

# 1

## Strategic Brand Communication

### KEY OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 What is the marketing mix, and how does it send messages?
- 1.2 What is integrated marketing communication?
- 1.3 Understand how this text will prepare you for your career.

In today's marketplace, new forms of communication and promotion are changing all areas of marketing and strategic communication. Intensive competition for the minds and money of people who buy products and support organizations has brought us so many choices that a text like this one is constantly challenged to have a focus. We believe the focus should be on the brand, the one constant in the shifting sands of strategic communication. By strategic communication we mean the principles and practices used in advertising, public relations, direct response communication, sales promotion, online communication, and other areas of promotion.

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## IT'S A WINNER

Category	Brand	Agency	Awards
Long-Term Brand Development	New Pig	In-house	Since 2005: Telly Award for Christmas video; Automotive Communications Award (Direct Mail, Campaign, Newsletter); Multichannel Merchant Gold Award for Pigalog, three times); Multichannel Merchant "Catalog of the Year" award for UK Pigalog (twice); Multichannel Silver International award for BV Pigalog; Catalog Age Gold Industrial Supplies Category for Pigalog; Catalog Age Gold International Category for UK Pigalog; WebAward Standard of Excellence

## New Pig: Partners in Grime



Photo: Courtesy New Pig Corporation, www.newpig.com



Photo: Courtesy New Pig Corporation, www.newpig.com

New Pig Corporation, an international business-to-business (B2B) company, has built a unique brand position in the often-dull niche markets of industrial absorbent products and workplace safety. New Pig reaches its markets through its award-winning Pigalog® catalog, direct marketing program, and distributors. The company is also recognized for its innovative product line and legendary customer service.

Its fun brand personality has transformed the dirty world of the factory into a clean, pig-focused theme park. The “pig” theme is integrated throughout the company. Here are a few examples:

- Catalog name: **Pigalog®**
- Employees are **Piggers**
- Address: **One Pork Avenue**
- Phone: **1-800-HOT HOGS®**
- Fax: **1-800-621-PIGS**
- Intranet: **OINKX** (Online **IN**formation & **KN**owledge **X**change)
- Cafeteria: **Pig Trough**
- Promotional item: **PIG® Snout Hat, PIG® Pen, PIG® Note Pad, etc.**
- The founder is **Chairman of the Boar . . . d**
- The president/chief executive officer (CEO) is the **Head Hog**
- Vocabulary: **Swine-cerely, Boarhday, Hamiversary, ThOINKs, Boar-B-Q, etc.**

Historically, oil spills, as well as other liquids, were absorbed by spreading around dirt or clay. The process may have soaked up most of the spill, but it created its own mess. The solution was an invention: the Original PIG® Absorbent Sock, the first contained absorbent sock that changed leak and spill management forever.

All the products project the light-hearted pig brand image. For example, a mat commonly used around machinery to soak up spills has been marketed as the PIG® Ham-O® Mat with a colorful piggy pattern as well as slogans that carry the brand theme, such as “Scuff-resistant top layer is tough as a pig’s hide!” (New Pig Corporation). A scratchy sketch of a friendly pig face (“Mr. Pig”) pops up from time to time in the Pigalog, on the website, or on special promotions to add surprise and fun to its pig-themed personality.

Although the company avoided industrial distribution in the early stages of its growth, the demand for PIG® products was such that select distributors like Grainger, Caterpillar, Safety-Kleen, Motion Industries, and NAPA are now “partners in grime.” Today the company is a multichannel, multibrand manufacturer and merchandiser offering the world’s largest selection of absorbent products and other industrial maintenance products to help workplaces maintain a clean, safe environment.

It all began in the corner of a warehouse in Altoona, Pennsylvania, aptly nicknamed the *Pig Pen*. With rounds of experimentation and product testing in constant progress, it was always messy. As the sausage-sized socks wallowed in pools of dirty oil, it’s easy to understand why the founders started calling them *Pigs*.

When it came time to register an official name, it made perfect sense to name the world’s first contained absorbent, the PIG® Absorbent Sock, in honor of its birthplace, the *Pig Pen*. However, a top ad agency warned that the “Pig” name would never do as a commercial name because it conjured up too many negative connotations. For example, angry protestors called police “pigs,” overeaters are called “pigs,” and some religions have strong precepts about pigs.

The founders nevertheless realized that many “pig” references are positive as well: think of Porky Pig, piggy banks, and hog heaven, for example. “Pigs are really a lot of fun,” said the company’s public relations director, Carl DeCaspers.

The founders also chose *Pig Corporation* as the company's new name, but company chairman and cofounder Ben Stapelfeld discovered that *Pig Corporation* had already been registered. Undaunted, Stapelfeld simply added the word *new* at the beginning to create *New Pig Corporation*, and the company with the funny name was born. His compromise name, *New Pig*, was a stroke of genius because it reflected the nature of the product as well as the innovativeness of the company.

Because customers had so much fun with the name and remembered it so easily, the founders decided to stick with it as the corporate name, despite the experts' advice. The success of the company has proved the power of the brand vision. The leak and spill experts serve more than 200,000 industrial, commercial, utility, institutional, military, and government facilities in more than seventy countries. Headquartered in Tipton, Pennsylvania, the company employs 570 people worldwide.

New Pig has kept its sense of fun intact while continuing to expand its reach globally. Listed as the sixty-fourth-fastest-growing private company in the United States by *Inc.* magazine in 1990, New Pig's growth has continued uninterrupted. It currently maintains ten facilities in the United States consisting of manufacturing, warehousing, and sales operations. International development continues as New Pig has expanded operations with headquarters in the United Kingdom and Holland to serve continental Europe. In 2007, New Pig continued its Asia growth by founding Shanghai-based New Pig China. Its most recent foreign subsidiary, New Pig India, opened its doors in March 2015 with headquarters in New Delhi and warehousing and sales operations in Mumbai.

New Pig's sales are driven by direct marketing and rely heavily on its award-winning catalogs. The Big Pigalog® (annual January edition) is a colorful 450-page catalog showcasing more than 3,100 industrial maintenance solutions for a clean and safe workplace.

New Pig's customer service is legendary. Customers contact the company by phone, by Internet, and in person through sales representatives. Every interaction reflects the personality of the company's corporate culture.

New Pig has successfully branded what some might think is the unbrandable by selling mundane industrial absorbents and workplace safety products with a pig theme and pig-related product and promotion paraphernalia.

This chapter will give you a foundation for thinking about marketing and the role of communication. The New Pig story demonstrates how imaginative strategic communication can help establish a brand and bring a product to life. This chapter starts with an explanation of the basic principles of marketing and relates marketing to strategic communication and integrated marketing communication. We explain the concept of branding and why it is so heavily dependent on strategic communication.

The brand is the anchor for our thoughts, feelings, and experiences with a product or organization. It's the name we use, the image we have in our minds, and the way we organize and perceive the marketplace. To understand brands and how they work, however, we first need an understanding of marketing, which is the corporate function most likely to manage an organization's brand or brands.

**1.1** What is the marketing mix, and how does it send messages?

## The Marketing Foundation

Because many advertising, public relations, and marketing communication majors are expected to take an introductory course in marketing, we won't try to present Marketing 101 here. Instead, we will review some of marketing's basic concepts in terms of how they affect or give direction to strategic communication.



Photo: Courtesy Urban Decay Cosmetics. Used with permission.



### SHOWCASE

*The Urban Decay line of cosmetics projects is designed to lead the market with edgy product designs and formulations that appeal to fashion-conscious young women. Its street-smart attitude is embodied in its packaging and product names.*

Wende Zomnir, co-founder, Urban Decay, Costa Mesa, California, is a graduate of the University of North Texas advertising program. She was nominated to be featured here by Professor Sheri Broyles.

**Marketing** is designed to build brand and customer relationships that generate sales and profits or, in the case of non-profit organizations, memberships, volunteers, and donations. Traditionally, the goal of most marketing programs has been to sell products, defined as *goods*, *services*, or *ideas*. Marketing's sales goals respond to the marketplace, ideally matching a product's availability—and the company's production capabilities—to the consumer's need, desire, or demand for the product.

Sometimes the challenge is to build demand for a product, as the Showcase feature illustrates. Urban Decay is a line of cosmetics with a street-smart attitude that markets to fashionable young women. The *Wall Street Journal* says Urban Decay caught its market's attention with its edgy packaging and product names, such as "Perversion" and "Stray Dog."<sup>1</sup>

### The Marketing Mix

Marketing accomplishes its goal by managing a set of operations and strategic decisions referred to as the **marketing mix** (or the **Four Ps**). They are the design and performance of the *product*, its *place* (where it's available, distribution), its *pricing* strategies, and its *promotion*. These Four Ps all deliver messages about the brand. In other words, what do the design and construction of the product say about the brand; what does the price suggest about the quality of the product; what does the store or online site contribute to the brand image; and what do the more formal marketing communication messages (such as advertising, public relations, direct communication, events and sponsorships, packaging, sales promotion, and other planned messages) say about the brand?

Marketing also focuses on managing customer relationships to benefit a brand's **stakeholders**. By stakeholders, we mean all the individuals and groups who have a stake in the success of the brand, including employees, investors, the community, media, business partners, as well as customers. As we'll explain later in the section on branding, positive stakeholder relationships create value for a brand.

### Marketing and Messages

What we call **marketing communication** (marcom for short) involves the use of a variety of tools and functions, such as advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct response, events and sponsorships, point of sale, digital media, and the communication aspects of packaging as well as personal sales and new forms of online communication that are constantly being developed. They are pieces of a planned effort that strategically delivers specific messages to promote a brand or organization, such as New Pig.

On a more general level, **brand communication** includes all the various marketing communication messages from marketing communication. It also includes personal experiences that create and maintain a coherent brand image.

For example, consider the Puma brand. The same creative spirit that drives Puma's cutting-edge product design also drives its marketing communication, which includes advertising. Puma also uses nontraditional ways to connect with customers, such as **word of mouth**; the Internet; eye-catching in-store merchandising displays; and other marcom programs that promote the

brand on the street and on the feet of its devotees. Clever brand communication ideas include promotions, such as one during the World Cup held in Japan and South Korea that featured a special Puma sushi roll served in select Japanese restaurants in cities around the world. These restaurants also discretely announced the sponsorship through Puma-branded chopsticks, sake cups, and napkins. At the same time, Puma partnered with a UK-based design shop to sell an exclusive version of its World Cup soccer boot. It also held weekend sushi-making events at a home furnishings store. In other words, Puma's brand communication extends well beyond advertising and traditional media.

The management challenge, then, is to plan and monitor all the messages delivered by all the various types of marketing communication so that they work together to present the brand in a coherent and consistent way<sup>2</sup> as a coordinated basket of messages.

### Principle

The challenge is to manage all the messages delivered by all aspects of marketing communication so that they work together to present the brand in a coherent and consistent way.

## Who Are the Key Players?

The marketing industry is a complex network of professionals, all of whom are involved in creating, producing, delivering, and promoting something to customers. They are involved both as audiences for marcom messages and as partners in delivering brand messages. The four categories of key players are (1) marketers; (2) marketing partners, such as advertising and public relations agencies; (3) suppliers and vendors; and (4) distributors and retailers. These positions represent jobs, so this review also describes careers should you be interested in working in marketing.

The marketer is any company or organization behind the brand—that is, the organization or company producing the product or service and offering it for sale—or promoting a good cause or nonprofit organization to its supporters. To marketing communication partners (advertising agencies and other marketing communication firms), the company or firm behind the brand is referred to as the *client*. The product or brand manager is the key contact within the market organization for marketing communication partners. This person gives direction to the agencies about the brand strategy, budget, and schedule. As one brand manager explained, the effective manager is one who lets his or her market communications experts do the work: “I finally figured out that I never had to solve the problems. I just gave them my problems to solve.”<sup>3</sup>

As a *Wall Street Journal* article explained, the relationship between marketers and their agencies can be a complicated one because of pressures to cut costs as well as changing strategies and technologies, particularly in the digital arena.<sup>4</sup> Achieving an effective “partner” relationship between agency and client is sometimes challenging, as the Inside Story explains.

The materials and ingredients used in producing a product or managing a nonprofit organization are obtained from other companies, referred to as *suppliers* or *vendors*. The phrase **supply chain** is used to refer to this complex network of suppliers who produce components and ingredients that are then sold to the manufacturer. The **distribution chain** or **channel of distribution** refers to the various companies involved in moving a product from its manufacturer to its buyers. Suppliers and distributors may also be used in nonprofit organizations, where they are also partners in the communication process.

## What Are the Most Common Types of Markets?

The word **market** originally meant the place where the exchange between seller and buyer took place. Today, we speak of a market not only as a place (for example, the New England market), but also as a particular type of buyer (for example, the youth market or the motorcycle market). The phrase **share of market** refers to the percentage of the total sales in a product category belonging to a particular brand.

As Figure 1.1 shows, the four main market types are (1) consumer, (2) business-to-business (industrial), (3) institutional, and (4) channel markets. We can further divide each of these markets by size or geography (local, regional, national, or international).

- **Consumer markets** (business-to-consumer or B2C) refer to businesses selling to consumers who buy goods and services for personal or household use. As a student, you are considered a member of the consumer market for companies that sell jeans, athletic shoes, sweatshirts,

## Dos and Don'ts of an Insatiable Client

Anthony Morrison, *Owner and CEO, MYP Training, Houston, Texas*

Advertising is a very exciting, fast-paced, and rewarding industry. Many look at advertising as a way to deliver client needs and wants and develop tangible materials out of intangible concepts and ideas. All that is true, and for a young advertiser, there are so many columns, stories, mentors, and examples of how to succeed in the advertising industry.

A good skill to pick up as a young advertiser is how to deal with a client who is not ideal. A client might have a strong personality but not the industry knowledge to develop the concept. I like to call them "Good but not good enough" clients. Handled the wrong way, this type of client can make or break a young advertiser's career. This client can even have a young advertiser thinking of a career change. Before that happens, here are some important "Dos" and "Don'ts" to dealing with this type of client.

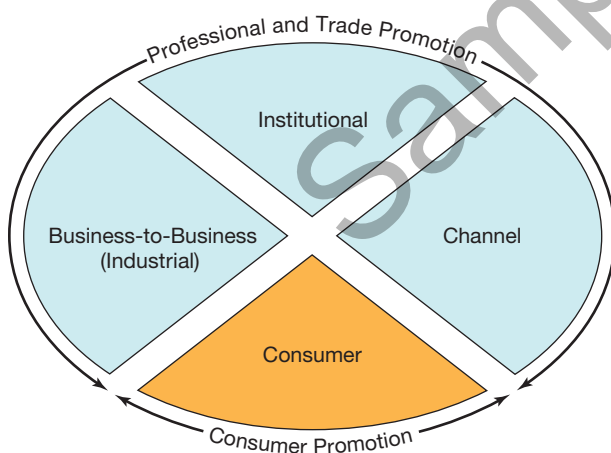
### Do

- **Do understand the full scope of the deliverable.** Never start a project without knowing the end result.
- **Do keep the client abreast at every step in the process.** Doing so makes the client feel involved.
- **Do stay within the budget and time line initially scoped out.** If you are in danger of going over budget or falling behind, say something immediately. If not, the client will lose trust in you.
- **Do reach out for help from colleagues.** Coworkers may have had some of the same experiences.

### Don't

- **Don't deliver a product that is out of scope.** Even if the product is better than originally scoped, it needs to be discussed first.
- **Don't get frustrated with the client.** The client is just as passionate about the product as you are. Everyone just wants the best deliverable product.
- **Don't talk to the client when you are upset.** Some communications may come off as angry and will hurt the relationship.

*Note: A graduate of the University of Houston, Morrison was nominated to be featured here by Professor Larry Kelley, a member of this book's advisory board.*



**FIGURE 1.1**  
Four Types of Markets

The consumer market, which is the target of consumer advertising, public relations, and promotion, is important, but it is only one of the four types of markets. The other three are reached through professional and trade marketing communication.

pizza, music, textbooks, backpacks, computers, education, checking accounts, bicycles, and a multitude of other products.

- **Business-to-business (B2B) markets** consist of companies, such as New Pig, that buy products or services to use in their own businesses or in making other products. General Electric, for example, buys computers to use in billing and inventory control, steel and wiring to use in the manufacture of its products, and cleaning supplies to use in maintaining its buildings. In 2016, the three biggest B2B marketers were Microsoft, IBM, and Wells Fargo.<sup>5</sup> Promotion in this category tends to be heavy on factual content and information.
- **Institutional markets** include a wide variety of nonprofit organizations, such as hospitals, government agencies, and museums. Universities, for example, are in the market for furniture, cleaning supplies, computers, office supplies, groceries, audiovisual material, paper towels, and toilet paper. Such ads are similar to B2B ads in that they are generally heavy on facts.
- **Channel markets** include members of the distribution chain, which is made up of businesses we call **resellers** or intermediaries. **Channel marketing**, the process of targeting messages to the distribution channel, is more important now that manufacturers consider their distributors to be partners in their marketing programs.

Most marketing communication dollars are spent on consumer markets, although B2B marketing is becoming almost as strong. What’s important, however, is that marketing communication is used to reach customers in all four types of markets. The type of marketing communication and the way it is directed to the audience might differ, but strategic communication is essential to all four types of marketing.

### How Does the Marketing Mix Send Messages?

Marketing managers construct the *marketing mix*, the Four Ps, to accomplish marketing objectives. As shown in Figure 1.2, these marketing mix decisions are key elements of marketing strategy. To a marketing manager, marketing communication is just one part of the marketing mix, but to a marcom manager, all these marketing mix elements send messages that can sometimes contradict planned marcom messages or even confuse consumers. The following sections explain these three other components of the marketing mix as providers of communication cues.

**Product** Design, performance, and quality are key elements of a product’s success. When a product performs well, its performance sends a positive message that this brand is okay to repurchase or revisit. (The opposite is also true: poor performance sends a negative message.) A positive brand experience also motivates the buyer to recommend the brand to others, extending the reach of the positive experience through word of mouth.

Some brands, such as Apple, are known for their design, which becomes a major **point of differentiation** from competitors. When this point of difference is also of significant importance to customers, it becomes a **competitive advantage**. Apple’s personal digital products, such as the iPod, iPhone, and iPad, have built a fanatical following because of their innovativeness. The iPhone, for example, was characterized in the *Wall Street Journal* as “the defining consumer item of its age.”<sup>6</sup>

A *product launch* for a new brand such as Apple’s iWatch depends on announcements in the media usually involving publicity and advertising as well as trade promotion. The communication is designed to build awareness of the new brand and to explain how this new product works and how it differs from competitors. Performance is important for launching innovative and technical products, such as the iWatch, that are introduced to the market through ads and publicity that explain how to use this new technology.

**Principle**

Every part of the marketing mix—not just marketing communication—sends a message.



Photo: Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

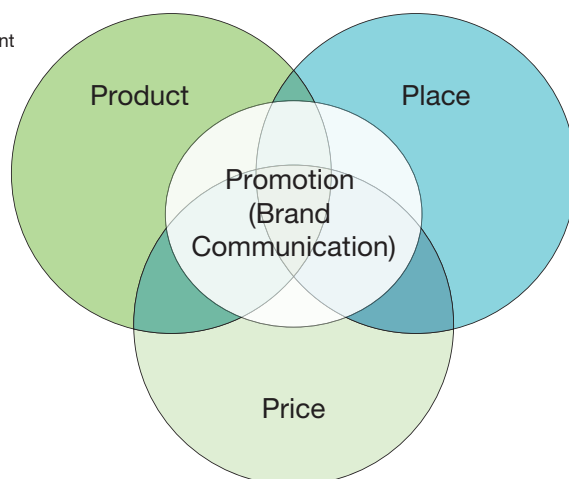
The Apple Watch launched in 2015 has a clean design and is a well-constructed smartwatch with hundreds of apps and the ability to send and receive calls, similar to an iPhone. It’s also like a super iPod combined with a fitness device that’s worn on the wrist.

**Product**

- Design and development
- Performance
- Branding
- Packaging

**Price**

- Psychological pricing
- Sales
- Price/value



**Place (Distribution)**

- Channels
- Market coverage
- Push-pull
- Co-op advertising

**Promotion (Brand Communication)**

- Personal selling
- Advertising
- Sales promotion
- Point of purchase
- Customer service
- Public relations
- Direct marketing
- Merchandising
- Packaging
- Events, sponsorships

**FIGURE 1.2**

**The Marketing Mix**

The four marketing mix elements and their related tools and marketing communication techniques are basic components of marketing. Brand communication is shown in the middle and overlaps the other three Ps—product, place/distribution, and price—because all have communication effects.



**Principle**

Product performance sends the loudest message about a product or brand and determines whether it will be purchased again.

Product performance—how it handles or is used—sends the loudest messages about a product or brand and determines whether the product is purchased again or whether the buyer recommends it to others. Buyers of computers, for example, will assess performance by asking the following: Is the computer easy to use? Does it crash? How big is its memory? Quality is another product feature that is often linked to upscale brands, such as Mercedes and Rolex. The idea is that if the product is well engineered and its manufacturer maintains a high standard of quality, the brand will perform at a high level.

Related to product performance is product adaptation, particularly when innovation is driven by consumer needs. An example comes from Avon's bath oil, Skin So Soft, which has long been used as a bug repellent. Avon figured that out and launched Skin So Soft Bug Guard.

**Principle**

The treatment of the price in marketing communication cues a meaning that puts the price/value proposition in perspective.

**Pricing** The price that a seller sets for a product sends a “quality” or “status” message. The higher the price relative to the competition, the higher—supposedly—the quality or status will be. The price is based not only on the cost of making and marketing the product, but also on the seller's expected margin of profit as well as the effect of the price on the brand image. Ultimately, the price of a product is based on what the market will bear, the competition, the relative value of the product, and the consumer's ability to gauge that value, which is referred to as the *price/value proposition*. **Psychological pricing** strategies use marketing communication to affect the customer's judgment of value. For example, ads showing *prestige pricing* in which a high price seems to make the product worthy or valuable may be illustrated by photographs of the “exceptional product” in luxury settings or by ad copy explaining the reasons for a high price. The meaning of the price is often dependent on the context provided by the marketing communication, which puts the price in perspective.

With the exception of price information delivered at the point of sale, marketing communication is often the primary vehicle for telling the consumer about price. The term **price copy**, which is the focus of much retail advertising, refers to copy devoted primarily to the price and its relation to value. During the Great Recession, fast-food chains as well as Walmart and, of course, discount and dollar stores depended on a *value pricing* strategy using the \$1 price to signal money-saving offers. *Promotional pricing* is used to communicate a dramatic or temporary price reduction through terms such as *sale*, *special*, and *today only*.

**Place/Distribution** It does little good to offer a good or service that will meet customers' needs unless you have a mechanism for making the product or service available and handling the exchange of payment. Where or how a brand is made available also sends a message. The image of a watch, like Swatch, can be quite different if it's sold in Walmart as opposed to Nordstrom. The objective is to match the distribution to the product quality, brand personality, and price.

Puma, for example, is growing the market for its shoes and athletic apparel because of its unusual approach to distribution. Its channel marketing strategy delivers Puma products both to exclusive and mass-market audiences, selling its edgy designs to trendy retailers and then placing its more mainstream products in mall stores. In recent years, Puma has expanded its distribution program to include its own stores, which greet customers with a unique shopping environment that reflects the personality of the Puma brand.

A common distribution strategy involves the use of *intermediaries* such as retailers. Apple, for example, sells not only through other retailers but also in its very popular Apple stores. “Clicks or bricks” is a phrase used to describe whether a product is sold online (clicks) or in a traditional store (bricks). **Direct marketing (DM)** companies, such as Lands' End and Dell, distribute their products directly without the use of a reseller. The sale is totally dependent on the effectiveness of catalogs and direct-response advertising. New Pig has some resellers, but it depends primarily on direct marketing.

Another distribution-related strategy involves the distinction between push and pull strategies. A **push strategy** offers promotional incentives, such as discounts and money for advertising, to retailers. Distribution success depends on the ability of these intermediaries to promote

the product, which they often do with their own advertising. In contrast, a **pull strategy** directs marketing communication efforts at the consumer and attempts to pull the product through the channel by intensifying consumer demand.

**Other Functions in the Mix** The Four Ps concept is useful in identifying the key marketing strategy decisions that support communication about a brand. Other areas, such as personal sales and customer service, are also important in the brand's communication mix.

**Personal sales** rely on face-to-face contact between the marketer and a prospective customer rather than contact through media. It's particularly important in B2B marketing and high-end retail. In contrast, self-service retailers (grocery stores, drugstores, and big-box stores like Costco) rely on customers to know what they want and where in the store to find it.

In contrast to most advertising, whose effects are often delayed, marketers use *personal selling* to create immediate sales to people who are shopping for a product. The different types of personal selling include sales calls at the place of business by a field representative (field sales), assistance at an outlet by a sales clerk (retail selling), and calls by a representative who goes to customers' offices. Marketing communication supports sales programs to develop **leads**, the identification of potential customers, or **prospects**. **Lead generation** is a common objective for trade promotion and advertising. Personal sales are even more important in B2B marketing for reaching key decision makers within a company who can authorize a purchase.

**Customer service** refers to the help provided to a customer before, during, and after a purchase. It also refers to the company's willingness to provide such help. Most manufacturers have a customer service operation that provides follow-up services for many goods and also answers questions and deals with complaints about products. It's more than just traditional face-to-face customer service, though. Many companies now provide more assistance to customers through online connections than through face-to-face communication.

### What Is the Added Value of Marcom?

Information from the marketing mix and marketing communication can add value to a product both for consumers and for marketers. **Added value** refers to a strategy or activity that makes the product more useful or appealing to the consumer as well as to distribution partners. The three Ps of product, price, and place add more tangible value. For example, the more convenient the product is to buy, the more valuable it is to the customer. Likewise, the lower the price, the more useful features a product has, or the higher its quality, the more a customer may value it.

Marketing communication adds psychological value by creating a brand that people remember, by delivering useful information, and by making a product appealing, as in the "Classic" ad for Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. With no added value, why pay more for one brand over the competition? A motorcycle is a motorcycle, but a Harley-Davidson is a highly coveted bike because of the brand image created by its marketing communication and relationship with its customers. Advertising and other marketing communication not only showcase the product's inherent



Photo: National Library of Medicine

#### CLASSIC

Ads for Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound appeared in newspapers in the 1870s with claims that the product "goes to the very root of all female complaints." Other turn-of-the-century concoctions made even more dramatic and extreme claims. How do products and advertising like this one compare with modern-day pharmaceutical advertising?

value but also may add value by making the product more attractive and getting the attention of potential customers, members, or donors.

On the other hand, not all marketing mix decisions send positive messages and add value to products. Netflix found that a clumsy plan that split its streaming video service and DVD-via-mail services so that it could add a more expensive alternative system called Quickster enraged its customers and drove its share price down. Nothing in the proposal was seen as adding value for Netflix customers, who instead saw the move as a way for Netflix to get more money for a more inconvenient form of the video service.

**1.2** What is integrated marketing communication?

### Principle

IMC is like a musical score that helps various instruments play together. The song is the meaning of the brand.

## What Is Integrated Marketing Communication?

The form of strategic communication called **integrated marketing communication (IMC)** is the practice of coordinating messages from all marketing communication tools as well as the messages from the marketing mix decisions. One important IMC goal is to send a consistent message about the brand. IMC is like a musical score that helps all the various instruments play together, but before you decide what tune each individual instrument will play, you have to decide what the song is all about. We say that the song is the brand: it is its strategy and meaning. This concept will be developed in more detail in Chapter 16, where we explain the challenge of managing IMC campaigns and programs.

IMC is still evolving, and both professionals and professors are engaged in defining the field and explaining how it works. *Integration* is a key; it means that every message is focused and that all messages work together to create a coherent and attractive brand image, as the Day in the Life feature about the varied marketing communication program of a B2B company explains. Coordination creates *synergy*, which is expressed in the common saying that “2 plus 2 equals 5.” In other words, when the pieces are effectively coordinated, the whole has more effect than the sum of its parts. A simple example is McDonald’s brand identity, where the “M” in the name is reflected in the shape of McDonald’s iconic arches. A name, a logo, a building design, and signage all work together to create the face of this familiar and highly successful brand.

### How Does New Pig Use IMC?

New Pig’s marketing has been successful because of an unforgettable brand image supported by a highly creative approach to marketing communication. New Pig operates a sophisticated IMC program using multiple marketing communication tools. Its award-winning B2B direct marketing program incorporates not only its flagship Big Pigalog® January edition but also product-focused monthly “mini-catalogs” ranging from 52 to 148 pages. The program includes daily customer and prospect mailers, email and fax blasts, and Internet and telesales efforts as well as advertising in trade publications (print and digital) and directories. New Pig also produces a series of videos that tell the company’s story and serve as video catalogs and employee and sales training materials.

Interactive face-to-face contact is also important, so New Pig not only boasts an outstanding customer service operation, but it also attends several major trade shows each year. Customers respond to the quirky “pig personality” and have come to expect a certain level of fun in their dealings with the company. New Pig soon discovered that the name also appealed to customers who were testing the product in research and development. Not only did the *Pig* name tickle them pink, but they also enjoyed adding a “piggy” comment or joke when talking about the product. Frequently, they would “oink” or ask about Miss Piggy or Boss Hog in conversations. These kinds of responses, unusual in typical buyer/seller relationships, made the product development process a lot more fun.

In addition, a proactive public relations/media program—corporate and technical articles, press releases, and awards, for example—strengthens New Pig’s brand. It also helps reinforce the company’s reputation as the world’s leading expert and resource for keeping



A DAY IN THE LIFE

## A View from the Marcom Front Line

Peter Stasiowski, *Director of Communications,*  
*Interprint USA, Pittsfield, MA*

There's a big difference between working for an ad agency, where the focus is on promoting many clients, and becoming an individual company's lone marketing professional, where the focus is on promoting the company that signs your paycheck.

The most obvious changes, such as fine-tuning one marketing plan instead of juggling several, give way to more subtle and important differences. When I traded my agency title of art director and creative director for my current position as marketing and communications manager for an industrial printing company, I went from working with a group of people dedicated to practicing good marketing communications to working with a group dedicated to printing good decor paper for its customers in the laminate industry.

In my case, the opportunities to expand my marketing skills beyond commercial art into areas like copywriting and financial planning came with the responsibility to make good marketing decisions without the security of an ad agency's team behind me.

At its core, a day in my life as the marketing and communications manager for Interprint is spent communicating clear messages to the right markets as efficiently as

possible. For example, to the broad laminate market, I write 90 percent of the articles for Interprint's promotional magazine about everything from our latest printing technologies to our environmental stewardship programs.

I'm also responsible for speaking with newspaper reporters, either to answer their questions or to promote a press release. Then there's coordinating the construction of trade show exhibits, planning press conferences, and, yes, designing print advertising. It's all meant to get the good word out to the right eyes and ears.

At the end of the day, my reward is knowing that as I dive deeper into the fabric of one company and learn what messages and media resonate with its customers, I gain both a broader skill set and the unfiltered feedback that ensures increasingly successful marketing efforts into the future.

For more about Interprint, check out the company's fact sheet at <https://www.interprint.com/interprint/facts#facts>.

*Note:* Peter Stasiowski is a graduate of the advertising program at the University of West Florida. He started his career as an art director at Gargan Communications in Massachusetts before moving to the client side. He and his work were nominated to be featured here by Professor Tom Groth.



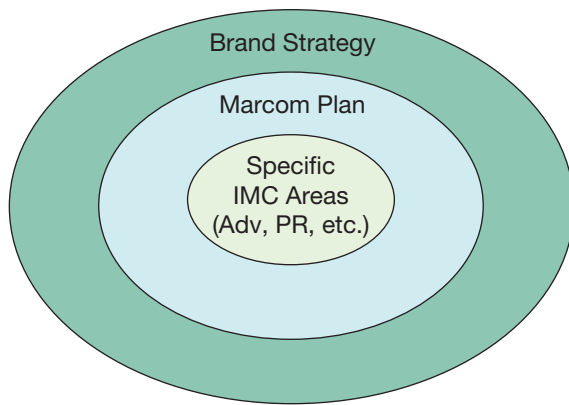
Photo: Courtesy Interprint, Inc. Used with permission.



Photo: Courtesy Interprint, Inc. Used with permission.

workplace environments clean, safe, more productive, and in compliance with safety practices and regulations.

Marketing communication is at the center of brand communication and marketing planning. Those relationships are depicted in Figure 1.3. The problem arises when the marcom tools are not aligned with other marketing mix communication messages that deliver



**FIGURE 1.3**

**The Hierarchy of Brand Communication**

Brand communication begins with a brand strategy that is outlined in a marketing plan. Then specific plans are developed for the relevant marcom areas that are needed to implement the marketing and brand strategy.

**Principle**

An organization cannot not communicate. People form brand impressions whether or not the branding process is managed by the organization.

brand communication. For example, how well do the activities of a function such as sales promotion reflect the brand image? Does it distract from the pricing strategy and the relationship of price to value? A high-priced status product, such as a Lexus or Tiffany jewelry, can be undercut by poorly created sales promotions. Likewise, direct-response messages, whether by mail or online, can raise issues of privacy that can make a brand seem insensitive to its customers.

One thing that makes the practice of IMC different from traditional advertising or public relations is its focus on branding and the totality of brand communication, including experiences. Tom Duncan and Frank Mulhern, authors of a symposium report on IMC, explain that “IMC is, among other things, a process for doing advertising and promotion better and more effectively in the process of building brands.”<sup>7</sup> Through IMC that considers all possible brand messages, marketing communication managers are able to ensure that the perception of their brand is clear and sharp rather than confused and mushy.

**Why Focus on Brands?**

We’ve mentioned brands throughout this chapter, so let’s take a minute to explain the importance of that concept. A brand is more than a product or an organization. Hamburgers are products, but the Big Mac and Whopper are brands. Toothpaste is a product (also the *product category*), but Colgate and Crest are brands of toothpaste. Branding applies to organizations (McDonald’s) and products (the Big Mac) as well as to services (State Farm and the US Postal Service). Branding is also important to nonprofit organizations, such as United Way and Habitat for Humanity.

*Organization brands* may or may not be distinct from product brands, as in the New Pig example. International branding expert Giep Franzen and his team of Dutch researchers found that “organizations should be aware that simply by existing and interacting with others, an organization is branding itself. So branding the organization is inevitable. It is going to happen whether the process is managed or not.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, an organization cannot not communicate.

*Branding* is a management function that uses communication to create the intangible aspects of a brand that make it memorable and meaningful to a consumer. Effective marketing communication establishes the unique identity by which the brand engages the hearts and minds of consumers. Here’s how we would define a **brand**: *a perception, often imbued with emotion, that results from experiences with and information about a company, an organization, or a line of products*. Other definitions include the identity elements, such as the brand name and the trademark, that stand for the brand.

A brand is a complex bundle of feelings, promises, and experiences. In other words, a brand lives in the heads and hearts of consumers and other stakeholders. Their heads hold brand information (promises), and their hearts hold brand emotions and feelings (like or dislike, high or low status, sexy or boring, and so forth).

In fact, all organizations with a name can be considered brands. For many brands, specifically smaller ones like cosmetic company Urban Decay, the communication decisions lie with the owner, founder, or partners in the business. Wende Zomnir is not only a founding partner and creative director of the street-smart Urban Decay brand of cosmetics, but also an advertising graduate and a marketing communication professional who used her creativity to shape a distinctive brand presence in the highly competitive cosmetics market.

**Branding Differentiates Products and Organizations**

Branding also differentiates similar products and organizations from one another. Sometimes the difference between brands in the same product category lies in product features—the quality of the meat in the hamburger or the chemistry of the toothpaste—but

often we choose one brand over another because of a difference in the brand impressions we carry. Companies make products, but they promote brands. A brand differentiates a product from its competitors and makes a promise to its customers, as the Keds ad demonstrates.

Product brands are not just about “goods” for sale; they apply to services and nonprofit organizations as well. You may have heard of a hospice program in your community, but did you know that there are many different for-profit and nonprofit hospice programs sometimes competing in the same community? That’s why many of these programs are trying to develop distinctive brand identities.

### How Does a Brand Acquire Meaning?

A brand is more than a name or logo; in fact, it is a perception: an identification or impression that we assign to the products we know and use. In their book on the science and art of branding, Giep Franzen and Sandra Moriarty explain that the meaning of a brand is “an integrated perception that is derived from experiences with and messages about the brand.”<sup>9</sup> What do we mean by that?

Why does one brand sell twice the number of products as another when there is no basic difference in product attributes or performance and when both brands sell for the same price? The answer is that there is a difference in the brand meaning. Meaning-making cues and images are what marketing communication delivers to brands. This *brand meaning* is the one thing a brand has that can’t be copied. Competitors can make a similar product, but it’s difficult for them to make the same brand because brand meaning is built on a collection of personal experiences.

A brand, then, is a perception, an impression loaded with emotions and feelings (intangible elements) as well as tangible elements, such as a trademark or package design. Tangible features are things you can observe or touch, such as a product’s design, ingredients, components, size, shape, and performance. Intangibles include the product’s perceived value, its brand image, positive and negative impressions and feelings, and experiences customers have with the brand, product, or company. Intangibles are just as important as the tangible features because they create the emotional bonds people have with their favorite brands.

An example of a campaign that attempts to imbue a city with a distinctive brand meaning comes from Billings, Montana, a story that is showcased in the Matter of Practice feature.

The meaning of a brand, then, is an aggregation of everything a customer (or other stakeholder) sees, hears, reads, or experiences about an organization or a product brand. This meaning cannot be totally controlled by management, however. A company can *own* a **brand name** and brand symbol and *influence* to some degree what people think about the brand, but it can’t dictate brand impressions because those exist in people’s minds and are derived from their personal experiences.

Brand meaning affects more than just customers or consumers. Employees often say that they are searching for meaningful work. Sometimes that involves the job description—what they do—but more likely it comes from the mission of the organization, that is, what the company does and what it stands for. Even Harley-Davidson’s marketing chief admitted at an investor event that “there is a higher purpose to the Harley-Davidson brand that is more than motorcycles.”<sup>10</sup>

carson pirie scott . keds.com



freewheeling in keds stretch™

Photo: Ilan Rubin/Art Department

There are many different types of tennis shoes, and the advertising challenge is to create a distinctive brand image for the product. What do you think this ad says about the Keds brand?

#### Principle

A brand is an integrated perception derived from personal experiences with and messages about the brand.

## Branding Billings

John Brewer, *President and CEO, Billings (Montana) Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitors Bureau*



What do you think of when you think of Montana? Big Sky, right? That's an example of an incredibly successful branding campaign for a place.

What do you think of when you think of Billings, Montana? Probably not much, right?

That's the problem I faced when our steering committee took on the problem of brand-

ing Billings. So this is a story of our two-year effort to create a brand identity campaign for the city.

You can check out the results of this plan at [www.brandbillings.com](http://www.brandbillings.com). In addition to beautiful scenery, the first thing you may notice on the site is a logo with the slogan "Billings—Montana's Trailhead." Here's how the city arrived at that theme line.

The campaign began with research, including more than a thousand online surveys, community workshops, and presentations to clubs and service groups, followed by countless hours of strategic envisioning sessions. The research and analysis determined that Billings is a very special place that merges its location with an attitude, a position that combines "open space" and "western pace."

The important brand characteristics begin with its location, which is shaped by the Yellowstone River and sheltered by the Rims geographic formation. The community is progressive and a regional center for finance, health care, transportation, arts and culture, and diverse educational opportunities. Its hardworking citizens have a unique Montana perspective that combines warmth with an appreciation of scenery and history, but what defines them most is a lifestyle that loves the adventure of an untamed wilderness right outside the door.

Those characteristics translated into a statement of Billings brand essence as "Montana's city connects you to the authentic historical West." The "trailhead" idea springs from the recognition that Billings is a starting point for business growth and development as well as a gateway for opportunities to explore the wonders of Montana. The starting point idea was supported in the "trail" graphic with its "X marks the spot" symbol. The "Where Ya Headin'?" tagline expresses the idea that Billings is the gateway for adventure.

The campaign's objective was to create a position that expresses this brand essence. In addition, the campaign aimed to create a consistent and cohesive brand message that unifies the city's efforts to encourage business and workforce development, individual and family relocation, tourism, and community pride.

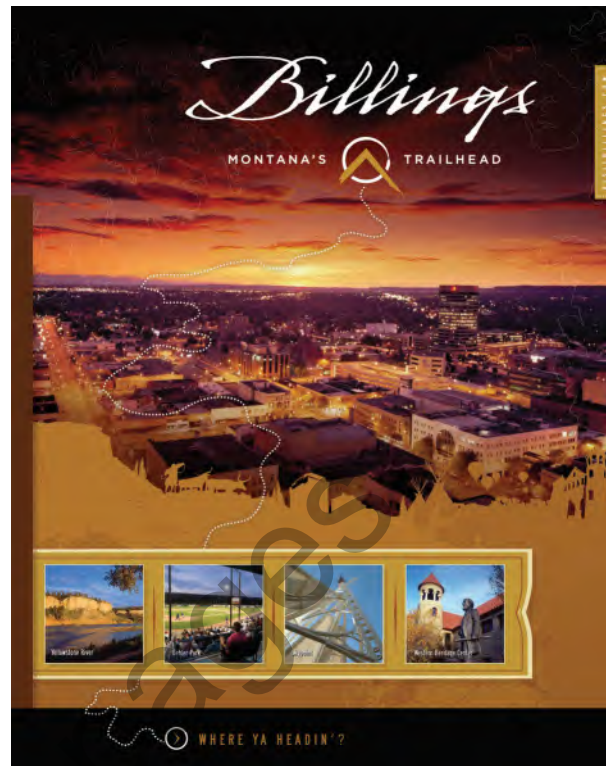


Photo: Billings Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitors' Bureau

The Travel Planner is the primary piece sent to visitors by the Billings Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitors Bureau. Its cover uses an appealing photo of Billings, the new logo and Trailhead slogan, and the "trail" graphics.

An ongoing identity development project, the campaign is spreading out to local businesses and community events. For example, the airport etched the brand logo into its five main terminal entryways. Newspaper ads by local merchants proclaimed Billings as the trailhead for great shopping. The local Walmart carries Trailhead apparel with the new logo. Pepsi branded half a million Pepsi cans with a picture of Trailhead hats for a joint promotion with the chamber of commerce.

To sustain the campaign, a Trailhead Marketing Committee meets regularly. Using the brand standards website and tool kit as a guide, this committee encourages

1. Businesses to adopt the brand.
2. General local awareness.
3. Individual and family relocation.
4. Community pride through public relations and other marketing opportunities.

Success will be determined on an annual basis from media clips and the increased number of businesses that are using the brand in their messaging and the frequency of that use. In terms of results, in the first eight months of the campaign following the brand launch, the site [www.brandbillings.com](http://www.brandbillings.com) had 7,913 visitors and a daily average total of 33 per day.

Note: John Brewer graduated from the University of West Florida. He was nominated to be featured here by Professor Tom Groth.

## How Does Brand Transformation Work?

A basic principle of branding is that brand communication transforms a product—goods as well as services—into something more meaningful than the product itself. A brand adds personality and creates a brand identity that separates similar products and makes them unique. That simplifies shopping and adds value for the consumer. A Tiffany watch is more than a timepiece; it is also different from a Swatch even if both have the same basic components, and both are different from a generic Kmart watch with an unknown brand name. **Brand transformation** creates this difference by enriching the brand meaning through symbolic brand cues. The Tiffany brand symbolizes quality, sophistication, and luxury; a Swatch brand is fun and fashionable; and a generic watch from Walmart is inexpensive and utilitarian.

There are many elements in branding, but for our discussion here, we will focus on four: identity, position and promise, image and personality, and reputation.

**Brand Identity** A critical function of branding is to create a separate **brand identity** for a product within a product category, and that starts with the name we use. Analyze the language you use when talking about things you buy: chips or Doritos? A soft drink or a Pepsi? Tennis shoes or Nikes? And do you call it a discount store or Walmart? If branding works, you refer to a specific brand by name rather than its generic category.

The choice of a brand name for new products is tested for memorability and relevance. The idea is that the easier it is to recognize, the easier it will be to create awareness of the brand. That also makes it easy to find and repurchase a brand, which is an important factor in brand loyalty. Successful brand names have several characteristics.

- **Distinctive** A common name that is unrelated to a product category, such as Apple for a computer, ensures there will be no similar names creating confusion. It can also be provocative, as in the Virgin line.
- **Association** Subaru, for example, chose Outback as the name for its rugged SUV, hoping the name would evoke the adventure of the Australian wilderness.
- **Benefit** Some brand names relate to the brand promise, such as Slim-Fast for weight loss and Head & Shoulders for dandruff control shampoo.
- **Heritage** Some brand names reflect the maker, such as H&R Block, Kellogg's, and Dr. Scholl's. The idea is that there is credibility in a product when makers are proud to put their names on it, particularly in some international markets, such as Japan, where the company behind the brand is an important part of the brand image.
- **Simplicity** To make a brand name easy to recognize and remember, they are often short and easy to pronounce, such as Tide, Bic, and Nike. Because of the increase in multinational marketing, it is also important that names properly translate into other languages.

When Coke moved into the Chinese market in the late 1970s, it faced the immediate problem of translating its well-known brand name into Chinese. There are no equivalent Chinese words for *Coca* and *Cola*, and phonetic-based translations were meaningless. The ingenious solution was to use a group of four characters—可口 可乐—the first half meaning “tasty” or “delicious” and the next two characters together meaning “really happy.” Although it has come to stand as a generic phrase for cola, the name for Coke in Chinese is roughly “tasty happy” cola. So Coke owns the category. The effectiveness of the Chinese trademark has been an important factor in making Coca-Cola the leading soft drink in China.

Brand identity cues are generally the brand name, but they can also be visual symbols—think of the “swoosh” graphic that symbolizes Nike and the leaping cat for Puma. A number of elements contribute to the visual identity: logos, trademarks, characters, and other visual cues such as color and distinctive typefaces. For organizations, such things as building design, delivery trucks, packaging, shopping bags, and even the clothing worn by employees are also part of the brand identity. A **logo** is similar to a cattle brand in that it stands for the product's source.

### Principle

A brand transforms a product into something more meaningful than the product itself.

### Principle

If branding is successful, you refer to a specific brand by name rather than its general category label.



Photo: Michele and Tom Grimm/Alamy Stock photo

Although the distinctive logo is known around the world, Coca-Cola's brand name needed to be represented in Chinese characters that had meaning for the Chinese market.