

Integrated Marketing Communication
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Lecture “ 29
IMC Planning-Part III

Welcome back to the sequence of Integrated Marketing Communication Planning sessions, wherein for the past two sessions, we have been talking about various elements, especially last session, we mentioned situation analysis, wherein we talked about organizational analysis, competition analysis, market analysis, and product analysis. Now, we will focus on the strategic perspective associated with the plan.

What elements must we carry in our minds? And when we talk of strategy, one must take a cord from several aspects which we have touched upon in terms of positioning, competition, comparison, path, time, number of customer spans we would be covering, and the corporate image. Remember we talked about Patanjali, wherein that organizational perspective gets reflected into products and is pursued through integrated marketing communication.

That is what I mean to say when we talk of strategy. So, let us enumerate a few elements of strategy associated with the IMC plan.

Brand name recognition is one aspect we have to focus on in terms of our strategic approach. How many people recognize us with that kind of a name? Are we thinking of an organizational umbrella kind of a branding recognition perspective? Or are we thinking of generating several brands out of our organization? Are we thinking of putting different brand recognition to even the line changes we are making?

What is our approach? That is where the recognition element comes in. And again, we have been talking about repetition frequency, which we also mentioned last time. Broaden the appeal to new segments, and this again is a passing reference to that one plus one or let us say the addition of contact, the addition of target in one plus two kinds of wherein I mentioned baby products, and automobiles.

We may think about face creams, specific ice creams, soft drinks, etc. And several soft drink

manufacturers have been trying very hard to include different kinds of customers for the same product type. Even SUV's, have been trying to become gender-neutral. Their approach has now been to females or people who have not been driving SUVs.

They should think of SUV as vehicles rather than only as a male-dominated kind of vehicle. So and then there are elements of rhyming games associated with as far as brand name recognition goes. So, you see, when we talk of recognition, what we are focusing upon. Are we attracting customers through visuals, rhymes, and songs? What are we trying to go far as the narrative goes?

What are we trying to go with? Then trial use simulation, we have talked about this, but now we have to focus upon this with the strategic perspective introductory offers. Many organizations are often very aggressive when introducing their products. They are going for aggressive advertising or integrated marketing communication.

That is part of their plan. And as the sales grow, they increase the size of the products being marketed, just going beyond the samples and reducing integrated marketing communication deliberately because they feel that the flow is maintained now and let people purchase and keep on going. And let us save the costs and then introduce another product, focus upon that.

Or we might use it when competition refutes from their side with different messages. So that can be one of the approaches to product guarantees also. When competition is cutthroat, and there is not so much differentiation in products, assurances work. So, many organizations specifically focus on the kinds of guarantees and warranties they give on different types of products, and again, that is the perspective.

See, do not take away your sight from these elements while talking about them. What are you looking at in terms of span and time? And that is where the strategic approach comes in. And last time, I also mentioned brand switching, and I said mobile communication companies focused on that. So, once you invite customers to switch their brand, what reason are you giving them?

So that is related to value propositions, that is related to the product comparison. And that is where I remember that a company was focusing on that they are fastest in retrieving data. They continuously mentioned the name of a rating agency that rates the speed of the networks but I do not know how much it worked because I do not have data related to that.

But we will talk in terms of evaluation later on, wherein this becomes a point of consideration that how well the objective got resolved in terms of? But their product comparison is where they focused on the network's speed. And this is part of your strategy for an integrated marketing

communication plan. So, a strategic perspective has two elements wherein you think about how far time and what kind of steps you are using to execute your plan.

Now, there is a beautiful campaign which has been going on in recent times. You must have seen it somewhere, especially those who are the users of WhatsApp. They have been watching this campaign appear on their mobile phones. So, this is Apna Sa Lagta Hai Apno Ke Beech, and they are beautiful, clipping small clippings which appear.

WhatsApp is trying to focus on the value of connectivity between different kinds of people through WhatsApp wherein this beautiful storyboard, this older woman, she is staying in her home and somehow losing hope as she is lonely. And a medical nurse, who has been taking care of this woman very beautifully, gets connected to or remains connected to her through WhatsApp and keeps on prompting her to wake up and asking her to send the photographs that she has woken up and she has pulled off the curtains of her window. And she is watching the sun so that she can feel elevated. And that is how life gets rejuvenated for the older woman. So, you see this storyboard again. We have mainly talked about emotions and those kinds of things in our preceding sections.

And connecting those while considering those as part of an integrated marketing communication plan, we are thinking of a narrative and storyboard to project our positioning of what WhatsApp can do. WhatsApp is not launching itself just as a socially connecting people, they are projecting themselves from the perspective of socially connecting people with emotions, feelings, and meaning.

So that is where Apna Sa Lagta Hai Apno Ke Beech comes. So this is up to you; how many similar types of advertisements can you find? And try to consider what kind of perspective they were carrying concerning their integrated marketing communication plan? And then comes the element of execution.

Now, we have talked about situation analysis. We have spoken from a strategic perspective. We have mainly discussed the broader elements of an integrated marketing communication plan. Let us focus on four aspects of execution, and I will be talking about these at length in due course of time. So, I would not be wasting your time here.

Because it might bring redundancy, I will be talking about it at greater length later on, to mention

that these are the broader aspects of the execution part of the planned document creative brief, just to what would be the aspects related to creativity in the communication. That is what creativity is a copy strategy. How would that whole narrative lead to what actually?

And then what kind of a narrative would emanate from there? And then what kind of an effect might it generate, and if so, where would it go? So that kind of a sequence has to be documented, as of now, because that helps us think or rethink when something does not go the way we wish for it. So that is the relevance you see we can do without plans. I must mention it here, but then there is a chance.

There is a risk we might lose, and we would not have other ways if somehow it does not work the way it should. That is again wherein the importance comes in media planner, one of the essential elements. Because you have everything in place, and if you are not choosing the suitable streams to go to people, it would not only waste lots of money, but it might create a different kind of space for your competitors.

And I have talked about this at length in the preceding sections. So, remember those lessons and think of them. So, here you must have a powerful integrated combination of different modes, which you would be utilizing in a rainbow situation. You start from your home, you are watching your mobile, you see something, and somehow the same thing appears in front of you at the junction of a road somewhere on a billboard, and some flash comes in then FM is also talking about it.

That is where integrated choices, who does that there are intelligent, marketers who are continuously on to it. They have lots of integrated marketing research support with them. They have lots of understanding and intelligence associated with that, but their perspective realizes the objectives they have decided for this integrated marketing communication plan.

Integrated brand promotion, sorts of revenues, and connectivity between other modes related to communication, not precisely advertising modes but how you would be focusing upon? How should your sales force carry forward the efforts your advertising has initiated? What kind of sales promotion activities related to your retail outlet should be done?

What kind of POPs should you decide on? What kind of public relations campaigns should you be focusing upon? What kind of narratives and stories and interviews of the senior executive organizations? And when should it be done? So, all those activities and it is always mesmerizing? You see, sometimes you have very aggressive beautiful campaigns around a product.

And suddenly, in two days, you watch the CEO appearing on a television interview with lots of comments on the future business plans. And on the other side, his vice president of marketing is coming to the newspaper interview. And then there is an editorial article by the CEO himself in a newspaper. There is an internet note, and then there is a Twitter handle releasing his messages.

And then several other messages are coming from all other sites, and then there is somehow a group photograph wherein you can watch the same person in some gathering, let us say some business meeting. Then there is a TV coverage, wherein this is talking to someone. All this is associated with an integrated marketing communication plan.

In brand image build-up, product sales become integrated after a particular stage. Everything helps, and that is where planning comes in.

Now comes an essential element. I am optimistic in saying that evaluation is the most critical element. Evaluation gives you further direction because if you do not have other advice, you do not know about the next steps, which means you have not been monitoring the effects. That means you have not been watching the reactions of the competitors.

That means you are probably not in touch with the ground team, the retail section, the sales team, or even other functional areas of your organization. Who is capable of telling you that? How is it working somehow? So that has to be noticed and that has to be observed systematically. And again, a very relevant point we should consider is that evaluation is supported through ongoing and integrated marketing communication research.

We initiated from day one when we thought about generating particular communication. And when we are talking about writing that plan, we continuously focus on carrying forward the elements of research through and through up until the evaluation stage or beyond that. And that brings us to what was expected to happen. It is not just revisiting our objectives. It is the core of the realization of those objectives we thought of.

What kind of an effect would be generated and visible if we fulfill those objectives? So, is it visible around? Are people talking about us? And to what extent are people talking about us? For example, there is a movie launch and an integrated marketing communication plan as stated with that movie. Are people expecting that movie to launch or to be released? If it is so, then things are working.

If people do not care, if we have to remind them that today is the release, there was something

seriously wrong with our plan. That means we have spent a lot of money, but still, people do not know that this movie is about to be released today. And people are not booking the tickets somehow. That has happened with several films in recent times in cinema halls, also and otherwise, also on the internet mode.

And many times you mention that the movie is coming and people are looking forward to it. But that mention has that kind of worth when people keep looking towards that movie's release. And that makes all the difference because we all know that once people are waiting for this release, they will watch that, and revenue pulls in and first-week sales. And analysts would be able to tell you that first-week sales.

How does it go into the second week? And then what is the time when revenue objectives have been fulfilled and so on. So, what happened? What was the effect of each marketing communications element and its collective product? Can these effects be separated from other factors? Now, this is where I think we should pause for a few seconds.

And think we created a plan where we included almost everything. We had all the modes of advertising other than public relation elements and sales, promotional elements, direct marketing and everything. Whatever is possible for an organization or whatever they are into but after a particular stage, not only because the cost is a significant consideration but because as a natural step, you would like to think about what is working best for us.

Can we do without something basically, or should we go randomly for everything wherever we were doing? And if we can stop that and utilize that kind of resources for other modes, financial or otherwise. So, would it work better for us because I told you earlier as well, it is not just about these kinds of products that the contemporary products we are focusing on?

We are focusing on the coming changes in the line, the width, etc. And we are focusing on the stockholders' value through company-branded ways to lift up and so on. So, how to rationalize is all about justifying our sequence. So, what were the reasons for success or failure? If at all, if there was a failure. So that has to be revisited because it is not that we would stop doing that.

We must keep going, and if it is successful, we must remodel it. We have to re-strengthen it, I should say, we have to develop a model out of it, or we have to follow in the same footsteps we thought of doing. That means the plan worked, becoming a continuous guidebook for us. And what was learned from the campaign? What was the learning? Which are the steps which we would not be doing anyway?

We would not be repeating those or the steps we should be shortening. What should happen

next? What does this tell us that we can learn from the following planning for the next planning period and so on? To mention when political parties are primarily focusing on their integrated marketing communication plan. Nowadays, they have started doing that much before elections.

Intelligent marketers and advertisers, and planners are associated with them. Earlier, they used to focus upon that within a certain period of elections, and that period comes after five years. Now that could create different aspects to be catered to after those years because times and situations might change. External factors are going on and so on, and many steps a party would take. People might expect those to happen, might not expect those to happen so on.

And that is why many intelligent marketers or agencies support political parties. They have been suggestive that the integrated marketing communication plan should incorporate all the five years starting from the beginning of the contemporary period. And that is where the next planning period comes in. So, the planning period can focus upon a period that gets a connecting cord from this to that, or it goes on and on.

Then how to spread that from here to there? Or how to create a connecting chord from this period to that period that depends? You will watch the news clippings, the coverages, the activities, the advertisements, the messages, the programs which are going on by almost every political party whosoever is about to face elections wherever. So, you would realize that they are going for a flight.

Or they are going for sparse kinds of spurts, or they are going for a continued sort of communication with their voters. So that is how the integrated marketing communication plan perspective for the next planning period comes in.

Now, I will be quickly focusing on evaluation methods, and by the end of this section, you will realize that we can look at evaluation with several methodologies. For example, retail sales now show integrated marketing communication. And remember when we are discussing a plan during the evaluation aspect, we are looking in a retrospective mode.

So, if the objective was pushing the sales, it must be monitored against sales achievement. So, if something we said moved our customers towards or pursued them towards the purchase, it has worked. But then we would have talked about some numbers because, when we speak of retail sales, we would have categorized that sales objective in terms of allotting a percentage to integrated marketing communication from that sales.

So, we definitely should be worried about that. That is how to measure that objectively. Then again, percentage response to direct communications percentage, conversion to sales. Now, again one methodology can be related to consumer buying behavior. When remembering this section wherein we talked about objectives and we want to influence the buyers' behavior.

So, if we target our approach towards that now, we have to measure it against that or against the benchmark we thought of. So, there comes panel data, transactional data, or, let us say, consumer responses or our research associated with understanding how consumer behavior has been influenced now. For example, we talked about a gym and focused on an integrated marketing communication plan related to generating habits amongst people to take care of their health by joining gyms.

Could we create a sustained behavioral change amongst, for example, we generated sales? That means people joined, but people did not remain with us. That means there was a cavity in buyer behavioral change, which is what we have to think about. Many large gyms focus on this kind of element, and it is just an example. There are several other products and organizations which look for behavioral change.

Because behavioral change only will help them in sustained sales in due course of time attitude towards the brand, of course, a very, very large area, wherein we have to generate a positive mindset of the customer for a longer time. How to do that? What do you think of that? Survey research and, most of all, reflexive methodology. I have mentioned this term in front of you many times.

And especially during the integrated marketing communication research section wherein you have to become the part of the consumer to understand that the kind of message you try to put across has fell into their minds. And now remember that campaign 'Dudh Dudh Dudh'™, so did people start thinking in terms of consuming milk as part of their excellent health program? Did they think of that?

Sometimes I wonder why publishers do not go for a similar kind of program for students read read read. I do not know. Because often, when I ask my dear students how many books they have read in due course of time in your path? They smile at me because this question is practically wrong. I suppose so because they are crossing the methods without reading books.

So, I apologize to all the students who are reading, who are aggressive readers but have an attitude to the brand. You see, and then publishers say somehow the book is not selling. And I am talking of very renowned textbooks. I have found those to be sold but not being read, creased beautifully stocked in the rooms of the students. Whenever they say, I always ask them, did you

flip off the pages?

Could you dirty some pages? Kind of just flipping off somehow. Could you find your finger spots there? I do not know what to say? So the perception of a brand is a matter of understanding the consumer. Because perception is built up in the course of time, your campaign or your integrated marketing communication plan had that kind of an element pursuing that particular period.

That might be annual, but after every period, you have to assess that. How much did you affect the perception? And when we talk about how much? Then there must be a benchmark you are following in terms of that this is the stage, and that should be when we are taking it towards the consumer. Awareness is slightly more accessible than assessment because you have to ask whether they remember that.

Or do you know that? Or have you heard that? This kind of question and recall is related to which advertisement has views seen in terms of x product recently, and they would say, or otherwise, you would say that do you remember any paint advertisement recently? Or do you remember any jingle kind of recall? And what sort of prominent aspect are they carrying in their minds?

Are they passing it on to someone they are carrying it forward to? They are taking it to the shops or clicking on their computer, holding a perspective and an image generated by a particular kind of integrated marketing communication in their minds; if they are, your plan is successful. Ladies and gentlemen, I will be returning to you with the role of advertising agencies and integrated marketing communication plan.

And when and with one or two stories about effective IMC plans executed in India. To give you a glimpse of how it happens in the next section, till then, goodbye.