

## **Eseosa Imade | What is Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)? | 09/22/2021**

As media use grows rapidly, organizations need to maintain consistent messaging to enable brand equity, reputation, and loyalty across all communication channels. In the 1970s and 1980s, there was a significant shift by advertising agencies to merge advertising, public relations, and sales promotion to cut down on budgets and reduce costs (Duncan & Caywood, 1996). This was also a result of the inadequacies found in the structural conditions (Fill, 2001). They referred to this as the “new advertising” without acknowledging that it was Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) (Duncan & Caywood, 1996). IMC fully emerged in the twentieth century and is definitely here to stay with the increase in the use of multimedia and technology (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010). There has been a growing need to satisfy customers’ wants and needs by engaging in consistent messaging across social media channels (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010). The need for IMC is essential as countries are becoming interdependent and globalization is taking over (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010). Fam *et al.* (2007) observed that IMC combines media channels to achieve the best communication results. Organizations have moved from using different messages and media channels to aligning with one messaging to cut costs and solve their customer’s needs (Fill, 2001). IMC is the integration of promotional tools; it is a mix of public relations and advertising (Fill, 2001).

IMC consists of marketing promotional mix, organization stakeholders, business strategy, and outsource provider (Fill, 2001). However, IMC must have one basic requirement, which is consistency in messaging, because it would nurture relationships and customer loyalty (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010). In summary, IMC is the process of managing brand messaging and communication across various media channels to achieve organisations’ goals (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010). There are numerous definitions and concepts on IMC; however, it has been a

hassle for academicians and scholars to agree on a common definition over the years (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010). Hence, Kitchen and Burgmann (2010) highlighted five primary attributes that define IMC: 1) Consumers are the focus of communication effort; 2) The customers should be the center of marketing strategy and campaigns; 3) Organisations should build human connections with their consumers; 4) Communication messages should have an integrated call-to-action strategy for consumers; 5) Also to enable clear point of difference among brands, there must be clear coordination between communication channels (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010).

Today, IMC has shifted to building connections with customers, retailers, intermediaries, and manufacturers through effective product marketing (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010). Also, due to the increase in globalization, there has been a demassification of the market (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010). Consumers can now get information from almost anywhere without waiting to hear from manufacturers or organizations, leading to high competition amongst brands (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010).

Overall, IMC has helped brands position their products and services to the right audience. IMC has given a direction on strategic marketing and communication, given clarity on building brand equity and reputation through effective and consistent messaging. IMC has also helped brands increase revenue and financial growth (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010).

## REFERENCES

- Duncan, T., & Caywood, C. (1996). The concept, process, and evolution of integrated marketing communication. *Integrated communication: Synergy of persuasive voices, 13024*, 13-34.
- Fam, K. S., Merrilees, B., Yu, H., & Jozsa, L. (2007). What Drives Small Retailers to Adopt an Integrated Marketing Communications Approach? In *2007 International Conference on Service Systems and Service Management* (pp. 1-6).  
<https://doi.org/10.1109/ICSSSM.2007.4280211>.
- Fill, C. (2001). Essentially a Matter of Consistency: Integrated Marketing Communications. *Marketing Review, 1*(4), 409-425. <https://doi.org/10.1362/1469347002562588>.
- Kitchen, P. J., & Burgmann, I. (2010). *Integrated marketing communication*. Wiley international encyclopedia of marketing. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444316568.wiem04001>.