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REDEFINING THE AGENCY MODEL:
THE BENEFITS OF AN IMC APPROACH

By
Rebecca Gatto

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Public Relations Degree
of
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at
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ABSTRACT

Rebecca Gatto

Redefining the Agency Model: The Benefits of an IMC Approach
2010/11

Dr. Suzanne FitzGerald
Master of Arts in Public Relations

This study will seek to find out if full-service agencies are more effective than agencies that focus on only one marketing component or separate components. While some companies and agencies have fully embraced integrated marketing, others think the cons outweigh the pros. Many companies do not think the process of getting the individual functional groups to work together is worth the effort.

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with one full service agency, one advertising agency and one public relations agency to gain insight into the perceptions and effectiveness of IMC. A content analysis of the company Websites of four full-service agencies and four boutique agencies was done to analyze the agencies' promises and services. Data from an intercept study was used to determine if communication professionals use an IMC approach in their organization and whether they think an IMC or boutique approach is more effective.

Results showed that an IMC approach is more effective than a boutique approach. The majority of communication professionals think the benefits of using a full-service agency make it a more efficient and effective option than boutique agencies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Colin Powell once said, “A dream doesn’t become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work.” With that thought, I would like to thank those who helped me reach the completion of my master’s degree and thesis; my advisor, Dr. Suzanne FitzGerald, for her patience and guidance; my family for believing in me and supporting me through all my life decisions; and my boyfriend Andrew for his unconditional love and encouraging me to never give up.

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Chapter I

Introduction

IMC involves marketers blending communication messages across all available media channels into a continuous brand experience. As part of a successful integrated marketing strategy, IMC integrates public relations, advertising, and marketing into one unified entity all sharing the same message. Instead of dividing marketing communications into separate groups that rarely communicate, organizations are now integrating all marketing disciplines under one roof. This makes every aspect of communication consistent with one message that shares the same strategy (Brito, 2006).

IMC tries to show that the sum is greater than its individual parts. It is the combination of all marketing communications efforts in an integrated way to maximize communication effects that promote company goals. Old rules of public relations and marketing are being rewritten as businesses compete for revenue and market share in an increasingly aggressive marketplace, all while customers are becoming harder to reach.

The concept of integrated marketing communications has become well known on an international level since the 1990s among practitioners and academicians in both fields of marketing and mass communication. In recent years IMC has become a popular topic; however, its agreed-upon conceptualization is still unclear. There is not yet a common understanding of its real meaning or a generally accepted definition (Holm, 2006).

IMC used to be fairly simple. If your television and radio ads were tied to your newspaper and direct mail campaign, you had an "integrated" plan. Today it is more complicated than that. Traditional media vehicles still need to be tied together, but they also must integrate with point-of-sale materials and PR efforts, including Facebook and

Twitter accounts, website content, and internal communications (McKee, 2010).

Advertising is a critical ingredient in any IMC program. Generally, advertising serves to create, build, or maintain a long-term image for a brand, and reinforce product positioning. This method provides exposure to the largest and most geographically-dispersed audience. Advertising sends its message through media like television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the Internet.

Public relations allows a product or a company to utilize source credibility through media to persuade consumers and the public. At the same time, it can be used to reach other groups or prospects that may not be accessible by advertising (Anantachart, 2006). Public relations refers to how you or your company handles relationships and the flow of information to the publics you are trying to reach. PR tools include press releases, events, and promotional collateral.

Traditional marketing is a discipline that focuses on the 4 Ps of promotion, price, production, and placement of goods and services. The transition to IMC, a relationship-based marketing effort, focuses on the 4 Cs-consumer, convenience, cost and communication. The first “C,” consumer, focuses on consumers' needs and wants rather than on a product or service. Cost is viewed as what it costs a consumer to buy/use a product or service rather pricing the product to make a profit.

Convenience focuses on how easy it is for the consumers to obtain a product or service instead of how easy it is for a company to distribute it. The fourth “C” is communication, which focuses on two-way communication of listening and learning instead of one-way communication of telling and selling (Smith, 2003).

A common form of marketing used in an IMC plan is direct marketing, which allows companies to reach out to the public without having to use intermediary channels. This component comprises of direct mail, telemarketing, catalogs, and online marketing. Direct marketing often encourages a “call to action.” Sales promotion and personal selling are other commonly used marketing tools.

Nike created a groundbreaking IMC campaign in 2000. Its consistency raised sales greatly and gained a lot of attention. The advertisements ran on television and online and put viewers into an immediate situation. The ad said, "You're racing Marion Jones. The fastest woman in the world. Look out for the glass door. (CRASH!) What do you do? Continued at whatever.nike.com." Viewers then went on the Nike website to choose the ad's ending.

Nike continues to use integrated marketing through traditional advertising (billboards, television, and magazines), sponsoring sporting events, and engaging in online marketing allowing customers to design their own shoes (Brito, 2006).

Statement of Problem

While some companies and agencies have fully embraced integrated marketing, others think the cons outweigh the pros. Practitioners have viewed it as a valuable concept, but some believe that organizational factors have imposed constraints. Many companies do not think the process of getting the individual functional groups to work together is worth the effort.

Companies opposed to using IMC worry about the internal power struggles it could bring on, as well as its adaptability. The increase in time and cost during the

preparation stages are a major reason more companies are not willing to try integration when there is not a promise it will work for them. This study will look to find out if full-service agencies are more effective than agencies that focus on only one component or components separately.

Significance

The old rules of public relations and marketing are quickly evolving as companies need to find ways to stand out in an extremely competitive marketplace. Traditional methods are no longer catching the publics' attention. IMC, although controversial, is becoming a possible solution to this problem. Public relations is a very important component that is needed to create and implement a successful IMC plan.

Delimitations

- The author will not interview agencies outside of the Philadelphia area.
- The author will not analyze Web site content of agencies other than the four full-service and four boutique agencies identified in the study.
- The author will not interview low-level employees or anyone who has less than five years experience in the field.
- The author will not survey employees in the intercept study if they work for one of the six agencies being studied.
- The author will not focus on the sales aspect of IMC.

Purpose

There is much controversy over the effectiveness of IMC. When this study is complete it will add to previous literature that has worked to support or not support if IMC is more effective than a single marketing entity.

Companies seem to lack the research and knowledge they need to understand how IMC will affect their business and how they can fully utilize it. The researcher aims to further the understanding of IMC.

H1: It is expected that an IMC emphasis in an organization is more effective than its individual components: marketing, advertising and public relations.

According to Medill's Website (*Journal of Integrated Marketing Communication*) integrated marketing is a customer centric method of communicating. It is the management of all organized communications to build positive relationships which stress marketing to the all publics by understanding their needs, attitudes, behaviors, and motivations.

Sonja Gugajew says that today's marketplace is extremely competitive. Increasing pressure is being put on creative capital to break through all the clutter. IMC offers a unique product experience communicated through a modern and creative marketing campaign.

Procedure

To gauge the efficacy of integrated marketing in agencies the author will conduct in-depth interviews with one full service agency, one advertising agency and one public relations agency.

The author will also perform a content analysis of the company Web sites of four full-service agencies and four boutique agencies. The content analysis will analyze the agencies' promises and services. This will benchmark the information that already exists on the Web Site.

The author will also conduct an intercept study before an American Institute of Architects Philadelphia Chapter Communications Committee meeting. This will include communication professionals in Philadelphia.

To determine the most recent body of knowledge on the subject of integrated marketing communications the author, conducted a literature review of peer-reviewed journal articles, books and other content relating to IMC which is displayed in Chapter 2.

Definition of Terms

American Institute of Architects Philadelphia Chapter Communications Committee- AIA Philadelphia was founded in 1869. AIA organizes architects in the region for the purpose of advancing their influence in shaping the built environment, and their ability to effectively practice architecture in an ever-changing society and competitive marketplace. One of AIA's key activities is its award-winning communications program.

Nike- Nike, Inc. is a major publicly traded sportswear and equipment supplier based in the United States.

Public Relations- Public Relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends.

Advertising- Advertising is information placed in the media by an identified sponsor that pays for the time or space. It is a controlled method of placing messages in the media.

Marketing- Marketing is the management function that identifies human needs and wants, offers products and services to satisfy those demands, and causes transactions that deliver products and services in exchange for something of value to the provider.

Content Analysis- An analysis of four full-service agency and four boutique agency Websites based in Philadelphia.

In-depth Interview- Three interviews, lasting no longer than one hour each, with one full-service agency, one advertising agency, and one public relations agency.

Chapter II

Literature Review

IMC

IMC integrates the marketing communications disciplines of advertising, direct marketing, and public relations. It advocates for businesses to align all processes from product development to customer service. Customers, investors, the media, employees and others do not distinguish between the messages intended for them and those intended for other audiences. Integrated Marketing is a customer centric method of communicating. It is the management of all organized communications to build positive relationships which stress marketing to the all publics by understanding their needs, attitudes, behaviors, and motivations (IMC Defined).

An IMC plan begins with a critical understanding of the customer. This goes far beyond knowing the audiences' demographics. IMC focuses on uncovering consumers' motivations that drive them to particular purchasing decisions.

IMC is data-driven because marketers have more information than ever about their consumers' behaviors and preferences. This data allows marketers to identify and understand their company's most profitable customers and make informed decisions regarding how to communicate with them in the most effective manner.

Edwina Luck and Jennifer Moffatt believe IMC is more than just advertising and promotion. There are multiple stakeholders involved including employees, channel members, media, and suppliers. Luck and Moffatt distinguish between communications, which is an integration of methods, and communication which is one integrated function.

It is argued that IMC functions alone are not enough to give a company a

significant competitive advantage unless all other aspects of an organization are also integrated. This is referred to as cross-functional planning. IMC is evidence that communication is becoming of increasing importance in marketing. All organizations use various forms of communication to promote their products and services to their public.

A popular element of IMC is the belief that integration improves media and message delivery. However, it has been argued that the consumer controls integration and synergy rather than the marketer. “While managers are more focused on the individual components of marketing actions (e.g. advertising, price, or package design) customers tend to use a more contextual and integrated perception of the product, the brand, and their existing relationship to determine their response,” (Luck and Moffatt, 2009).

Customers and other stakeholders unconsciously integrate messages and communicators must decide whether to ignore this integration or manage it (Luck and Moffatt, 2009).

The evolution of IMC from promotion management began in the early 1990s. Clarke Caywood suggests that the emergence of IMC comes from three major areas. The first area is from the corporate or client side due to increasing competitiveness in the marketplace. The second area is due to the media and market’s weakening power of traditional marketing and advertising due to technology and an increase in more effective and cost-efficient methods. The consumer side is the third area which is due to on-going changes and varying consumer lifestyles. This has encouraged communicators to develop more elaborate methods that generate a quicker response (Han, 2004).

Advantages

Today's marketplace is extremely competitive. Increasing pressure is being put on creative capital to break through all the clutter. IMC offers a unique product experience communicated through a modern and creative marketing campaign. Branding a product or service in the marketplace is becoming increasingly difficult due to the large array of choices, an enormous amount of noise in the media, and declining attention spans. Marketers must find the most effective way to invest millions of dollars (Gugajew, 2008).

Rudolph Magnani refers the consumer's diminishing conscious ability to respond as part of the Blur Age. Consumers are exposed to approximately 3,000 brand impressions daily. This number exceeds any reasonable expectation for cognition. In a recent survey 1,000 consumers were asked to recall taglines of 25 of America's most well known companies including Wendy's and Sears. Fewer than half were recalled by five percent of the respondents and one-fifth were recalled by one percent or less. Companies are spending millions of dollars each year on media that does not create a lasting impression beyond their brand name.

Last year, men ages 18 to 34 started using the Internet more than television. This signaled for a change in how marketing communications should be focused today. "Marketers must improve their understanding of total integration, evolve mediums of contact, and use the technology that created the communication barriers to overcome the communication barriers," (Magnani, 2006).

Method Products Inc. introduces disruption which helps to catch its consumer's eye. Method developed an IMC message focused around cool, environmentally guilt-free

cleaning. In order to succeed as a soap company it reinvented its product by elevating the chore of cleaning into a healthy and fun experience. This idea came from two housemates who hated cleaning their house. They knew advertising alone could not transform an average product into something greater.

They wanted to use a consumer-centric approach to discover who their target audience was. They coined them the “Progressive Domestic” because unlike the housewife generation they were modern consumers who lead busy and active lives and experiment with many brands as they try to be health conscious and environmentally minded. Consumers feel an emotional connection with their homes and promoting the product as fun rather than a chore helped to attract buyers. The fact that it is non-toxic also helped appeal to the health-conscious consumer.

Method appeals to its core audiences first because of its design and soon after its fragrance. When they discover it’s good for you that is what drives loyalty. Method keeps a consistent message that focuses on a holistic experience. It goes beyond just solving a small functional problem but rather change the whole approach to homecare to one that is natural and therapeutic. Method’s products are all united under one brand and one philosophy.

In the summer of 2007 Method launched its biggest campaign, “Detox Your Home. This included print and banner advertisements and a search engine-marketing component. The common thread it uses to underlie all of its marketing communications is a very intimate feel expressed through human dialogue and experience. This portrays a very sincere message that traditional companies would have difficulty mimicking.

Method used public relations to generate more than one billion impressions each

year in a number of well-known magazines. It strives to make each consumer's experience personal by answering each e-mail, letter and phone call. Its website provides another personal connection to its consumers by putting candid face shots of actual Method employees. Along with this its website offers an online store, e-cards, and forums to ask questions (Gugajew, 2008).

Disadvantages

Although many companies find IMC very appealing, more than a decade has passed now since it was introduced and most major U.S. corporations have yet to fully implement the ideas of integrated marketing. The greatest barrier to IMC is the need for support by top-level management. The heads of a company make most decisions while IMC should be collaborative, but have CEO support. In order for IMC to become a reality, there must be a greater emphasis on implementation than adoption.

Once the CEO and top-level management are in support of an integrated approach, an implementation plan must be developed that can be merged with existing structure and functional realities of the company. For IMC to be effectively implemented its theory must be made flexible enough to accommodate the variety of organizational and leadership structures that exist (Pettegrew, 2001).

Lloyd S. Pettegrew says that there are a series of necessary conditions that must be present for IMC to be fully embraced by a company. The first recommendation for optimal use of IMC is that a company must implement it systematically and simultaneously at all levels throughout every function. The CEO must fully support the adoption of IMC.

Companies with strong marketing cultures should beware because issues such as corporate reputation will take a back seat to brand management. Companies must make functional and structural issues a critical component to their IMC plan. A leader must be appointed to watch over the IMC implementation effort and guide it to success. Only an IMC program that is unique and different than its competitor will succeed (Pettegrew, 2001).

Measurement and Evaluation

Traditional marketing has been measured on a medium-by-medium basis: one for marketing, one for publicity, one for sales promotion and so on. In order for IMC to have credibility it needs to make business sense. For this to occur, a strategically selected combination of promotional tools should deliver a greater return than one marketing component used alone. This includes attitudinal and behavioral impact as well as return on investment (ROI).

Michael Ewing thinks companies have a fairly good idea of how IMC could work in theory, but not necessarily in practice. It is easy to measure the success of IMC through achievement at the consumers end but examining the process by which IMC is created and managed is a more difficult task. Ewing says that IMC needs a stronger theoretical base that implies more and better empirical research.

The future of IMC measurement and evaluation assess how to best communicate with customers in a modern marketplace. Measures of IMC will need to embrace emerging technologies to provide accurate assessments. This will also require an increased understanding of the links between market capabilities and marketing stimuli.

Yi-Chen Lin's article discusses the Integrated Communications Model (ICM) which provides a framework to review and evaluate the process and effectiveness of integrated communications. This model is meant to help organizations set up effective communications. Characteristics of a good ICM include analysis of the IC issues through four dimensions: awareness integration, a unified image/message, evaluation of database, and identification and analysis of customers and key stakeholders.

The benefits of using the ICM are that all four dimensions are taken into account, strengths and weaknesses of management can be identified, and managers can think about what the best choice would be from a systematic perspective. The IC model discussed in Lin's article reviews all possibilities in order to identify where to use the individual methodologies most appropriately to improve IMC success. To implement this model companies would need assistance with a person with prior knowledge of the IC model and its components.

Implementation of this model will be intense and very involved but beneficial in the long run. Companies are not aware of the methodologies that are available to them. Even if they have heard of them before that does not mean they know how to put appropriately put them into effect. The ICM can help to improve a company's communication quality and help them to think differently in a way that focuses on managing customer relationships (Chen-Lin, 2001).

Advertising

The creation of an advertising campaign can be a messy reality. After abstract strategizing and conceptual planning advertisers need to produce an advertisement that

includes a persuasive and creative strategy. Most media use decisions in an integrated campaign appear to be based off factors relating to target audiences (Koslow, Riordan, and Sasser, 2007).

An advertising campaign is defined as “a series of advertisements and the activities that help produce them, which are designed to achieve interrelated goals,” (Koslow, 2007). These advertisements have some consistency in terms of slogans, taglines, characters, and sounds as well as themes, tones, images, and attitudes.

Traditionally an advertising campaign was a series of spots placed to run over a given period of time in a selected media. However, recent campaigns are viewed as a connected set of advertisements designed to run at the same time across several media (Koslow, 2007).

Consumers have more control over which marketing messages they receive more than ever before. Advertisers must create compelling reasons for consumers to seek out their message. Captive audiences have been replaced with consumers not only with remote controls, but also keyboards, and other technologies which allow them to skip over commercial messages entirely. “As consumers gain more and more control over the media messages they receive, the need for advertisers to create more relevant and valuable messages will grow along with it,” (Bernstein, 2001).

Advertisers will soon find out that the best spokespeople are real customers. These peoples’ recommendations are far more believable to consumers. As consumers gain more control over the messages they receive, advertisers must look beyond traditional marketing to find more subtle, relevant, and valuable ways of integrating messages towards their target markets. Today's advertising must change the way they

reach their audience but the question is how far advertisers will go to accomplish this (Bernstein, 2001).

Steven D. Rappaport sees the advertising industry crossing an inflection moving from the “conventional mass media interrupt and repeat model” to a model centered around relevance. The Internet gives consumers the ability to select and choose which brands they want to interact with or view the content of. Before this consumers depended on manufacturers, retailers, and distributors for brand information. Advertisers need to focus on delivering engaging experiences that inform, educate, or entertain their target markets.

New advertising models shift attention away from traditional one-way advertising centered on reach, exposure, cost-per-thousand and other brand metrics to measure and evaluate relationships with consumers. Advertisers need to put more emphasis on getting target markets to engage over make them just simply aware of what their company has to offer. It is more important to reach the right people with the right message rather than the most people with the same message (Rappaport, 2007).

Calder and Malthouse claim that integrated marketing calls for managing advertising as one of the many contact points with consumers. Advertising should affect consumer experiences so that the desired brand concept emerges. This implies that an advertisement should not just tell consumers about the brand but let consumers experience it. Advertisements that are more stories and less persuasive arguments are more effective (Calder and Malthouse, 2005).

Nyilasy and Reid say there are four direct effects of advertising. The first is making consumers stop and look at the ad therefore generating attention. Once the ad

gains attention, brand awareness emerges. This involves remembering the advertised brand. The third effect is that the advertising causes a change in attitude towards the brand. This also refers to opinions, perceptions, judgments, and interest in the brand. These attitudes can be both emotionally and rationally based. The last effect is a behavioral response. Although memory and attitude effects are important, the ultimate goal of an advertising effort is to create a buying response (Nyilasy and Reid, 2009).

Public Relations: Building Customer Relationships/Relationship Marketing

IMC is more than just creating an integrated message. Cross-functional planning requires managing and integrating multiple departments and functions. Consistent brand messages and improved internal communication will lead to building, maintaining and influencing strong customer relationships. Many marketers believe their company's current customers are also its best potential customers. This means that customers who already show a specific interest in their products will have strong potential for an interest in other products of the same nature. This however depends on how successful cross-functional processes are throughout the organization (Luck and Moffatt, 2009).

Communication professionals foresee relationships with customers becoming more direct. Vice President of Marketing Catherine Captain of MSNBC.com thinks that with the rise of participatory journalism and instant feedback mechanisms the concept of audience as a whole will become less useful (Marketers Roundtable, 2008).

A more consumer centric approach to marketing communication is now needed. Instead of studying IMC messages the focus should be switched to consumer activity. It has become more important to focus on the consumer instead of only on the message

sent. The traditional marketing communication concept involves a sender conveying a message to the receiver through coding, noise, and a decoding process. Communications should focus more on the receivers and the meaning created by the receiver.

Finn and Gronroos think there are four categories of factors that influence customers meaning creation including historical, external, internal and future. These factors combined create a single conceptual model for understanding and managing the different aspects of marketing communication. This model helps in the development of the emerging concept of relationship communication.

Historical factors are all kinds of messages from the past that can have an impact on the consumer's meaning creation. This can also include personal history and memories/stories heard somewhere as well as history that does not relate to commercial issues. Future factors can be rooted in the person's life themes and the expected future of the relationship in terms of goals, expectations, hopes and visions. Traditional communication has only focused on the present, but an individual's perception of a relationship is ongoing and constructed over time.

Situational aspects consist of internal and external factors. External factors include trends, traditions, economic situations, family, and advertising from competing brands. Internal factors involve projects related to the self including capabilities, attitudes, identity, and personal interests.

Relationship communication influences the receiver's long-term commitment to the sender by creating a meaning through integration with the receiver's perception of the history and envisioned future of his/her relationship with the sender. Along with time relationship marketing includes internal and external situational aspects. A

communication relationship is on-going co-operation between the customer and the supplier in a certain time frame.

“Previous experiences have an impact on current interactions, and for example, feelings of trust and commitment can be expected to carry over into the future and create expectations for future interactions.” Relationship marketing is influenced by internal and external situational dimensions including context, setting, self, and situated activities. The key features in relationship communication are that two parties take part in the process, it is long term, it is a sum of actions that leads to a shared knowledge base.

The receiver has an active part in the modern day communication process. Instead of focusing only on the message being received other factors must be considered. Relationship communication cannot be created without making the consumers perception an important aspect of the planning and implementation process. IMC refers to an integration of messages that takes place at a company level where relationship marketing refers to integrating the message with the consumer’s time and situation.

While it is important to integrate at the company level, there is becoming a crucial integration at the consumer level. It is the receiver who really determines whether a communication message will lead to a relationship or not. Its success depends on the time and situational context of each individual consumer. Marketers must attempt to execute efforts that will lead to a relationship communication result after obtaining sufficient information about its target markets.

Relationship marketing gives buyers a deeper level of appreciation for brands. Most brands do not effectively connect buyers with them in a long-lasting and meaningful way. Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey built a strategy that leans heavily on

relationships and storytelling. Jack Daniel's advertising told stories about their distilling process, people, the bottle, their barrels, and the men who took over the business.

Each story showed the brand's promise of being a remarkable, consistent, handcrafted and exceptional quality whiskey. Readers were invited to visit the hollow where they could visit the scenes shown in the ads and "drop us a line" showing how the customers were greatly valued and appreciated. After a brand creates a relationship moment with its customers these customers try to validate their emotional feelings with rational proof.

When the customer's validation is satisfied to match their preferences the brand then becomes their brand of choice. After this primary brand stimulus the brand must be ready with the next iteration of proof that will create deep commitment. Relationship marketing's goal is to make customers comfortable with the company so that they chose the brand and reject competitors' messages.

Marketing: Branding and Social Media

Today's marketing is more complex with a number of ways in which brands can communicate with their clients and prospects. These opportunities include adding value to products, improving the brand experience, collecting feedback to monitor consumer satisfaction, and delivering brand messages which increase brand knowledge and strengthen the client brand relationship (Luck and Moffatt, 2009).

Building a strong brand increases marketing communication effectiveness. Along with this benefit there are many more including improved perceptions of product performance, greater customer loyalty, and less vulnerability to competitive marketing

actions. A strong brand will make consumers more willing to attend to other communications associated with the brand and have a greater recall the product or service. Marketing communications can create experiences and build communities, which contribute to brand equity.

The dramatic changes of technology have lessened the effectiveness of mass media. Brand equity is fundamentally determined by consumer's brand knowledge created by marketing programs and activities. Brand knowledge is not the facts about the brand but rather the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, experiences and images consumers associate with the brand.

Two important components of brand knowledge are brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness is the strength of the brand in the memory as shown through the consumers' ability to recall or recognize the brand in various conditions. Brand image is the consumers' perceptions and preferences of the brand. Strong brand associations drive effects including enhanced loyalty, greater communication and growth opportunities.

Marketing represents the "voice" of the company and establishes a dialogue and builds relationships with consumers. Marketing communications can show what a company and brand stand for and give an incentive for using it. Marketers need to figure out which experiences and impressions will have the most influence at each stage during the buying process. Marketers should mix and match communication options in order to build brand equity as well as choose a variety of communication options that share common meaning and content.

Marketers should be media neutral and consider all communication options, mix and match options to maximize their strengths and weaknesses, and ensure the interactive

marketing plays a significant and appropriate role. In today's marketplace marketers need to adjust their communication strategies to gain loyal customers. Customers who know more about the companies behind a brand communicate more freely with them about their opinions (Keller, 2009).

Social networks like Facebook, MySpace and LinkedIn allow people and businesses to connect at an extremely fast rate. This age of engagement has a significant impact on marketing. In order to remain relevant marketers must realize how this interactivity changes traditional marketing. Companies must require consumer research and have a unique competitive strategy to succeed.

Engagement puts a focus on the audience. Together with technological advances progressing at an exceptional speed, organizations must address a different call to action. Engagement reinforces the need for marketing to shift towards meeting consumers on their own terms as well as in terms of how they live in relation to the communities in which they live and the experiences they have had.

Marketing was formally introduced as a discipline focusing on the 4Ps of promotion, production, price, and placement of goods. However, today's emphasis focuses on concepts such as social construction of consumers, services, and intangible aspects of products such as promises and values. IMC was the first to significantly attempt to alter traditional marketing which is product orientated.

Businesses are beginning to incorporate people's everyday lives into marketing. Evidence supports that consumer research is becoming an increasingly evident aspect of marketing research and management. Research advance efforts acquire a deep understanding of consumers through engagement, conversation, and observation

conducted about where consumers live, work and play. Many researchers and practitioners introduced IMC as a way to communicate better to meet and address the needs of a consumer dominated society.

IMC calls greater attention to inner aspects of marketing, communication, and marketplace as they impact peoples' lives. IMC represents a shift in marketing where a product centered understanding of the world no longer advances communication. Production and consumption are inseparably linked when it comes to IMC.

Marketers must face the reality that people do not organize their lives around products or services rather they use these to communicate order and organization. Change is unavoidable in the modern world. The fundamentals of products do not need to change, but the ways in which they are presented to their audiences must in order to meet the expectations of consumers (Groom, 2008).

Young audiences are one of the hardest markets to reach due to them becoming increasingly skeptical of traditional media. New media outlets are becoming an increasing way for young audiences to gather information. Generation Y (5-25 year olds) have never experienced life without computers. This group grew up during a time where technologies rapidly grew and are getting their messages from a larger number of media than ever before. This generation expects technology to keep up with their lifestyle. To reach this market, marketers must speak their language and go where they are to tell their organizations story in a way that is relevant to them.

Social media focuses on building networks of people who share common interests and activities. These networks create ways for users to interact chat, meet others, network, and share photos and videos. Social media connects people for little or no cost

at all. It gives individuals a place to express themselves and have a voice.

Businesses are accepted to join the social media space as long as they are upfront about who they are and what they are doing. Posting relevant notes may lead to a company being not welcome in a social networking community. Becoming part of a community involves knowledge of the social media place and the proper etiquette that is used within it.

An organization must bring something of value to the social networking community in addition to product or service information. Users look for something to react including virtual experiences. Social media is about sharing and two-way communication. Organizations must allow open dialogue and interaction to occur in order to succeed. All feedback, both negative and positive, should be left posted to show the organization is open to questions, comments, and concerns.

Organizations should make sure that their name comes up in searches when relevant key words are used. Content should be updated frequently and not seen as an advertisement. Consumers lose interest when organizations do not keep their sites, blogs, or pages up to date. Becoming a part of a community shows users that the organization is taking the time to establish itself and communicate with its current consumers and target audiences (Goetz and Barger, 2008).

Agencies

“For agencies and media companies, it’s about survival. Their models are under threat and they need to adopt a new suite of capabilities and move higher up on a marketer’s food chain,” (Klaassen, 2010). Agencies are struggling and need to develop an

integrated model that continues to attract clients.

Some authors who wrote about IMC as it first emerged viewed it from an agency perspective and referred to it as managing traditional marketing in an integrated fashion. They suggested that marketers have a general knowledge of all communication tools. This view was seen in the definition constructed by the American Association of Advertising Agencies which focused on the process of IMC with no reference to the audience or its effectiveness or impact.

“The skeptics’ rhetoric is that IMC was developed as an opportunistic move and a marketplace survival strategy conjured up by advertising agencies and media schools in response to an industry shift towards marketing communication and away from advertising,” (Luck and Moffatt, 2009). Others believed IMC was not a new concept but the need to integrate a number of promotional activities was imperative. IMC has grown over the past 15 years and claimed a broader application beyond agencies (Luck and Moffatt, 2009).

While traditional marketing has left a lasting imprint on many agencies there is an emerging class of interactive and creative agencies. Some of these are transformed agencies that have realized the impact of new technologies while others are relatively new. These agencies engage their audiences the way to want to be engaged. The employees at these agencies tend to have backgrounds in a number of marketing practices. These employees prepare themselves to put the same energy into a sales meeting as they would for a national advertisement.

IMC agencies integrate research, planning, public relations, promotions, interactive, and media to have the same name and agenda. The creation of an IMC culture

takes time as well as trial and error. A hierarchical model struggles in an IMC agency because all internal communications must equally communicate (Magnani, 2006).

When advertising agencies develop a campaign with an IMC approach with a wider number of media, it results in greater creativity. A weakness in developing an advertising campaign with “one voice” is that lower level advertising personnel often work in separate areas with little knowledge of what other departments are developing. “Agency boundaries may prevent shared information, inhibiting possible options explored, thus creating a media vacuum. It then becomes difficult to develop and evolve unique, consistent, or uniform campaigns if agency executives cannot “hear the voice” of other media, much less propose novel media solutions to the client,” (Koslow, 2007). This shows another reason why integration throughout an organization is just as important as an integrated message and strategy.

Any traditional agency can create an advertising message for a brand but IMC goes beyond traditional agency boundaries in three important ways. This includes treating advertisements as empirical contacts instead of persuasive messages, evaluating media based on potential exposure and the strength of relevant experiences provided by context, and building a relationship brand by customizing advertisements for each audience (Calder and Malthouse, 2005).

Summary

Secondary research reveals that advertising, marketing, and public relations all play a part in developing an IMC plan. Traditional marketing followed a product centric approach but IMC focuses on a consumer centric method of communicating. Integrated

marketing focuses on discovering consumers' motivations, attitudes, and opinions. This allows a company to determine who their most profitable customers are and know the best way to communicate with each of their target markets.

It is argued that IMC alone is not enough to give a company a significant competitive advantage. All other aspects of an organization must also be integrated. IMC functions alone are not enough to give a company a significant competitive advantage unless all other aspects of an organization are also integrated.

Customers unconsciously integrate messages and communicators must decide whether to ignore this integration or manage it. Today's marketplace is extremely competitive and increasing pressure is being put on organizations to break through the clutter and stand out.

Although many companies find IMC appealing it has not been fully grasped and implemented by the majority of U.S. corporations. The greatest barrier is that is not supported by top-level management.

Advertising, marketing, and public relations all appear to be important components of an IMC plan. Today's marketplace calls for organizations which create relationships with customers, build a strong brand, and focus on engaging their audiences.

In Chapter 3, the researcher will outline the specific research designs used to gauge the efficacy of integrated marketing agencies in comparison to boutique agencies. The researcher will focus on evaluating agencies in Philadelphia. This will be done through a content analysis, in-depth interviews, and an intercept study.

Chapter III

Methodology

How can researchers gauge the efficacy of integrated marketing communications agencies in comparison to boutique agencies that focus on one single marketing component?

Research Design

This study will attempt to determine if integrated marketing produces a more clear and consistent message that is more efficient and effective than advertising, pr or marketing alone. IMC is the combination of all marketing communications efforts in an integrated way to maximize communication effects that promote company goals.

Traditional methods of communication are changing as businesses must compete to be noticed in an increasingly aggressive marketplace. At this same time customers are becoming harder to reach because of factors such as the high appeal of social networking sites. While many organizations have fully embraced IMC, the majority have not shift their focus to a more modern technique of communicating.

The subjects of this study include employees of IMC and boutique agencies in Philadelphia. This study will examine the experiences these employees have had with working in one or both of these types of agencies.

Findings will identify what agencies view as the “negative “and “positive” aspects of IMC. It will also provide an understanding of why people disapprove of IMC. This study will use three research methods, all with different samples.

Content Analysis

Source of Data

The researcher will randomly select four integrated marketing agencies and four boutique agencies located in Philadelphia. The sample will include only agencies with information rich Websites.

Method of Acquiring Data

This researcher will conduct a content analysis comparing each section on the eight agency Websites selected. This will include their promises to clients as well as what services they have to offer. Other categories include how user friendly the Website is, how much information is in each section, and do they offer means for an ongoing relationship.

This content analysis will be conducted in January 2011. This preliminary knowledge is important to the researcher based on the nature of the other research methods that will be employed using the results of the content analysis.

Method of Analyzing Data

The researcher will codify information from each Website used in the content analysis then use the qualitative and quantitative data to compare and contrast what each agency has to offer.

In-Depth Interviews

Source of Data

This researcher will use a convenience sample to select one advertising agency, one public relations agency and one IMC agency located in Philadelphia. The sample will include an employee from each of these types of agencies.

Method of Acquiring Data

The analysis will be conducted through in-depth interviews in person or over the telephone. In particular, these interviews will be done from January through February 2011.

The researcher will draft a number of questions to go through during the interview. It will include informational, attitudinal and behavioral questions which will identify the types of agencies each person works in as well as their opinions on IMC.

Method of Analyzing Data

This researcher will collect and analyze the data to find common themes as well as see the differences in answers between the different types of agencies. This will provide insight on how agency employees view IMC.

Intercept Study

Source of Data

The researcher will also attend a monthly meeting of the American Institute of Architects Philadelphia Chapter Communications Committee. The committee consists of communication professionals.

Method of Acquiring Data

This researcher will conduct an intercept study as members walk in to the meeting. The intercept study will include no more than four or five questions.

The communication professionals will be asked about their current organization and whether or not it uses an IMC approach. Another question will determine if they see an IMC or boutique approach as more effective. The intercept study will be done in March 2011.

Method of Analyzing Data

The researcher will collect the intercept surveys, then use the quantitative and qualitative data to identify current opinions towards the implementation of IMC in Philadelphia agencies.

Chapter four provides primary research results, which range from the opinions of IMC within the samples to attitudes towards the use of IMC agencies over boutique agencies. The chapter contains charts and graphs to provide quick data references. Although it contains strictly data, the chapter provides insight into the make-up and opinions of IMC agencies in comparison to boutique agencies.

Chapter IV

Research Findings

A comparative study was conducted to examine the efficacy of full-service agencies over boutique agencies. The research was incorporated using qualitative in-depth interviews with one experienced professional from a full-service agency, an advertising agency and a public relations agency. The researcher obtained additional data by doing a content analysis of four full-service and four boutique agency's Websites. Once these two methodologies were completed the researcher conducted an intercept study at the beginning of an American Institute of Architects Philadelphia Chapter Communications Committee meeting which had a number of communication professionals.

H1: It is expected that an IMC emphasis in an organization is more effective than its individual components: marketing, advertising and public relations.

Content Analyses

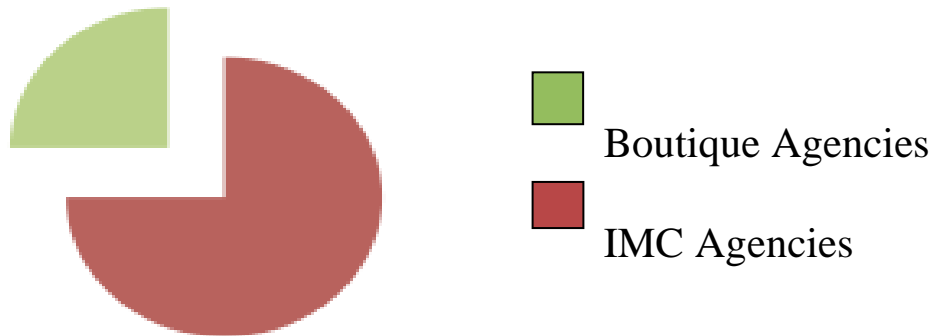
The researcher analyzed the selected agency's Websites and developed a list of keywords. Table 1 shows the significant data from the Keyword Content Analysis.

Table 1: Keywords on Websites

Keyword	IMC	Boutique
media	25%	100%
customers	50%	0%
advertising	100%	25%
SEO	75%	25%
communication(s)	100%	50%
clients	100%	50%
graphic design	75%	25%
direct marketing	50%	0%
marketing research	75%	25%
copywriting	50%	0%
relationships	25%	75%
naming	75%	0%

According to the data, 100 percent of full-service agencies use the keywords: marketing, advertising and public relations. Seventy five percent of boutique agencies use the word marketing, 75 percent use the word public relations and 25 percent use the word advertising on their Website. Of these agencies, 100 percent of IMC agencies use the word communication(s) on their Website while only 50 percent of boutique agencies do.

Figure 1: Marketing Planning and Research



The Keywords Content Analysis shows that 75 percent of IMC agencies use the words marketing planning and marketing research on their Websites. Only 25 percent of boutique agencies do.

Figure 2: Search Engine Optimization (SEO)



The IMC agencies' Websites analyzed offer a larger number of services including search engine optimization (SEO), branding, graphic design, Website development, direct marketing and copywriting.

Few keywords appeared more on boutique agency Websites than IMC ones. These included media, social media, image and relationships.

A second content analysis was conducted which documented the different categories/ “click-on” tabs that exist on each agency Website. The following table only accounts for categories that showed a 50 percent difference between IMC and boutique.

Table 2: Categories on Websites

	IMC	Boutique
Branding	75%	0%
Website Development/Design	50%	0%
Public Relations	75%	0%
Portfolio/Work	75%	25%

Of the four IMC agency Websites analyzed, 75 percent have a category about branding. Not one boutique agency Website did. Website development/design was a category on half of the IMC agency Websites but was not used at all on boutique agency Websites. Public relations had its own category on 75% of IMC agency Websites. The majority of IMC agencies displayed samples of their work on their Website while only 25% of boutique agencies did.

In-depth Interviews

Interviewees were asked if they prefer to work at a full service agency or a boutique agency. The public relations representative would prefer to work for a smaller to mid-sized agency because she thinks it gives more personal attention to clients and there is less focus on bottom-line only results. However, she feels strongly that agencies need to provide creative and web services in house so that it comes from the same voice, perspective and attention to quality. The advertising agency representative would rather

work in a boutique agency because it focuses more on being creative.

The representative from the IMC agency said that clients often choose agencies based on their expertise not their breadth of services. Most often clients choose multiple agencies (PR, advertising, and IMC) to handle their communications. Executives from each of the agencies may meet as a team to plan and execute the marketing strategy as an integrated effort.

All interviewees have been working in the industry for 17-27 years but do not all have an educational background in PR, advertising or marketing.

The PR and IMC agency representatives see IMC as valuable. However, the advertising representative thinks IMC can be negative because it lacks an area of specialty.

All agency representatives identified a number of positive aspects of using IMC including: strategically targeting audiences, adapting messages to the medium, effectively meeting communications objectives, one stop shopping, and offering a single resource for a client's various marketing needs. The PR agency representative thinks that for too long public relations has kept itself at an arms-length distance from sales and marketing. In her opinion, IMC is a way to integrate key elements of PR into a comprehensive approach to solving communication challenges.

When asked the negative aspects of IMC, the full-service agency representative thinks there are none. In today's market consumers use multiple sources of media. Communicators cannot reach audiences and accomplish objectives effectively without leveraging all media strategically. The advertising agency representative said that a negative aspect to IMC is that it tries to be all things to all clients and has no area of

specialty. The PR representative thinks that there is a chance that as lines between disciplines become blurry, PR will lose large pieces of the communication pie to other, more bottom-line oriented disciplines.

When asked about the current state of IMC, the advertising and public relations representatives think that IMC is not widely embraced. The PR representative thinks that many companies still have strict silos between marketing, advertising and public relations. She thinks until this changes, IMC will not be widely accepted. The advertising agency representative thinks IMC will always be around, at least in the near future, but that it is not widely embraced by communicators. The full-service agency representative thinks IMC is absolutely widely accepted and embraced as a communications approach. All major corporations implement IMC plans because the nature of media has changed and how consumers use it. The PR representative also said that the definition of “media” is changing so therefore out definition of what each marketing tool is and is not is also changing.

The researcher asked interviewees if they think IMC is more likely to be used at agencies, small companies or large corporations. The full-service representative said that all organizations small and large integrate communications, depending on the size of their budget, because IMC, as a communications approach, is more effective. The advertising representative said that most large brands use a mix of different agencies and marketing companies. For example, a friend of his is a Global Brand Manager for McDonalds and he has told him that they use multiple ad agencies, PR shops, design companies, etc. He believes smaller companies like/need more of that one-stop-shop situation. He said he knows a lot of smaller companies that still use a different firm for public relations than

they do for advertising and/or marketing, media buying, etc.

The public relations representative thinks that large corporations are structured to bifurcate PR and marketing. In the 90s her agency tried to sell an integrated solution but clients were reluctant to buy it. The PR staff wanted “their” agency and the marketing staff wanted theirs. Typically when there is a small corporation with one director or vice president of marketing communications he or she is open to an integrated approach. It is a way to save the company time and money.

The interviewees were asked why they think people disapprove of IMC. The PR representative does not know that people necessarily disapprove it; rather it is a new way of approaching things. She feels that if communicators like to have their own silos/loci of control. Putting things into one large pool gives fewer people control. The advertising representative said that even though public relations, advertising and marketing all fit under the “communications” heading, the disciplines are different enough that people want to think they are getting specialists in the different areas.

The full-service agency representative said that he does not know anyone who disapproves of IMC as a communications approach. He said that in the late 90s, agencies began to purchase multiple agencies that offer diverse services to position themselves as IMC houses with a goal to generate more revenue. However, what the industry soon discovered was that for all the “seamless” integration between member agencies that was promised, the service was no more seamless than if a client had hand selected multiple agencies. The IMC house proved to be nothing more than a team of disparate agencies working together the same way any group of agencies might work together as a team.

All interviewees agreed that IMC will grow, at least as a communications

approach or idea. It is inevitable that the blurring of the lines between web communications, media relations and advertising will continue. The public relations representative thinks that IMC can provide an integrated, coordinated and cost-effective approach to solving client problems. She thinks that using an integrated approach is the only way forward. The advertising representative thinks integration as an idea will not go away and in fact will be more and more embraced. However, it will come from multiple specialist agencies being strategically aligned and guided by the client's marketing department. He thinks that even though IMC as an idea will grow, the structure of a communications company will wane.

The IMC representative thinks the industry is not discussing IMC as some new and novel approach to communications. It is already a standard communications approach. The industry as a whole is focused on how to more effectively, more creatively, employ the media outlets available, or find new ones. He thinks agencies still specialize and what they seek to add is some level of online and new media expertise.

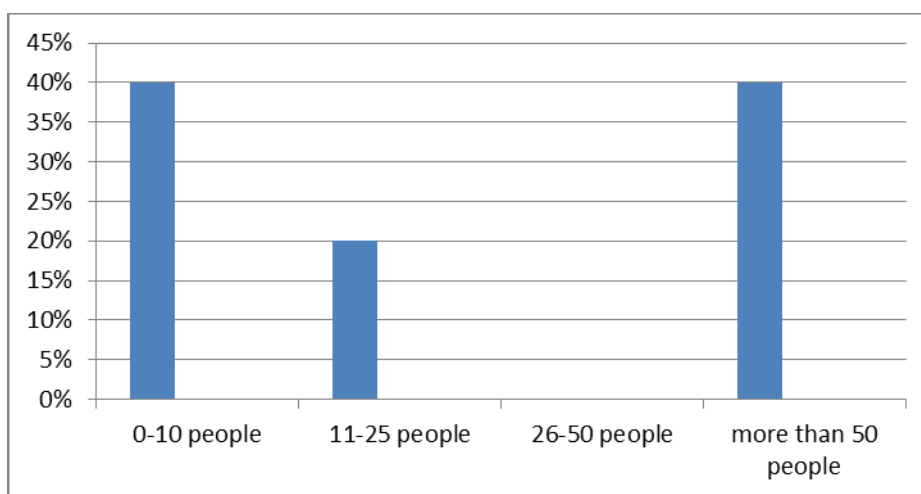
The researcher asked interviewees to define IMC to determine if they all viewed it the same way. Overall the interviewees see IMC as a channel-neutral approach that uses multiple media and communications vehicles that all work together in delivering a brands message to its audience to achieve communications objectives and meet clients' goals.

Intercept Study

Among the select number of communication professionals who filled out the intercept study 80% of them claim to use an IMC approach at their organization. Of these professionals their reasons include: convenience of standardizing materials and messages across a marketing team in multiple offices, IMC offers both an integrated strategy and an economical approach, and it allows them to maintain and control branding, messaging, etc. Another reason is because their small staff size requires everyone to integrate services. The 20 percent who do not use an IMC approach said that their office is not organized to function in that way. However, this 20 percent did feel that an IMC approach is more effective even though their organization does not use it.

Of the professionals who filled out the intercept study, 80 percent were female and 20 percent were male. The professionals were asked to choose a range of how many people work at their organization. These ranges were 0-10 people, 11-25 people, 26-50 people and more than 50 people.

Figure 3: Organization Size



The majority of communication professionals surveyed work for organizations with 0-10 people or more than 50 people. This majority accounts for 80 percent. Only 20 percent of professionals work for an organization with 11-25 people. None of the professionals surveyed selected the 26-50 range.

The last question on the intercept survey asked which approach they think is more effective and why. Of the communication professionals surveyed, 80 percent think IMC is more effective while the other 20% think both approaches are effective. Twenty percent of professionals think that in some cases a boutique approach is more effective.

For those who chose they indicated that it is more cost effective, it reinforces the business development plan and it is easier to stay on message. IMC also helps each agency project the same image and brand, so that clients understand who the company is and what they do.

General Findings

The content analyses, in-depth interviews and intercept study yielded many general findings.

Content Analyses: After analyzing keywords on IMC and boutique agency Websites it can be seen that more services are offered through IMC agencies. However, some words were found more on boutique agency Websites such as “media” and “relationships”. IMC agency Websites offered more categories/“click-on” tabs to choose from. These categories included public relations and website design/development.

In-depth Interviews: Although not all interviewees agree that they prefer to use IMC, all agree that IMC is a wave of the future, at least as a communications approach.

They all think that the blurring of lines between advertising, public relations and marketing will continue to fade. IMC appears to be effective, but interviewees do not necessarily think that all services need to be in house. An IMC approach can be multiple agencies working together to create the same message with the same voice.

Intercept Study: The majority of communication professionals surveyed think IMC is more effective. They use IMC for reasons such as it uses integrated strategy and an economical approach, and it allows them to maintain and control branding, messaging, etc. Although not all of the communication professionals surveyed use IMC in their organization, it does not necessarily mean they do not see it as more effective.

After conducting primary research through content analyses, in-depth interviews and an intercept study, the researcher's hypothesis was supported.

Chapter five will discuss the interpretation of the findings and recommendations for future research.

Chapter V

Discussion

By conducting both quantitative and qualitative studies, the researcher concluded that an IMC approach in an organization is more effective than a boutique approach which focuses on individual components: marketing, advertising and public relations.

Content analyses, in-depth interviews and intercept studies generated the findings that support the hypothesis. In addition, the findings serve as the basis for this researcher's discussion of the study and recommendations for future research.

H1: It is expected that an IMC emphasis in an organization is more effective than its individual components: marketing, advertising and public relations.

H1 was supported indicating that an IMC approach in an organization is more effective than a boutique approach. As stated in Chapter 2, IMC tries to show that the sum is greater than its individual parts. It is the combination of all marketing communications efforts in an integrated way to maximize communication effects that promote company goals. The data found in this study supports this idea. Content analyses, in-depth interviews and an intercept study verified that majority of communication professionals see IMC as more effective than advertising, public relations or marketing alone.

The content analyses of Websites revealed that IMC agencies offer a larger number of services to clients. These services include direct marketing, graphic design, marketing research and copywriting. The only keywords used significantly more on

boutique agency Websites were “media” and “relationships”. This may show that boutique agencies focus more on building relationships while IMC agencies focus more on offering a larger breadth of services to meet clients’ needs.

IMC agencies more often display samples of their work for clients than boutique agencies do. None of the boutique agencies analyzed had a category or “click-on” tab for public relations. This reveals that the majority of IMC agencies have separate categories showing clients the different components of IMC that they offer.

This study revealed that majority of communication professionals would rather work for a full-service agency. Some of these professionals would rather work for smaller agencies that allow them to give more personal attention to clients and allow them to be more creative. Many communication professionals think it is important for all marketing disciplines to be integrated.

An important thing to note is that while integration is effective, it does not necessarily need to be through the same organization. Clients sometimes choose agencies based on their expertise, not their breadth of services. Most often clients choose multiple agencies (PR, advertising, and IMC) to handle their communications. Executives from each of the agencies may meet as a team to plan and execute the marketing strategy as an integrated effort. As long as these executives are integrating marketing components, communication will be consistent with one message from the same voice.

IMC agencies that offer a large number of services should also make sure that the expertise of each service is stronger than that of boutique agencies competing for their business. The research reveals that the most effective agency is a full-service agency that

offers many services and exceptional expertise in all disciplines.

In-depth interviews and intercept surveys show that communication professionals see more positive aspects than negative aspects to using IMC. It strategically targets audiences, adapts messages to the medium, to effectively meet communications objectives, is one-stop shopping, and offers a single resource for a client's various marketing needs. IMC is seen as a comprehensive approach to solving communication challenges.

Although the majority of communication professionals in this study prefer IMC, they believe that others still disapprove of it. Many companies may still have strict lines between marketing, public relations and advertising, but it is possible that this is merely a preconceived notion. This study shows that organizations who do not use an IMC approach often feel as though it will cause their communication department(s) to lose its locus of control.

The blurring of lines between marketing, advertising and public relations will continue. This study also reveals a number of other reasons communication professionals prefer an IMC approach. The benefits of an IMC approach revealed in this study shows that a full-service agency is a more efficient and effective option.

Future Research

Since the study focused only on agencies in the Philadelphia area the data may reflect bias. The researcher suggests that a future study replicates this thesis but makes a number of variations. The following are suggestions for future research. It would be useful to:

1. Analyze more agency websites from different regions, including the New York City area, and cities on the west coast.
2. Conduct more in-depth interviews. I would suggest doing at least five interviews with PR representatives, five interviews with advertising representatives and five interviews with IMC representatives.
3. Distribute intercept surveys to clients as well as communication professionals. Clients' views on IMC effectiveness may differ.
4. Obtain agencies for the content analyses through a random sample.
5. Add an interview question asking if his/her organization imposes strict boundaries between their advertising, public relations and marketing departments.

The topic requires further research, especially in the ever changing times of technology and the way media is used. A continuing study on this topic will enhance the knowledge of IMC's effectiveness in comparison to a single marketing component.

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APPENDIX A

Keywords Content Analysis

	IMC	Boutique
strategy/strategic	100%	75%
publicity	25%	25%
tactics/tactical	25%	25%
branding	75%	50%
creative	100%	75%
media	25%	100%
Marketing planning	75%	25%
customers	50%	0%
marketing	100%	75%
advertising	100%	25%
public relations	100%	75%
consulting	25%	0%
positioning	75%	50%
SEO	75%	25%
interactive	50%	25%
integrated	75%	50%
communication(s)	100%	50%
integrated marketing comm.	50%	0%
clients	100%	50%
Graphic design	75%	25%
Full-service	25%	50%
Website development/design	75%	50%
direct marketing	50%	0%
efficiently/effective	50%	75%
newsletters	50%	25%
Trade shows/ Special events	75%	75%
E-mail marketing	50%	50%
photography	50%	0%
marketing research	75%	25%
copywriting	50%	0%
direct mail	50%	25%
promotion	0%	25%
social media	50%	75%
image	25%	50%
increase sales	50%	25%
issues/crisis management	25%	25%
relationships	25%	75%

message/messaging	25%	25%
audience	0%	50%
targeted	25%	50%
internal communications	25%	0%
naming	75%	0%
sponsorship/endorsement	25%	0%
packaging	50%	0%

Categories Content Analysis

	IMC	Boutique
Home	50%	25%
History	25%	0%
Approach	25%	0%
Difference	25%	0%
About	75%	75%
Services	100%	75%
-consulting	25%	0%
-branding	75%	0%
-communications	25%	0%
-marketing plans and research	25%	0%
-brand strategy	25%	25%
-marketing	50%	25%
-interactive	0%	25%
-media	0%	25%
-website development/design	50%	0%
-public relations	75%	0%
-publicity	0%	25%
-promotions	0%	25%
-social media	0%	25%
-advertising	50%	25%
-product and service rollouts	0%	25%
-tradeshows and special events	25%	50%
-issues management	0%	25%
-collateral	25%	0%
-strategic planning	25%	0%
-photography	25%	0%
-copywriting	25%	0%
-internal communications	25%	0%
Clients	100%	100%
Contact	100%	100%
Portfolio/Work	75%	25%
News	50%	25%
Team/Staff	25%	25%
Blog	50%	50%
Naming	25%	0%
Raves	25%	0%
Story	0%	25%
Case Studies	25%	25%
Awards/Milestones	0%	25%

APPENDIX B

Toni Buckley
IMC Interview

Background

1. Is your agency full-service or boutique?
Mid-sized PR agency affiliated with a full-service ad agency.

2. Would you prefer to work at one over the other? If so, why?

It's not necessarily the size of the agency or the breadth of its services that matters; it's the expertise the agency offers. Clients choose agencies for their expertise... and they rarely choose one agency to handle all of their business, even if it is a full-service agency.

What I prefer is the big business, which large, full-service agencies usually secure, primarily because of the experience of their executives. However, it depends on the agency, because many boutique agencies, launched by experienced executives from corporations or large conglomerate agencies, secure the big business, too. As mentioned, most clients do not pick one full-service agency to manage all of their communications – advertising, public relations, direct marketing, online, etc. Most often, clients choose multiple agencies as members of an integrated communications team, which may include a mixture of full-service, mid-sized and boutique agencies. For example, GlaxoSmithKline, when it launched alli weight loss medication, chose a worldwide advertising agency to handle its ad work; a mid-sized NY PR firm to manage PR; a large national agency specializing in promotions to handle events; a small, boutique PR firm specializing in multi-cultural audiences to address African-American and Hispanic groups; another regional firm specializing in Web communications to handle programs online. Executives from each of the agencies met often as a team to plan and execute the marketing communications strategy as an integrated effort, but each executive managed his own discipline.

3. How many years have you been working at your current job? 3 years

4. How many years have you been working in the industry? 25 years

5. How many years have you been in your current position? 3 years

6. Do you have an educational background in PR, advertising, or marketing?
Yes, undergraduate degree in communications with a specialization in PR; graduate degree in the liberal arts with focus on political rhetoric in communication. My experience spans all areas of communication – advertising, public relations, direct marketing, online and new media.

Effectiveness

7. **What do you think the negative aspects of IMC are?** None. In today's market consumers use multiple sources of media. Communicators cannot reach audiences and accomplish objectives effectively without leveraging all media strategically.

8. **What do you think the positive aspects of IMC are?** IMC enables communicators to strategically target audiences, adapting messages to the medium, to effectively meet communications objectives. Employing multiple media outlets enables frequency in, reinforcement of and depth in communications.

9. **Do you think an IMC agency is more effective than an agency that focuses on a single component: marketing, advertising, public relations?** No. IMC is effective. Agencies that offer more than one service may be in a position to secure more business, but they are not guaranteed to win more business just because they offer more services. It's expertise that wins the business. As mentioned earlier, agencies that offer a specialization and do it well will win a seat at the IMC team table. It's not the "agency" that is full service that is more effective. It is the "communications plan" that is implemented as an IMC plan that is more effective than one that is not. Even the agency that specializes in only one service can compete successfully with full-service agencies to win a place at the table of the IMC team. It's not a question of whether an agency is full-service or not, as if only IMC agencies can do IMC work. It's a question of whether agencies, whether full service or specialized, do what they do well enough to secure a seat at the IMC team table.

Current state of IMC

10. **Do you think IMC is becoming widely accepted and embraced?** If yes, how? If no, why not? Absolutely, as a communications approach. All major corporations implement IMC plans, because the nature of media has changed and how consumers use it.

11. **Do you think IMC agencies should outsource any marketing strategies? If so, which?** Clients may choose, possibly, one full-service firm to manage all aspects of their communications business, but they rarely do; clients typically choose several agencies to handle specific aspects of the IMC program based on expertise. Sometimes agencies that do not offer a particular service in-house will partner with other agencies that offer that service as a specialization. So, yes, agencies already (and have for some time) outsource work they do not do in-house in order to gain a larger share of the business for the firm. Again, if an agency provides all the services the client requires, it is not guaranteed that the client will award that one agency all the aspects of the business. Clients divide the business among multiple agencies.

12. **Do you think IMC is more likely to be used at agencies, small companies, or large corporations?** Why? All organizations small and large integrate communications, depending upon the size of their budget, because IMC, as a communications approach, is more effective.

13. **Why do you think people disapprove of IMC?**

I don't know of any one who disapproves of IMC... as a communications approach, of course.

Perhaps, however, you're thinking about IMC as an "offering of agencies" instead of a "strategic approach to communications." In the late 90s, agencies (mostly holding companies) began to purchase multiple agencies that offer diverse services in order to position themselves as IMC houses... with a goal, obviously, to generate more revenue. What everyone in the industry discovered quickly, however, was that for all the "seamless" integration between member agencies that was promised, the service was no more seamless than if a client had hand selected multiple agencies to work on the business himself. The advantage was supposed to be seamless integrated communications from one source. But it didn't work. The IMC house was nothing more than a team of disparate agencies working together the same way any group of agencies – whether members of one corporation or separate entities – might work together as a team. The promise of seamless integration from holding companies died. While holding companies still offer "one stop shopping," the industry knows it's meaningless as it relates to seamless integration. Clients may work with several agencies of one holding company, however, for a financial advantage.

Future of IMC

14. **Do you think IMC will grow or eventually disappear?** It's already, and has been, the wave of the future (as a communications approach, of course). The industry is not discussing IMC as some new and novel approach to communications. It's here. It's been here. It's already standard (as a communications approach). The industry is focused on how to more effectively, more creatively, employ the media outlets available... or to find new ones. From an agency offering standpoint, IMC is for the conglomerates. Agencies still specialize. What agencies do seek to add, however, is some level of online/new media expertise. If they don't have it in-house, they may partner, hire or acquire that service.

15. **What do you think the future holds for IMC?** See the answer to question 14.

General

16. **How is your overall opinion of IMC?** It's business as usual, as a communications approach.

17. **What is your definition of IMC?**

Simply stated (as a communications approach), integrated marketing communications orchestrates multiple media and communications vehicles to achieve communications objectives.

Michael Neiderer
Advertising Interview

Background

1. **Is your agency full-service or boutique?** Boutique
2. **Would you prefer to work at one over the other? If so, why?** Probably a boutique because we focus more on creative and that is my passion.
3. **How many years have you been working at your current job?** About a year and a half.
4. **How many years have you been working in the industry?** 17
5. **How many years have you been in your current position?** About a year and a half.
6. **Do you have an educational background in PR, advertising, or marketing?** I have BFA and an MFA, I taught Portfolio Prep at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco and have been a Professor of Advertising at Rowan for one year.

Effectiveness

1. **What do you think the negative aspects of IMC are?** Trying to be all things to all clients. No area of specialty.
2. **What do you think the positive aspects of IMC are?** One stop shopping. IMC agencies offer a single resource for a client's various marketing needs.
3. **Do you think an IMC agency is more effective than an agency that focuses on a single component: marketing, advertising, public relations?** No

Current state of IMC

4. **Do you think IMC is becoming widely accepted and embraced? If yes, how? If no, why not?** I think it will always be around—at least in near future, but it is not widely embraced.
5. **Do you think IMC agencies should outsource any marketing strategies? If so, which?** Hmm, not sure I quite understand this question.
6. **Do you think IMC is more likely to be used at agencies, small companies, or large corporations? Why?** Most large brands use a mix of different agencies and marketing companies. For example, a good friend of mine is a Global Brand Manager for McDonald's and they use multiple ad agencies, PR shops, Design companies, etc.

Smaller companies like/need more of that one-stop-shop situation. That said, I know of a lot of smaller brands that still use a different firm for PR than they do for advertising and/or marketing, media buying, etc.

7. **Why do you think people disapprove of IMC?** Even though they all fit under the “communications” heading the disciplines are different enough that people want to think they are getting specialist in those areas of expertise.

Future of IMC

8. **Do you think IMC will grow or eventually disappear?** Again, not in the near future.

9. **What do you think the future holds for IMC?** Integration as an idea won't go away, and in fact will be more and more embraced. However, it will come from multiple specialist agencies being strategically aligned and guided by the client's marketing department.

General

10. **How is your overall opinion of IMC?** Again as an idea it will grow. As a structure for a communications company I think it will wane.

11. **What is your definition of IMC?** Integrated Marketing Communications is a big fancy term to describe the idea of sales promotion, PR, direct marketing, advertising-branding, events, web-based initiatives that all work together in delivering a brands message to its audience.

Nancy Bacher Long
PR Interview

Background

1. **Is your agency full-service or boutique?** Not sure what you mean by the designation. We are a mid-sized public relations firm and are part of a holding company that offers advertising, web solutions and medical education services.
2. **Would you prefer to work at one over the other? If so, why?** Generally speaking I prefer a smaller to mid-sized agency (more personal attention for clients, less focus on bottom-line only results) but feel strongly that we need to be able to provide creative and web services in house so that it comes from the same voice, perspective and attention to quality.
3. **How many years have you been working at your current job?** I worked at the agency for 17 years. Was president for more than 15
4. **How many years have you been working in the industry?** 27 years
5. **How many years have you been in your current position?** I was president of Dorland Global (now Tonic) for 15 years.
6. **Do you have an educational background in PR, advertising, or marketing?**
No. my bachelor's degree was in psychology

Effectiveness

7. **What do you think the negative aspects of IMC are?** I am not sure how you are defining IMC. I think an integrated approach to marketing and communication is valuable across the board. I think there is some chance that as lines between disciplines become blurry (with IMC) that PR will lose large pieces of the communication pie to other, more bottom-line oriented disciplines.
8. **What do you think the positive aspects of IMC are?** I think that PR for too long as kept itself at an arms-length distance from sales and marketing. IMC is a way to integrate key elements of PR into a comprehensive approach to solving communication challenges.
9. **Do you think an IMC agency is more effective than an agency that focuses on a single component: marketing, advertising, public relations?** Yes.

Current state of IMC

10. **Do you think IMC is becoming widely accepted and embraced? If yes, how? If no, why not?** I think there is a lot of lip service being given to it, but don't know that I

think agencies *really* understand what PR is (and is not). I also think that PR practitioners are continuing to hold onto antiquated ways of approaching communication problems. As our definition of “media” is changing so too must our definition of what PR is and is not. Companies – especially Fortune 500 companies – still have strict silos between advertising, marketing and PR. Until that changes IMC will not be widely accepted.

11. **Do you think IMC agencies should outsource any marketing strategies?** If so, which? Strategy should never be outsourced. Intellectual property is what we – as agency folks – own and can sell. There are tactical elements that can be outsourced such as market research or event coordination.

12. **Do you think IMC is more likely to be used at agencies, small companies, or large corporations? Why?** As noted above, large corporations are structured to bifurcate PR and marketing. Seldom does PR report in through the marketing team. My agency often tried to sell an integrated solution – as far back at the 90s – but clients were reluctant to buy it. PR staff wanted “their” agency and marketing staff wanted theirs. More typically when there is a small corporation with one director or VP of marcom s/he was open to an integrated approach. It was a way to save them time and save the company money. Again, while some agencies have multiple disciplines represented, it would be interesting to see what percent of their business is cross-platform.

13. **Why do you think people disapprove of IMC?** I don’t know that people disapprove of it; rather it is a newer way of approaching things. I think folks like have their silos/locus of control. Putting things into one large pool gives fewer people control.

Future of IMC

14. **Do you think IMC will grow or eventually disappear?** I think that it is inevitable that the blurring of the lines between web communications, media relations, and advertising will continue. IMC may be re-branded, but will grow.

15. **What do you think the future holds for IMC?** As noted above, I think that an integrated approach is the only way forward.

General

16. **How is your overall opinion of IMC?** I think it can provide an integrated, coordinated, cost-effective approach to solving client problems.

17. **What is your definition of IMC?** A channel-neutral approach to communication that uses multiple outlets and tactical tools to meet clients’ goals.

APPENDIX C

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this short intercept survey. My name is Rebecca Gatto, and I am a graduate student at Rowan University working on the primary research for my thesis.

Before completing this survey, please review and understand the two types of marketing approaches mentioned below:

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Approach- a method of integrating all marketing communication tools (marketing, advertising, public relations) into a single, unified process with shared messages and goals.

Boutique Approach- a method of using individual marketing communication tools to achieve individual goals, often by dividing resources and staff into "boutiques."

Gender (Check one): Male Female

Organization Type (Please specify; e.g. communication, architecture, engineering, non-profit):

Organization size (Check one):

0-10 people 11-25 people
 26-50 people more than 50 people

In your organization, do you use an IMC approach? Yes No

Why or why not?

Our office is not organized to function this way.

Which approach do you feel is more effective? IMC Boutique

Why?

I believe an integrated approach would be more cost effective overall and reinforce the business development plan.

For additional information or to receive results of this research, please email gattor84@rowan.edu.

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Gender (Check one): Male Female

Organization Type (Please specify; e.g. communication, architecture, engineering, non-profit):

non-profit architecture

Organization size (Check one):

0-10 people 11-25 people
 26-50 people more than 50 people

In your organization, do you use an IMC approach? Yes No

Why or why not?

Small staff size requires everyone to wear multiple hats.

Which approach do you feel is more effective? IMC Boutique

Why?

It's easier to stay on-message and collaboration makes for a clearer message.

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Boutique Approach- a method of using individual marketing communication tools to achieve individual goals, often by dividing resources and staff into "boutiques."

Gender (Check one): Male Female

Organization Type (Please specify; e.g. communication, architecture, engineering, non-profit):

architecture

Organization size (Check one):

0-10 people 11-25 people
 26-50 people more than 50 people

In your organization, do you use an IMC approach? Yes No

Why or why not?

Convenience of standardizing materials and messages across a marketing team in multiple offices, consistency of approach. Occasionally use unique approaches for special purposes.

Which approach do you feel is more effective? IMC Boutique

Both

Why?

The integrated approach is beneficial for the reasons above though special opportunities can benefit from a boutique approach.

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Boutique Approach- a method of using individual marketing communication tools to achieve individual goals, often by dividing resources and staff into "boutiques."

Gender (Check one): Male Female

Organization Type (Please specify; e.g. communication, architecture, engineering, non-profit):

communication consulting firm

Organization size (Check one):

0-10 people 11-25 people
 26-50 people more than 50 people

In your organization, do you use an IMC approach? Yes No

Why or why not?

In today's economy, IMC offers both an integrated strategy and an economical approach.

Which approach do you feel is more effective? IMC Boutique

Why?

IMC lets you do more with less - money, resources, people.

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Boutique Approach- a method of using individual marketing communication tools to achieve individual goals, often by dividing resources and staff into "boutiques."

Gender (Check one): Male Female

Organization Type (Please specify; e.g. communication, architecture, engineering, non-profit):

Architecture, Interior Design, Engineering

Organization size (Check one):

0-10 people 11-25 people
 26-50 people more than 50 people

In your organization, do you use an IMC approach? Yes No

Why or why not?

All materials are produced/designed/created in NELSON's Philly office so we can maintain/control our branding, messaging, etc. across all of our offices and markets.

Which approach do you feel is more effective? IMC Boutique

Why?

Particularly for a company as large as NELSON, it's important that each office project the same image and brand so that clients understand who we are and what we do in every city.

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