

Integrated Marketing Communication anticipating the 'age of engage'

1. Introduction

Interactivity--wide interactivity--characterizes today's marketplace. From personal communication devices (PDAs) to social networks like Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, and Flickr, people and businesses connect with each other at an unprecedented rate. In this interactive world, conceptions of public and private discourse and behavior have become more ambiguous than ever; so too have the "right ways" to reach people.

This engaged reality has a significant impact for the field of marketing--a field traditionally understood as the means to build a public bridge between an organization, its product(s), and its current and/or prospective audiences through a production (product-based) orientation. According to Shiffman (2008), business today faces a wholly new marketing reality.

We can no longer write a marketing plan at the beginning of the year and execute against it over the year. The traditional marketing plan can do no more than give us a snapshot of a point in time. It doesn't help us make the right decisions as we move forward in a complex and constantly changing marketplace.... The only marketing strategy that will work today is one that is designed to encourage and incorporate change as the product evolves. (Shiffman, 2008, p. 25)

The present emphasis on multiplicity, audience, and conversation calls for a nimbleness and agility within marketing not characteristic of its traditional theory and practices. To remain relevant, marketing must adapt by first recognizing how this moment of engagement and interactivity changes everything.

First, the engaged nature of this historical moment has reconstituted the role and function of marketing. Most companies do not resemble Apple: They cannot create products and have people come to them based on the quality and uniqueness of the product itself. Most companies have products and services that look like many other products and services. Therefore, they require consumer research and a sound competitive strategy to succeed. Second, the pervasiveness of "engagement" as a way of life elevates the centrality of communication to human experience in all contexts including the marketplace. It is not enough to gauge business decisions based on demographic data or extensive (scientific) marketing research. The marketplace demands rhetorical and interpretive practices that yield resonant insights and result in strong common interests between companies and the people they depend on for their existence. And third, marketing can no longer do it alone. Engagement coupled with a strong service orientation in today's marketplace necessitates stronger connections across all facets of organizational communication. Specifically, it requires an integrated relationship between marketing and marketing communication in order to establish communicative cohesiveness internally and externally.

This essay explores marketing's approach to today's situation of interactivity and engagement as strategic integrated communication. Specifically referred to as Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), this emergent discipline constitutes a prophetic response to today's marketplace, privileging the consumer as the fulcrum for all marketing planning, strategy, and execution. This outside-in approach aligns marketing and marketing communication for the express purpose of navigating change and ambiguity in order to build strong communication plans. Agile internal and external communication strategies make up the ideal commitment of IMC. Together these create added value for a company by enhancing the sense of continuity between often disparate entities, as well as by emphasizing the value dimensions of an organization so that they can be communicated publicly. While the integration of internal and external organizational communication practices has not yet come to full realization in theory or practice, this commitment forms an undercurrent in IMC, eagerly pursued by scholars and practitioners of the discipline. To this end, this paper will establish the baseline for the fulfillment of this commitment by tracing IMC as an emerging discipline.

A. Introduction: The issues

Marketers today work within a complex moment to advance a discipline steeped in tradition. Scholars and practitioners of marketing realize that postmodernity and the philosophical disposition of postmodernism poses unique challenges to the way things have always been done. Christensen, Torp, & Firat (2005) bring to light this reality as they treat today's increasingly fluid environments. The ambient emphasis in marketing poses new challenges for organizations used to doing business and marketing in more traditional contexts, not the constant change of today's global marketplace. Ponsonby & Boyle (2004), Vargo & Lusch (2004), and Penaloza & Venkatesh (2008) highlight challenges to marketing through the shift from production to consumption. They offer insight by heightening awareness of the increasingly service-oriented economy and its relationship to consumption. Proctor & Kitchen (2002) set the stage for examining a service orientation by questioning whether or not the consumer focus in marketing actually satisfies consumers, or whether marketers simply help them to live out postmodernism's notion that consumers only know what they do not want.

Exploratory work related to marketing and the philosophical premises of postmodernism make explicit the critical juncture of consumer, consumption, and service today. Christensen (1997), Brown (1997), Firat and Schultz II (1997), as well as Denison and McDonald (1995) first sounded a collective warning concerning the potential for postmodernism to influence marketing in ways that alter its role and abet strategic decision making, or at the very least challenge the scientific underpinnings of the discipline on social and cultural terms. Prior to their contributions, the work of Firat, Dholakia, and Venkatesh (1995), Firat and Venkatesh (1995), Brown (1993), Elliott (1994), Rouleau and Clegg (1992), and Ogilvy (1990) established foundational investigations into postmodernism. Through their scholarship, each offered careful scrutiny of the broader philosophical implications of postmodernism for marketing and the marketplace. Likewise, scholarship from Rapp and Collins (1990) and others called attention to the excessive Western focus on "I" and "me" in individualistic terms as a point of attention and opportunity for marketers.

Related Results

The metaphor of "marketing as a multiplex" provides a helpful overall approach to documenting the various challenges to marketing during and after the transition into the 21st century. Brown (1994) uses films to illustrate the significance of a multiplex metaphor for understanding the contemporary situation of marketing. He builds on conceptions of postmodernism (Berman, 1983; Bell, 1976; Habermas, 1987; Kroker, Kroker, & Cook, 1989; Jencks, 1989; Harvey, 1989; Smart, 1992; Hassan, 1985) to identify the significant challenges of this historical moment for marketing, not the least of which involves gaining an understanding of the moment itself. Brown presents postmodernism in the following way:

[Postmodernism is] a refusal to accept that there is one particular way of doing things and one way only. No form of knowledge is privileged and, rather than search for non-existent truths, one should be sensitive to differences and the perspectives of marginalized groups, exercise the art of judgment in the absence of rules, emphasize the importance of pragmatism, provisionality, and local forms of knowledge and recognize that the objectives of the Enlightenment project are Utopian and unattainable. (1994, p. 38)

His multiplex metaphor offers a cost-benefit analysis of 12 films that illustrate challenges to marketing. For example, he situates the relationship between postmodernism and marketing as parallel to the opening of *Jurassic Park* (1993). Like the film, Brown argues that postmodernism engenders responses ranging from accolades to cynical critiques of its technical wonders; the cost-benefit determination varies depending on a person's point within the spectrum of potential responses. In another parallel, Brown suggests that postmodernism offers its own version of *The French Connection* (1971). He adduces a strong connection between postmodernism and post-structuralist thought, established for example in the work of Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault, and examines postmodernism for its preoccupation with linguistic instability and the inability to ground meaning on anything other than a "sublimated metaphor" (Brown, 1994, p. 37). Brown offers a final, overarching conclusion that marketing has reached a communicative juncture, caught between its epistemological roots and the complex, undefined, contradictory world championed as postmodern.

For marketers today, the unavoidable question is, "where do we go from here?" (Schultz & Schultz, 2004). The answer requires a response that addresses marketing on two levels: (1) the form and processes of marketing and (2) marketing theory. Form connects to the everyday usability or the "handiness" (Heidegger, 1953/1996) of a given approach; it must communicate the relevance and applicability of the approach in each era. Content, or the "theoretical why," substantiates the "how to" of form. It provides the substance that guides the application of a given approach. Although most cases do not make the theory explicit, the theory still shapes and informs the marketer's framework for application.

Responsive marketing, then, requires a reorientation amidst divergent views on how form and theory work together, and under what paradigm. This review itself demonstrates that work to this end is well underway. However, the essay primarily examines more carefully the communicative dimension of this reorientation through the

most common answer to the "what next?" question in marketing: integrated marketing communication (IMC).

Given the implicit and explicit communicative nature of integration and IMC as a whole, the scope of this examination pays particular attention to the communicative aspect of integration. After this introduction (Section 1), three primary sections develop the material. Section 2 introduces a shift in the fundamentals of marketing theory and practice. This shift culminates in what Shiffman (2008) calls the "age of engage"--a new era of marketplace and marketing communication grounded in a widespread socio-cultural movement characterized by people engaging and being engaged in more "participative, collaborative, user-generated, sharing, social, global, open, interactive generation" ways (p. 2). Section 3 introduces the move to integration and integrated marketing communication as a phenomenological shift in marketing. It situates the turn to integration in the broader context of an increasingly customer-centric marketplace and heightened importance of engagement as a means for reaching, developing, and sustaining long-term relationships with key audiences. Section 4 offers a concluding overview of insights from past and current conversations about IMC. This final section ends the essay with an invitation to continue the work already underway through an ongoing commitment to the question, "where do we go from here?" Thus, this essay begins and ends in the spirit of Christensen, Firat, and Torp's observation that "integration is an outcome of many diverse sources ... many different voices and types of wisdom in the organizational setting" (2008, p. 443).

2. A Shift in Fundamentals

The traditional approach to marketing treats it as a "business function" much like finance or production (Calder & Malthouse, 2003, p. 9). Indebted to practices from an era of industrialism and mass marketing, traditional marketing emphasizes "the functional translation of the planned STP [segmentation, targeting, and positioning process] into activities [collectively understood in terms of the '4Ps'--product, price, place, promotion]" (p. 9). The 4Ps emerged at a time focused on communication about physical products; they represent an organization's ability to control specific aspects of its business. Under the control of the marketing manager, mass marketing's emphasis on product (physical attributes, brand development, packaging, etc.), price (strategic pricing decisions, warranties, discounts/ retail pricing, etc.), place (distribution channels, market coverage, inventory, etc.), and promotion (advertising, sales, public relations, etc.) aided decision-making aimed at producing perceived value for the consumer. In general, the 4Ps elevated the "science" of orchestration within the marketing mix and all activities according to the STP process, privileging a sense of tangible and measurable outcomes driven by management control of product-based communication (Brown, 1997).

More recent conceptualizations, however, have translated the functional focus of the STP process beyond textbook definitions that position marketing as the anticipation, management, and satisfaction of demand through the exchange process. The shift moves marketing definitions toward a more comprehensive statement of marketing as an indispensable presence in organizations as well as the global marketplace (Christensen, Firat, & Torp, 2008; Eagle, Kitchen, & Bulmer, 2007). As such, definitions have

changed to reflect marketing as an organizational asset dedicated to a strong sense of purpose, process, and return-on-investment (Holm, 2006; Kliatchko, 2005). Notable among these revisions is the American Marketing Association's 2007 definition of marketing as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large." This advances the same group's 2004 definition--marketing as "an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders"--foregrounding marketing's long-term value and presence as an organization-wide activity with broader impact, not simply marketing as just another department.

Definitional re-calibration in marketing has coincided with significant theoretical developments. Marketing theory has adapted ideas from positivism and interpretivism (Deshpande, 1983), science (Arndt, 1985a; Arndt, 1985b), humanism (Hirschman, 1986), relational constructs (Christopher, Payne, & Ballantyne, 1991; DiMaggio, 1992), cultural studies as related to organizations (Hakansson & Snehota, 1990), social symbolic understanding of language (Capra, 1997), and critical theory (Alvesson & Karreman, 2001). These varied perspectives have affected marketing practices in different ways to varying degrees depending on the marketing challenge and context. Most, however, affected the way in which marketing professionals conducted and evaluated basic research. Examples of the impact on marketing include but are not limited to the eschewal of attitudes and intentions as relevant to understanding/evaluating buying behavior (positivist); the evaluation of people and their purchasing patterns on their own terms in their own environment, also termed marketing ethnography (humanist); and the more careful consideration and evaluation of the way in which people consume symbols and meaning through their purchases/participation in the marketplace (social symbolic).

More recently, marketing theory has embraced what Vargo & Lusch (2004) call a "service-dominant logic" (S-D logic). This paradigm marks a transition in marketing towards customization, services, and value creation for the consumer in which there is an emphasis on the following:

intangible services; value as perceived and determined by the consumer in use as benefits of specialized knowledge and skills they label as operant resources; the customer as co-creator of the service; and wealth as obtained in the form of economic capital from consumers to firms in the application and exchange of operant resources by consumers and firms. (Penaloza & Venkatesh, 2008, p. 300)

Unlike other schools of marketing thought, especially the traditional marketing and marketplace worldview, this paradigmatic shift to a service-dominant orientation is unprecedented. The approach links resources such as intangible ideas and knowledge to foundational marketing processes of value creation, opening up possibilities for marketing research and development; and posing challenges to the systematic and measurable approach of a product-centered marketing approach. S-D logic changes the starting points, research, and strategic operations of marketing theory and practice (Penaloza & Venkatesh, 2008, p. 301; Gupta, Grant, & Melewar, 2008). Through terms

such as "co-creation," Vargo and Lusch's marketing theory posits a phenomenological turn in the conception of value from that of "value in exchange to value in use" (2004, p. 302). This refers to the use-value determined through interaction between consumers and marketers vis-a-vis a given service; this interplay of consumption and production is not limited to one party or the other. For Penaloza and Venkatesh, the result could become as significant to marketing thought and practice as did the major socio-economic shifts in industrialization or urbanization during the 20th century. At the very least, it positions marketing activities as "the predominant organizational philosophy" within an organization (Penaloza & Venkatesh, 2008, p. 300; cf. Christensen, Firat, & Torp, 2008).

Even with such a definitive move, Penaloza and Venkatesh (2008) believe that the advancements of Vargo and Lusch (2004) do not take marketing thought and practice far enough. To this end, they contend that the more substantive move situates marketing as a socially constructed phenomenon.

Our view emphasizes value as constituted by marketers and consumers in their activities and discourses via an enacted process, a social construction that takes place prior to, during, and after the actual exchange and use(s) take place. Further, we do not limit marketers to production or consumers to consumption, as marketers consume and consumers produce (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). Over time ... value may be seen to be constituted in exchange and use, simultaneously and sequentially. (Penaloza & Venkatesh, 2008, p. 303)

At the heart of this perspective lies a practical commitment to value created in exchange and use. This commitment acknowledges markets in a comprehensive and practical way as co-created entities between marketers and consumers simultaneously. Therefore, marketing research and practice must attend to the intricacies of this relationship along its social terrain. Insight must include the meanings created in given contexts, reflexivity on the part of the marketer, attention to consumer subjectivity, consideration regarding the limits of the marketer, engagement of the consumer-marketer relationship from within community, and attentiveness to cultural differences (local and international) (Penaloza & Venkatesh, 2008, p. 301). In the end, the approach intends to better understand how "market valuations become our valuations and validations" (p. 312).

Consistent with this perspective on a social construction of marketing, Penaloza and Venkatesh align beliefs and practices surrounding a given organization and its consumers with the social context emergent from a given time and place. The authors state, "the market is both a force to be reckoned with and a social terrain that consumers construct in a continuous, dialectical process with marketers towards their life projects and goals" (2008, p. 312). Penaloza and Venkatesh provide a context for marketing grounded in social relation. They envision the future of marketing as one in which markets are not entities to be mined down to "ones and zeros"--people deconstructed to fundamental numeric code like those at the core of all computer programs. Instead, a market exists as a force within a larger social web. Therefore, marketing must engage

this larger social web in order to elevate social life and resituate the market within that context.

A number of different theoretical perspectives have applied the web metaphor to both the marketplace and to the human condition. The applications range from the web metaphor as illuminating the fabric of our social existence to the web metaphor as a means for validating the human condition through a visible representation of the narrative connectivity that defines us. Some examples of this include a web as referring to the significant relationship between people, God, and work (Weber, 1992/1930); "webs of significance" as the symbolic interplay that forms and suspends a person's life and their relationships, social and otherwise (Geertz, 1973); "webs of interlocution" that frame a communicative space out of which one establishes a personal standpoint as well as one's relation to others (Taylor, 1989); and "webs of significant relationships" as a metaphor for the intricate dynamics between identity formation and the social economy (Lapidis, 2004).

Unless you count the World Wide Web, an explicit use of a web metaphor in marketing has not occurred. The present time, however, supports a dominant metaphor that advances the "experience economy" (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) to embody the fundamentally communicative nature of the web metaphor, making overt the importance of realizing human social relation and representation through the marketplace. That metaphor is "engagement."

The idea of engagement has permeated marketplace discourse to the degree that Shiffman (2008) calls this historical moment "the age of engage." She offers the metaphor of engagement as a responsive approach to the complexity and constant change of the marketplace. Engagement also reinforces the need for a shift in marketing toward meeting individuals on their own terms as well as in terms of how they live in relation to their respective communities, both social and historical (Penaloza & Venkatesh, 2008). Marketing must now recognize a more complex relationship with the market--one made up of a "semi-autonomous social group comprised of multiple firms, and of marketers and consumers" (p. 309).

Engagement subjugates a traditional product focus with a hyper-emphasis on the audience (Reid, Luxton, & Mavondo, 2005). Being audience-centered coupled with technological advances ushering in unprecedented speed and choice to marketplace interactions forces organizations to address a simultaneous yet divergent call to communicative action: simplify communication to combat an oversaturated marketplace, and expand communication to intensify connections between current and prospective clients and consumers (especially with so many ways to connect). This unresolved tension characterizes not only external communication; it also reflects back on the organization and its marketing management, marketing communication, corporate communication, and brand development (Holm, 2006).

Where marketing theory and practice fail to meet this age of engagement, strategic organizational communication remains underdeveloped or sabotaged by one of its own. Characterized in broad terms as the strategic communicative decision-making by people within a given organization, strategic organizational communication aims to situate the organization in conversation with the industries, communities, and cultures it intersects (Conrad & Poole, 2004). The efforts of marketing communication, corporate

communication, interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, philanthropy, as well as any number of internal and external initiatives that work together to form a gestalt understanding of the organization support it in theory and practice. While not yet fully developed, the recalibration of marketing through IMC infuses the conversation with an attempt at aiding strategic organizational communication through integration. And so, we now turn our focus to integration.

3. Anticipating "The Age of Engage": Introducing Integration

Since its inception, marketing has undergone a number of transitions. From its more formal introduction as a discipline focused on the 4Ps of promotion, production, price, and placement of goods (mass marketing) to today's emphasis on more cerebral concepts including social construction of consumer communities, service industries, and the intangible aspects of products (brands), each transition resulted from different answers to the question "where do we go from here?" The range of these responses reflects an overarching shift from one-way communication practices to interactive and engaged "meetings" with current and prospective consumers. Responsiveness and relevance have replaced the recalcitrant assumptions of a marketing era that believed if you build it, they will come. This transition includes adjustments to quantitative and qualitative research methodologies (Greenyer, 2006; Mriampolski, 2006), inquiries aimed at expanding marketing theory through concepts such as the "fourth hermeneutic" in marketing--a value dimension not yet fully realized by any approach to the discipline--and paradigms that have been lost in marketing's maturation process (Lowe, Carr, Thomas, & Watkins-Mathys, 2005; Arias & Acebron, 2001; Firat & Schultz II, 1997; Brown, 1997; Deshpande, 1983), arguments about the scientific capacity of marketing (Brown, 1995; Anderson, 1983; Kotler, 1972; Alderson & Cox, 1948; Converse, 1945), and, most recently, valuations regarding the integration of marketing, marketing communication, and corporate communication functions (Schultz & Schultz, 2004; Cornelissen & Harris, 2004).

Until IMC, no response has significantly altered the traditional starting point for doing marketing--the product. The next three sub-sections examine key developmental stages in moving from a product orientation in marketing to an integrative and consumer-oriented framework in greater detail, bringing added clarity to integration's introduction into the marketplace. The first sub-section offers an answer to the question "why integration?" It presents the communicative significance of integration as tied to a phenomenological shift in orientation to the consumer. The second recalls IMC's formative development vis-a-vis key junctures in its advancing a praxis definition. Finally, I briefly introduce IMC through the concept of re-engineering--a first-attempt at translating integration into internal agency and corporate contexts. The gestalt of this section focuses on a picture of marketing's phenomenological turn through IMC--a move that advanced the discipline and "prophetically" anticipated the pervasiveness of today's engagement economy.

A. Why Integration?

To say that marketing has reached an impasse (Brown, 1997; Buttimer & Kavanah, 1996; Hunt, 1994) simultaneously acknowledges an opportunity for change and growth. Today, marketing's longstanding practices embedded within business models propelled by modern assumptions about a mechanistic, mass-produced, and a stable market (Arias

& Acebron, 2001) confront the shifting appetites, fragmentation, paradox, and multiplicity characteristic of the postmodern marketplace (Brown, 1997; Firat & Schultz II, 1997). According to Ponsonby and Boyle (2004) in their literature review of marketing, the intersection of these two paradigms prompts a re-examination of the relationship between production and people's lives; and marketing must figure out how to work in this new environment (Pettegrew, 2001; Twitchell, 1999).

From bartering to early industrialization, production and consumption have been "viewed as a single operation" (Ponsonby & Boyle, 2004, p. 346). The service orientation of today's marketplace gives renewed meaning to this relationship, calling specific attention to the dual importance of instrumental value (product) as well as personal value (consumption) in establishing a coherent experience for people (Ponsonby & Boyle, 2004). While revisiting marketing's methodological and paradigmatic associations regularly address the former, the latter involves a preoccupation with the audience and has, until more recent conceptualizations of marketing, received only peripheral treatment (Valentine, 2000).

Business people and researchers now commonly identify incorporating the personal into marketing with consumer research and the overall goal of bridging marketing with people's everyday life. Consumer research reclaims a valuable part of the communicative interchange between marketing and the marketplace--the relationship perspective (Gronroos, 2004). To date, evidence supports that consumer research has become an increasingly visible aspect of marketing research as well as marketing management.

Helgeson, Kluge, Mager, and Taylor (1984) inspired consumer research through their content analysis of trends in consumer behavior early in the development of consumer research as a necessary aspect of strategic organizational planning and development, especially in the area of marketing. Around this time, Hirshman and Holbrook (1982) focused on evaluation methods for hedonic (pleasure-seeking) consumption while Zajonc and Marcus (1982) examined preferences in consumer decision-making processes. These basic building blocks for socio-cultural and behavioral consumer research led to contemporary work by Mriampolski (2006, 1999), Arnould and Price (2006), and Goulding (2005) who all seek to shift the intercultural methodology of ethnography into the world of advertising and marketing communication. Their research advances efforts at acquiring a deep understanding of consumers through participatory engagement, conversation, and observation conducted alongside them in the places they live, work, and play.

Consumer research textures not only insights into the human condition, but also insights into marketing management and strategy through interdisciplinary means. For example, work by Holbrook (1994, 1999) and Endler and Rosenstein (1997) offer frameworks for analyzing consumers that provide management with data that can then support more esoteric initiatives in branding, as well as traditional product development opportunities. Holbrook and others appropriate constructs, such as the "personality construct" associated with psychological measurement, as well as evaluative categories such as "consumer value," for metric adaptation in marketing. Additionally, Mick (1986) opens consumer research in another valuable way by connecting it to semiotics. Mick explores the relationship potential of symbols, signs, and significance to consumer research, offering a textured read of the ways in which visual associations can inform inquiries

into particular audiences. This particularly helps organizations frame who they are through words and symbols, creating a visual and literate context for association and participation.

The answer to the question "why integration?" emerged from the need to address an historical moment influenced by the value of intangible assets--those things that cannot be owned but have a direct impact on costs, service, profitability, etc. within an organization (e.g. brand, trademark)--and the consumer's role in the marketing process (Ratnatunga & Ewing, 2005). Several researchers and practitioners introduced IMC as an integrative perspective that united the fundamentals of marketing with the rhetorical sensibilities of communication to better meet and address the needs of a consumer dominated society. IMC brought to the fore knowledge and understanding of the consumer as the means to achieve marketing success (Ponsonby & Boyle, 2004; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Peppers & Rogers, 1995).

To the end that companies implement this orientation, IMC scholars and practitioners believe that it marks the promise of a "critical step"--a point of necessary advancement for the field--in which marketing becomes an idea that drives strategy and tactics, and makes the message meaningful and relevant for the consumer (Calder & Malthouse, 2003, p. 14). Through integration, this critical step advances marketing accountability as well as strategic activity used to manage the firm (Schultz, 2004). At a functional level, marketing and marketing communication integrate to relate sales to communication efforts and to increase the possibility of a more organic process between the organization and the consumer (Schultz & Wang, 1994).

But IMC does more. Integration reinvests the whole of marketing with an overt commitment to "stewardship"--accountability and ethics--not only in terms of finances but also for organizational communicative practices ("mission through messaging") as they touch the lives of people (Schultz & Wang, 1994). IMC begins to call greater attention to the inter-relation of marketing, marketing communication, and the marketplace as they intersect and impact people's lives (Ponsonby & Boyle, 2004). In this capacity, IMC represents a phenomenological shift in marketing whereby a product-centered understanding of the world no longer advances communication. In IMC, production and consumption are inextricably linked, and the role of the consumer drives marketing success (Rust, Lemon, & Zeithaml, 2004).

B. Defining IMC: Revisiting the Sender-Receiver Model of Communication

The phenomenological shift to a consumer-focused model in marketing began during the late 1970s and continued throughout the 1980s as advertising agencies merged and acquired different firms in an attempt to offer more than just traditional advertising to their clients (Duncan & Caywood, 1996). According to Novelli, the idea of "one-stop shopping" became popular "because ad dollars [were] flowing to other marketing communication disciplines and ad agencies needed to do something to respond" (1989, p. 8). As suggested by the phrase, "one-stop shopping" refers to "offering a variety of marketing communications functions with little emphasis on 'integration' of the functions or the end result of the communication" (Duncan & Everett, 1993, p. 30). This definition characterizes those agencies that initially claimed an integrated framework by offering a number of tactical solutions to the client, not just advertising.

Unfortunately, with the bottom line as the driving motivation, these mergers and acquisitions failed to provide a more comprehensive and integrated program for clients. In addition, they failed to build respect and a true integrated partnership between advertising and its counterparts. As a result, clients could not see the benefit of dissolving their current relationships with different firms (i.e., one for advertising and one for public relations) for a one-stop agency whose parts were still functioning as separate, specialized entities.

In the late 1980s, agencies adopted the term "new advertising" in an attempt to move away from a vendor status toward a more unified and integrated organization (Duncan & Caywood, 1996; Schultz, Tannenbaum, & Lauterborn, 1993; Caywood & Ewing, 1991). When this term did not work, others like marketing imperialism, orchestration, seamless communication, whole egg, and integrated marketing communication were offered as alternatives (Duncan & Everett, 1993). In 1991, the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) and the Association of National Advertisers (ANA), together with Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, surveyed national advertisers to learn how industry professionals perceived "integrated marketing communication" (IMC), the newest and most consistently used term for what was taking place between advertising and its marketing communication counterparts (Schultz, 1996a). For the purposes of the study, IMC was defined by the American Association of Advertising Agencies as:

a concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communications disciplines, e.g., general advertising, direct response, sales promotion and public relations--and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communications impact (definition established in 1989). (Duncan & Everett, 1993, p. 33)

Based on this definition, 67% of the executives surveyed from major U.S. corporations said that their companies were integrated; "nearly half said they had been integrated for more than three years, and a little over a third said they had become integrated within the last three years" (Duncan & Everett, 1993, p. 30).

Following the initial investigation in 1991, Duncan & Caywood (1996) published an historical review of IMC that chronicled the various scholarly and practitioner efforts to develop a more theoretical definition. According to Duncan & Caywood, shortly after the 1991 study Schultz and his colleagues at Northwestern articulated a refined definition directly centered on eliciting a behavioral response by the customer or prospect: "[IMC is] the process of managing all sources of information about a product/service to which a customer or prospect is exposed which behaviorally moves the consumer toward a sale and maintains customer loyalty" (Duncan & Caywood, 1996, p. 18).

Then, in 1993 Schultz, Tannenbaum, and Lauterborn published *The New Marketing Paradigm: Integrated Marketing Communications*. In this landmark work, the authors argued that technological advances had ended the days of mass marketing. They advanced an alternative, integrated process--beginning from the "outside-in"--starting

with the customer or prospect and working back toward the organization and brand (Schultz, Tannenbaum, & Lauterborn, 1993; Schultz, 1993). Schultz and his colleagues publicly formalized the characterization of this process as

a new way of looking at the whole, where once we only saw parts such as advertising, public relations, sales promotion, purchasing, employee communications.... Integrated marketing communications means talking to people who buy or don't buy based on what they see, hear, feel, etc.--and not just about [a] product or service. It means eliciting a response, not just conducting a monologue. And it means being accountable for results ... delivering a return on investment, not just spending a budget. (Schultz, Tannenbaum, & Lauterborn, 1993, p. xvii)

These definitional refinements had a direct impact on Northwestern's conceptualization of integration. As a result, they put forth a more comprehensive, refined framework for understanding IMC.

Integrated marketing communications is the process of developing and implementing various forms of persuasive communication programs with customers and prospects over time. The goal of IMC is to influence or directly affect the behavior of the selected communications audience. IMC considers all sources of brand or company contacts that a customer or prospect has with the product or service as potential delivery channels for future messages. Further, IMC makes use of all forms of communication which are relevant to the customers and prospects, and to which they might be receptive. In sum the IMC process starts with the customer or prospect and then works back to determine and define the forms and methods through which persuasive communication programs should be developed. (quoted in Percy, 1997, p. 2)

Shunning integration at the level of media choice and execution alone, the group advanced integration as the embodiment of a new process "lived and demonstrated by the top person or persons in an organization" (Schultz, 1993, p. 5). The overarching commitment was to IMC as a discipline supported by communication that leads an organization, not communication as an exercise in tactical execution.

At this point in IMC's development, two trends emerged. First, seeking a return on communication investment became a matter of "measurability, valuation, and evaluation" built into the strategic plan (Schultz, 1993, p. 5). The call for communication leadership required companies to situate IMC on two crucial cornerstones--measurability and accountability. The second trend suggested that the marketer and consumer engage each other in more of a conversation; however, the consumer now formed the locus of control. No longer a catchy phrase for one-stop-shopping, integration meant engagement over the long-term--a systems approach, not a

process approach (Schultz, 1993). As a result, brand loyalty and relationship management assumed a privileged position over integration's initial emphasis on achieving communicative impact through a unified message strategy (Duncan & Caywood, 1996).

Revisions to IMC's definition continued to evolve conceptions of relationship building, behavioral and attitudinal response, as well as the importance of dialogue between both the organization and the consumer (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). For example, in 1997 Percy expanded the process-orientation of IMC by stressing a "single 'positioning'" for all communication messages (p. 2). Percy's definition pronounced the key to integration as a realignment of all communication based on the consumer's perspective. As such, he and others considered modern database marketing a point of communicative engagement with the consumer--a means for sending and receiving valuable information. Following Percy and Schultz, Pettegrew (2001) offered his idea as eight necessary conditions that must be met in order for total and sustained integration to occur. These ranged from speaking in a consistent voice through all communication and placing the consumer at the center of all communication planning, to engaging consumers in dialogue and cutting through the clutter of the marketplace to do so. All eight of the conditions were communication-centered; six, however, related in some way to the various audience(s) addressed by the IMC efforts. Both Percy and Pettegrew's insights reflected the phenomenological shift to marketing's consumer orientation through the development IMC.

In recent years, definitional refinements have continued (Kliatchko, 2005). Notable revisions came from the pioneers and experts of IMC. In their 2003 collection of published essays on the subject, Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management and Medill School of Journalism reaffirmed that marketing "has always meant, and will continue to mean, responding to consumers (or, in the case of intermediaries, customers) to increase sales" (Calder & Malthouse, p. 6; cf. Shultz, 2003). The acknowledgment that marketing as a whole has always been "naturally integrated" is referenced for its banality--a stated but not engaged philosophy actually established in modern marketing theory's principles of the Industrial Age which privilege integration and response from the perspective of the marketer (Calder & Malthouse, 2003; Schultz, 2003). As advocates for "new" integration in IMC, Calder and Malthouse (2003) note that any attempt at advancement must include the strategic creation of strong brand concepts, the invitation to a total consumer experience, and the plan for a mass customization model. Beginning with a "strong connection to corporate strategy," the goal is to "create a consumer, or customer experience that is as meaningful and relevant as possible ... delivered through contact points both within and outside the product platform itself" (Calder, 2003, p. 262, 263, 283).

The point is clear: IMC marks a phenomenological shift in marketing from the marketer as the locus of control to the consumer as the new locus of control. Creating a continuous dialogue (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), representing the voice of the brand to consumers (Keller, 2001), developing strong brand equity (Keller, 2003), harnessing media for the benefit of products and services (Naik & Raman, 2003), and bringing an interdisciplinary approach to the integration process (Kalla, 2005) all rely on an outside-in orientation for instituting IMC. Schultz and Schultz (2004) offer a more comprehensive statement to this effect in their most recent book, citing the American Productivity and Quality Center's 1997 definition of IMC: "Integrated marketing

communication is a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute, and evaluate coordinated, measurable, persuasive brand communication programs over time with consumers, customers, prospects, and other targeted, relevant external and internal audiences" (pp. 20-21). Though we may lack evidence to support a total shift from mass marketing to IMC (a marketing development that some might contend as reinforcing a neo- or post-Fordist advocacy for flexible specialization or generalists that can work in a number of specialized contexts), even the most ardent skeptics cannot deny that today's postmodern moment demands change in marketing (Cornelissen, 2003). Without symbolic alignment (Smith, 1996), consistency and clarity across communication channels (Percy, 2008; Duncan, 2005), and consistency between communication messages and associated organizational behaviors (Balmer, 2001), organizations put at risk their long-term presence in the global marketplace.

The promise of IMC is a move towards bridging these communicative gaps in marketing by inviting a stronger dialogue with consumers.

C. Reengineering: Outside-in Integration from within the Organization

As an influencer of behavior, a driver of creating and establishing relationships and partnerships, and a tool to solve business problems (Gonring, 2002), IMC by design elicits and engages consumers with the end goal of consumer behavior's answering the organization's IMC invitation (Schultz, 1993). Working from this perspective, we can argue that the greatest communicative value comes through strong links between IMC, the bottom line, and organizational goals (Gonring, 2002; Balmer, 2001). Thus, it follows that for IMC to achieve all its claims, a phenomenological shift in external communication practices must have a parallel in internal communication that reflects an outside-in commitment.

Reengineering provides one way to adapt an integrated approach to agency and corporate settings. This organization-based integrative process reflects the "new regime" shaping today's marketplace--the consumer (Hammer, 1996). As a process, reengineering takes place internally but should also create something of value for the consumer. The proposed value in the process of reengineering delivers on its promise in the most comprehensive and complete way possible. The reengineered "soul" puts "loyalty to the customer over loyalty to the company--because that is the only way the company will thrive" (Hammer, 1996, p. 159).

Theorists and practitioners developed reengineering based on this heightened awareness of the consumer as well as on the recognition that one organization or agency may have an IMC philosophy while maintaining separate, specialized departments while others might claim integration through outsourcing, and still others may treat IMC through cross-functional teams. Hammer and Champy introduced reengineering as a vision for what true organizational integration means, offering a formal definition as "the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical, contemporary measures of performance, such as cost, quality, service, and speed" (1993, p. 32). The foundation of this radical rethinking and redesign exists in the character of an organization (Hammer, 1996). However, a "process" of reengineering--the re-ordering of an organization--to maximize the communicative impact and reach to the consumer follows. This process remains specific to an organization, and cannot be reified by set technique or approach for making it work.

The central idea in reengineering consists of process. Maintaining this focus enables an organization to "stay attuned to the needs of the changing business environment" (Hammer, 1996, p. 17). Yastrow unites the theme of "process" in reengineering with IMC, arguing that "fully integrated marketing" is something a company does. He states the following about this action.

Fully integrated marketing suggests that every part of the organization that touches a customer is involved in managing the brand, with the customer integrating every contact with the brand into an overall impression ... The challenge, then, becomes managing the ongoing stream of contacts a company has with each customer as an integrated marketing dialogue. (Yastrow, 1999/2000, pp. 1, 3)

Being fully integrated means going beyond IMC as an external communication orientation (i.e., integration within agencies, or integrated marketing communication in philosophy only) to integration existing throughout the entire organization. For Hammer, Champy, Yastrow and others, reengineering provides an organizational investment done today that affects the marketplace of tomorrow. Reengineering prepares an organization to be agile, flexible, and nimble amidst an increasingly complex and global marketplace. It assumes the spirit of IMC in a broader context, fully aware that integration meets the needs of today's historical moment and adapts to address the demands of tomorrow.

4. IMC: Where do we go from here?

In this age of engagement, IMC marks the intersection of modern and postmodern marketing thought as well as a proliferation of divergent approaches to the field (Kliatchko, 2005). As proponents strive to bring about greater confidence in integration as more than just a passing trend, the question of "where do we go from here?" remains at the forefront of conversation. It addresses today's situation and prepares IMC as a framework for advancing the field of marketing as a whole. IMC offers a communication infusion into an otherwise business-oriented field, inviting a hermeneutic approach often contrary to conventional marketing wisdom into the conversation.

To move forward in IMC, one should look back in search of issues and opportunities that may open the future of this young discipline. In 1948, Alderson and Cox called attention to a major issue that may do just that: the art-science tension in marketing. Although initialized by Converse in 1945, the debate over marketing's scientific status developed significantly in the wake of the Alderson-Cox publication which problematized marketing because of its reliance on other fields to stimulate growth, particularly the field of social science (cf. Deshpande, 1983). Alderson and Cox (1948) called for integration in marketing through clarification regarding the interplay of behavior, system, and organization as these apply to marketing. In the latter part of the 20th century, the questioning of modern social science, both in general and in relation to marketing, further illuminated issues for clarification, especially the overemphasis on quantitative marketing communication methods that presupposed "linked assumptions" for studying an organized world and did not take seriously the social realities that offer "shades of meaning" behind statistical formulations (Deshpande, 1983, p. 107). This has

resulted in an implicit conversation over the decades regarding the inherent nature of marketing as a scientific field of study or as an art that employs empirical data to support humanistic insights.

According to Brown (1997), the art-science debate has entered its third wave. The first wave--the "pro- science era"--capitalized on the development of the American Marketing Association (AMA) and the Marketing Science Institute to provide an official point of demarcation for marketing's aspirations of "scientific status." This era emphasized positivist and empirical efforts to curtail criticisms that marketing was not scientific by advancing substantive theoretical and research-oriented marketing scholarship. Significant among those advancing marketing as a science, Buzzell (1963) contended that marketing could only attain scientific status if marketing met stringent criteria; it had to become a systematic and classified body of knowledge organized around a key theory supported by quantifiable evidence.

This pro-science phase began in the late 1940s with Converse's publication, continued through multiple iterations, and ended with Anderson's (1983) challenge to the fundamental philosophical premise of marketing science as established in positivist assumptions about the world. Marked by a strong relativist position, Anderson ushered in the second phase by challenging the sensibilities of a discipline long ordained by its faith in logic and quantitative outcomes, ultimately calling into question modes of knowing and attaining "truth" through marketing (Hunt, 1990). For Anderson, one could not access external reality "independent of human sensations, perceptions, and interpretations. Hence, reality was not objective and external to the observer but socially constructed and given meaning by human actors" (Brown, 1997, p. 172). Anderson's invitation for marketers to consider social realities offered the first directive towards a social constructionist view of marketing.

Today's "anti-science era" is, broadly speaking, framed by "the postmodern consciousness [and] is predicated on a repudiation of Western science. Or, to be more precise, it is exemplified by its renunciation of 'scientism,' the long-standing modernist assumption that science is capable of solving all our problems, that science is a force for the good, that science is unproblematic" (Brown, 1997, p. 173). The postmodern consciousness expects and even welcomes inconsistency and ambiguity. It is the fulfillment of a rebellion against marketing science that came to the foreground post-World War II. Brown (1997) sums up the critique of marketing science that led to Anderson's social constructionist position as hinging on two issues: first, that marketing science lacks moral, spiritual, and ethical fiber; and second, that marketing science has not achieved anything of worth since the post-war period.

IMC's development emerges on the crest of this third wave amidst the juxtaposition of modern and postmodern thought in the art-science debate concerning marketing (Arias & Acebron, 2001). Under these circumstances, its limitations and the quickly diminishing value of tools such as segmentation typologies become explicit (Penaloza & Venkatesh, 2006; Cova, 1997; Firat & Schultz II, 1997). Additionally, it questions the reliance on a scientific paradigm. This results in a complicated relationship between business and marketing as more subjective, sensory-oriented modes of engagement call into question traditional business models driven by data collection for the purposes of directing organizational action.

The manifestation of the art-science issues in today's marketing literature appear subtle; nevertheless, they do exist. For example, in spite of the positive trajectory of IMC, views on its definition, terminology, perception, and actual success still vary due in large part to issues over measurability and accuracy (Kliatchko, 2005; Reid, Luxton, & Mavondo, 2005; Ratnatunga & Ewing, 2005; Kitchen, Schultz, Kim, Han, & Li, 2004; Cornelissen, 2003; Cornelissen, 2001; Cornelissen & Lock, 2000; Schultz & Kitchen, 2000; Beard, 1997). The art-science tension also appears in emergent themes within IMC. As this essay has indicated, these themes include IMC as more adept at handling the changing marketing and organizational landscape (e.g., Nowak & Phelps, 1994; Duncan & Caywood, 1996; Gronstedt, 1996; Schultz, 2001); IMC as holistic, integrative thinking (e.g., Schultz, Tannenbaum & Lauterborn, 1993; Percy, 1997); and IMC as solving a significant problem in marketing by providing a means for the unification and coordination of all organizational communication, administrative and otherwise (e.g., Schultz, Tannenbaum & Lauterborn, 1993; Duncan & Caywood, 1996; Duncan & Moriarty, 1998; Gronstedt, 1996). Both a movement toward artful engagement that compels people to respond and a scientific methods of data gathering and application ground these themes and the larger scope of IMC.

While the marketplace gives evidence for these themes, IMC remains in its infancy--and by all standards in its growth stage (Kim, Han, & Schultz, 2004). No claim exists about IMC as an art or science. Shultz and Schultz (2004) suggest the next step(s) in advancing integration in general categories as "future challenges for IMC" (p. 377). Seven identified challenges, or avenues for future research include: (1) aligning internal (corporate communication) and external marketing communication (IMC); (2) moving to a behavioral base for marketing communication outcomes (a humanist, not scientific base for treating communication between organizations and their related audiences); (3) reversing the flow of marketing communication programs (moving from an inside-out, production orientation to an outside-in, consumer orientation); (4) making the brand the key element in the marketing effort (elevating the role of intangible assets in communication strategy and planning); (5) developing a global perspective; (6) developing forward-looking systems of forecasting, measurement, and evaluation (instead of benchmarking and tracking studies that focus on past and present moments); and (7) developing new organizational structures and compensation methods (retooling organizations to support the shift towards more holistic, integrated communication baseline for strategic organizational decision-making) (Schultz & Schultz, 2004). Each challenge references the consumer and makes explicit the need to overcome distance in order to capitalize on the simultaneity of the production-consumption process. Each also points to organizational communicative competency through the alignment of internal and external communication so that every aspect of the exchange functions well.

What's next for IMC may not, however, be as functional (or scientific) as Schultz and Schultz (2004) suggest. The work of Christensen, Firat, and Torp (2008), Lowe, Carr, Thomas, and Watkins-Mathys (2005), Schultz and Schultz (2004), and Cornelissen (2003) imply a call to action for IMC that takes place before integration can fully occur. It has to do with the language, rhetorical capacity, cultural relevance, and symbolic interaction that characterizes the human condition. Specifically, the call to action hints at the significance of the values implicit in IMC initiatives. These values come from people--from the human community--and represent a much deeper sense of meaning than any product or service can ever fully embody. This inspires compelling and resonant communication messages.

While this is crucial for IMC success, those values represented in and through IMC impact the way people encounter, interpret, and share their marketplace experiences. In order to engage IMC with conviction, the implications of a value-laden approach to run deeper than value as constituted in use or exchange because they emerge from life together. What's next in IMC--the prophetic voice of an age conspicuous in its proclivity towards engagement as a consumptive practice--may involve a flexible, hermeneutic approach aimed at the purposeful and artful enactment of the interplay between the consumer, a product and/or service, and an organization in a given historical moment. In both theory and application, this invites IMC into a web of relationships. More than a definitive approach (e.g., inside-out or outside-in), IMC must remain consumer-informed and idea-led. A proactive engagement of the consumer through ideas increases the potential for a true gestalt engagement of IMC in which the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

Exemplified by responses to IMC in its growth stage, marketing cannot shift its locus of control and expect an uncontested transition to the new paradigm, nor can it expect evidence of this paradigm's success to pass without scrutiny. In response to the question of what's next in IMC during a time of heightened consumer engagement, the present postmodern moment invites marketing to make this hermeneutic investment--to continue re-visioning IMC theory and processes with greater care for their impact on the human condition. As the age of engage and S-D logic suggests, the intersection with the storied nature of human experience and the knowledge that "all social experience is founded on a narrative--that is, a story constructed by a social group about life, its conditions, and its requirements" must constrain IMC processes (Firat & Schultz II, 1997, p. 188). IMC theory and practice must attend to the reality that people do not organize their lives around things; rather they use things to communicate order and organization in their lives, even if only for the sake of appearances. People ascribe to a way of life, not to products and brands. They exchange and use products and brands as ways of associating with others, challenging IMC to encounter consumers, not just communicate at or with them. IMC must recognize that while cost/benefit assessments no longer define the consumer, the narrative through which he or she seeks to unify meaning and purpose in his or her life do define the consumer.

Working from within a framework that guides not dictates will allow IMC to remain relevant and continue its diffusion in the marketplace (Christensen, Firat, & Torp, 2008; Kim, Han, & Schultz, 2004). Against any form of technological imperialism, a value-oriented core from which to institute IMC programs calls for greater reflective planning that involves the interplay of the organization, its product, and the audience in a given historical moment. Answering the question, "Where do we go from here?" continues to situate IMC in historical context and conversation with other equally viable aspects of marketing. The promise of considering IMC and its impact on the human condition, in particular the way in which people encounter and share their marketplace experiences, rests on an underdeveloped aspect of marketing. In spite of marketing's prophetic insights leading to IMC as a pre-emptive response to the engagement economy, marketing still lacks a defined body of scholarship that artfully examines its relationship to the human condition. Thus, this essay begins and ends in the spirit of Christensen, Firat, and Torp's (2008) observation that we need multiple sources informing our marketing efforts. An interpretive, artful approach, IMC offers one such avenue for further research.

Editor's Afterword

The word "marketing" is distasteful to many people who are chiefly concerned with religious evangelization, and it is almost as distasteful to those whose focus is the development of educational institutions and educational opportunities for otherwise disadvantaged students. In fact, most people whose deeply-felt motivations are social or political would be at least somewhat uneasy if they were described as "marketing" the reforms they envision for accomplishing their social or political goals. The same reaction could be expected in the fields of medicine and public health.

Nevertheless, all these human endeavors have "products" which must be promoted if the fields are to remain significant. Distasteful or not, their successful promotion shares many of the requirements of commercial marketing mentioned in this paper. On the one hand, many successful religious evangelists, for example, have unashamedly adopted some of the worst methods of commercial marketers. On the other hand, the use of modern mass media usually requires some adaptations to fit into the media culture. While respecting the non-commercial values of their own field and rejecting some of the extreme means that are incompatible with their own values, some ideas of the commercial marketers can be employed safely even by religious "marketers."

One positive approach of this kind was taken by Father Pedro Arrupe, S.J., who said, shortly after his election as Superior General of the Jesuits, in the 1960s that Christians should promote Christianity with as much vigor as soft drinks are sold by their manufacturers.

It was in response to Father Arrupe's initiative that the Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture, and its publication, COMMUNICATION RESEARCH TRENDS, were established in the 1970s to explore ways in which current advances in communication research might be useful to Catholic communication specialists. As Professor Groom's review essay emphasizes, citing Shiffman (2008), marketers, including religious "marketers," must be aware that the ways they present their products must change constantly to match changes that occur in their audience's environment with each moment of engagement. Change is unavoidable in the modern world, and every "marketing plan," including the "marketing plans" designed to "sell" religious "products," must include mechanisms that adapt those plans to the ever-changing environment in which they engage their audience. This does not mean that the fundamentals of the product have to change, but the ways in which they are presented to their audience must change to meet the evolving expectations of that audience through successive moments of engagement.

--W. E. Biernatzki, S.J.

General Editor

COMMUNICATION RESEARCH TRENDS

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