly taking the customer to the purchase. The second element comes in the form of advertising clutter. Let us do a small exercise, or you may do a small exercise. Choose one category of product, let us say a two-wheeler.

Let us say toothpaste and try and watch similar kinds of advertisements from different advertisers and marketers. That is one part. In the second part, try and look for the clippings of

the advertisers from the same products through different modes. What I mean to imply here is that the clutter would keep on rising in the case of one product category. That is, you are watching three or four different advertisers of similar category products on television.

Now you have those advertisements simultaneously in newspapers and on the internet. And then you have ended up watching for products in three different modes meaning 12 times. And if it happens in three or four days, then multiple times. What kind of time would you have spent on those? Probably the first time slightly longer, second time slightly you know less.

But cumulatively, there would be a substantial number of minutes you would have spent as far as those advertisements would have gone, and this is precisely the clutter. And then keep on adding products to it, go beyond this category, look into other products, consumer products, and so on, and just try and list down, you know, just hang a piece of paper on, you know, on the wall.

And every morning, just note how many advertisements you have seen for different products. This one is in the morning, then in the evening; just add something there. Just do it for three days, and you will realize that you have spent lots of time watching advertisements, many of which you would not recall. But they would have consumed space in your mind.

They would have gained your attention, which is precisely advertising clutter. Why? Understand this. One marketer spends millions of dollars developing one advertisement and reaching the customer. And if the clutter hampers that flow to a percentage and a degree, it will hit the, you know, the cost which this marketer will pay for that.

The third element is in the form of selective attention. The customer does not pay heed. This is a widespread kind of thing. Have you noticed yourself watching your mobile phone while watching TV simultaneously? It always happens, always. How often do you look out the window of the cars or buses you are travelling to or airport lounges? How often have you looked up from your mobile phone to watch the advertisement on the billboard in front of you?

Remember the last time when you travelled? Can you recall what advertisement you saw on the billboard, you know, in the airport lounge or at a railway station or a bus station or somewhere? Can we recall that advertisement? No. Because simultaneously you were watching your mobile phone or your attention was selective elsewhere.

You can do this experiment today if you watch this advertisement, this sorry video in the afternoon. Remember what those advertisements were beyond the first page you saw in the newspaper today. And that is what you can think of in terms of selective attention. It is a long and detailed subject, but that is what you think of selective attention. And these are barriers.

These are concrete barriers; which marketers have to face. You see, we are talking of cognitive responses here.

And the effort from the advertiser's side to influence the customers' beliefs and attitudes brings a cognitive response. Why should I shake up whatever I am thinking? And that is an imbibed resistance in the customers' minds as such. There is a whole lot of, you know, the theoretical backdrop to this kind of thing, but you see, it is effortless basically.

And that can be most evident in the form you know in children, for example. You introduce a particular kind of a product to them, and then you try to put up advertisements across, they would like those, but they might not easily change those. Even if you want them to change, they might not. For example, they purchase a particular kind of toothbrush they were attracted to.

And you were not so happy; you wanted them to use some other product. Would you be able to change that particular choice by introducing several kinds of messages to them? Not so easy. And this is evident almost everywhere, all through, and that is where you know averages or average association of customers with the products are calculated.

And several other things are being associated with, and we have discussed a few of those associations in the earliest part of this discussion. Now how to cater to the resistance from the side of the customer to change his belief is a big question. And that is what we will try to address for a short while.

There is one model which is very supportive of this kind of a thing for us to understand and then to go for this kind of a progression reaching to the minds of the customer.

And that is the ELM model, Elaboration Likelihood Model. And this Elaboration Likelihood Model, like several other models, has a broader framework. Let us talk about this for a while. And then whichever model comes your way, and I motivate you to look into other models as well; there are several.

And we cannot go for every model and decipher this because the structure of this discussion is related to integrated marketing communication rather than discussing every model in detail. But this is one of the most acceptable or discussed one of those models. And then you can compare it with other models available as such.

Now, the basic premise of this model is to understand how persuasive communication may affect

a person's attitude, motivation, and ability to elaborate on the message during processing. So, motivation is the critical point of concentration and elaboration on the message; basically, how the consumer will get associated with or develop a thought around that message.

How or, to be precise, the consumer would let it into his thought process. That is because we have been talking of cognitive resistance, more or less, you know, or cognitive response associated with resistance. So how the customer would you know, now comes in motivation and ability to elaborate the message can be seen as a function of how involved a person is with the consumption decision in question.

Again, we have talked about experience and involvement and take a cue from there, and ELM also talks about that, but here we are talking of persuasion. There, we talked about a few other things, including brand loyalty. But remember, brand loyalty would come when resistance is reduced, and the customer would accept the message so much that he would change his product or purchase the product even if it is for the first time.

So that motivation and ability to elaborate is the point of concern, and you know this involves decisions that result in active mental elaborations. In contrast, uninvolved decisions will implicate passive or passive processing, should I say, and here come two routes. Now it has become exciting.

To persuade the customer, there are two elements or routes of persuasion. And that is what the ELM model talks about. Remember ELM model means Elaboration Likelihood Model. How would you let things in? How would you elaborate upon whatever? So, there is a central route to persuasion.

This means you are focusing upon the product's core element through messages that talk of that core benefit or utility or association point or focal point, whichever way you want to look at it. And then, a peripheral route of persuasion is also there. How from all the sides do you wish to reach that customer and just focus upon the central root, for example, Patanjali Atta Noodles.

So, Patanjali Atta Noodles never says Patanjali Noodles. Patanjali Atta Noodles says Atta noodles. And they talk about the benefit of Atta. And then there are automotive, which technically talk about safety despite being engines or machines. Because safety matters, and that is what they project. You see, the first important thing now automotive projects nowadays is the number of airbags because that has become a prime concern for the customer.

Just this morning, I was looking at an advertisement for a car that has eight airbags apart from other things. That means all the people sitting in the car are safe. And that is what you know

automotive manufacturers are projecting. Recently I was visiting a showroom, and I was, you know, just looking into the features of a new launch.

And a young child asked the salesman, " Do you have six bags here, eight airbags here, or four airbags? Here are how many airbags are there. For example, how many passengers are safe in this car in case of any emergency? So, safety, and in the case of noodles Atta, have you seen advertisers talking about jogging, running, or walking shoes? Specifically, telling you to know what this would be used for?

Have you talked about they have talked about this? Has someone talked about the purity of water from the Himalayas? Has anyone talked about this? You remember that people talk about that. And recently, some pizza with crust or thin crust or filling, that kind of thing basically. So, you see, that is how central route to persuasion. And we can go on and on, and there are many things which you may agree with.

And then comes in the peripheral route. This is related to the referral cues and refers to the features other than the actual argument about the brands or brand performance, for that matter. For example, consumers learn to associate pleasant feelings and attractive images with the brand, and their attitude toward the brand you know becomes positive. For example, some tunes which take them there.

Tourism advertisements are also associated with lots of pictures, and airline advertisements are associated with lots of discussions on food, for example. And you know storyboards are talking about the comfort of seats, and you know, taking you through all other than the core argument. The core argument in the case of airlines might be the destinations or the time or those kinds of things.

But here they are talking of hot food and the way you are served, the safety of your goods, and so on. So that is where the peripheral route comes in. Now you know we will talk about whatever we have discussed slightly systematically, traversing through different elements one by one. These slides are more or less explicit. And I will follow you while you read those and listen to me.

So,, you see tools of influence through the persuader's perspective. How a persuader looks at, looks at the consumer, looks at the customer.

So, there is one element of reciprocation. Using favors to encourage the customers to reciprocate by buying the product. So, then there are several, you know, communicational or promotional elements associated with the reciprocation perspective. Commitment and consistency. After

people make a choice, there is a strong tendency to remain faithful to that choice.

And that is how, you know, persuader thinks about that, if somehow, he generates that choice, and fetches initial commitment, then there is a chance of customer remaining committed. And that is the beauty of it. Because we have seen how rational the customer is and how sociologically the customer is influenced. How culture plays a vital role. How values play a decisive role and so on.

Then, social proof. The behavior of, you know, others provide proof of how one should behave; we have talked about it. Then liking. Consumers are likely to adopt an attitude or undertake action when a likable person promotes that action. We have just mentioned that concerning celebrities, that can be one also. But otherwise, someone whom you can resonate with.

Then authority. People are raised to respect authority figures and exhibit a sense of duty towards them. Basically, someone who has that command over your thoughts, and that is how persuaders look at this. Scarcity is also one of those elements. And this is where I would end my discussion as far as this whole; you know, aspect of persuasion goes. And let us oversee this.

Wherein the influence process is also related to the persuadee's perspective. Until now, we talked about the persuader's perspective. Here we are talking about the persuadee's perspective. And there are two aspects, persuasion vehicles and persuading characteristics. So let us look at the vehicles. Message arguments, for example.

The strength or quality of message arguments is often a significant determinant of whether and to what extent persuasion occurs. How logical it is, how passionate it is, how competitive it is, and so on. And that is where many communications are based on customer references. Then the customer says that this product is good, and I am happy to use it. So that referral points.

You see lot many books are being sold based on endorsements. Lots many places are being sold that way. Many hotels do that. And other references are also being generated. And real-life characters are brought in there. Then comes peripheral cues; we have talked about that slightly earlier as well, wherein the presence of cues peripheral to the primary message arguments like background music, attractive sources, scenery, and graphics.

And I just talked about that wherein, you know, there is the core element, and then the argument is supported by elements other than the central argument. Here are peripheral cues which constitute the complete body to make it attractive. This works for generating a long-term recall in case of as far as integrated marketing communication goes in, especially mass advertising.

Remember a sweet salesman coming to you promoting a particular kind of a product and talking about so many things other than the product as well, trying to gain your attention, looking at your family values, and being consistent with those. His appearance is also very, you know, pleasing. And then he refers to so many other things. That is where peripheral cues, which are evident in direct sales also.

Lots of colors, and the role of colors, is massive. Colors play a particular role. And marketers spend lots of time analyzing what kind of an impact this color would make on people's minds. Then comes in communication modality. This is where television, radio, social media, or magazines come in. And we have been talking about this long.

So, these essentially constitute vehicles. And this part I have been calling as modes, usually. Now comes receiver involvement. And this we had talked about when we talked about the sender-receiver situation also wherein we talked about you know message starting from somewhere and reaching somewhere. So, here personal relevance that communication has for a receiver is a critical determinant of the extent and the form of persuasion.

So, you know how relevant it would be for a particular individual. For example, college-going students. How would this communication be relevant for them? Remember that MasterCard advertisement wherein this young girl returns home after, you know, initial days in her college, let us say six months or a year or so, which seems to be very long.

Because she has left home for the first time, we must all be remembering those things now. I remember that day when I went to college for the first time, and I was just coming back after four or five months. But I felt like coming after so many years. And that MasterCard tells you that suddenly you decide to go back home, you book your ticket through MasterCard.

And you know, as they say, priceless few things money cannot buy, for everything else, it is MasterCard. And that is where relevance comes in. There are several beautiful storyboards and advertisements which are related to relevance. And the last part of it is the receiver's initial position. Persuasion results from self-generated thoughts that people produce in response to persuasive efforts.

Mark these specific words and thoughts people produce in response to persuasive efforts. So, you see, we have talked about how those thoughts come into being. But now, we have to focus on the thoughts which might be generated because of a message. And that is where I leave you today. We will meet next time. And we will talk about some other aspects of integrated marketing communication.



I hope you have been enjoying this course till now. And you have started getting involved all through. And today, because we have also referred to involvement, please think about that particular element of involvement concerning the messages around you. Goodbye for now. Be happy and keep safe. Thank you.