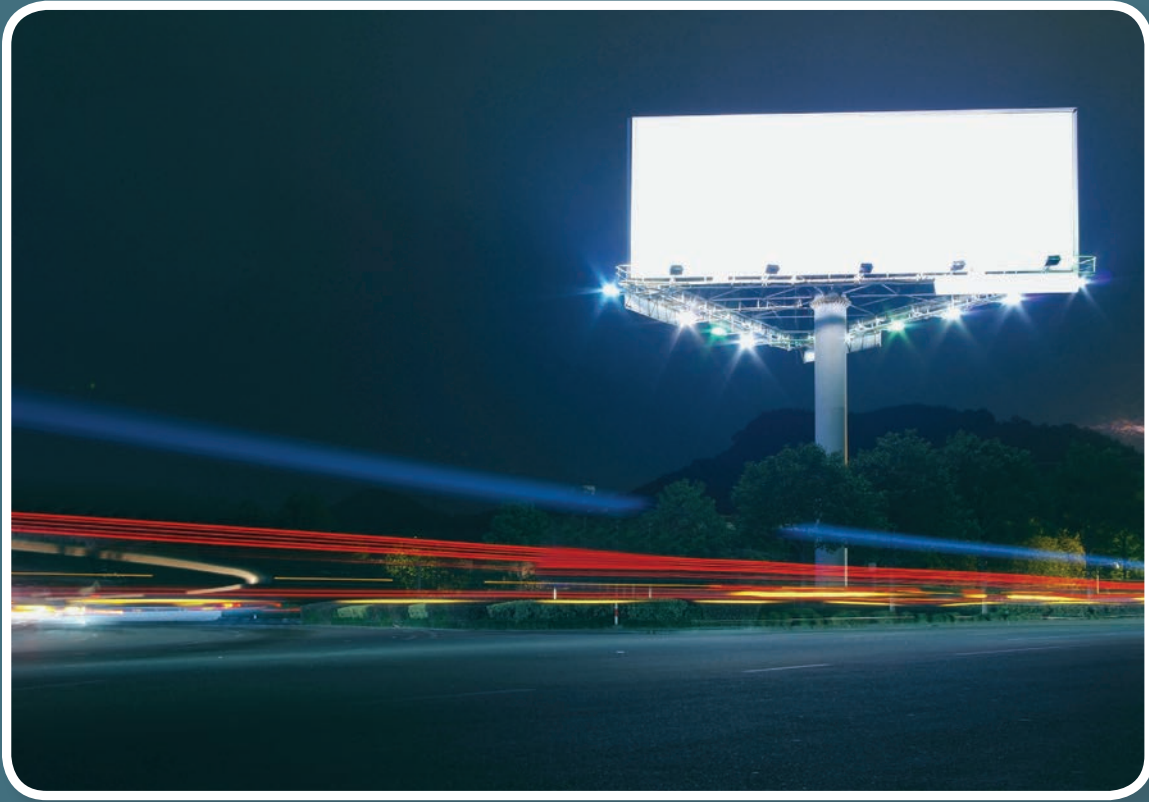




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Learning Objectives

Upon completing this chapter the student will be able to:

- Explain the current IMC landscape and environmental scanning.
 - Identify the main trends that will impact IMC in the future.
 - Discuss the changing consumer and the impact on IMC.
 - Discuss how the IMC industry is changing.
 - Explain best practices in developing the IMC plan.
-

Pre-Test

1. Which companies will have the most success in the new marketplace?
 - a) Those whose planning models put consumers at the top
 - b) Those who have the best balance of principles and profits
 - c) Those who understand how to deal with international competition
 - d) Those who have the most integrated marketing communications
2. Because consumers today shop multiple channels, _____ is being developed to help them access a company seamlessly across all communication platforms.
 - a) omni-channel marketing
 - b) multichannel marketing
 - c) customer-engagement marketing
 - d) environmental scanning
3. What is one reason consumers have more power today than ever before?
 - a) They have more brand loyalty and thus companies want to please them.
 - b) Social media allows them to express their approval and disapproval of companies.
 - c) They are more diverse than ever before.
 - d) Lifespans are lengthening in the developing world, and older people have the most purchasing power.
4. What key quality separates businesses that succeed from those that fail?
 - a) The ability to respond to change
 - b) Digital experience
 - c) Collaborative consumption
 - d) IMC planning best practices
5. How should IMC professionals prepare for busy executives or clients who want a brief overview of the IMC plan?
 - a) Create an executive summary and an elevator pitch
 - b) Dress formally and prepare an in-depth presentation
 - c) Prepare just the IMC plan flowchart to share electronically
 - d) Train representatives from each department to bring along for executive summaries

Answers

1. a) Those whose planning models put consumers at the top. The correct answer can be found in Section 12.1
2. a) omni-channel marketing. The correct answer can be found in Section 12.2
3. b) Social media allows them to express their approval and disapproval of companies. The correct answer can be found in Section 12.3
4. a) The ability to respond to change. The correct answer can be found in Section 12.4
5. a) Create an executive summary and an elevator pitch. The correct answer can be found in Section 12.5

Introduction

After an IMC plan is completed, changes in the environment often prompt a change in marketing communications. Through environmental scanning, executives respond to changes in the environment. Two important environments that affect a company are the political environment and the social environment. Sometimes the company's response to these environments is good for the company but other times a spokesperson may do or say something that is inconsistent with the brand or an incident may occur that upsets consumers. A trend, seen in the past few years, is a company executive becoming involved in an issue within the political or social environment.

Recently, an executive entered the debate over gun control. On September 17, 2013, in response to changes in the political and social environments, Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks™, one of the nation's largest coffee shop retailers, announced a policy change. Mr. Schultz asked customers and consumers not to bring guns into Starbucks' stores (Strom, 2013). Mr. Schultz had been studying the changes in the gun control debate and was moved by the incidents at Sandy Hook Elementary School and at the Washington Navy Yard, both locations of mass shootings. Schultz assessed his consumer market and found that "... customers in many stores have been jarred and fairly uncomfortable to see guns in our stores, not understanding the issue and feeling that guns should not be part of the Starbucks experience, especially when small kids are around." Starbucks did not ban guns from stores, but requested that people leave their guns at home. Only time will tell if Starbucks made the correct decision in terms of sales and customer satisfaction.

Businesses are increasingly focusing on the political and social environments. While Starbucks™ customers have responded positively, sometimes companies experience mixed or negative results. The CEO of Chick-fil-A, Dan Cathy, expressed his personal belief against same-sex marriage. The company experienced a backlash from many consumers who support marriage equality. Other consumers applauded his remarks. Chick-fil-A executives released a statement in July 2012 stating that their intent is to leave the policy debate over same-sex marriage to the government and political arena (Donelan, 2012). Many organizations scan the political and social environments to determine whether to get involved.

This chapter focuses on the future of IMC. The chapter begins with a discussion of the current landscape and moves to a discussion of the future of IMC including trends, the changing consumer, and industry changes. As an IMC professional, it's important to understand the changes in order to create strategic responses that will strengthen the development and execution of the IMC plan. Two key components of this chapter include the concept of environmental scanning and the concept of keeping a customer focus. The last section of the chapter focuses on tips for preparing the IMC plan.



imagebroker.net/SuperStock

▲ Starbucks™ is one in a growing list of companies getting involved in political and social issues.

12.1 The Current Landscape and Environmental Scanning

In this section, the current landscape of IMC and the importance of environmental scanning to spot changes and trends are discussed.

The Cycle Continues

The integrated marketing communication plan has been completed. The plan has been executed and the evaluation and control functions have been put into place. The campaign is nearing an end. Now what? After development, execution, and evaluation and control of a plan, IMC professionals immediately begin working on the next campaign plan. The cycle of developing objectives, strategies, and tactics continues.

In the world of IMC, planning for the next campaign is essential. In this planning process, a key element of success is to return to the concept of environmental scanning. The IMC landscape is dynamic and changes occur often. Marketing managers must be ever vigilant in spotting changes and trends in technology, laws and regulations, and consumer attitudes, tastes, and perceptions.

The Current Landscape

Changes in advertising and IMC industries occur quickly. Advertising agencies have reinvented themselves and have become integrated marketing communications agencies addressing issues and problems that did not exist in the past. There has been a movement toward large media conglomerates that have become full-service businesses meeting the needs of companies by providing everything from research to development of IMC executions. There has been a tremendous movement toward the use of electronic and Internet marketing and social media. The IMC industry has responded by reorganizing businesses to address current and future problems and issues that will impact advertising and integrated marketing communications.

One issue that IMC professionals have been struggling to understand and respond to, has been the blurring of lines between electronic channels of distribution and integrated marketing communications. Because advertising and retailing often occur simultaneously online, it is important to utilize new methods of communication for these online channels. Online retailers for example, advertise on the sites where they sell products and services. Messaging to consumers can get confusing. Because of this, IMC planners are developing models for online point-of-sale communication as well as creating customer relationship management (CRM) programs to sell and communicate. Sites have added features such as the ability to speak to a sales representative in real time while shopping online. This is true integrated marketing communication because the shopper has access to sales promotions, product information, and a person to help when there is a question. Some companies, such as L.L. Bean, excel in this area. Others have a long way to go. Through methodical evolution, L.L. Bean has successfully integrated its catalog, brick and mortar stores, and online presence to create communication that is integrated across channels.

As tactics and strategies change to keep pace with the quickly changing industry environment, one thing hasn't changed—the importance of keeping the consumer at the center of the planning and execution. In her book, *Hitting the Sweet Spot*, Professor Lisa Fortini-Campbell (2001) explains “how consumer insights can inspire better marketing and advertising.” Based upon a thorough understanding of the needs and wants of consumers, IMC planners can more effectively target their campaigns toward those desires as opposed to marketing to statistics. In focusing on consumers, marketers and IMC planners can pinpoint what motivates consumers, on the consumers' hot buttons; these are the areas that Dr. Campbell calls the “sweet spot.”

The issue for marketing communicators is to understand the changing markets, the changing consumers, and the changing media. There are new economic realities that have forced more attention on the return on investment of marketing activities and IMC. New technologies have forced marketing professionals to learn more and generate more information. It has forced planners to think out of the box in terms of reaching and communicating with the customer base. Every day more competitors enter the marketplace, while many competitors leave the marketplace. Whether marketing communicators have to deal with new international competitors or competition from niche marketers, the competitive environment is also changing. Customer wants and needs are changing, as well as the customers themselves. Customers have more brand choices, product choices, store choices, channel of distribution choices, and choices on how they receive their marketing communications and other information. Consumers have grown up with convenience and continue to demand it.

The successful marketers and marketing communicators will be the ones that focus on the customer. The companies that put consumers and consumer insight at the top of their planning models will be those that are the most successful in the new marketplace.

Environmental Scanning

Earlier in the text the concept of environmental scanning was presented. When beginning a campaign, environmental scanning helps to identify problems, issues, and changes in a company's business environment. Environmental scanning is relevant throughout the implementation and after the campaign has run. The concept behind undertaking an environmental scanning program is to identify environmental changes and create strategic solutions that will mitigate the impact of the change, or take advantage of the change.

The marketing communicator's environment will include individuals that are attempting to adapt to change, environmental forces that will impact change, and environmental forces that come in the form of a crisis. In order to develop a system to track and deal with changes, marketing communicators must be flexible. There must be a system of continuous input from personnel. The organizational structure must be flexible and created for continuous input. Employees must be creative, knowledgeable, and flexible in order to deal with the change. Environmental forces come in many different disguises and it's up to individuals to identify the change and the significance of the change.

Any change that emanates from the environment and that has the possibility of impacting the marketing communication activities of a firm or agency is an environmental force. When looking at the IMC environment, IMC professionals want to concentrate on any change external to the company or agency and decide on its importance, and the time needed to modify or join the change. These environments are uncontrollable, thus IMC planners must have knowledge of the change, but must also create strategic responses that will deal with the change.

Environmental scanning can be as simple as setting up a Google Alert, or as complex as hiring individuals to continuously scan the social media environment looking for changes that will positively or negatively affect the company or brand. Many companies specialize in trend spotting, which is an environmental scanning process. These companies undertake research and act like futurists when it comes to predicting the next hot color or the next teenage style. Environmental scanning is proactive. Identify changes before, or while they occur, and develop strategic responses to deal with these changes. It saves time and money to deal with an issue before it becomes a problem, rather than waiting for the problem to occur and trying to put out the fire caused by the change.

Carnival Cruise Lines Responds to Changing Environment

Carnival Cruise Lines® used environmental scanning when it ran into a series of problems that caused negative publicity and caused sales to drop. Fires on two of the cruise ships in 2010 and 2012 resulted in a sales decline. The company immediately stopped advertising in order to create a strategic marketing communications response with the hope that customers would come back. Prior to the fires, the company used fun as a central theme in its IMC efforts. The tagline, “Fun for all. All for fun,” was used to express the theme.

Because this particular line of ships represented 30% of Carnival Corporation’s profits, something had to be done. The company experienced about a 10% sales decline. The company developed a new IMC campaign along with other changes, including a \$300 million upgrade to emergency power, fire safety technology, outreach to travel agents, and vacation guarantees that promise consumers 110% refunds if the consumer isn’t completely happy with the cruise vacation (Levere, 2013).

The company realized that the fun message would not play well when customers were unhappy and venting their anger on social media. Carnival developed a new advertising campaign with a focus on experiences that people have while on a cruise. According to Jim Berra, Carnival chief marketing officer, “Once the brand perception took a hit post-Triumph, we felt the strongest and most credible voice to convey what a cruise experience is truly like is the voice of the guests.” The company used social media to encourage people and former employees to post pictures of their experiences. The company received over 31,000 entries (Levere, 2013).



AP Photo/Carnival Cruise Lines/Andy Newman

A TV commercial shows people in different settings with picture frames, which contain images and videos that people submitted to the company via social media. A voice says, “We never forget the moments that matter. We hang them on our walls. We share them with everyone. And hold onto them forever.” The end of the ad shows a Carnival cruise ship as a voice asks, “Since the day we first set sail, millions of lasting moments have been made with us. What will yours be?”

The campaign is an integrated approach aimed toward communicating with consumers that all is well with Carnival, and that the consumer won’t have to worry about the vacation (guaranteed).

Here’s the television/social media spot: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkJn4_r7sng

As part of their environmental scanning process, mobile communication companies realized that customers prefer smartphones to cell phones. The cell phone market is on the decline. The downside for mobile communication companies is that this move may erode their traditional revenue-generating models. In response, these companies are developing new methods of generating revenue. AT&T is creating home management services, which will allow all connected appliances in a consumer’s home to manage consumers’ energy consumption and home security (Armshaw, 2013). Mobile communication companies have moved toward connecting objects as opposed to people.

As the marketing and business environments change, so must professionals in the integrated marketing communication industries. It is important to create an environmental scanning program that identifies change as it occurs. IMC planners and other marketing professionals may then develop strategic responses that will drive current and future business.

› Learning Check

Reflect on your learning by answering the following questions:

1. Which group do you think benefits the most from IMC, consumers or companies?
2. What are some ways companies can engage in environmental scanning?

12.2 IMC Trends

There are many trends that will affect IMC. Marketers should keep the following trends in mind when creating and maintaining the IMC plan and using the IMC flowchart. In this section, glocalization, omni-channel marketing, increased use of technology, personalization, content marketing, and real-time communications will be discussed. Let's take a look at each.

Glocalization

Companies are increasingly reaching a global audience and must not only customize their offering for the local market but must also adapt messages for global consumers. The Internet will continue to allow businesses to expand. New business models will be created as a result and will attract greater numbers of consumers. IMC managers will face challenges as they attempt to adapt communications to a global audience while maintaining relevance at the local level. The idea that a company adapts its marketing specifically for each location is called **glocalization**.

Glocalization Example

This trend spotter discusses the importance of “thinking global and acting local.”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5k0Me3hqc6k>

Omni-Channel Marketing

Integration of the multiple channels used by IMC professionals will continue to grow. The term, *omni-channel marketing*, has been used to describe the seamless approach to a consumer's ability to access a company across all channels simultaneously (Arthur, 2012). Companies will be able to track consumers across channels to better communicate with and deliver what consumers want. Having a comprehensive multichannel strategy will become more important for companies as consumers continue to shop multiple channels. New multichannel solutions will also be developed. In order to support multichannel experiences, marketers will need to make major changes (Deloitte LLP, 2012). Omni-channel marketing is becoming a trend. **Omni-channel marketing** is the improved version of multichannel marketing that allows consumers to move seamlessly across all communication platforms. According to Paul Elliot, managing partner of Rosetta, a customer-engagement agency:

It may seem like a simple task, but unifying the focus of a Fortune 500 retailer or manufacturer along these lines is a complex undertaking. First, you have to prioritize among hundreds of possible initiatives. Then you have to rethink the customer experience across

channels and devices, and build the communications web to bring it together, from conference room to showroom. Within the organization, you need to break down functional silos and create incentives for different departments to share data and sell products from every channel (Elliott, 2013).

The challenge for IMC professionals is integrating messages and pulling together the talent necessary to perform omni-channel marketing in a way that is relevant to consumers.

Technology

Technology has and will continue to influence the IMC field. Options such as mobile coupons and quick response (QR) advertising are already used. Smartphone technology will continue to be a major force in multichannel approaches. Channels available for selling are colliding, which will change the way consumers interact with brands. There will be more interactive technology, which engages the consumer and increases touch points between companies and customers. Wearable technology such as smartwatches and glasses that allow users to access the Internet will be more common. In 2013, Samsung released the first serious entry into the smartwatch category. The Galaxy Gear smartwatch alerts the wearer of notifications and updates. The smartwatch has a camera and a phone. Apple® and Google are set to follow with their own versions of smartwatches. The blurring of channels will increase as the omni-channel approach catches on. IMC professionals will have to discover ways to leverage new technologies.



Rainer Jensen/picture-alliance/dpa/AP Images

▲ A Samsung executive shows off the Samsung Galaxy Gear smartwatch.

Consumers will be able to shop whenever they choose as long as there is an Internet connection. There are already virtual stores in subway systems in South Korea where consumers can order products by waving their smartphones at barcodes. The products are delivered before the consumer arrives at home (Swartz, 2012). Technology will make it easier to predict what consumers want. For example, Target scans purchases and email activity on Target.com to determine when a customer is pregnant. Then it targets specific products to appeal to the expectant families (Duhigg, 2012). Concerns about data privacy and security will continue to challenge marketing professionals. For consumers, the

trade-off between privacy and convenience is a concern. Companies will continue to invest in security and will increase public relations efforts to educate consumers on how their information is protected.

Technology-Based IMC Tools

The online world has brought new methods of reaching and communicating with customers. IMC professionals have found search engine optimization (SEO) and pay-per-click (PPC) effective marketing tools. Table 12.1 shows other technology-based IMC tools that companies will embrace (Jantsch, 2012).

Table 12.1 Trends: Technology-based tools for IMC professionals

Tool	Description
Conversion rate optimization (CRO)	Allows IMC planners to understand how effective their website marketing is. This metric will probably be used in order to prove effectiveness of online marketing communications.
Contextual advertising	A company's advertisements are matched with Web content in order to place the ads in areas related to the company's business.
Run of site (ROS)	ROS allows an ad or banner to appear on any page of a website. No matter which page consumers are on, they will see the ad.
Permission marketing	Companies or organizations ask Web users' permission to place advertisements on the users' personal websites. The thought is that if consumers are willing to have the ad on their site, they are more likely to react with the ad.
Remarketing	Remarketing is also referred to as retargeting. When a user visits a company or organization's website, a cookie is placed on the user's computer. Wherever the user searches online, the company's ads will pop up, keeping the user connected with the website.
Dayparting	Just like with advertising media buys, online advertisers are moving toward dividing the Web into day parts. In dayparting, advertisers or IMC professionals set up advertisements to appear during certain periods of the day. Ads will run when the targeted audience is online, giving the ads more eyeballs. It also allows advertisers to run ads when consumers are ready to purchase. For example, an advertiser may run ads for breakfast products during the early morning day part, inducing consumers to eat or drink the advertiser's products.

Personalization

The amount of information collected on consumers will continue to grow. For example, Facebook scans over a 105 terabytes (one terabyte = about one trillion bytes, or 1,024 gigabytes) of data every 30 minutes. There are 500 terabytes of new data ingested on a daily basis via Facebook (Tam, 2012). The amount of data a smartphone can hold is steadily increasing, allowing consumers to store music, books, and movies on their mobile devices. Marketers will expand the use of consumer data to provide more personalized shopping experiences. The information will be used to segment customers and manage customer relationships. As a result, customers will expect more personalized experiences.

Personalization also helps companies create a brand experience and engage the customer in a “brand story.” According to Interbrand (2013), “Now that the idea of shopping can't be managed as an event, the brand experience is too important—and holds too much promise—to be ignored.”

Many companies will use customization to increase sales and gain customer loyalty. For example, Bath Junkie (www.bathjunkie.com) allows customers to create their own lotions, soaps, and body washes by mixing and matching hundreds of different fragrances.

Related to personalization is “subscription commerce” where people subscribe to a service that delivers product(s) on a monthly basis. Companies such as Dollar Shave Club (razors), Wittlebee (kids clothes), JustFab (shoes), Doorganics (organic food), The Honest Company (children's clothing and accessories), and Blissmo Breakbox (snack food) have grown in members.

Consumer Trust

Mindreader (<http://mindreader.mindshareworld.com/>) is a study from Mindshare, a global media company that asks digital consumers from around the world a series of questions. These are the United States' results from the question, "Who/Which do you trust?" The percentage shows the combined totals of the "trust" and "strongly trust" categories (Mindreader, 2013).

Trust or Strongly Trust

- Car salespeople 5%
- Celebrities 7%
- Advertising 8%
- The media 12%
- Online reviews 36%

These numbers and figures become important to marketing communicators as they plan for upcoming campaigns. Consumer trust in many areas of IMC is low. Therefore, IMC professionals must make sure they have the pulse of their marketplace prior to developing and executing any plans.

Content Marketing

A dominant trend in terms of marketing communication is content marketing. According to the Content Marketing Institute (2013), "**Content marketing** is a marketing technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience—with the objective of driving profitable customer action." In essence, content marketing is about using content to build relationships. Types of content include (DeMers, 2013):

- Blog posts
- Guest blog posts
- E-books
- PowerPoint presentations
- Podcasts
- Social media posts
- Live presentations
- White papers
- Webinars
- Micro-videos
- Email newsletters
- Web-based newsletters

Many businesses are already using content marketing but the challenge is in making the content genuine, relevant, and customer focused. To be successful in content marketing, IMC professionals must understand their customers more than ever before. It becomes important to build context for individual consumers so that people are excited and entertained at the right place and time which ultimately results in higher levels of brand loyalty and sales.

Hyperspots

As media channels continue to proliferate and fragment, evidence shows that consumers and shoppers respond well to nondisruptive product placement, but its deployment is scarce. Brand owners share of online ad spending is declining despite the fact that brand owners are among the top total spenders across all media types. The industry is bombarding consumers and shoppers with marketing messages. An interesting development is being offered by a company called 3S Media Solutions. 3S is developing advanced technology that uses “hyperspots” in assisting consumers with marketing communication and driving sales through product integration. According to Scott Mahoney, one of the partners and principals of the company, “The bottom line is that the consumer audience will do what it wants, how and where it wants to and so the approach and the model has to change” (Mahoney, 2013).

The concept is to allow advertisers or brand owners the ability to create new, or enhance existing video clips with clickable product placement links. The technology will allow clicked interest to be shared and go viral. This will indicate customer interest to companies and allow companies to react to previously unrecognized consumer interest in near real time. Consumer response in terms of click-through rates and conversion rates should increase by factors of 20 or even more. According to Mahoney, that is exactly what clients have proven with the Hyperspots™ platform from Sherpa Technologies. Hyperspots™ is an enabling technology platform that allows advertisers and brand owners to create and manage clickable, viral product placement in all types of digital media without having to change the original file. “Hyperspots InterestGraphics™ allows advertisers and brand owners to detect previously unknown consumer demand and react in near real time to satisfy it by tracking where people click that isn’t linked yet and then allowing objects to be linked after the fact and immediately available virally.” The concept is to “...allow consumers ‘advertising by choice’ while providing advertisers and brand owners to take back control of their digital advertising revenue with vastly improved response rates!” according to Mahoney (2013). Old models may not work in new media. Advertisers are trying very hard to get consumers’ attention. That’s why ads are so intrusive. The harder advertisers try, the less effective their ads are because consumers learn to ignore them. Hyperspots makes advertising a choice. Consumers make that choice by clicking on anything they see in a picture or video, which they might be curious about. It is basically permission-based selling.

Hyperspots Example

The video below illustrates how hyperspots work. As you watch the video click on any area and information comes up on where to buy the item.

<http://www.3smediasolutions.com/>

Big Data Analytics

According to McKinsey, a global consulting firm, the quantity of the world’s data doubles every two years. As a result, a trend with marketing-oriented companies is to embark on **big data analytics**, which is the process of examining large amounts of data of a variety of types (big data) to uncover patterns and correlations (Tech Target, 2012). Those companies that are able to manage extremely large volumes of data will have a competitive advantage because they are better equipped to make informed decisions and can predict how consumers will react to IMC efforts.

Big data is described as “massively parallel software running on tens, hundreds, or even thousands of servers” (Jacobs, 2009). IMC professionals will face challenges in finding the best technology and hiring people that know how to manage big data analytics. Additionally, the monetary investment will make big data analytics more difficult for smaller businesses to adopt.

Big Data Explained

This video explains big data characteristics, technology, and opportunities:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7D1CQ_LOizA

Characteristics of big data include volume, velocity, and variety. Big data systems are able to analyze massive volumes of data very quickly (velocity) and of a wide variety (photos, location data, product data, and consumer data). Traditional systems are not able to analyze the massive amounts of data available; therefore, much information is not captured or is altogether ignored. Big data allows companies to better understand consumer behavior and to better allocate resources.

› Learning Check

Reflect on your learning by answering the following questions:

1. What are the greatest challenges with glocalization?
2. Why is content marketing so important?
3. How will big data analytics transform IMC?

12.3 The Changing Consumer

As the IMC environment continues to evolve, so does the consumer—it can be a challenge to keep pace. In this section, we discuss the changes in three areas: consumer power, consumer diversity, and the sharing economy.

Consumer Power

The availability of information via the Internet has empowered consumers to demand fairness in transactions. In addition, consumers are placing more value on their time and are increasingly intolerant of companies that do not respect their time. In general, consumers are more demanding and seek ways to control the shopping situation. As a result, consumers may become brand loyal and more willing to go elsewhere to shop when their demands are not met. Social media has given consumers a platform to display their likes and dislikes of companies, products, and brands, which gives them power never before experienced.

Diversity

Understanding the diverse base of consumers is increasingly important. Although diversity has always been a part of the environment, its magnitude continues to intensify. Culture, race, ethnicity,

and the changing composition of the family are just a few aspects of diversity that companies must consider. Marketing communicators need to understand religious diversity. Many food retailers have aisles of food dedicated to ethnic and religious preferences. Communicating to customers in different languages will continue to be addressed.

The growth of the world's population and the lengthening lifespans of people in developed countries will also impact marketing. Growth in the health care industry and a wealth of new products geared toward an increasingly older population will cause companies to pay more attention to these groups.

Brands that Are Trending

While watching general trends is important, IMC planners also need to understand the competition and what's trending in reference to brands and products offered by others. In 2010, NBCUniversal Integrated Media Company launched the Brand Power Index (or BPI). The brand power index was created to develop an understanding of which brands were trending. The BPI ranks the top 500 trending brands. Below are some brands that had great increases in their BPI from 2011 to 2012 (Brandweek Report, 2013):

- **Burger King®.** Burger King has moved up the rankings and saw an 18% jump from 49 to 40. It was in 2012 that Burger King introduced its healthier menu. The move was accompanied by key spokespeople such as David Beckham and Sofia Vergara. The spokespeople resonated with fast-food consumers and Burger King's business and brand grew as a result of great environmental scanning and intuitive marketing communications.
- **Starbucks™.** Starbucks saw a huge jump in its ranking from 37 to 28, a 30% change. What drove this? Starbucks is a company with great environmental scanning. Executives have a very good idea of who their customers are. Starbucks instituted a mobile payment plan and invested \$25 million into the initiative. As a result, Starbucks resonated with customers who prefer to pay for their coffee with their mobile devices.
- **Red Bull.** Red Bull saw a 16% jump in its ratings, moving it from 172 to 144 on the BPI. Red Bull, with a strong understanding of its market, created a sponsorship of the Austrian skydiver Felix Baumgartner. Baumgartner performed a space dive 24 miles above the earth. Red Bull's sponsorship, Red Bull Stratos, covered the event, which was streamed live via YouTube to over eight million people. Video viewing continued online and social media sites began to chatter, which created even more coverage in broadcast and other digital news channels. Red Bull's consumer base loved it, driving Red Bull to a higher profile and a better rating in the BPI.
- **Oreo®.** The Oreo brand was becoming a bit stale with Oreo occupying the 494th spot in the BPI. In 2012, Oreo jumped 49% into 198th place. Why the trending? The IMC masterminds behind the newest Oreo campaign (*The Daily Twist*) linked the cookie brand to current events over a 100-day period. The campaign was featured on all of Oreo's social media sites where it was played up. The campaign featured a Rainbow Oreo (Gay Pride Month), then a Shark Week cookie, followed



AP Photo/Red Bull Stratos

▲ Felix Baumgartner's space dive, sponsored by Red Bull.

(continued)

up by referrals to the Mars Rover, the Olympic Games® and Comic-Con. The final piece of the campaign was a crowdsourcing event in Times Square (NYC) where an ad was shot in real time. Consumers responded with new demand for the old product as the campaign resonated with them. It has become a new classic campaign.

- **Samsung.** Samsung invested in the talents of James Franco and made him its main spokesperson in ads, promotions, and other marketing communications executions. Franco was the correct choice for the market as he helped move Samsung up 25% in the BPI ratings.
- **Axe.** Axe spent many years researching its market, which was traditionally aimed toward men. With changes in the environment and with additional market share and sales available from women, Axe launched a product called Anarchy for Her with a fully integrated campaign. The campaign featured a branded interactive graphic novel which allowed consumers to vote on potential new characters for the show. This type of campaign has garnered strength among consumers and looks like a trend that will become medium length. The campaign increased Axe's BPI from 212 to 128.
- **Pine-Sol.** Although Pine-Sol typically targets women, in order to generate more sales, Pine-Sol created an IMC execution aimed toward men. The executions invited men to test Pine-Sol products. When the men arrived at the location of the test, they were surprised by the Pine-Sol Lady, who elicited shrieks of joy and surprise from the men. The ad was released virally and the comedy resonated with the audience, increasing Pine-Sol's BPI to 211, up from 241.
- **Old Spice®.** Another trend that resonates with consumers is co-branding. The Old Spice spokesman, Terry Crews, crashed into commercials for Bounty® and Charmin with the tag line that Old Spice was "... too powerful to stay in its own commercial." This co-branding effort increased Old Spice's BPI from 364 to 327.

Behavioral Changes

Because of increasing diversity and the redefinition of households, consumers are creating new "codes" or norms from which to operate. Although some carryover from past norms exists, new norms are slowly replacing many older norms, paving the way for new values. Thus, consumers have new codes of conduct and create norms and behaviors from situation to situation as they reinvent themselves (Scansaroli and Szymanski, 2002). Technology has changed people's behaviors in ways that could never be imagined. IMC professionals must track these changes and be responsive to the changing behaviors.

Because consumers have less time, they want to get the most out of the time they do have. In addition, consumers have developed a desire for more speed and excitement. On the other hand, consumers want to be left alone *when* they choose to be left alone. In other words, consumers will want both greater stimulation and greater sanctuary (Scansaroli and Szymanski, 2002). It is up to the marketer to create content with context so that customers are reached when and where they want to be.

Economic Pressures and Consumer Simplification

While debate continues on whether the United States is out of the recession, there is little doubt on how economic pressures have changed people's behaviors. People are seeking a work-life balance that affects their thoughts about material possessions. In short, many people are simplifying their lives. According to a study by the media group Mindshare, and reported in *Adweek*, the following changes are occurring that indicate consumers are simplifying (Moses, 2013).

- Fifty-three percent of the Mindshare study respondents indicated that a car was only a vehicle to get you from point A to point B. This may indicate a reduction in the number of people shopping for “upscale vehicles” with a return to compacts or smaller cars.
- A full 57% felt that social networks dilute the quality of human interaction. This may be a key finding for social media IMC professionals as they try not to be too intrusive into consumers’ lives.
- Brand sharing has declined. In 2010, 60% of study participants told the researchers that when they see or hear something interesting about a brand they like to pass it on to others. In 2013, only 53% said they would pass it along. This may have an impact on word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising or it may impact the social media plans that IMC planners have created.
- Only 36% of the respondents felt that a company that had been around for a long time was more trustworthy than a new company. It appears that consumers are developing negative attitudes toward larger, ingrained businesses. This may be an issue to be addressed in upcoming marketing communications.
- In 2009, 46% of respondents were very worried about the money they owed. That figure was reduced to 39% in 2013. This may indicate that consumers are becoming more open to spending, thus creating the need for marketers to communicate with consumers to inform them where they can spend that money.
- Fifty-one percent of the respondents felt they didn’t have enough time to do the things they wanted to do. This was down from 65% in 2009. Although fewer people report feeling that they have less time, the figure still reflects time-starved consumers and the need for companies to respect their time.
- Sixty percent indicated a good work/life balance, which was an increase of 7% from responses in 2009. This may point to an increase in communication for both work and leisure activities.
- Seventy-six percent of respondents prefer to enter as little data into a website as possible. With marketers trying to grab as much consumer information as possible, there may be a point where the consumer revolts and refuses to do business on a website that requires too much information. Smart IMC planners may want to team up with marketers and IT professionals to figure out a way to significantly reduce the amount of information required to shop online.
- Only 29% of respondents felt that their career defined who they were. This may mean less reliance on workplace information and more reliance on psychographic data.

The Sharing Economy

The **sharing economy** (also known as collaborative consumption) refers to a system that allows shared access to underutilized assets. Information technology is leveraged to allow individuals, companies, nonprofits, and governments to share information about rentals or asset trading opportunities. The idea is to increase value of the goods and services for all involved (Sundararajan, 2013). The sharing economy has prompted several new companies such as Airbnb (www.airbnb.com), Task Rabbit (www.taskrabbit.com), RelayRides (www.relayrides.com), and SnapGoods (www.snapgoods.com) all of which match owners (of things they are not using) with renters (who rent items such as rooms, cars, household goods). Users can even outsource tasks and errands. Technology used includes GPS technology, social networking sites, and online payment systems.

Technology reduces the transaction costs, which make sharing cost effective and easy (The Rise of the Sharing Economy, 2013). Growth in this business model will increase as people get more comfortable with the model and technology makes the sharing economy easier. For example, Airbnb matches thousands of people with rooms in 192 countries and over 30,000 cities. Beds are provided by private individuals at the prices decided by the owner.

Proponents of the model believe that collaborative consumption promotes environmental sustainability through more efficient use of resources (Brodwin, 2012). In the future, more companies and individuals will make a living through businesses based on the sharing economy.

The Sharing Economy

This video invites people to share in the sharing economy revolution:

<http://youtu.be/Ig31ELGDJ0Q>

› Learning Check

Reflect on your learning by answering the following questions:

1. How have you leveraged consumer power?
2. What types of behavioral changes do you make when the economy is weak?
3. What are advantages and disadvantages of a sharing economy?

12.4 Industry Changes

The many changes occurring in the technological and consumer environment are influencing the way agencies run. In this section, we look at two trends: automated buying systems and changing skill sets. The section ends with a discussion on the importance of market adaptability.

Automated Buying Systems

A movement toward automated buying systems is being explored. It was announced in August of 2013, that the advertising and marketing communications agency, Interpublic Group, is teaming up with many television and radio companies to build (and test) an ad-buying system that is fully automated. The system will be used for the purchase of radio and television advertisements (Vranica, 2013). Many other companies, such as NBCUniversal are watching the development. Because there have been complaints in the industry's environment in regard to the old system used for advertising sales, Interpublic began to research other methods for making buys. "There is so much intelligence and data out there, we have to capitalize on that and it cannot be restricted to digital media" according to Matt Seiler, CEO of the Interpublic Group. Seiler goes on to say, "Digital has paved the way for the reinvention of the rest of the media."

Source: Vranica, S., "Interpublic teams up with TV companies to build automated ad-buying system," *The Wall Street Journal*, (Aug 19, 2013). Copyright © 2013 DOW JONES & COMPANY, INC. Reproduced with permission.)

This is an indication that the processes used in buying advertising time may be changing for good. If automated buying systems are adopted by advertisers and IMC agencies, it will change the way that ads are purchased. This is not the first initiative of this type. In 2006, nine of the country's biggest advertisers got together to develop an online auction system, partnering with the online auction site eBay, in order to buy television advertising. The television networks refused to participate in the endeavor and it quickly failed (Vranica, 2013). This new trend has the support of the networks as well as many large advertisers. This trend is worth following.

Changing Skill Sets

With movement toward digital advertising, the intramarketing communication industry is changing a bit as well. The number of people employed in the industry is shrinking and the talent people that used to be a staple at most agencies, including media stars, creative directors, and others are not in demand. The advertising industry and those involved in the development and execution of integrated marketing communications plans are seeing a growth in digital expertise. According to a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* (Vranica and Stewart, 2013), “. . . Madison Avenue is increasingly a bastion of geeks: computer programmers, data heads, and quantitative analysts.” An advertising executive who returned from a two-year maternity leave noticed that in the two years she was gone, the industry had changed. “I’m 37 years old and extinct” she said. She indicated that the agencies were all looking for the same skill—digital experience.

For students of advertising and integrated marketing communications as well as professors of the same, it's a wake-up call to change the IMC curricula to include an expansion of digital courses as they relate to advertising and IMC. Students need to undertake coursework that will enhance their digital skills if they want to be employable in the industry.

Market Adaptability

The IMC field is exciting because there are so many changes that keep IMC professionals moving. Many changes will occur in marketing communications. Trends point toward dramatic change in technological and consumer environments. A key characteristic that separates successful businesses from failures is the capacity to respond to change. The key to staying competitive is **market adaptability**, which is knowledge about environmental changes and the ability to react to these changes in a way that benefits both the brand and the consumer. Critical components of adaptability include decentralizing decision making to more quickly adapt to consumer needs, streamlining processes, focusing on core competencies, implementing free exchange of information, and developing reward systems based on responsiveness to customers (H. R. Chally Group, 1998).

Companies that thrive in the face of a volatile environment are adaptive in their infrastructures, processes, and philosophy (The New Business . . . , 2003). It is imperative that new IMC professionals create comprehensive and integrated plans to leverage these changes.

› Learning Check

Reflect on your learning by answering the following questions:

1. How will technology change agency operations?
2. What skill sets will make a person more valuable in today's digital age?

12.5 Best Practices for the IMC Plan

As the integrated marketing communications plan is being developed for presentation, there are numerous issues involved in writing the plan. A series of best practices is provided in order to make the development of the IMC plan easier and more on point.

The last step in the development of the integrated marketing communication plan is to actually develop and write the plan. Typically, in marketing communications you will be asked for your IMC plan, plus you will be asked to present the overall plan. Presentations usually take one of three formats.

Often executives, clients, and others who have a stake in the IMC executions and planning want a quick overview of the plan. In other words, the plan must be presented in an executive summary format. An executive summary is essentially an abridged presentation of the plan. It is typically one-page (sometimes up to five depending on the length and comprehensiveness of the plan). The summary should include all aspects of the plan, in a short version. Don't include the marketing and advertising research that was undertaken, only the findings. Use bullet headings to reduce the amount of verbiage in the plan. Using this format, presentation time for a face-to-face or computer-based presentation is very short. These types of presentations are referred to as *elevator pitches* or *elevator talks*. They are called this because the presenter is only allowed a short period of time to make the presentation; the time it takes for an elevator to go from the bottom floor to the top floor. With this type of presentation, be very specific.

The typical advertising presentation or pitch is a bit longer. Typically, these pitches go from 20 minutes to an hour. With this type of presentation, stick to the facts. Rely heavily on the creative element of the plan in order to get the client's buy-in. Use audio and visual components to make the presentation splashy and fancy. Pay attention to detail. There can be no errors during the presentation. This is a formal presentation, it requires business attire. Be prepared to answer numerous questions and come prepared with all the research that was used to back up the plan.

After an elevator pitch or a typical pitch, the top IMC agencies will be called back to make an in-depth presentation. These can be daylong events and require more detail and more information in the presentation. It is a good idea to bring representatives from each department in order to effectively answer all the questions that will be asked.

In an oral presentation, the presenter's appearance and the plan's appearance are very important. There should be no mistakes on any of the presentation material, in the presentation itself, or in the written plan.

The integrated marketing communications plan will have much information, a great deal of data and research, plus numerous sections on executions. It must be easy to read and make sense. There should be a natural flow to the plan so all of those reading it understand why they should use the plan and what they are using the plan for.

Following are some great hints and tips to make your IMC plan effective:

- Make sure you utilize the templates provided throughout the text as an outline prior to putting the plan together. There must be continuity in the plan.
- "The Only Constant in the Universe is Change" (Ogden and Ogden, 2005). This means that the IMC plan must be dynamic. Things change. Adjust the IMC plan through the process of evaluation and control. There are almost always last minute changes in the environment, thus last minute changes in the plan.

- Tables, graphs, and figures are useful in an IMC plan. Flowcharts help readers understand what is presented. They also help the reader to understand the timing of the plan and the time necessary to develop a great plan.
- Choose simplicity over complexity when writing.
- Make sure the situation analysis is up-to-date and concise. The situation analysis should include facts, figures, data, and research. Do not guess.
- Reduce redundancy in the plan. Sometimes this is difficult and in certain areas material may have to be repeated, but overall, try not to say the same thing over and over.
- Don't use personal pronouns. Readers will know who wrote the plan.
- Begin and end with the most important aspects of the plan. Provide a rationale for all claims. Provide back-up research for the rationale.
- The executive summary goes at the beginning of the plan. Every plan should have one.
- Use primary research as much as possible to support claims.
- Make sure the objectives are on point. Use SMART objectives. What can't be measured can't be managed, so make sure the objectives are measurable.
- Show as many creative executions as possible within the creative sections of the plan. Often a side booklet or creative supplement can be used to reduce the length of the main plan, but provide creative support in a side document.
- Anything explained within the plan that is not common knowledge must have the source.
- Make sure you don't go over 60 pages (maximum plan length). Forty pages may be more reasonable.
- Check and recheck the media plan and media flowchart. The media plan must deliver the GRPs, reach, frequency, or other promised metrics. This is essential to reaching the plan's objectives.
- Include all measurement and evaluation tools used in the campaign. Justify why they were used. Explain how the plan will be controlled and evaluated should problems occur.
- Be sure that the entire campaign book/plan is integrated. Point out how synergy is achieved with this particular campaign.
- Point out the unique selling proposition or value proposition. Make sure to close the sale (or pitch). Explain why your plan should be used over all others. Focus on the target market.
- Be creative. Be positive. Stay focused

Summary and Resources

In this chapter, issues associated with the marketing environment were covered. In particular, the importance of understanding the marketing communications landscape was covered, followed by a discussion of the importance of environmental scanning. Trends in IMC were mentioned as well as changes in consumers. The IMC industry is also changing as technology transforms the way media is bought and new skills are required for success. The companies that are able to adapt quickly will prosper.

Finally, the chapter concluded with a series of best practices that IMC planners can use when developing their integrated marketing communications plans.

Post-Test

1. Which companies will have the most success in the new marketplace?
 - a) Those whose planning models put consumers at the top
 - b) Those who have the best balance of principles and profits
 - c) Those who understand how to deal with international competition
 - d) Those who have the most integrated marketing communications
2. Because consumers today shop multiple channels, _____ is being developed to help them access a company seamlessly across all communication platforms.
 - a) omni-channel marketing
 - b) multichannel marketing
 - c) customer-engagement marketing
 - d) environmental scanning
3. What is one reason consumers have more power today than ever before?
 - a) They have more brand loyalty and thus companies want to please them.
 - b) Social media allows them to express their approval and disapproval of companies.
 - c) They are more diverse than ever before.
 - d) Lifespans are lengthening in the developing world, and older people have the most purchasing power.
4. What key quality separates businesses that succeed from those that fail?
 - a) The ability to respond to change
 - b) Digital experience
 - c) Collaborative consumption
 - d) IMC planning best practices
5. How should IMC professionals prepare for busy executives or clients who want a brief overview of the IMC plan?
 - a) Create an executive summary and an elevator pitch.
 - b) Dress formally and prepare an in-depth presentation.
 - c) Prepare just the IMC plan flowchart to share electronically.
 - d) Train representatives from each department to bring along for executive summaries.
6. What are two recent changes in the IMC industry?
 - a) The growth of advertising agencies and the growth of full-service businesses
 - b) The movement toward media conglomerates and the increased use of electronic and social media
 - c) The movement toward the use of research and the movement toward individual branding of products
 - d) The rise of social media and the move away from environmental scanning

7. A user visits an organization's website, and thereafter sees that organization's pop-up ads whenever she searches the Internet. This is an example of
 - a) contextual advertising.
 - b) remarketing.
 - c) permissions marketing.
 - d) dayparting.
8. What two factors will contribute to growth in the sharing economy business model?
 - a) The model becoming more environmentally friendly, and the value of the goods and services increasing
 - b) The value of goods and services increasing, and prices being decided by renters
 - c) People becoming more comfortable with the model, and technology reducing the transaction costs
 - d) Technology increasing transaction costs, and underutilized assets being shared
9. Knowing about changes in the environment and being able to react to them in a manner beneficial both for the consumer and the brand is called
 - a) brand management.
 - b) market adaptability.
 - c) customer relations management.
 - d) behavioral change.
10. Why is it important to ensure that all of the objectives in an IMC plan are SMART objectives?
 - a) They are the first thing your plan's readers will see, so they are essential for making a good impression.
 - b) Something that can't be measured also can't be managed, so the objectives must be measurable.
 - c) Without measurable objectives, you won't be able to point out the value proposition.
 - d) If your objectives are not timebound, you will not be able to create a flowchart from them.

Answers

1. a) Those whose planning models put consumers at the top. The correct answer can be found in Section 12.1.
2. a) omni-channel marketing. The correct answer can be found in Section 12.2.
3. b) Social media allows them to express their approval and disapproval of companies. The correct answer can be found in Section 12.3.
4. a) The ability to respond to change. The correct answer can be found in Section 12.4.
5. a) Create an executive summary and an elevator pitch. The correct answer can be found in Section 12.5.
6. b) The movement toward media conglomerates and the increased use of electronic and social media. The correct answer can be found in Section 12.1.
7. b) remarketing. The correct answer can be found in Section 12.2.
8. c) People becoming more comfortable with the model, and technology reducing the transaction costs. The correct answer can be found in Section 12.3.

9. b) market adaptability. The correct answer can be found in Section 12.4.
10. b) Something that can't be measured also can't be managed, so the objectives must be measurable. The correct answer can be found in Section 12.5.

Key Ideas

- A change in the environment in which a business operates often requires changes to the organization's IMC plan. It is extremely important that a company designs, develops, and implements a system to assess the environment.
- Environmental scanning is the system that is used in order to identify changes in the marketing and marketing communication environments.
- A consumer's "sweet spot" is a "hot button" that motivates him or her to purchase a product or service. By focusing on a consumer's sweet spot, IMC professionals can develop campaigns that are more effective in getting consumer awareness and engagement.
- The concept behind environmental scanning is to be proactive. Try to identify trends and changes in the environment before they occur or while they're occurring. IMC professionals develop strategic responses to the changes prior to the change, thus they are proactive and ready to continue the campaign.
- Glocalization is the attempt at selling products and services worldwide while keeping the brand's relevance at the local level. With an increase in international business, this trend is important to watch.
- Because businesses are moving to omni-channels of distribution, IMC planners will be faced with the task of developing IMC campaigns that are inclusive of all the channels of distribution.
- Technology is one of the most important environments that impacts IMC. With changes in consumer viewing habits, changes in where consumers get information, and changes in the consumer, IMC planners must have knowledge of the latest and greatest technologies that will drive communications.
- Consumers are demanding more and more personalization. With the increase in data and information available to IMC planners, there must be a movement with continuous improvement toward personalizing messages for consumers.
- Content marketing is an up-and-coming trend. The key to great content marketing is to make sure the material presented is relevant, genuine, and customer-focused.
- Consumers are changing and IMC planners must respond to those changes. Some of the consumer changes include the increased power of consumers who now have access to information about products, brands, companies, etc. Another change to the consumer base is the increased amount of diversity. As markets become more diverse, it becomes harder to target messages.
- Business models are also changing. Technology is driving many changes in the way companies do business. IMC professionals must adapt and modify their current models to include the new models their clients will be using or face going out of business.
- The pitch to the client is very important. Make sure you've looked over the long list of tips to help develop and present an effective, creative, seamless, and synergistic plan for your potential clients.

Key Terms

big data analytics The process of examining large amounts of data of a variety of types to uncover patterns and correlations.

content marketing A marketing technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage customers and improve profitability.

contextual advertising Allows search engine advertisers to place ads in webpages, blog posts, and other news articles that are related to a company's business by matching Web content with advertised search terms.

conversion rate optimization (CRO) Allows marketing communicators to see how effective their communications are in converting customers to consumers online.

dayparting The process of dividing the day into different segments. IMC executions run during the day parts when the target market is most receptive.

glocalization The idea that a company adapts its marketing specifically for each location.

market adaptability Knowledge about environmental changes and the ability to react to these changes in a way that benefits both the brand and the consumer.

omni-channel marketing The improved version of multichannel marketing that allows consumers to move seamlessly across all communication platforms.

permission marketing Asking users' permission to place advertisements on their websites.

remarketing (retargeting) The process of reaching people after they have visited a company or organizational website. As the user searches the Web, advertisements for the company or organization's site pop up to keep the user connected to the company (organization) site.

run of site (ROS) When an advertisement is placed on pages inside a website allowing consumers to see the ad no matter which webpage they visit.

sharing economy (collaborative consumption) A system that allows shared access to underutilized assets.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is an understanding of a consumer's sweet spot so important for marketers? What role will this sweet spot play in the development of the next IMC campaign?
2. Discuss three IMC trends that you believe will have the most impact on the industry.
3. How does the consumer shape what companies do with their marketing communications? Give an example.
4. What can you do in school to make sure your skills set are valued when you seek employment?
5. Referring back to the beginning of the chapter, did Mr. Howard Schultz, the CEO of Starbucks™, make the right decision in deciding how his company would respond to the environmental issue of gun control? Defend your answer. Do you feel that consumers should follow

the Starbucks policy? What would you do if you were a Starbucks' employee and a customer came into your coffee shop with a gun?

Critical Thinking Exercises

1. Go online and search for online retailers. Select three of the retailers. Based upon their online catalogs, what do you think their customers' sweet spots are? Do you feel the retailers have researched their consumers to have a better understanding of the consumers' wants and needs? Why or why not? What indications are there that each retailer understands their customers' sweet spots?
2. Research recent news events. Which of these events, do you feel will have an impact on marketing communication? Why? Do you feel that any of these events should be watched? Which do you feel will turn into long-term trends? Prepare a report that discusses these issues. Make a case for the events you feel will be important for IMC professionals.
3. Select any consumer company. Prepare an overview of that company's consumer base. From the information you've generated, what do you feel this company's consumer sweet spot looks like? Prepare a one-page brief on the sweet spot. Be prepared to defend your thoughts.
4. Click on the link for 3S Media Solutions: <http://www.3smediasolutions.com/> Watch the clip of *The Hills*. What are your thoughts on the hyperspot technology? Do you feel this will be a lasting or long-term IMC trend or do you feel it will be a short-lived trend or fad? Defend your thoughts.

Continuing Project

The marketing communications plan is completed and being executed. It's time to begin looking for problems and environmental changes that may have an impact on your marketing communications plan. In the spaces listed below, please enter all information available to help assess trends and changes in the marketing communications environment.

1. Based on your integrated marketing communications plan, list all environments that may have an impact or that are relative to your IMC plan.
2. Do the following:
 - a) Identify potentially relevant environmental changes that impact your business and industry.
 - b) Monitor these changes. Determine the nature of the change. What is the direction of the change? What's the rate of change? What do you feel will be the magnitude of the environmental force on your IMC planning?
 - c) Forecast the probability that the change will actually occur. What is the probability of the change's impact? What is the timing of the change? What are the potential consequences if the change occurs (to your business or organization)?
 - d) Develop and list your strategic responses to that change. In other words, what will you do to stop or mitigate the damage from the change? Is it a positive change? How will you take advantage of this change and make the change work for you?

Additional Resources

Content Marketing Institute: <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/what-is-content-marketing/>

Mindshare Mindreader Survey: <http://mindreader.mindshareworld.com/about>

CMO.com–Digital marketing insight for chief marketing officers: <http://cmo.com/>

Tech Target–Resource for online technology buyers: <http://www.techtarget.com/html/resources.html>

World Future Society: <http://www.wfs.org/>

The Futurist (magazine): <http://www.wfs.org/futurist>

Case Study: Celebrities Endorse Junk Food

When developing brands it's important to make sure that all aspects of the brand follow the organizational mission and vision. As times change, marketing communication professionals must also change. In a recent study from Yale, Stanford, Duke, and Harvard universities, researchers found that many superstar athletes were endorsing food and beverage products that were unhealthy (Bragg et al., 2013).

The study found that, of 512 brands endorsed by 100 athletes, 122 were for food and beverages (McVean, 2013). Most of the food products were “energy-dense and nutrient-poor.” Many groups and organizations within the United States reacted to the report in a negative manner. Although many groups have responded negatively to advertising aimed toward children in the past, this may be the first time that star athletes have come under scrutiny for the products they endorse. In particular, a spokesperson from the Dietitians for Professional Integrity said that he found the ads irresponsible because so many children looked up to sports stars. The World Health Organization has a policy that limits young people's exposure to food advertising.

The report suggests that athletes should not condone the use of unhealthy food, especially when children see the advertisements. The researchers noted that tobacco companies had a history of advertising with athletes until the industry adopted a voluntary advertising code in 1964 that stated the industry would not (or should not) use athletes in its ads.

Star athletes like Peyton Manning and LeBron James earn millions of dollars a year with endorsements. The market responds to these star endorsers by purchasing billions of dollars of endorsed products every year.

Critical Thinking Questions:

1. How should the producers of junk food products respond to these criticisms?
2. You're the chief marketing officer of one of these companies. In terms of environmental scanning, what issues do you see that could possibly have an impact on your company?
3. How would you respond to this new wave of publicity?
4. Do celebrity spokespeople influence purchasing? Why or why not?

