

Integrated Marketing Communication
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Lecture – 25
Association of Research with IMC

Welcome back, friends; it has been a journey wherein we talked about several aspects of this mesmerizing world of integrated marketing communication. We tried to analyse things from a consumer's perspective and several other elements. But that specific element I wanted to remind you of because here there is a direct chord which we will touch upon concerning the research associated with integrated marketing communication.

How is it relevant? We all know that, but how to go along with that? Why specifically should we be conducting? And what are those times? When we would be conducting or should be conducting that kind of research that give relevance to our efforts in integrated marketing communication, that is the point of concentration today and in the subsequent session.

So, here comes the Association of Research with integrated marketing communication. It is a broader outlay, and I would strongly recommend you go through several sources, including the book to which we have referred. And otherwise, methodologies are available through several sources to strengthen your understanding of research and the relevance of research and marketing communication.

So, it is natural to think, find, analyse and conclude it. It is more or less the process that accompanies whatever we are going through. Why is it relevant in terms of integrated marketing communications? The most crucial element for us to understand is the kind of efforts we make for communication to reach the customer.

And you see, the most crucial element we must realize and which we had referred to when we were talking about the role of advertising agencies in integrated marketing communication. The types of work they do, the kinds of assignments they get involved in the types of agencies we refer to. It would help if you remembered that we referred to WPP and Omnicom and these kinds of groups and also talked about advertising history.

And then revisit those videos, and you would realize the kind of entirety required for one communication to reach the customers. The kind of humungous task, if you keep on counting the number of people involved in this kind of thing. You will realize there is N number of people

with different tasks associated.

So, looking at that kind of effort, many people must be engaged. One must be slightly sure of the kind of what we are doing? What are we up to actually? Otherwise, we will keep trying, and it might work or might not work, and then it would be a waste of financial resources. I will also be talking about other resources, but financial resources are required when there are so many people.

So much work is involved in designing and defining one communication, and then we make it because we desire and impact. If it does not work, it would be a waste. But what will we be doing? We will be generating a gap for others to come in. Because you see, so many people are trying to reach out to the same customer simultaneously and that we have talked about several times up till now.

We talked about AD clutter, message clutter, and so on. And then we talked about so many modes which are being used. We talked about how mobile communication is used as a very prominent mode of communication to reach the customer. So, if we do not do it right, or I should not say that we cannot be, we can be right every time.

But if we do not try to do it right, we waste the efforts and energy of so many people within so many capacities. Finance is a big part, and it costs; remember, we discussed costs in the budget. So, costs and several kinds of costs plus generating scope for the customer to look for the similar kind of product by someone else because you would click something in his mind and on the other side, as I said, several people are targeting the same customer.

So, this is the most important reason for us to think, find, analyse and contract, which is what integrated marketing communication research. You would have heard of marketing research; you would have heard research methodologies, and so on. You would have gone through several courses, but here we are referring to IMC research. So, this is to give you a gist of any research that helps develop, execute, or evaluate integrated marketing communication.

Now, it is essential for us to look into the development of communication. Again, what is to be said? That depends upon what people want to listen to; what do they want to hear about? Do they want to get connected to a manufacturer or a product emotionally? If they do that, you must consider generating an emotional advertisement.

But who will tell you that they want emotions regarding communication goes. Have you seen those beautiful advertisements for several products like Tanishq touching the chords of people associating storyboards with festivals, occasions, legacy, and so on? Some mothers are handing

over the legacy of jewelry to their daughter or daughter-in-law, touching the cord of people.

How did they know that people wanted to look into it? Look at such kinds of messages and find the reason people would get associated with such kinds of messages. Have you seen recent advertisements related to the Paralympics? For example, have you ever seen and would have seen 1000s of advertisements or messages related to COVID. A beautiful ad by Tanishq recently with a COVID theme wherein the teacher wearing a mask goes to the class after so many weeks and meets her students for the first time offline.

After so much gap and students are also wearing masks, and those beautiful young girls, want to hug their teacher, and somehow due to COVID protocols they feel restrained to do that. So, the gesture of hugging each other from a distance and their Tanishq comes in kind. So, those kinds of beautiful advertisements have beautiful messages.

We all know that COVID generates a kind of a thought process in us, and we are going for several kinds of retrospective thoughts and analyses related to what wrong we have done? And what better we can do and so on. But this type of element or storyboard wherein students have been waiting for the teacher and so on. So, how do we reach these kinds of messages? And then how do we try to think that this would work?

How do we reach that stage wherein we send it knowing that it will work? It is where integrated marketing communication research comes in. So, as I said, development, execution but through what modes? How it would be more effective, and so on. And then evaluation, did it work or not? So, all this is a matter of research. And then there is always an accompanying task, which IMC research does.

It keeps on strengthening our linkage with the target customer in determining them. These are our target customers whenever we think about touching the chords and the minds of people and modes. We are constantly working upon that these are the people we want to reach, which is always an ongoing process.

And then, to understand the respondents, our viewers, or our target customers, we may see audience well. Because when we send a message, an immediate response level gets initiated, and that is where we keep assessing how well it is working because there are several stages wherein, we can think of rejuvenating the message, re-strengthening the message, repositioning the message, and restructuring the modes.

But there is another crucial element related to; should we go ahead with this. So you have a beautiful advertisement developed, you think should we go ahead with this and put it there?

When to pull it back? Not just because it did not work so well.

But another storyboard can be sequentially sent, another message that can be sequentially sent to strengthen the earlier message, or the first message was destined to be related to that particular period. For example, festivals are coming; in 2020, we did not celebrate many festivals. We did not go for so many kinds of advertisements related to festivals.

Although we send messages for online shopping and so on, we sort of rejuvenated the thought of festivals amongst the people. While trying not to make them conscious of that situation we are in, we are not celebrating. Tell them the festival season is here, but we must stay under restraint. But now, things are changing; today, we are saying to go and celebrate with caution.

So, you see 2020, and this is 2021, wherein our message changes. And that is what I am referring to when we say when to pull a particular kind of a message and when to put up another kind of a message and so on or let us say when to pull the message in half or when to pull it from a particular kind of a mode and let the other mode take over completely beyond a certain point.

So, again, this comes through our ongoing research related to IMC and then evaluation of the effort. Because if we do not know, how did it work? We might not be able to allocate another budget, or we might not be able to; first of all, we might not be able to negotiate that budget with the organizational heads. And they would say everything was good, everything was fine, but it did not work well.

So, that is where effectiveness must be found and put up in front of the organizational heads. And next, to take a call on how to take it further? So, this is when we say why to go for integrated marketing communication and remember three things- efforts, resources, primarily financial, and then the impact we desire.

And most importantly, several others are looking for the same target; remember this. Now, there are specific critical issues related to research.

And these are very relevant aspects of reliability. We all know the meaning of reliability, but to re-strengthen it for you in terms of integrated marketing communication and research wherein it means that the method you engage should produce consistent findings over time. Here, we need to realize that it can happen to an extent. So, reliability is not to be seen as an everlasting thing.

For example, we go for a particular kind of sample, studying those people together for a specific objective and a purpose with a specific problem statement in mind knowing, let's say, that we have an x communication in mind, maybe communication with an emotional appeal because we

started with this example. So, I am carrying it forward that emotional appeal aspect.

We must analyse up to what extent it would go on or would it go on for specific occasions, or it can be associated with a person's entire life. So, looking into such aspects or problem statements, we can think about deciding the extent or the timeframe as far as the reliability element goes. Never take reliability that we have engaged a particular kind of a method.

We have gone for a particular kind of sample and brought in these kinds of results; for example, this kind of advertisement should be developed or executed through this kind of mode. For example, sports-related to a soft drink will work. This is the conclusion, and you have initiated a process of developing an advertisement for a soft drink about sports.

Would it work forever? It must not be seen as a holy kind of an outcome because that was specifically for a particular kind of an audience and the preference of the audience, the perspective of the consumer might change or get diverted towards something which they would feel more relevant to in due course of time. For example, defence forces, courage, strength, or that era may belong to something else.

Wherein people might have something else in mind. So, reliability is related to the extent as well. Then comes in validity, the information generated is relevant to the research questions being investigated. Again, there are several aspects to it because this is not a research methodology or marketing research class. So, I would not keep on elaborating on these aspects.

But, to give you a perspective, research questions must have relevant answers, or must the information generated be relevant to the research questions being investigated? Who's asking that research question, and to whom the question is being asked? So, that kinds of things have to be kept in mind. And have we asked that question in a relevant manner? So that it is well understood or interpreted by or responded to basically.

For example, if you ask this question to essentially many people, do you like cricket? The answer definitely would be yes. And would you like that if I put up a soft drink advertisement about a cricketer and cricket people would essentially say yes? But then we must interpret that understanding of the customer while asking that question, and once he answers, we must interpret it rightly.

There comes the element as far as the validity cost. So, as this discussion is proceeding, we must understand that it may also depend upon the execution later. How well is that thought converted? Because it might be after a particular kind of a state, people would say that the market response was not very relevant in terms of the questions we tried to ask.

So, the market response was irrelevant, which may also be seen in how well we interpreted and executed that market response. Then comes in trustworthiness. Does the data seem to make sense? You have so much in front of you. But then most important is that what is the source of data? Whom have you asked the question? Did you find the proper respondent? Who would be the target in terms of integrated marketing communication?

Remember one thing; it is a critical point for you to remember that in research associated with integrated marketing communication, your respondent essentially is your target customer as well. Because if you come to me and I am not the target customer, things might not go well. In automotive, I may be able to answer your questions well, and they seem to fit the situation, but I might not be the buyer.

So, I may be the respondent, but I may not be the target customer, which will create a void gap. So, the prospective target in terms of the respondent must be matched, which is a massive and essential exercise. You cannot go for randomly asking people things. And you see, at this moment, I would not reiterate, as I have been telling you during this course, that I am unwilling to point out the failures at large.

But I would keep on reminding you about the elements which may cause failure. So, remember any product or, let us say, any message which did not do well in converting that message into sales is an example of failure. So, you can find out beautiful advertisements and messages, but they did not work somehow; they did not pull the customers.

You can find those messages in biscuits, chocolates, jewellery, watches, automotive, apparel, shoes, or any other form of footwear, eyeglasses, sunglasses, whichever way you want to look. And while looking into those messages, you would realize that those were good, yes, but they did not work. So, this can be one of those reasons actually, the respondent and the target customer and then come in meaningfulness.

This whole exercise is for meaningfulness. An assessment of the limitation of data. Why is this question of meaningfulness relevant? Because ultimately, we must think, find, analyse and conclude. We have enumerated so many reasons; we must remember that throughout this process of thinking, finding, analysing, and concluding.

We have to keep meaningfulness in during the whole process. We must keep this element alive in continuity as far as the complete process goes. We must remind ourselves whether the kind of questions we are thinking about is meaningful or not. We have to remind ourselves whether the method we are approaching the data is meaningful or not. We have to remind ourselves whether

respondents would be adding meaningfully or not.

And then, we have to remind ourselves whether our analysis would give us meaningful results or not. So, meaningfulness, just all through basically, and that is how we must assess it.

Now, coming to the element of purpose of research, most important touching the hearts is important. This mesmerizing world of IMC is about touching people's hearts because once you enter there, you remain there. You motivate them to move towards the purpose of IMC, whether you call it in terms of products, you call it in terms of getting treated with an organization.

For example, an organization is seeking an employee who wants to put it up in front of them. Recently, I was talking to the head of one of the heads of a vast organization, and he said that finding relevant people, good people is very difficult nowadays. So, I said why do you not go for integrated marketing communication? He said people know about my organization.

I said people know about your organization, but people do not know how happy they would feel by working with your organization. What kind of prospects would they find in your organization? What kind of facilities would they find? Would their families be happy working with your organization or not? Because they would also be a part of your organization.

So, do they know what kind of life they are choosing along with you in terms of being with that particular organization? And how do we do that through integrated marketing communication? But how do you find out what kind of message you would tell such a prospective employee by going for research in terms of communication? So, touching the hearts is important and then comes in idea generation that this is how I have to talk about something.

You know, some image clicks, some words click, and you get those from your target customer, employee, or investor. Do you get those from why would someone be happy to invest in your organization? Why should he rely upon you? So, you have to find out why he would rely on you and then send a message to him. So, ideas innovation related to what he would like to hear from you. Then comes concept testing.

You have to seek feedback to screen the quality of new ideas or concepts because you are structuring those, you have to test those; again, the same target would be touched upon, or you have to ask the same target how's it working? Is it working or not, and there are several methods of going for that. So, we may also touch upon a few of those methods in due course of time, probably next session.

And then audience definition, once a target segment has been identified, IMC planning can

proceed with developing a message that will be meaningful to the consumers. So, that is how we have to go ahead, and then audience profiling creatives must know to whom their communication will speak. So, you see, we have been done talking about target time and again, but profiling of that target, structuring who that target is?

Imagine that target in front of you, as if you are talking to someone; that is where the audience profile comes in. Continuing from the same example, you are trying to attract someone to work with your organization; you have someone in mind. He is a very learned person; he has had good grades, he's a good human being, he has leadership characteristics, etc.

So, you are trying to imagine that this may sound like some job description. But again, you are trying to structure this. For example, if you are thinking in terms of traditional jewellery, some college-going girl might not be the target, a newly married woman can be, depending upon whether she would accept that traditional design or those kinds of designs you are considering now.

Or you are thinking of a woman who has past few stages of her married life, and her children are growing. And she now wants to carry the legacy passed on to her by her mother-in-law and mother and the older women of the family and the clan. At this stage, she might like that kind of traditional design-based kind of jewellery. So, that is where audience profiling comes in.

Because if you are targeting someone of the age of my daughter. For example, a tradition she might love, but then as far as her particular usage goes, some ongoing trends might be more attractive for her. So, that is where essentially, you put up this kind of thing. So, to summarize, thinking, finding, analysing, and concluding is the sole purpose of integrated marketing communication research.

I will be coming back to you with some methods and further crystallization of what we have discussed during this session. And the sole purpose of talking about integrating marketing communication research is to understand that effectiveness of the message can only be brought in if we work upon that beforehand, through a structured or a reflexive research perspective. Goodbye for now. See you in the next session.