

## 11.2: The Promotion (Communication) Mix

### Learning Objectives

1. Understand the different components of the promotion (communication) mix and why organizations may consider all components when designing the IMC program.
2. Understand the difference between types of communication that target many people at one time versus types of communication that target individuals.

Although the money organizations spend promoting their offerings may go to different media channels, a company still wants to send its customers and potential consumers a consistent message (IMC). The different types of marketing communications an organization uses compose its promotion or communication mix, which consists of advertising, sales promotions, direct marketing, public relations and publicity, sponsorships (events and experiences), social media and interactive marketing, and professional selling. The importance of IMC will be demonstrated throughout the discussion of traditional media as well as newer, more targeted, and often interactive online media.

Advertising involves paying to disseminate a message that identifies a brand (product or service) or an organization being promoted to many people at one time. The typical media that organizations utilize for advertising of course include television, magazines, newspapers, the Internet, direct mail, and radio. Businesses also advertise on mobile devices and social media such as Facebook, blogs, and Twitter.

Consumer sales promotions consist of short-term incentives such as coupons, contests, games, rebates, and mail-in offers that supplement the advertising and sales efforts. Sales promotions include promotions that are not part of another component of the communication mix and are often developed to get customers and potential customers to take action quickly, make larger purchases, and/or make repeat purchases.

In business-to-business marketing, sales promotions are typically called trade promotions because they are targeted to channel members who conduct business or trade with consumers. Trade promotions include trade shows and special incentives given to retailers to market particular products and services, such as extra money, in-store displays, and prizes.

Direct marketing involves the delivery of personalized and often interactive promotional materials to individual consumers via channels such as mail, catalogs, Internet, e-mail, telephone, and direct-response advertising. By targeting consumers individually, organizations hope to get consumers to take action.

Professional selling is an interactive, paid approach to marketing that involves a buyer and a seller. The interaction between the two parties can occur in person, by telephone, or via another technology. Whatever medium is used, developing a relationship with the buyer is usually something the seller desires.

When you interview for internships or full-time positions and try to convince potential employers to hire you, you are engaging in professional selling. The interview is very similar to a buyer-seller situation. Both the buyer and seller have objectives they hope to achieve. Business-to-business marketers generally utilize professional selling more often than most business-to-consumer marketers. If you have ever attended a Pampered Chef party or purchased something from an Amway or Mary Kay representative, you've been exposed to professional selling.



Figure 11.4: Pampered Chef and Tastefully Simple have built their businesses primarily on the professional selling skills of their consultants. Professional selling is used more in business-to-business markets than in business-to-consumer markets.

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Public relations (PR) involves communication designed to help improve and promote an organization's image and products. PR is often perceived as more neutral and objective than other forms of promotion because much of the information is tailored to sound as if it has been created by an organization independent of the seller. Public relations materials include press releases, publicity, and news conferences. While other techniques such as product placement and sponsorships, especially of events and experiences, tend to generate a lot of PR, the growth of expenditures and importance of sponsorships are so critical for so many companies that it is often considered a separate component in the communication mix. Many companies have internal PR departments or hire PR firms to find and create public relations opportunities for them. As such, PR is part of a company's promotion budget and their integrated marketing communications.

Sponsorships typically refer to financial support for events, venues, or experiences and provide the opportunity to target specific groups. Sponsorships enhance a company's image and usually generate public relations. With an increasing amount of money being spent on sponsorships, they have become an important component of the promotion mix.

### Key Takeaway

Technology is changing the way businesses and individuals communicate. Organizations use Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) to deliver a consistent message across all components of the promotion mix. The promotion (communication) mix is composed of advertising, professional selling, public relations, sponsorships (events and experiences), sales promotion, direct marketing, and online media, including social media.

### Review Questions

1. Define each component of the promotion (communication) mix.
2. Why is public relations considered a key part of the promotion mix?

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