MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT

"First rate and comprehensive. This book has got it just right: a rich blend of academic underpinning and practical examples in a very readable style. You are encouraged to participate in the almost distance-learning approach and via the innovative and thought provoking "stop-points."

Martin Evans, Senior Fellow, Cardiff Business School.

"Paul Copley’s Marketing Communications Management is an excellent text for exploring marketing communications in the 21st century. It skillfully balances the theory and practice of marketing communications, and, moreover, the blend of examples drawn from a variety of organizations, e.g. non-profit/profit, SME/MNC, industrial/consumer, demonstrate how marketing communications may be successfully and, in some cases, unsuccessfully applied."

Ann Torres, Lecturer in Marketing, National University of Ireland.

Marketing Communications Management: concepts and theories, cases and practices makes critical reflections on the primary issues in integrated marketing communications and is designed to encourage the reader to stop and think about key issues. The author takes a managerial approach to the subject and provides a set of frameworks that facilitate both learning and teaching. A wide range of pedagogical features are included such as sample exam questions, "stop points" vignettes, and case studies, and a summary of key points concludes each chapter.

Most organizations need some form of marketing or corporate communications and this text is designed to service both practitioners and students undertaking formal study. The author addresses strategic and critical issues that dovetail with the current interest in marketing communications as reflected in the media, with particular emphasis given to advertising and sponsorship.

Paul Copley is Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Programme Leader for the MA in Marketing, Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University. Formerly involved in publicity, marketing services and international product management in various industry contexts, he has taught widely on the subjects of marketing, marketing research, and marketing communications. His research interests include the role of semiotics in marketing, and marketing and marketing communications in SMEs, and he is a past Academy of Marketing track prize winner.
Marketing Communications Management
Marketing Communications Management: concepts and theories, cases and practices

Paul Copley
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About the Author

Paul Copley (MA, MPhil, BSc, PGDip Marketing, MMRS, Dip MRS) is Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Marketing Communications at Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University, and is the full-time mode MA Marketing Programme Leader. For the last twenty-five years he has been involved with marketing consultancy, training and development, and research. Post-MA Marketing (Lancaster) experience began with large companies and led on to being involved in consultancy with large business clients as well as working with small business and enterprise support agencies to devise, develop and deliver various programmes for both small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and students in the North of England. Part of this time has been devoted to empirical research into the education and training needs of small-firm owner-managers in the North East of England, leading to the award of MPhil (Newcastle). Prior to this Paul was involved with relatively large companies in marketing services, publicity and international product management, and has a good deal of experience in new product development.

Paul has been an external examiner at undergraduate and postgraduate levels for Dundee Business School and for institutions in Greece and Malaysia, and at postgraduate level for Napier University.

Current academic activities are focused on marketing communications management, interactive marketing, and international advertising and communications, and Paul has taught in this area of study for the past sixteen years. Conference papers, for example to the UK Academy of Marketing and the International Small Business Association, are a constant consideration and have been presented in the areas of marketing communication, semiotics, small business marketing and arts marketing. Paul remains, however, interested in the broad spectrum of marketing strands and is still a committed member of both the Market Research Society and the Academy of Marketing, and is a past Academy track prize-winner.
If the common watchword in successful marketing practice is exchange, then somehow mutual understanding between buyer and seller has to be achieved. This cannot be realized without effective marketing (and corporate) communications, but to be effective communications must be well managed. The increased sophistication of communication elements such as advertising, public relations and sponsorship has been responsible for increased commercial activity and the cluttered environment in which communications have to operate. Good marketing has always been conducted in an integrated fashion, but it is the quest for truly integrated communication campaigns that started in the late 1980s and came to the fore in the mid-1990s that brought about the interest in integrated marketing communications, or IMC as it is known. Recent developments on what has become known as the electronic frontier both challenges and offers opportunities to organizations, and the interactivity that has and is developing because of the technology that has given us the CD-ROM, mobile phones and the Internet is key to successful integration of communication activities.

Most organizations need some form of marketing or corporate communications. This text is designed to service both practitioners and students undertaking formal study. It is particularly geared to the needs of those who are on a course that has basic marketing as a prerequisite. The book has, therefore, been written with the final year undergraduate student, for example BA Marketing or BA Business Studies, and the postgraduate student, for example the Postgraduate Diploma/MA in Marketing, in mind. However, the growth of non-business studies students studying marketing and marketing communications is obviously important, as is the number of overseas students studying such subjects in English. There should also be some interest from professional marketing and non-marketing courses (where marketing is taught) and from marketing and non-marketing professionals in the public and the private sector.

The aim of producing this book is to meet the needs of the above students and practitioners by providing a product that addresses strategic and critical issues, and which dovetails with the current interest in marketing communications (especially advertising and sponsorship) as reflected in the media. More specifically the aims are to:

- provide a book that balances the theory and practice of marketing communications
- provide a managerial approach to marketing communications by first breaking down the various components and rebuilding them into a managerial whole
- provide a usable, accessible book that extends the reader beyond many of the conventional views of the subject; some less conventional but potentially very useful and more critical ideas are introduced
- present marketing communications in the widest possible context by using examples from a diverse range of organizations.

The book therefore draws on as wide a range of materials as possible from small and large firms, consumer and industrial companies, profit and non-profit organizations, public and private sector situations, and uses case study vignettes throughout to add flavour and a more in-depth case at the end of each part to facilitate application. International aspects run throughout the book and an overall international perspective appears as the last of twenty chapters. Importantly, the book makes critical reflections on the prime issues in marketing communications. The book is divided into six parts, each of which contains a number of chapters. Within each chapter there are ‘stop points’, following the vignettes, many of which are examples of actual occurrences. These ‘stop points’ are designed to encourage the reader to ‘stop and think’ about key issues. Typical examination questions, assignment briefing, and a summary of key points conclude each chapter. The main body of the text is followed by a comprehensive index.
Abbreviations

A/S advertising/spend
AA Automobile Association
ABC activity-based costing
AIDA attention, interest, desire, action
AIO activities, interests and opinions
APEC Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Conference
APIC analysis, planning, implementation and control
APR annual percentage rate
ASA Advertising Standards Authority
ASEAN Association of South East Asian Nations
ATR awareness, trial and reinforcement
BA British Airways
BARB British Audience Research Bureau
BAT British American Tobacco
BBC British Broadcasting Corporation
BBH Bartle, Bogle and Hegarty
BCG Boston Consulting Group
BHS British Home Stores
BLC brand life cycle
BMRB British Market Research Bureau
BtoB business to business
CAMRA Campaign for Real Ale
CAP Code of Advertising Practice
CBI Confederation of British Industry
CEO chief executive officer
CFC chlorofluorocarbon
CIPP Corporate Image Policy Programme
CPR corporate public relations
CPT cost per thousand
CRI Context Research International
CRM customer relationship management
DAGMAR designing advertising goals for measured advertising results
DAR day-after recall
DIY do it yourself
DM direct marketing
DMA direct marketing association
DMU decision-making unit
DRTV direct response television
DSM decision sequence model
EC European Community
ECVM European Council of Vinyl Manufacturers
EFTPOS electronic funds transfer at point of sale
ELM elaboration likelihood model
EMB Empire Marketing Board
EPOS electronic point of sale
Abbreviations

ESOMAR  European Society for Opinion Surveys and Market Research
EU  European Union
EVA  economic value assessment
fmcg  fast-moving consumer goods
FTC  Federal Trade Commission
GDP  gross domestic product
GIM  general interest magazine
GM  General Motors
GM  genetically modified
GMO  genetically modified organism
GPO  General Post Office
GRP  gross rating point
GUS  Great Universal Stores
HEM  hedonic experiential model
HTML  hypertext mark-up language
ICC  International Chamber of Commerce
ICMC  integrated corporate and marketing communications
Id  identity
IDM  Institute of Direct Marketing
IGMC  integrated global marketing communication
IMC  integrated marketing communications
IMF  International Monetary Fund
IPA  Institute of Practitioners in Advertising
ISP  Internet service provider
ITC  Independent Television Commission
IVR  interactive voice response
J&J  Johnson and Johnson
JSB  John Smith's Bitter
K&K  knickers and knitwear
M&S  Marks and Spencer
MAE  macro environment
MAN  money, authority and need
MBO  management by objectives
ME  marketing environment
MEAL  Media Expenditure Analysis Limited
MIE  micro environment
MNC  multinational company
MOD  Ministry of Defence
MP  Member of Parliament
MPR  marketing public relations
NEC  National Exhibition Centre
NIC  newly industrialized country
NOP  National Opinion Poll
NRS  National Readership Survey
OFT  Office of Fair Trading
OTC  opportunity to convince
OTS  opportunity to see
P&G  Procter and Gamble
PACT  Positioning Advertising Copy Testing
PC  personal computer
PEST  political, economic, social, technological
Abbreviations

PIE persuasive impact equation
plc public limited company
PLC product life cycle
POP point-of-purchase
POS point-of-sale
PRO public relations officer
PRSA Public Relations Society of America
PWı Pegram Walters International
QVC quality, value and convenience
R&D research and development
ROC Richness in Occasions to Convince
ROCI return on communications investment
ROI return on investment
RoSPA Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
RSL Research Services Limited
RSPCA Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
S-R stimulus–response
S&N Scottish and Newcastle
SBU strategic business unit
SEO search engine optimization
SIA Securities Industry Association
SIM special interest magazine
SKB SmithKlineBeecham
SMART specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed
SMEs small and medium enterprises
SOM share of market
SOV share of voice
SP sales promotion
STAS Short Term Ad Strength
STEP social, technological, economic, political
SWOT strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
TEASE trickster, excessive, adolescent, spirited and entertaining
TGI Target Group Index
TVR television rating
UDV United Distillers and Vintners
UMIST University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology
UN United Nations
USP unique selling proposition
VALS Values and Life Styles
VW Volkswagen
WAP wireless application protocol
WHO World Health Organization
Y&R Young and Rubicam
Marketing communications, the most visible of marketing functions, interacts subtly with corporate communications to form what can be a formidable force for business and other organizations, and one that impacts strongly on society generally. We are apparently exposed to thousands of stimuli each day and many of these are from the marketing and corporate communications’ arsenal belonging to myriad companies and other organizations, whether domestic, international or global. This includes the effects of branding, advertising, sales promotions, publicity and sponsorships, personal communications, packaging and so on. Marketers are faced with the challenge of integrating these activities in such a way as to maximize effective and efficient management.

This first part of the book consists of four chapters that take the reader from an introduction to the subject through to a strategic management approach to it. In Chapter 1, the integrated marketing communications mix and its environment is explored. Chapter 2 examines marketing communications theory and what it means for practice. In Chapter 3, behaviour and relationships with the other elements of the marketing effort are examined. Chapter 4 proposes a strategic framework for effective marketing and corporate communications management.
The integrated marketing communications mix and its environment

Chapter overview

Introduction to this chapter

The nature of marketing communication is explored and relationships developed with strategic marketing. Marketing communications, a mix within itself, is seen firmly as part of the marketing mix but in a strategic manner. Marketing communications as an entity is placed within an integrated marketing context surrounded by an ever-present and somewhat turbulent environment.

Aims of this chapter

This chapter seeks to explore the nature and role of integrated marketing communications in relation to the rest of the marketing mix. More specifically it aims to:

- discuss marketing in the twenty-first century in terms of exchange and change
- situate marketing communication within strategic marketing
- explore the future of marketing and marketing communications in integrative terms
- outline the major environmental forces that impinge upon the marketing communications management function.
Marketing, exchange and change

Marketing is said by many to be in a state of transition. Some might say marketing is no longer strategy but a requirement, a necessity. Some of the key issues of debate today are being expressed in terms of marketing, exchange and change, and marketing has for a long time been defined in terms of both exchange and change. Marketing in this sense can be defined as ‘A social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others’ (Kotler et al., 2001).

Exchange

There are differing types of exchange. Fill (1999) lists four:

1. Market – short term; self-interest driven; and independent.
2. Relational – long term, supportive relationships built up between parties.
3. Redistributive – where resources are shared with other parties who work as a collective unit.
4. Reciprocal – that is to do with gift-giving and mutuality as opposed to self-interest of the market exchange.

This has a good deal of meaning in the context of marketing communications since the way in which marketing is seen and practised will have a large impact upon marketing communications and their management. Exchange is becoming much more of the last three, i.e. more relational, redistributive and reciprocal, as the following vignette illustrates.

VIGNETTE

In the past manufacturers have hooked into channels. In the USA for example, the likes of Procter and Gamble (P&G) have become very much associated with Wal-Mart. Procter and Gamble’s success or failure in, say, Brazil could therefore be linked to that of Wal-Mart’s there (Schultz, 1996). Thus the likes of P&G can be seen as prisoners of their own actions. One of P&G’s great rivals, Unilever, does not quite see it this way. As a manufacturer, Unilever wishes to develop closer customer relations in order to sustain growth in the long term. In order to do this it is training its managers in the business of discovering and meeting the needs of customers, but especially those of Wal-Mart, Unilever’s biggest global customer. Unilever’s ‘Wal-Mart Readiness Training Programme’ has taken on board the Wal-Mart philosophy of ‘eat what you cook’. Just as a chef would sample his or her own dishes, so Unilever’s international managers become well acquainted with the retailer by being on the superstore floor stocking shelves, answering customer queries and even helping get the goods from the stockroom to the store. This allows the manager to better meet needs by getting well acquainted with the retailer in terms of its culture, business tools and objectives. This gives Unilever competitive advantage in terms of knowing what a major customer will require in advance, such as when Wal-Mart moved into the UK by acquiring ASDA in 1999.

The training programme includes the philosophy of managers from both organizations working together on live projects, but also that of shared resources. Unilever managers can tap into Wal-Mart’s vast database ‘Retail Link’ that
processes on a daily basis point of sale information from every store, thereby providing detailed sales, logistics and accounting data on every item sold – globally. However, knowledge transfer remains the key to the initiative that is seen as a ‘two-way street’ where, in particular, invaluable insights into how things are run in different countries are gained. Also, of course, managers from other countries can gain a unique insight into the situation in the USA. This includes Wal-Mart’s philosophy of low prices maintained by stripping cost out of the supply chain, a plain headquarters complete with plastic chairs and the no-gratuity policy (including paying for one’s own sandwiches during a working lunch with Unilever managers). For Unilever, it is all about making sales to the consumer via the customer, so that none of the above is alien. The fourth (of ten) of Sam Walton’s (Wal-Mart’s founder) laws reads: ‘Communicate everything you possibly can to your partners. The more they know, the more they’ll understand. The more they understand, the more they’ll care. Once they care, there’s no stopping them. Information is power and the gain you get from empowering your associates more than offsets the risk of informing your competitors.’

To sum up, two main initiatives underline this kind of partnership approach. First, the dissemination of priceless information via Retail Link; second, the appointment of individual suppliers to be ‘category captains’, where the supplier acts as an expert consultant to the category buyer and gives objective, impartial opinions and advice such as new consumer trends or a course of action against competitor activity such as the introduction of new product variants. At the end of the day it’s about fostering growth in categories. The philosophy is one of doing this in the broad category and inevitably growth will be fostered for Unilever.

Sources: Adapted from Dowman (2000) and Schultz (1996).

STOP POINT

There appear to be two opposing viewpoints. On the one hand, there is the now traditional view of power, conflict and co-operation in channels whereby reward and punishment are the norm, i.e. there are rewards for co-operation and penalties are imposed on nonco-operation (Bradley, 1995). On the other hand lies an apparently opposing view, as described above, that is one of relationships and partnerships and mutual benefits. Are there any real differences between the two? Do they represent two different marketing paradigms or are they part of the same marketing paradigm?

Change

There are differing objectives behind certain communication. Most writers agree on at least four, i.e. inform, persuade, remind and differentiate. The predilection towards the mnemonic and/or the acronym leads writers like Fill (1995; 1999) to rearrange the words to form DRIP, i.e. differentiate, remind, inform and persuade. Change has occurred in the way in which this has evolved. Information then persuasion can be seen quite clearly in the early forms of advertising, followed by the use of reminders and the notion of differentiation of very similar products often being achieved through the communication employed. These days, however, the idea of entertainment is viewed as an essential way to explain the
objectives behind certain forms of marketing communication but, in particular, television and cinema advertising. Change of all sorts is important: changing markets, for example the size of Europe as one market or the challenge from Asia. The ability/inability of multinational companies (MNCs) in the past to communicate internationally or even engage in, say, pan-European advertising has been grappled with since the 1960s in terms of communicating with members of the ‘global village’. In other words the adaptation/standardization debate as it applies to communication is still alive and kicking with a key question being ‘should companies think global, act local?’ We have moved into the era of the globalization of markets with very different types of companies emerging, underlining a fundamental change to the business ecosystem. Questions surrounding the new world order and the relationship between MNCs and the development of world regions impinge on many things, not least the communication process.

In particular, the ‘information explosion’ is upon us. The worldwide dominance of the USA is waning. We have moved chronologically from American manufacturing and distribution dominance in the 1950s and 1960s, through cost-cutting and re-engineering in the 1990s, to the dominance of the media and consumers through ownership of technology and communications in the twenty-first century (Figure 1.1).

The late 1990s have seen technological influence in terms of, for example, digital technology. Corporations such as Eastman/Kodak have digital photography. If this technology were introduced too fast then this would kill off the paper and chemicals business. If too slow then they miss out to the competition. Ultimately the consumer will control this, not corporations. Levi is on the Internet. The consumer who has the technology can order direct. United Airlines offers tickets, hotel reservations and car hire – all on personal computer (PC) software. This is not good news for travel agents. As Schultz (1996) put it, the key to this transition is the transfer of information technology first into channels then to the consumer. Visually this looks something like Figure 1.2.

The future appears to be in the realms of interactivity. Fragmentation has begun and the myth of company/corporate image is dissolving before us. Coca-Cola has a thousand – maybe a billion – images worldwide. The consumer is

**Figure 1.1**
From manufacturer to technology/communications dominance.
*Source:* Adapted by the author from Schultz (1996).

**Figure 1.2**
Source of power in the transition from marketer to media and consumer dominance.
*Source:* Adapted by the author from Schultz (1996).
still small but is growing fast in terms of control. The notions of change and globalization are illustrated in the vignette below.

The integrated marketing communications mix

VIGNETTE

Developments in world regions: Taiwan, South East Asia and global economic tremors

The question is, do we live in one world and if not what kind of world do we live in? On the one hand, there appears to be rapidly converging activity, interest, preference and demographic characteristics leading to readily accessible, homogeneous market groupings. On the other hand, this may very well be stereotyping across cultures that might not be possible, desirable or even necessary. The economy of Taiwan and business developments in that country, and in South East Asia generally, in the past fifty years are interesting. There was rapid growth in the 1990s until the 1997 crisis. Taiwan is part of Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Conference (APEC), which includes the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries as well as Australia and a growing number of others. Taiwan has moved to a high-tech, high-wage economy that is more to do with niche exploitation than copycat activity and has used existing technologies in innovative ways. This strategy avoided head-to-head contests for technological supremacy. Taiwanese companies target niches with world-class products specializing in, for example, computer peripherals, microcomputers and the application of specific chips. This has not been a one-way street though. Motorola, Intel, Glaxo, Apple, Boeing, Lockheed have weighed up the ‘tigers’ and recognized their high potential, and have teamed up with local companies for manufacturing, applied research and applied design. Asia’s markets post-1997 have been rather bumpy. Towards the end of 2000, the economic prospects for the region were rather gloomy because of higher oil prices outside the region and a slowdown in US demand for electronics products. Internally concern has been expressed over corporate restructuring and financial sector reforms. However, the global outlook remained positive with projected growth of 4 per cent in 2001 and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) claimed that a slower expansion is not the same as an economic downturn. Current account surpluses, foreign exchange reserves replenishment and manageable short-term debt are cited as positive indicators of stability. They add to this Japan’s road to recovery and China’s 8 per cent growth for the year 2000. Moreover, various countries are putting new laws and regulations in place to improve the way corporations and banks are run. This costs money and the IMF provides the figures of between 15 and 45 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in terms of public sector costs, spread over several years, of bank restructuring in Indonesia, Korea, Thailand and Malaysia. The expectation is one of continuing commitment to reform on the part of governments, debtors and financial sectors in many ways. For example, in Thailand banks are advised to reduce non-performing loans; in Korea the debt of corporations should be reduced by asset sales; and in Indonesia, similarly, with the sale of corporate assets taken by the government. The way the IMF and the World Bank see it, tangible progress has been made in promoting openness and accountability and the development of international standards. The IMF sees itself at the centre of this ‘crisis prevention’.

This does not mean that things go back to the way they were. Previous generations of Japanese consumers had to make do with the department store. Japan’s twenty to thirtysomethings have much more. The 1000-yen shop, for example, should do well whether the economy is good or bad. Typical of these
is Uniglo that sells cheap and cheerful clothes via television advertising to the tune of $2 billion in sales. The driver for this change is the economic crisis, so that the Japanese consumer has stores like Uniglo but also a plethora of shopping magazines and television shows. The Internet and overseas travel have helped educate a new generation of consumers in what they like and how much they should pay. Having said all this, higher priced consumer goods still sell – Louis Vuitton’s sales rose by 14 per cent in 1999 making the $800 million mark – but this is a very fluid environment where today’s successes can easily become tomorrow’s failures.

Source: Adapted from BBC (1994a); Mutsuko and Rutledge (2000); Shigemitsu (2000).

Late 1997/January 1998 saw the beginning of the economic crisis for the ‘tiger’ economies. Compare the optimism of 1994 with the pessimism regarding the Pacific Rim then. In addition, the current situation at the time of writing allows us to make a further comparison. The Asian crisis was primarily an economic crisis just as the ‘tigers’ had been economic miracles. The crisis provided some hard lessons about sound banking and corporate systems, and about the ability to withstand short-term economic fluctuations that can unnerve investors. It also tells us quite a lot about knock-on effects for the marketer. Put yourself in the shoes of a European company wishing to do business with one of these countries and also a domestic company wishing to trade and survive. What contrasting parameters might emerge?

Marketing communications’ place within strategic marketing

The basic marketing concept and mix and their meaning to the organization should by now be well understood and will not be discussed here except in terms of the ways in which aspects of the other elements impact upon communication. Marketing communications can be described as being every form of communication relevant to marketing. This invites marketing communications managers to question the efficiency of every item of communication as it relates to and affects the whole strategy. The basic promotional mix elements and their derivatives as the requirements for effective communications and customer understanding have been recognized for some time as being ‘above-the-line’ advertising and ‘below-the-line’ everything else, i.e. sales promotion, public relations and selling. The line is an artificial construct devised for accounting purposes within the commission system where 15 per cent of billing was the fee in advertising terms for placing the message in the appropriate space, the rest of the transaction being fee based. It is not unusual, however, to see the term ‘through-the-line’ being used to indicate changes that have taken place in recent times (see the ‘Integrated marketing communications’ section later in this chapter). Figure 1.3 shows the relationships between corporate, marketing and communication functions.

The difference between mass and personal communications is obvious. With audiences tending to become more fragmented, mass communication is rapidly becoming a relic of a former era. It is now recognized in many markets that there
is a need for media and media vehicles that match this fragmentation. Mass communication was, traditionally, relatively fast and low cost but with the disadvantages of involving selective perception, poor comprehension of the message, the possibility of only a monologue taking place with poor feedback and the difficulty of measuring effectiveness. Personal communication, on the other hand, has been seen as just about the opposite of this, with high cost per contact at a slower speed but with the opportunity to better get the message across. There is therefore much higher comprehension of the message and the possibility of a dialogue with fast and accurate feedback and, consequently, a move towards ‘narrowcasting’ rather than ‘broadcasting’ in all media forms. Traditionally, the view has been that there is a requirement for an explanation of the product/service/organization in order that comprehension is achieved. Promotion (or to put it more accurately, marketing communications) therefore involves many things. For example, legible phone numbers on letterheads, brand name for display on packs etc., product/brand image, price/imputed quality, shape/design of container for recognition on television and shelves, colour of product/pack and even easy-to-follow instructions. The use of a combination of such devices leads, it is argued, to customer/consumer understanding and better positioning of the company/brand. The basic marketing mix then usually includes communication as a fundamental element but the communication itself is a mix of elements. The old promotions mix was usually seen as consisting of advertising, sales promotion, marketing public relations and personal selling. This is forever developing and mutating. Corporate PR is probably at this point in time seen as being of greater import than product/marketing PR. The optimal mix is determined by factors such as degree of control, cost, credibility, size and geographic spread of target audiences. Fill (1995; 1999; 2002) adds the two new categories of corporate PR (as opposed to marketing PR) and direct response media (often simply called direct marketing). It will be argued later, in Chapter 14, that sponsorship should be taken out of the PR box and stand out as a strategic communication element in its own right. This is shown in Figure 1.4.

This is still the approach of ‘putting things in boxes’ to provide the practitioner with a kind of shorthand, in the same way as the 4 P mnemonic does for the practitioner considering the overall marketing effort. The aforementioned derivatives of the main communication elements are developing all the time. For example, recent new additions have been in the areas of product placement (a form of the usually mass or impersonal type of communication that includes...
brands appearing within films or television programmes). A useful comparison of the two basic forms is reported by De Pelsmaker, Geuens and Van den Bergh (2001) who use the examples of personal computers and software that have been given away free but come with compulsory consumption of various advertising messages. There are people known as ‘troupers’ who organize, say, a trip to the theatre for groups of people and who are given incentives to do so (probably a free trip for themselves). This illustrates non-mass or personal communication. Both these ideas would be placed in the sales promotion box, at least in the first instance. Less mainstream ideas, for example language and meaning, including the usefulness of semiology/semiotics referred to in Chapter 6 have, for the past three decades, become increasingly more commonplace. The Marlboro vignette below illustrates the Philip Morris reaction, in the communications arena, to enforced change.

The tobacco companies, some might say, have had to be inventive, whether this be in developing new products for markets that do not yet exist or, especially, in communications terms. The anti-smoking lobby and other pressures have made this inventiveness a necessity for companies like Philip Morris with brands such as Marlboro if they are to survive.

The Marlboro ‘America’s most wanted’ or, if you prefer, ‘If you want it, come and get it’, the Grand Larceny case 01/773/5668, is a case in point. This is a promotion that closed after a typical period in which it was sent out through the mail, in a pack that looked like a packet of Marlboro cigarettes, hopefully to known smokers on a database. This forms a classic piece of direct marketing using an unusual approach to sales promotion. Thus there is the pack itself (a videotape box) with a number of objects inside. These include a personally addressed letter, a small leaflet illustrating gifts available in exchange for pull foils, a videotape with a professionally made certificate-18 film on it and a map of Marlboro Country (this also has the application form for entry into a competition, rules, instructions and so on).

The front of the pack uses the Marlboro brand’s distinctive colours of red and white, a photograph of Marlboro Country as depicted in poster and magazine advertising, the Marlboro logo accompanied by ‘America’s most wanted’ and ‘If you want it come and get it’. The spine of the pack contains the Marlboro logo, ‘America’s most wanted’ and ‘Certificate 18’. The back of the pack repeats the ‘Certificate 18’ warning. The usual Chief Medical Officer’s warning on the bottom is included, as are pictures of the three Marlboro brand packs in question. There is some information on the dates of the promotion and eligibility to take part in the offer, and some text that describes the plot. The latter involves felons in Marlboro Country having stashed counterfeiting plates.

**VIGNETTE**

**Marlboro: ‘America’s most wanted’ promotion**

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away where the police cannot find them. It is up to you, the recipient, to track the plates down and if you do you will receive the reward of $150,000. To do this you have to watch the video and unravel the clues in it, but also study the map to locate the plates.

The letter has the logo and strap line and is printed on top of a faint map. It gives more detail. You would be one of fifty ‘investigators’ to have a crack at doing what the ‘local law enforcement agencies’ could not. You need hard evidence from the map and videotape to follow the trail of events that ultimately would lead you to the reward. There is a tiebreaker of course but, if you get into the last fifty, then you and your partner will be invited on an all expenses paid trip to Marlboro Country to look for the plates and win the $150,000. In the mean time you are invited to consider the pull foil offer on a Zippo lighter, a polished metal ashtray and a white cotton v-neck T-shirt – these are illustrated and the offer is explained in the leaflet.

The leaflet has the same photograph of Marlboro Country as the videotape box and ‘America’s most wanted gear’ above it. It also has ‘If you want it come and get it’ and the Marlboro logo on it. It has colour photographs of the gifts and information about the pull foils. On the back are the three Marlboro brand packs pictured with ‘America’s most wanted’ above it. It has the rules and conditions of entering into the promotion and the usual health warning at the bottom.

The map has the same imagery as the leaflet and videotape box, only it reads ‘America’s most wanted map’. The back is the same as the leaflet. The instructions, the entry form and rules and conditions are all on the inside next to the full colour map. Albuquerque is probably the most famous place on it, or maybe Amarillo, El Paso or Santa Fe. Maybe the Pecos River and Plains or the Rio Grande are the things you recognize but, whatever strikes you, after a while you know what is meant by Marlboro Country.

You watch the video and you think of Tarantino or Travolta, or someone like that. Maybe it is a Ry Cooder soundtrack because of the bottleneck guitar. If you are watching it as a recipient of the mailing then you are probably doing so to look for clues. You may not know it but the Marlboro product is placed firmly within the film either literally on the hotel desk clerk’s counter or simply the Marlboro brand’s distinctive red and white, which may be subliminal. Whatever all of this is about, it’s certainly about Marlboro.

Source: Adapted from Marlboro materials (December 2000).

STOP POINT

Whether Philip Morris was forced to do this kind of promotion or not is in a sense irrelevant. Restrictions of one sort or another are part of the marketer’s environment (see ‘The marketing communications environment’ section later in this chapter). The challenge is to meet such obstacles and create opportunities, in this case if you are Philip Morris. Consider other challenges that the likes of Philip Morris will have to face. Make a short list of challenges (for example, look at the situation regarding recent advertising bans in the UK and the sponsorship of motor racing by tobacco companies and the pressure to stop this) and consider the kind of communications mix you would devise in order to help meet such challenges.
Integrated marketing and integrated marketing communications are nothing new, since integration has been around for years with good practitioners. A simplistic view of how IMC works is to concentrate solely on communications elements working together with a ‘unified message’, where below-the-line activity supports above-the-line activity, and vice versa. This is the drive toward cost-effectiveness and ‘careful planning creates marketing communications synergy which reinforces a consistent message or image in a cost effective manner’ (Smith, 1993). This is a good start, but what is IMC really? Integrated marketing communications can be described as a process that involves various forms of communications that variously persuade, inform, remind and entertain customers and prospects, affecting and influencing behaviour of target audiences. The IMC process also includes anything and everything that an organization, company or its people and brands do with targets and publics, either deliberately or not. To make good use of all forms of relevant communication makes sense. All in all, the IMC process, like the more general marketing process, starts and ends with the customer or prospect.

What IMC means

Many words are thrown around in this area. Gestalt, seamless, clarity and consistency are but a few examples. As Massey (1994) suggests, the future of marketing communications seems to be integration, just as it was synergy in the 1970s and pan-Europeanism in the 1980s. This is perhaps so, but many would see integration as synergy, and the possibility of pan-European advertising being allowed by a synergistic or integrative approach. Brown (1996) lists eight possible themes to explore the question ‘what is IMC?’: attitude of mind, one spirit (a single theme to support the brand, the intellectual message where this is the overly simplistic ‘one voice, one look’ does not account for complexity), one strategy (a single communications strategy that embraces what it needs to achieve objectives), synergy (a unified message where each part reinforces the others, each drawing from each other), equal status among key communication elements where advertising’s dominance is challenged, merging disciplines (for example between advertising and public relations or sales promotions), stakeholder emphasis and marketing orientation.

The above can be viewed as a useful addition in understanding IMC. However, the notion that a drive towards IMC and branding without consideration of the customer is short-sighted. At the end of the day, a reiteration of 1950s and 1960s Levitt-style marketing myopia, where the future lies not with outdated constructs that relate to mass communication, but rather with the increasing fragmentation of the mass into one-to-one situations – or something near this. The client–agency difficulties are potentially the biggest area of concern. Until agencies better understand and serve clients’ needs in this fragmented rather than mass world, this will not be resolved. There are a number of questions one can ask in this area. The answers to these are attempted below, but some questions remain unresolved here.

What drives IMC?

The overriding factor that drives IMC is the move away from mass communications but at the same time finding ways to get through the clutter in the most efficient way possible. Cost, accountability and a results orientation are
now seen as being achieved through the co-ordination of diverse tools targeted at diverse audiences in an increasingly technology-led and global context. Therefore, financial factors are important for Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn (1994), who suggest that the recession, the trend towards pay by results, restructuring of how agencies are paid in terms of billing/income/profit, pressure to reduce media billing and media fragmentation have all contributed towards consideration of IMC. The sophisticated client, for many commentators, now is a reality, with such clients being more knowledgeable than in the past. The mystique of advertising is diminished and a power shift has occurred. Disillusionment with the brand, advertising and agencies (in a similar vein to the previous point above) appears to be a reality. Own labels are stronger and advertising less revered. Other elements of communications are deemed important. Agencies have had to change, but should see this as a set of opportunities not threats. The power shift to retailers generally, and what they need/expect, has meant more scrutiny of the way in which communication is viewed.

What are the benefits of IMC?

The perhaps more practical/practitioner-orientated Linton and Morley (1995) provide a clear list of benefits of IMC to organizations, including creative integrity (theme and style consistent throughout, therefore impact is achieved as opposed to confusion, which can aid campaign build-up and provide materials for other uses), consistency of messages (strap lines and other parts of the message can provide the basis for reinforcement and reminder, leading to the development of the key message, visual standards and consistent use of company colours), unbiased recommendations (usually through one agency and ‘through the line’ with no worries about earning commission from advertising billing only), better use of all media, greater marketing precision (databases and information processing generally), operational efficiency (needs fewer people, can be a single interface and so creates less conflict, is simple compared to the potentially messy multi-agency situation), cost savings (in administration, rationalization of materials, artwork), high-calibre service (IMC means professionalism for below the line as well as above the line where, overall, service is improved ‘through the line’), easier working relationships (one agency means no new learning curves because of knowledge of the client’s business, simplified administration, no relearning and ongoing and consistent) and accountability (this has to be true if only one agency is used and value for money should result).

Who benefits from IMC?

Agencies benefit, if they change to meet the needs of clients, i.e. if they apply good marketing practice to themselves. There are lots of opportunities including multimedia. Clients benefit where the principal argument is that it was high time clients made their budgets work harder for them. Consumers not benefiting means that the full benefit of IMC has not been passed on. There is no real evidence as yet as to whether the consumer is benefiting, but it is certainly looking this way (see Chapter 19 with particular reference to the Internet as an interactive, integrating tool).

What inhibits IMC?

A lack of a clear definition inhibits the development of IMC. There is some debate as to just what IMC really is. Practical difficulties, for example the
complexity of different objectives being achieved by different strategy and
tactics, do not help. Implementation can be very difficult to achieve. Cultural
factors inhibit the development of IMC but the main factor is change, or resis-
tance to change. The culture of the organization, for example, may be hung up
on flashy advertising on television or it may be that sales promotions have been
the norm, linked to bonuses. Any change would be accompanied by conflict.
A deeper dimension is provided by Cornelissen (2000), who points to the failure
of academia to provide an adequate managerial approach to IMC and suggests
that the notion of integration should be rephrased into ‘the more operational
constructs of interaction and co-ordination between areas’. Useful and memo-
rable constructs should be provided as performance indicators, for example the
degree of interaction positively related to the degree of co-ordination between
departments.

Where is IMC going?
The organization’s communication function should be consolidated rather
than divided up where ‘managers can install co-ordination mechanisms to achieve
required levels of interaction between functional areas or departments of com-
munication’ (Cornelissen, 2000). In practice, agencies are going to have to add
value beyond media-buying and creativity, and new structures are emerging.
Agencies must seize this opportunity. Clients should understand the importance
of continuity and that the depth of the relationship will remain, or get even
stronger, resulting in a situation akin to relationship marketing that has impli-
cations for the role of senior management.

The Haagen-Dazs vignette below provides a good illustration of integration of
elements of communication.

VIGNETTE

Haagen-Dazs: ‘From food to fashion accessory’

The situation for Haagen-Dazs is a case where the media department and the
creative department worked closely together to develop a campaign that first
created consumer excitement. It then created newsworthy PR, then trade
excitement and, consequently, more and more consumer interest, to the point
where the whole launch gained an unstoppable momentum. Haagen-Dazs
luxury ice cream previously had very little above-the-line activity. The limited
amount of local advertising used radio and posters. Local press, cinema and
sandwich boards were used to launch the openings of Haagen-Dazs shops.
There had been no previous brand launch activity. After being briefed, agency
Bartle, Bogle and Hegarty (BBH) immediately started researching. Focus
groups were set up among premium ice cream consumers to try to identify the
main differences and reasons for purchasing a super premium ice cream over
other ice creams. After a lifelong diet of other ice creams, individuals found it
difficult to describe the experience of tasting Haagen-Dazs. They kept lapsing
into the language of sensual satisfaction. Some elements of this were more
tangible than others. The lavishness of the ingredients (fresh cream, egg
yolks, skimmed milk and no E numbers at all) invited comparisons with indul-
gence. The special flavour of the ice cream elevated it to an experience more
sensual than just eating. People also seemed to want to enjoy the ice cream
quietly and intimately – to savour it without interruptions. They wanted to con-
centrate on the experience without the distraction. This was not easy to define.
Although the ice cream was expensive to market, it was not casually defined
as ‘up-market, frivolous and young’. Instead, the target market was defined by
attitude – they enjoy the best, believe that quality is worth paying for and
that they themselves are worth treating (see below how this was translated
into media selection). Rather than conducting independent research into
the Haagen-Dazs audience, answers were sourced from the extensive quali-
tative research that was used to guide the creative development of the adver-
tising message itself. Despite the attraction of television advertising for a new
brand and the popularity of television with other ice cream suppliers (87.5 per
cent of the total ice cream spend went on television), press was preferred
since it created a ‘feel’ with the advertising that could itself be savoured and
enjoyed at leisure. In addition, the intimacy of the experience could be better
hinted at through the personal one-to-one communication of the press.
Television is often a family or social medium that might, in itself, devalue the
communication by exposing it to the comment and reaction of third parties.
Research showed that women were particularly expressive of these special
moments when they are left alone with their favourite magazine. They often
save up the magazine for the sheer joy of being alone with a cup of coffee,
disconnected from the rest of the world for a few moments of self-indulgence
(ideal for Haagen-Dazs).

The principal objective was to launch the Haagen-Dazs brand nationally. Then
the task was to build brand awareness. Thirdly, the brand had to be positioned
as the finest ice cream in the world. The campaign also had to generate strong
consumer response since the campaign took place when many of the major
multiples were testing the brand. Brand leadership was built strategically
by creating a new language for ice cream. Other ice creams focus on ingredients
or images of happy families. Before advertising came the creation of ‘brand
ambassadors’ – celebrities willing to endorse the brand in press articles. As
well as this, the product was given away at all the best places, for example
Henley Regatta, and even appeared on the menu at top restaurants. All of this
was designed to get the ‘chattering classes’ chattering. The new advertising
talked about end benefits that are sometimes hidden deep below the surface,
as opposed to the more traditional style where conscious feelings are
expressed about ice cream. Strategically, a series of press advertisements
allowed a relationship to be built with the target audience, unlike a one-off
advertisement. Tactically, although weekend colour supplements and week-
end reviews are considered to be highly optional reading, they lack the imme-
diacy of their parent newspapers. The weekend’s ‘leisurely read’ aspect (being
read for leisure rather than for information) lent itself to the creation of the val-
ues that the brand advertising was trying to develop. The qualitative research
highlighted those lazy Saturday or Sunday afternoon moments, languishing in
the garden. This is just the moment to whisper Haagen-Dazs, instead of
having to shout the message on television. Implementation was achieved
through Haagen-Dazs using 6 per cent share of voice (SOV) to launch the
brand (which is not a large budget for a launch). A small sum was used on
PR. Scheduling was aided by original research and TGI data was used to
blend the shopping and reading habits of the target customer. To ensure that
the target market would be exposed to more than one of the four advertise-
ments, the media schedule was compiled with meticulous ‘attention to
duplication’. The media planners researched and analysed the extent to which
readers of each magazine also read the weekend reviews or the weekend magazines. The titles eventually chosen also had to share a commitment to the quality lifestyle that was appropriate to the brand itself. Evaluation was seen as a crucial part of the campaign. Although this advertising campaign only had a 6 per cent SOV (share of all the advertising money spent by UK ice cream manufacturers), campaign measurement showed the campaign helped to make Haagen-Dazs the most talked about ice cream brand of the year. It was 'New Product of the Year' for the Marketing Society and it had become brand leader of the take-home premium ice cream sector.

The results confirm the power of good communication. The propensity to purchase (or try it) increased by over 500 per cent. Sales through Haagen-Dazs's own outlets broke all records. Distribution penetration increased through the retail multiples, with Waitrose increasing distribution from their test stores dramatically and Safeway going to national distribution immediately. Prompted awareness almost quadrupled. Haagen-Dazs had a unique positioning as they were 'Dedicated to Pleasure', effectively redefining what premium meant to the consumer.

Sources: Adapted from the BBC (1994b), Haagen-Dazs materials (1996), McCrae (1996) and Smith (1993; 1998).

STOP POINT

Much is written about BBH's advertising campaign on behalf of Haagen-Dazs, but much less on the fact that they created a textbook IMC/integrated marketing campaign. The advertising in fact came almost last and was preceded by a number of communication devices centred on the idea of 'brand seeding' including the use of 'brand ambassadors', getting on posh hotel menus, associations with polo, sailing and the kind of venues where 'debutantes come out and jetsetters mingle' (McCrae, 1996). Consider how important this is if a brand legend is to be created or destroyed by advertising too early and perhaps losing the solid base that can be built through effective word of mouth. Consider also whether or not Haagen-Dazs achieved 'classic brand status' along the lines of Levi or Harley-Davidson.

The marketing communications environment

Environmental factors as an integral part of the planning and managing process are dealt with in Chapter 4 and then throughout the rest of this book. In Chapter 3 such factors are considered in terms of the communication process sender–message–receiver model. The general aim here is to look at the environment in which organizations/marketers and communicators work. The reader should already be familiar with the PEST/STEP/SLEPT-type models of the macro environment and models of the micro environment essential for marketing analysis but which also apply in the communications context. Some writers refer to this as the 'near' and 'far' environment (e.g. Smith, Berry and Pulford, 1997). These are discussed below in three ways: characteristics of the micro and macro environment; strategic environmental issue management; critical components of the micro and macro environment.
Characteristics of the micro and macro environment

Modernist marketing authors like Kotler (e.g. 1984; 1988) appear for many years to have philosophized in terms of the marketing environment. Kotler uses at least two anonymous sayings that mean something in this area. These are ‘it is useless to tell a river to stop running; the best thing is to learn how to swim in the direction it is flowing’ and ‘there are three types of companies. Those who make things happen. Those who watch things happen. Those who wondered what happened’. These allude to the company purpose. This position holds that the purpose should be specific as to the business domain and that products and technologies are transient while basic market needs generally remain. The company should shift its business domain definition from product to market focused. The modernist position sees the marketing environment (ME) as an important concept to the practice of good marketing management. The ME consists of all those factors that affect the organization and its markets, and any factors that affect the relationship between an organization and its markets. Matching takes place in the ME, i.e. the matching of the organization's capabilities to meet customer needs and wants. There is therefore a requirement of management to monitor the ME and adapt product and marketing strategies to meet changing needs. Markets are dynamic and needs fast-changing, so there is, therefore, the need for some form of marketing information system which would necessarily include marketing research and intelligence that should be built into the organization's decision-making process. With many of the aforementioned factors, the organization usually has little or no control over them but can influence them. These factors or components are discussed below.

Strategic environmental issue management

Most managers involved in companies are aware of the importance of environmental analysis. More experienced managers are perhaps also aware of the difficulties of monitoring the environment that is both within and surrounds their organization. In order to implement environmental issue management, four stages of such a process need to be considered. First, environmental scanning must take place in order that key environmental issues can be identified and an impact evaluation allowed before the formulation of a response strategy occurs. This applies across the business (including marketing) board but, of course, part of this response is marketing and corporate communications.

Critical components of the micro and macro environment

The micro and macro environment are well-known constructs in general marketing terms and their respective components are depicted in Figure 1.5.

From this general model of the marketing environment the components or elements of each of the micro and macro environments can be seen in relation to what they might mean to marketing communicators.
The micro environment

The micro environment (MIE) consists of a number of elements. Taking the elements of the MIE in turn we can begin with the organization itself. There obviously exists an internal environment within all organizations. Management structures vary vastly but, whatever the structure of the organization, marketing management has the task of making marketing decisions within this context and in the context of corporate mission, objectives, strategies, policies etc. It is especially important to note the notion of conflict within organizations. There are many possible sources of conflict that could occur in organizations, for example how marketing, production and finance interact or how sales and marketing interact (see Chapter 13 for a fuller consideration of internal communications). Every company needs resources of some sort in order to function, for example material and fuel, and there is therefore a need to monitor suppliers’ prices, shortages, alternatives and perhaps to consider more than one supplier to avoid total cut-off while not getting the benefits of economies of scale. Marketing intermediaries include middlemen – agents, manufacturers’ representatives, wholesalers and retailers – who have place/time/possession utility. The notion is that such players can act more efficiently and hence more cheaply than a manufacturer. There are also physical distribution firms – warehousing, transportation – who can increase the cost-effectiveness of operations in terms of speed, safety and so on. Marketing services include advertising, PR, marketing research agencies, marketing analysts who can also be classed as marketing intermediaries as can financial services – banks, credit brokers and so on. Customers can be consumers or buying for someone else; they might be organizational buyers or resellers; they might be national or local government; they might be at home or abroad. Each type of customer has particular characteristics that call for careful study and, consequently, differing approaches. Competitors lie somewhere on a spectrum between co-operation and open warfare. Competition can come in many forms of which there are four from a customer viewpoint:

- desire (where one type is satisfied but not another, for example a new car as opposed to a holiday)
- generic (one problem-solver versus another, for example a car or bike)
- product form (one product rather than another, for example saloon or sports car)
- branding (one brand rather than another, for example own label, Oxo or Bovril stock cubes).

The term publics alludes to the organization seeking goodwill, usually via PR activities, on a continual basis. There are a number of established publics: financial (for example the banks), media (press, television and radio) and government (national, pressure groups and local). A related concept, that of the stakeholder, has been used relatively recently to describe the actors in such a system as suggested above, which is associated with strengths and weaknesses of organizations and is returned to from a communications management perspective in Chapter 4.

The macro environment

The macro environment (MAE) also consists of a number of elements, which are listed below. All micro elements operate under a larger MAE consisting of forces that have been traditionally thought of as uncontrollable (as opposed to the
The integrated marketing communications mix

elements of the marketing mix). The forces of the MAE therefore influence opportunities and threats. The organization should be aware of any trends or changes in the MAE. Products developed in the technological environment range from ‘wonder drugs’ to hydrogen bombs to soft-as-floss white bread full of vitamins. It has been argued that new technologies have a creative destruction, especially where real innovation is present and not just gimmicks such as freeze-dried coffee. The accelerating pace of change perhaps underscores the importance of research and development being conducted hand-in-hand with marketing research. Innovation opportunities/threats should be delineated from minor improvements and the need for regulation of, for example, food and drugs recognized. Technology is constantly changing. It can no longer be assumed that current ranges of products will continue to satisfy customer demands. In an early volume of marketing management, Kotler uses the example of non-drip paint as a product that had a profound effect on what had been a stable market. We could extend this now with the recent developments in ‘one-coat’ paints. Kotler (1984) stated that new technology creates some ‘major long-run consequences that are not always foreseeable’ and at the time used the example of the contraceptive pill, that ‘led to smaller families, more working wives and larger discretionary incomes’. Kotler’s argument was that this then resulted in more money being spent on things like holiday travel that in turn would increase airline traffic. Kotler also concluded that the pill had also ‘led to a larger average size in brassiere, something the women’s lingerie industry has missed entirely’ (ibid.).

The political/legal/ethical environment involves an increasing and changing amount of legislation. This includes protection of companies from each other; for example antitrust laws (USA) and the Monopoly and Mergers Commission (UK) prevent unfair competition. It also includes protection of consumers from unfair business practices, for example unfair or misleading advertising and packaging, and protection of the larger interests of society against unbridled business behaviour. Acts of Parliament, changing government agencies and changes in their roles (whether this be, for example, leanings toward deregulation or the opposite), the growth of public interest/pressure groups and the notion of consumerism as major social force all have a potential impact. The true nature of the ‘sovereign consumer’ with many examples of exploitation in many markets such as those for cars, meat, loans, car repairs and insurance (the list is endless) carries on today with consumer magazines like Which? and Watchdog carrying the flag. The early forms of communication were often trade depicters – an inn sign, a barber’s pole and an apothecary’s jar of coloured liquid. Now advertising alone is a large (and powerful) industry in its own right. In terms of what can be called the regulatory environment there are very many historical/legal/ethical/moral issues. Controls over marketing communications and in particular advertising, i.e. laws (as passed in parliament) or voluntary control (by the industry for the industry to keep up standards) are many and varied. These to some extent can be the same issues regarding consumerism and environmentalism as discussed above. Of the many issues involved suffice to say that all are interesting and some are very important tactically from the communicator’s viewpoint. Commentary on controversial communication is abundant in the literature.

The demographic environment has many strands to it. An ageing population and therefore new and different markets – for example children, youth, young adults, the early middle aged, the later middle aged, retirees – could form the
segments of a market based on age that would change quite radically percentage-wise over the course of time. Increased life expectancy, slowdown of the birth rate, fewer young people, family size/number of children, later marriage, fewer children, higher divorce rate, more women/mothers working, men the target for food manufacturers etc. all contribute to this, as do the rise of non-family households, the single adult and two person co-habiters – all groups with special needs. There are also better education standards, a decrease in indiscriminate television viewing and increases in book and magazine reading and travel to consider. The geodemographic perspective sees geographic shifts, rural to urban, urban to rural, city to suburbs, suburbs to city (very important if such shifts mean losing suburban facilities) and regional (say) the North East to the South East.

The economic environment is closely linked to demography and markets that require purchasing power that is a function of real income and any changes in disposable and discretionary that are affected by inflation, unemployment and taxation. Such effects may lead to marketing responses such as more cautionary price appeals or time-saving products bought by consumers such as ‘yuppies’ or ‘dinkies’. Savings are clearly pitted against expenditure but this also involves things like credit facilities, lending and mortgages. Changing expenditure patterns, for example when income rises the percentage of income spent on food might very well decrease while that on leisure and recreation increases, need to be recognized.

The sociocultural environment involves beliefs, norms and values. Primary concerns are things like ‘the institution of marriage’, while secondary concerns would follow sentiments such as ‘you ought to marry early’. It is said that primary values are more difficult to change than secondary ones – although this is clearly not impossible. Core values are things like ‘the American way’ and ‘Englishness’ in terms of culture. Subcultural values belong to groups such as ‘teenagers’. Secondary cultural values may involve shifts over time. In one era ‘teenagers’ may have a particular set of values. These can change quite radically. The sociocultural environment is therefore to do with people’s relations with themselves, for example, a ‘me society’ seeking self-fulfilment, reflected in the use of and expenditure on leisure, recreation and fun. People’s relations to others (a ‘me’ to ‘we’ shift involving others) are reflected in the use of, for example, ‘honesty’ in advertising. In terms of ethnicity, Hispanics are seen in the USA as an important subcultural group but this may not be refined enough. In Britain it may make more marketing sense to look at British South Asians as a target group rather than ‘the Asian community in Britain’, which clearly has a complex make-up. British people’s relations to institutions, including shifts in loyalty to marriage or the work ethic, can be readily seen. People’s relations to society, again including shifts in loyalty, for example the erosion of patriotism, are also visible, as are people’s relations to nature and the universe, again including shifts such as a move from a specific religion to, say, worldliness or some other form of spiritualism.

The natural/environmental/green element, with particular reference to the recent rise of environmentalism and ‘green’ issues, shows clearly the interaction that can occur between the various elements of the MAE and MIE. For example the natural/political/public pressure groups involving ‘limits to growth’-type debate
and argument. The natural environment therefore involves shortages of raw materials, divided into the following:

- **infinite resources** such as the air we breathe and long-term dangers or shorter-term ones such as the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)
- **finite, renewable resources** such as forests but with similar long- and short-term dangers
- **finite, non-renewable resources** such as coal, oil and gas.

Increased cost of energy, levels of pollution and government intervention in natural resource management are all items for consideration. All these issues beg the question ‘what opportunities are there for the development of new sources and new materials?’ Clearly there are opportunities for marketers to communicate benefits or to use particular imagery in this area while at the same time there is the danger of the bandwagon effect, i.e. simply milking an environmental issue by jumping on a current wave of favourable opinion without any real justification for doing so. Environmentalists are perhaps more critical of marketing than consumerists. For example, environmentalists complain more vigorously about (wasteful) packaging whereas consumerists like the idea of convenience packaging. Consumerists worry about deception in advertising whereas environmentalists do not like the idea that advertising leads to greater (than necessary) consumption. The rise of environmentalism has made the marketer’s life more complicated, probably much more so than consumerism ever did. The cost of including environmental issues and criteria in marketing decision-making is in many cases not insignificant, but at the same time managers have realized that, at the very least, respecting the environment is in itself worthwhile. This is probably the richest area for marketing opportunities. Kotler (1984), two decades ago, quoting the chairman of Du Pont, makes this point clear. The real environmental challenge is not to be reactive or to try to browbeat but to persuade through real environmentalism what ‘I define as an attitude and performance commitment that places corporate environmental stewardship fully in line with public desires and expectations’ (ibid.). Again, a communications management perspective on MAE elements will be dealt with in Chapter 4.
study and much that is relevant is naturally beyond the scope of the marketing professional, being the province of corporate lawyers. However, anyone can quite easily get an appreciation of the legal/regulatory environment. The problem is there are so many situations worldwide and the whole issue is compounded by the nature of integrated campaigns, i.e. we are not usually dealing with advertising in isolation but with PR, sponsorship and so on. Added to this are cultural constraints and self-regulatory bodies, making the whole picture quite complex. A further dimension is the development of economic and other groupings like the European Union (EU) and consequently things like European Community (EC) Directives. International marketers should therefore be concerned with laws (international law, misleading claims, government/EC regulations) and codes (self-regulation by companies, the advertising industry and so on).

Examples of product categories that are of concern are tobacco, alcohol, pharmaceuticals and financial services. Specific target groups that are much written about are children, women and, increasingly, men. Restraint is still very much domestic driven but, for example, EC Directives are becoming increasingly important. A fundamental question is, ‘is the business community capable of self-regulation or, left to their own devices, would some firms break the rules?’ After all, business exists to make money not moral or ethical judgements. However, intervention is justified for consumer protection. In 1989 within the EC the Consumer Consultative Council (consisting of thirty-nine consumer bodies) existed to express consumer protection opinion. In Germany comparative advertising had been banned since 1909 but the EU appears to like comparative advertising since it apparently assists consumers, and Germany has now followed this lead. Further afield than the EU and EC Directives etc. the world picture is rather diffused. In the Arab world Islam plays a huge part, it being a fusion of culture/religion and law. Of not least importance here is the role and representation of women. Children should not be used in advertising. In many countries, there is concern for dishonesty in advertising, but a strongly held view from the business community is that every merchandise item produced legally should have the right to be advertised.

In many instances it is not the products themselves but blatantly offensive advertising which causes the problem – whether this be real or imagined. For example, a poster campaign in the UK has caused division in the advertising industry itself. The adverts for Club 18–30 (a package holiday company) had sexual innuendo-laden headlines such as ‘Beaver Espana’ and ‘The Summer of 69’ that the ASA asked to be withdrawn after 314 complaints. The company said they were inundated with requests for marketing materials from the target audience. More importantly the ‘any publicity is good publicity’ rule appears to apply for Club 18–30. Pretty Polly’s use, on a poster hoarding, of a live model whose cocktail dress is removed to have her posing in high heels, a burgundy bra and a pair of black tights for the press pack is a Trevor Beattie creation. This is the man who allegedly gave us ‘Hello Boys’ for the Wonderbra (there is some dispute here) but certainly gave us ‘f.c.u.k.’ after first providing fcuk for the newly positioned and rebranded French Connection fashion house. fcuk saw a plethora of complaints to the ASA. And, of course, there is always Benetton. After the worldwide hullabaloo about shocking images from newborn babies to a nun kissing a priest, from a Mafia killing to a black devil and white angel and so on, came a period of Fabrica (the Benetton art school) and a return to more traditional marketing. This rather more quiet time did not last very long and soon
Assignment

It has been said that the organization has little or no control over the forces of the MAE but can influence them. Select one of the following organizations and make a list of environmental factors that such an organization might take into account when analysing its markets. Consider the possible marketing opportunities which may exist now or arise in the future in the environmental/‘green’ part of the marketing environment for such organizations. Follow this through with basic ideas on marketing communications strategy and tactics, especially with regard to message strategy.
Marketing Communications Management

- A soap powder/liquid manufacturer.
- A soft drinks manufacturer.
- A car manufacturer.
- A toothpaste manufacturer.
- A packaged holiday company.
- A surface coatings (e.g. paint, varnish) manufacturer.

Summary of Key Points

- Marketing and corporate communications has to operate in a climate of exchange and change. The type of exchange is important but so, too, is the nature of change. We appear to be moving towards an era of media and customer dominance, with a greater relational emphasis on marketing communications practice and one that is increasingly global.

- Marketing and corporate communications’ role is mutating continually. The old mix within the marketing mix mnemonic has changed to reveal new strategic tools such as sponsorship.

- The notion of IMC is not acceptable when expressed in very simple terms such as synergy. This needs to be contextualized both within and outside the organization, and will have to become a more functionally endemic part of what an organization is and does.

- The marketing environment is constantly changing. The biggest challenge for marketing and corporate communications management in meeting this change is not so much a result of shifting sands but more to do with dealing with an anthropomorphic, living, growing and mutating entity.

Examination Questions

1. Outline the different kinds of exchange that might exist in marketing. In particular, explain relational exchange, using examples to illustrate.

2. Discuss the notion of power shift from manufacturer to consumer. Use relevant examples to illustrate your discussion.

3. The communications mix is potentially made up of many things and is constantly mutating. Choose two contrasting product categories and highlight the likely communications mix differences when launching a product within each category.

4. ‘The absence of IMC now is the equivalent of having marketing myopia in the 1960s.’ Explain why you either agree or disagree with this sentiment.

5. The marketing communications company has a vital role to play in the achievement of IMC on behalf of clients. Explain this role using examples of your choice.

6. Explain why distributors are of interest to the marketing communicator. Illustrate your response with examples from consumer and organizational markets.
7 Explain the relationship between the micro and macro environments. Discuss the effect of this on marketing communications outputs.

8 The demographic environment clearly interfaces with the economic environment. Explain this interface and illuminate your response with examples.

9 'The natural or green environment is the most important element in any environmental scanning exercise for any company these days.' Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement.

10 Choose any element of the macro environment and put it in the context of a brand of your choice. Discuss the likely communications issues that would have to be dealt with by a brand or category manager.

Notes

1 Some writers do not see marketing this way. Most notably in Europe, Brown (1995), commenting on the marketing concept that he believes is not unassailable, explains that the work of Shigemitsu (2000) 'with its tripartite emphasis on customer orientation, overall integration and profit maximisation [the marketing concept] has been the subject of extensive debate and periodic modification'.

2 See Elinder (1961) for one of the first articles in the literature directly to deal with this subject.

3 The useful shorthand that is the ‘marketing mix’ has been, and still is, the subject of some debate in academic marketing circles. Building on the problem with mnemonics, for example, Kent (1986) underscores the 'seductive sense of simplicity', the point being that to create something that is a memory aid that then becomes an 'article of faith' is dangerous. It is with this kind of understandable argument in mind that the useful shorthand is used here with caution.

4 Short-sightedness, the inability to see in a truly marketing orientated way. Levitt's original myopia is seen as a classic piece of thought. It is not surprising that Levitt's (1983) article has been reprinted so many times in so many places. See, for example, Enis and Cox (1985), where it is the first of the selected classics chosen to start the book off.

5 The limits to growth debate of the 1970s, centring on the environment, finite oil resources and so on.

References


Theoretical underpinnings of marketing communication

Chapter overview

Introduction to this chapter

The nature of communication theory is explored in terms of meaning for both marketing and corporate contexts. Many of the theoretical models available were established during the 1960s but some of the key ideas have been around for much longer. Other, more recent, developments have tried to bring buyer behaviour theory closer to that of communications, and this is looked at in Chapter 3. In particular, the traditional view of the communications process has been fused with the ‘hierarchy of effects’ model to offer further insight into the workings of marketers’ communications and the likely effects of such communications on recipients. This chapter concentrates on the ways in which senders of a message can get meaning across to a recipient. These are many and varied but not at all 100 per cent accurate. However, it is recognized that the context in which communications takes place is important and that interactive and relational approaches in such contexts offer an alternative view of communications working in practice. The role of personal influence, the power of word of mouth and the usefulness of adoption/diffusion models are explored.

Aims of this chapter

The chapter seeks to explore and explain the theoretical underpinnings of communication and to underscore the usefulness and limitations of theory to practice. More specifically the reader, on completion of the chapter, should be able to:

- discuss communications in terms of the needs of practitioners
- explain the basic model of communication within an historical context
- explore other communications models and theories that can help inform practitioner decision-making
- assess the impact personal influence has on the communications process
- assess the usefulness of the adoption and diffusion process as an aid to the marketing communicator.
Communications and practitioners

There is concern for the fundamental use of the very basic model of the (marketing) communication process used by many writers of textbooks to suggest the availability of, at the very least, a framework for marketers to help manage their various forms of communication – whether mediated or interpersonal. Buttle (1995) provides a useful history/ancestry of communication (and marketing communication) theory and points to the lack of explicitness regarding theory. The simple argument is that theory should inform practice otherwise it is pointless, but practice needs some theoretical underpinnings to provide stability.

This argument is central here since we are concerned with practitioners and what they can gain from the theoretical stances taken by writers – whether practitioners themselves or academicians – in order to provide a framework or even simply a basis from which to build the desired model. The vignette below illustrates the need for vigilance and a problem-solving outlook.

By August 1999 Sainsbury, the supermarket chain, had become the centre of a row with competitors over a new advertising campaign that was said to be misleading. The ‘no genetically modified food where you see this label’ line over the Sainsbury logo followed by a claim that Sainsbury ‘are the first major supermarket to start making all own-label food without genetically modified ingredients’, all in the name of customer care, had infuriated the likes of Iceland, Marks and Spencer (M&S) and Waitrose. These companies claimed themselves to be the first, and Russell Ford (Iceland’s managing director) went as far as to accuse Sainsbury of telling ‘a blatant lie’. Further, the accusation that the advertising gave the impression that all of what Sainsbury do is genetically modified (GM)-free, when clearly a lot of branded (as opposed to own label) goods are not, has been made.

Sainsbury vigorously denied any attempt to mislead but this controversy follows on from a previous Christmas campaign that starred John Cleese, the well-known comedy actor (among many other things) who is as least as famous for his Basil Fawlty character in the 1970s BBC comedy Fawlty Towers as he is for the earlier Monty Python’s Flying Circus television programme or the later hit film A Fish Called Wanda with Jamie Lee Curtis. The ‘Value to Shout About’ promotion had backfired badly. It was voted the worst campaign of the year by the industry. Store staff complained it made them appear stupid but, more fundamentally, traditional mid-range shoppers stayed away from what seemed a store that was going in a downward direction while attracting price-conscious shoppers who were simply after bargains, hitting sales and, presumably, profits. Some estimates put a value on price per share loss of 34p (£600 million in value). Sainsbury were a poor fourth to the other big three supermarkets and the overall effect on image was one of portrayal of a value store.

Job losses, the sacking of agency Abbott Mead Vickers and some restructur- ing followed, along with rumours of takeovers and mergers. Tesco had emerged as the champion with Sainsbury playing catch-up with ideas previously rejected but used to good effect by arch-rival Tesco. Allegedly the Queen buys Tesco Christmas puddings, and globalization is at work on the high street. For Sainsbury, like many others, this meant reinvention and renewal. This requires vision of the sort shown by Time Warner and AOL whose
Numerous models have been developed in this area that help further develop this general framework for understanding. The commonest form in the textbooks deals with the problems of one-way mass communication, although it does have a feedback loop that indicates that the source is likely to search for, or expect some form of, recipient feedback. The source is usually the marketing organization and the receiver the consumer, though not always. To complete this process accurately is a very difficult task to achieve. The process looks simple but in practice is far from simplicity. The basic model is shown in Figure 2.1.

For this to be of any practical use in the real world, it has, of course, to aid the marketer in terms of effective and efficient communications. Fundamentally, the idea is for the communicator to be in a position to understand the (target) recipient well enough to be able to encode desired messages with a high degree of certainty that there will be no 'noise' in the system. The task is to understand how decoding will occur and allow for the subsequent transfer of pure, unadulterated meaning.

The most frequently adopted model of the communications process in marketing terms is that of Schramm (1971), revised from Schramm’s 1954 model which itself was derived from Lasswell’s (1948) semantic description, and Shannon and Weaver’s (1962) ‘model’ of the communication process. Many authors, such as Fill (1995; 1999; 2002) and Belch and Belch (1995), use this as a fundamental building block. The elements of the process for our purposes

**A model of mass communications**

It is easy, with hindsight perhaps, to see what went wrong with the Sainsbury campaign. The use of Cleese in this way was an error of judgement, especially given the wonderful opportunity to exploit one of the best known and funniest comedy actors in the business. What else could Sainsbury have done with such a character in your view?
here need to be explained and broken down into their own constituents in order that the model can be better understood. Taking these in turn:

1 **Sender/source.** A person, group of people, company or some other organization may wish to transmit/relay an idea, set of ideas or a proposition in order to share something with another party. This out of necessity includes the encoding of a message in some shape or form with the intention of achieving one or more of the communications objectives, and necessarily involves the sender/source itself as part of that message. The source characteristics outlined in the Kellman model below apply here so that salespeople, advertising and so on should have elements of trust, likeability, attractiveness, power or other characteristics in order to influence and persuade.

2 **Encoding.** If the problem is perceived incorrectly by the source then the wrong concept might be developed and encoded, making the communication faulty. Some form of situation analysis is useful here. We are concerned about actuality and perception, where any mismatch is the perception itself in the mind of the transmitter. This makes a lot of sense in the real world of everyday experience where thought/ideas have been translated into symbolic form. The problem lies in the task of getting the right sentences, words, symbols and so on, that will communicate effectively, from a vast array of verbal and non-verbal elements.

3 **The message.** The message is the symbolic representation of the sender/source’s thoughts/ideas. If the source does not say what he or she means, even if the problem is understood, then the message strategy will be faulty. Objectives should be met by using the best combination of marketing communications tools – advertising, packaging and so on – with the right kind of message at the right time. The message itself has no meaning. Meanings are part of the message user, i.e. sender/source or recipient/receiver. Many options are available to the communicator including one- or two-sided arguments, open/closed conclusions and rational/emotional appeals. All this adds up to creative strategy.

4 **The medium.** As the conduit/channel for the message, the medium (or particular vehicle) and its nature and characteristics are of crucial importance to marketing communicators whether this be via a newspaper, a trade show or a salesperson. Messages are often viewed as mediated (if, for example, a salesperson is involved) or unmediated (if, say, an advertisement is used). The medium or media vehicle might be an upmarket, glossy magazine. The advertisement might well use references to, say, the works of Cezanne to sell crystal glass products. This would require a certain knowledge of art and especially painting (even if only gained through simplistic magazine articles!) on the part of the reader in order for the advertisement to work on that reader. In other words, as McCluhan1 said a long time ago, ‘the medium is the message’ or at least it is part of it.

5 **Decoding.** This involves the deriving of meaning from the received message that is a composite of the actual message sent and any influences the medium may have had upon it. If the receiver does not understand the message or does not interpret it in the way it was meant then communication is faulty. Many feel that in marketing communications terms there is a need for clarity and simplicity where, for example, key selling points are understood. Others advocate much more complex approaches involving devices such as metaphors or metonyms.
6 **Recipient/receiver.** The receiver is normally the person, people or organization (hence the reason why some writers prefer to use the catchall 'decision-making unit' – DMU) with whom the sender wishes to share thoughts, ideas and so on. This, of course, will not always be the case since, clearly, others will receive the message that is not intended for them. The receiver might understand the message but might ignore or forget it. In marketing communications circumstances some believe that repetition can 'educate' the customer/consumer over a period of time.

7 **Feedback.** This loop of the process provides the sender/source with a channel of evaluation of the message encoded and sent. This can be viewed in two ways: first, in terms of how accurately the message has hit the target; second, in terms of the degree of correctness of interpretation on the part of the recipient/receiver from that which was intended. This then allows the sender/source to correct any ineffectual or misdirected messages. Typically viewed in marketing terms as a marketing research opportunity, this involves straightforward activities like coupon redemption in sales promotions but also things such as awareness scores, image studies and tracking studies. Some of this may be continuous rather than ad hoc.

8 **Noise.** The notion of noise can be misconstrued. It is not a question of making enough noise in order to be heard, like a shelf screamer in a supermarket that is designed to attract attention. Rather, the term 'noise' was used originally to denote interference or impedance, for example of a radio signal. These are terms often used interchangeably to describe the blocking or distortion of the message at any stage in the marketing communications process. This can take many forms, from the poor signal on radio or television resulting in poor sound and/or vision to the lack of knowledge or information that causes a consumer to be unable to fully understand the message. Noise can therefore be physical or cognitive and can be anything from interruption by a secretary to the amount of clutter in a newspaper or magazine.

**Critique of the original process**

It is, of course, recognized that the marketer is not the only player in this game. The target is another player, but other influences are also part of the process – the bullet theory (Schramm, 1971b) or hypodermic effect (Klapper, 1960) having been rejected for some time with an emerging preference for interactive and integrative rather than linear thought. Buttle (1995) provides a clear analysis of commonalities within the various representations of the communication process, identifying four such commonalities and concluding that marketing communications theory fails to draw on the very disciplines it should. Four common themes emerge in what Buttle calls 'normal marketing communications'. These are:

1. **Focus on the individual,** where family/household, institutional and cultural levels are left out. For example, the age-old 'what we do during the commercial break' question or the social context of advertising reception would apply to family or household contexts. Institutional effects involve the message production and delivery systems of companies, agencies and so on that are an interlocking network of institutions are things like voluntary codes and lobby groups. Cultural effects are both cognitive and critical. Cognitive effects involve, for example, cultural values and mores, whereas critical effects
involve Marxist and feminist views, dealing with institutional structures and the way society is organized.

2 Focus on individual messages, clearly a problem if estimates such as the one that suggests that 3000 marketing-controlled messages bombard individuals each day are true. Cumulative impact should be taken into account. Added to the effect of marketing communication stimuli, other stimuli existing outside the marketing communications area have impact.

3 Focus on source's intent where cumulative impact, shared meaning, derived symbolic meaning and not least meaning derived from non-promotional marketing and other variables are bound to have some sort of effect. Belief in the notion of the passive audience is long gone. The view that 'people do something to the content' has superseded the view that the communications content 'does something to people', at least in the minds of those who favour the interactive approach. The notion of source intent is clearly not without problems. The relationship (between content and audience) to message content whereby the 'exposure tradition' holds that power is in the content, whereas the 'gratification tradition' holds that power is in the hands of the audience. The 'interactive tradition' has power with both.

4 Focus on co-orientation, whereby to avoid problems with fidelity the communicator can opt for a closed text to avoid misreading, misunderstanding and so on. This, of course, ignores social and other contexts people necessarily operate in and that might produce multiple meanings because messages get 'contextualized'.

Buttle therefore condemns the usual marketing communications theory as ill informed and narrowly focused. The danger in educational/learning terms is that lecturers think that this is what students need in order to be practitioners. Much of this is steeped in 1940s and 1950s thought, with many important parameters unaccounted for and ignored. In a sense one can argue that such parameters are accounted for within the notion of 'realm of understanding/field of experience' as depicted in Figure 2.2.

Realm of understanding/field of experience

This is often included in representations of the marketing communications process to indicate the possibilities of overlap between sender and receiver so that 100 per cent commonness of field of experience – what Shimp (1997), calls 'perceptual field' – is a possibility. It is in this light that one cannot escape the feeling of opportunities being lost through not pursuing greater understanding of such effects. The marketing communicator, it could be argued, has a lot to gain from the participation of a broader spectrum of professionals such as sociologists, anthropologists, semioticians, cognitive scientists and, even, psychoanalysts. This is a qualitative shift that suggests 'a new phase in the attempts to penetrate the secrets of the black box' (Mattelart and Chanan, 1991).

Dealing with both the theoretical and applied side of semiotics, Hetzel and Marion (1995a; 1995b) are concerned for its use in consumer marketing research. They use Fouquier's 1984 work to depict the communication process in terms of the 'field of semiotic description' (Hetzel and Marion, 1995a). The way in which the semiotician tackles the real world is by seeking to describe not what is real but that which is constructed in and by a particular discourse. Self-images of senders
and receivers and the constructed world must be taken into account. The act of communication therefore moves to a constructivist position from an ontologist position. Semiotic reality is the reality of language (used in the widest sense of the word) and its goal is to build models that are constructed with a certain meaning. This might be in a piece of film or architecture or, indeed, an advertising image or corporate identity. Constructed cultural objects allow for communication, with varying degrees of success, in this research paradigm where language is used as a model for all forms of cultural discourse, and therefore semiologists borrow from the structural linguists (principally de Saussure) of the first half of the twentieth century. Language is seen as a whole system of rules governing the selection and combination of different signs out of which meaning is produced. Since the transfer of meaning is fundamental to marketing communications, there is much to be gained for the marketing communicator from its study and use (see Chapter 6).

The range of research techniques available to researchers is vast but possibly the most common form is the focus group. Projective techniques, often seen as the pariah of marketing research because of their lineage with largely discredited motivation research techniques from marketing’s early days, have gained some credibility through their use in focus groups by large companies like Guinness. The use of such techniques form Peter Cooper’s viewpoint to fit the product to the message and the message to the product. Peter Cooper is a psychologist with vast experience of consumer research of this sort. Cooper gets participants to cut up pieces of magazine images in order to explore the personalities of brands of chocolates such as All Gold and Dairy Box. Research like this, it is argued, allows the researcher to explore how a brand expresses itself. Cooper uses role-play as a means of exploring ways of segmenting markets and developing brand personalities. This is illustrated by its application to the market for painkillers, where the market can be broken into those consumers who would prefer pain to be attacked and driven