



Integrated Marketing Communications

Music Direct to the
Marketer's Soul



Signal Graphics®

BY THE NUMBERS

Marketers see better results using multiple tactics and channels:

- Coordinated multichannel marketing increases conversion rates by **27%** to **50%**
- A full **67%** of online search users are driven to search by an offline channel
- Nearly **40%** of online searchers influenced by offline channels ultimately make a purchase

Juniper Research

Organizations are seeing big gains by taking an integrated approach to marketing. Social media, direct mail, signage, digital marketing, email and more combine to create emotional connections with audiences and drive engagement like never before. Business owners, marketing and sales professionals can learn a lot about integrated marketing communications (IMC) by watching a music composer at work. Read on to learn how to develop your own integrated marketing strategy.

When scoring a piece of music, composers seek to share a story with audiences. They evaluate the instruments available to them and coalesce the individual sounds into one story. Music has structure, so composers create a plan to maximize this structure and work with it to tell their narrative. They may revise this plan as they consider new ways to present harmonic progressions. Upon completion, composers introduce the piece to audiences, listening to their feedback to improve the new score or process next time.

The process of integrated marketing is strikingly similar to the art and science of music composition, as both seek to tell a story and receive a response.

Marketers draft individual marketing communications tools to work in concert. Each element—design, direct marketing, website, social and more—functions to tell one facet of the narrative, like chapters in a novel. Marketers also develop strategic plans, knowing they need a blueprint to allow story progression. Of course, they may revise this plan as they examine data from previous campaigns or explore emerging tactics. Finally, as marketers roll out their integrated marketing strategy, they tune in to customer feedback and calculate how to improve.

And that is how integrated marketers make beautiful music.

THE ORCHESTRA OF INTEGRATED MARKETING

Before smartphones and social media likes, rants and raves, there were primarily four ways to reach an audience through targeted marketing:

- In person
- At tradeshow or other events
- Through direct response mail
- By telephone.

“Integrated marketing communications is a planning process designed to assure that all brand contacts received by a customer or prospect for a product, service, or organization are relevant to that person and consistent over time.”

American Marketing Association

As technology evolved we soon had an arsenal of time-tested channels to use. Marketers became more educated and sophisticated in their tactics and could better identify their target audiences because buyers fell easily into homogenous groups with similar demographics and psychographics.

Then, social media with an all-new vocabulary emerged, and integrated marketing communications never would be the same.

With the fragmentation of all media, integrated marketing communications has become the model that brings order to the changes brought about by the many advancements and opportunities in marketing.

An integrated approach is one that uses multiple media all with the same look, feel and messaging to reach a targeted audience. It's an effective approach because no two people respond to marketing the same way, which means you have to be in as many places as you can to catch them wherever they are. The more you touch your prospects and customers through multiple media, the more likely they are to respond.

Buyers today want to research and receive information on their own terms, using the platform of their choosing. And they expect brands to be there. They want to feel like their favorite brands understand them individually — not trying to get them to buy something through mass marketing. So integrated marketing is about being everywhere your audience is.

HITTING THE PERSONAL NOTES

Data is the key to integrated marketing. Using personal information about your prospects and customers entices them to respond. You have much information within reach that you can use to target new prospects and even previous and existing customers.

- When did they last buy from you?
- What was their last purchase?
- What haven't they purchased?
- Where do they live?

Knowing the answers to these and other questions will help you better understand the messaging you need to use to communicate with your audience in order to be heard. By incorporating this information (data) whether as copy or pictures into your marketing channels, you create customized one-to-one marketing tools that have a better chance of grabbing their attention.

TAKE YOUR BRAND TO THE TOP OF THE CHARTS

Although customers may like your products and services, their emotional connection to your brand is what builds loyalty. This is true for both business-to-business as well as business-to-consumer companies. Integrated marketing campaigns are especially adept at building an emotional connection with audiences, thus creating a rhumba of brand advocates.

Marketers report an average improvement of 35% for multi-channel campaigns using print, email and landing pages.

InfoTrends

3 KEYS TO INTEGRATED MARKETING SUCCESS

1. Use **multiple mediums** and communicate a unified message through content and design.
2. **Know your audience.** Data is vital to the overall success of any campaign. Start with what you know and aim to capture more.
3. **Measure the effectiveness** of everything. Use collected data to optimize future campaigns. A comprehensive data and measurement strategy can help every organization turn prospects into customers and customers into lifelong advocates.

But before you can build brand loyalty, you must know what your brand stands for and communicate your brand message every time customers interact with you. Your brand must be in action 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Here are five questions to answer before preparing any IMC campaign:

1. What is the business objective for your campaign?
2. What kind of marketing have you done in the past? What's worked? What hasn't?
3. What are the attributes that define your best customers?
4. What type of offer or incentive would appeal to your audience?
5. What's your Unique Selling Proposition?

TACTICAL HARMONY

Successful integrated marketing strategies create seamless inbound-outbound campaigns. But keep in mind, strategies can and should change based on the target audience. This is where the fun of selecting the right tactics to deploy begins, and you'll start to see the additive effect of integrating marketing.

By implementing a multichannel marketing campaign, you not only expand your market reach, you also reinforce the brand messaging you developed during all previous touches, which boosts the likelihood of greater response.

So what instruments will build your integrated marketing orchestra? Popular marketing channels include:

- Direct Mail
- Email
- Website
- Mobile
- Event
- Promotional Products
- Corporate Identity
- Collateral
- Signs
- Social Media
- And more.

Don't limit yourself to these. Expand the mix of tactics you use based on your company culture as well as best practices in your industry. Regardless of the tactics selected, the most-important imperative is to maintain a cohesive look and feel across all channels, relevancy of messages and targeted direct marketing practices.

Get ready. Get set. Go integrate.