

14.10: Why It Matters- Integrated Marketing Communications and Promotions

Let's assume you've done all the work to establish your retail business. You've conducted rigorous strategic planning, by evaluating your opportunities. You've evaluated channels of distribution, selecting the one(s) that fit with your capabilities and growth prospect. You've selected a market, targeting a specific customer segment. You've built channel relationships, sourcing products and ensuring a well-merchandised store. You've hired capable staff, setting performance objectives for them that support your strategic plan. You turn on the lights, unlock the doors and...

You wait...

You wait for consumers to come to shop your well-merchandised store...

And you wait? Where are they? Are they coming? What did we miss? Not strategy or channel or market or segment or assortment. How well did we market ourselves?

Did we leverage advertising and promotion to publicize who we are and what benefits we'll provide for shoppers? Did we engage in traditional and new media to support awareness? Did we share compelling messages with clear calls to action, which would prompt a shopper response? That is, did we invite the shopper to the store, using multiple media, and give them a reason to come?

Too often it's tempting to think that the product or service "speaks for itself." That it will "sell itself." Perhaps we think that marketing, especially advertising and promotion, is boastful or can be misleading. Maybe we worry that it "forces" people to buy things they don't want or need. Or, we believe that we've done such an effective job with strategic planning, targeting the perfect segment and building a great plan to support it, that we're destined to be successful.



Yet, you may know from [Multi-Channel Retailing](#) that Logistics, Facilitation and Transaction are the channels activities that bridge the producer and the consumer. Further, facilitation refers to channel coordination, including marketing & promotion. Thus, marketing & promotion are fundamental for supporting the exchange of goods, transferring products & services to the consumer and transferring payments back to the producer. Without them, the onus is on the consumer to search for what they believe they need—for products and services they believe will resolve issues for them.

Further, if you think about [Identifying and Understanding Customer Behavior](#), you can consider the buying process. From the marketer's perspective, we discussed AIDA:

- Attention
- Interest
- Desire
- Action

In short, advertisers grab a consumer's *attention*, making them aware of the product or service that can satisfy that individual's identifiable need. Then, through the description of features & benefits, the consumer's *interest* is developed to the point of *desire*. At this point, the consumer becomes the actor and takes *action* to purchase the item.

Because we described the AIDA model as enduring but overly simplistic, you also read about the buying process from a consumer's perspective, represented by six (6) stages:

1. Recognition of an Issue or Need
2. Information Gathering
3. Evaluation of Options or Alternatives

4. Selection
5. Purchase
6. After-purchase Evaluation

As you may remember, the consumer begins to *gather information*, seeking out options that could satisfy their want, after *they recognize an issue or need*.

In the AIDA model, marketing & promotion are implicit for getting *attention* and developing *interest*. But, can you imagine the buying process from a shopper's perspective WITHOUT marketing and advertising activity? How could a shopper easily *gather information* or *evaluate options*? Here, too, marketing & promotion are implicitly important for the buying process.

In short, marketing & promotion help facilitate exchange by providing information and context to consumers so that they are better able to understand how specific good and services can meet their needs. It's for this reason that we want to spend time discussing Integrated Marketing Communication. Integrated Marketing Communication optimizes messaging by harnessing the benefits of each channel to build a clearer and broader impact than individual or singular campaigns.

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