

Integration Is Key To Marketing Campaign Effectiveness

The phrase “The whole is greater than the sum of the parts” is never more appropriate than as part of a discussion of integrated marketing campaigns. No matter how you slice it, by media type, by audience, by offer type or any other way, multiple approaches working together with common offers, common brand and common goal will be much more effective than any of those single efforts, and even more than all of them working independently. At the risk of using an overused term, there is “synergy” to be gained by driving all efforts under the same flag.

Integration offers several key benefits, which as marketers we can scarcely afford to ignore.

1. **Cost-effectiveness.** If a greater return (be it registrations, hits, impressions, memberships, sales, etc.) is gained by fewer outgoing exposures (mail pieces, ads, radio spots, e-mails, phone calls) because they work together and support each other, then the results have been obtained for less expense. More for less is the goal, and this hits it squarely.
2. **Breadth of Coverage.** If point one is true (and we stipulate that it is) then the corollary is that for the same cost, you can reach out to even broader audience. This spreads the brand and the offer further, which can be beneficial to the next effort beyond this initial one, preconditioning the new audience to respond the next time they are touched.
3. **Brand Strength.** Based on point two, if you are reaching more people with an integrated campaign, the pieces supporting each other, the brand impression is strengthened with each hit – overlap is more likely, and the impression is stronger with each hit as a result – there’s no disconnect between impressions depending upon the piece to which the audience is exposed.

Some of the strength of campaign integration comes down to brand control. Harley Davidson has one of the strongest brands on earth, and its customers and fans are among the most loyal purchasers around. One reason for that effect is that the brand itself is so highly protected. All licensing is strictly enforced, and that HD moniker in all its various forms can ONLY appear on products that fit the brand profile. That kind of control creates a strong continuity. That brand on any product means that you can expect a certain level of quality, a certain outward attitude, a certain value and an appeal that competing products don’t have. An integrated campaign uses that same power of continuity and of meeting expectation as part of its effectiveness.

Another big strength of integrating a campaign is to drive more response from the fringes of the target at no additional cost. If each segment of a campaign is independent, some slivers of the audience may slip through the resulting cracks in coverage between segments. If one medium fails to reach and motivate a member of the target population, if another does hit at a later time, the recognition level will be lower because the look, feel, fit, offer or appearance are not the same. No gain for that second piece. On the other hand if that first effort hits but fails to motivate, when the second, but integrated hit comes

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along, it has higher chance of being effective and motivating a usable response, because the recognition level is higher.

It's All About Levels

Integration can be achieved on a number of levels. Ideally, a tight effective campaign should be tied together on all of them to maximize return on investment.

Level 1 – Appearance

All pieces in all mediums (except radio) should have a similar look and feel to them, including type face, imagery, color palette, theme, copy voice, and should offer the same product at the same terms, should share contact information (same phone number, e-mail address, website address etc.) for response, and include the same expression of the product and company logotype. First glance continuity will go along way toward boosting that recognition and beefing up response numbers.

Level 2 – Functionality

Each piece should not only function on its own to drive response, but cross-promotes to drive response from the other approaches as well. Fast food advertising is often good at this technique. You see the spot on television, which drives you to the website for more details, which drives you to the restaurant to use the coupon from the web, which is e-mailed after a registration process. These three media are functionally tied together in this campaign. The TV spot, the website, the e-mail and the point of purchase materials all have the same offer, the same appearance and you are engaged by all 4 to drive a purchase. The added bonus is that along the way you're also exposed to a full range of other related products, thus priming the pump for an extended purchasing relationship.

Level 3 – Emotionality

This is the toughest to achieve, but if the campaign is truly integrated it becomes extremely effective. Emotionality describes the emotion, the feeling elicited by the campaign. Each piece, each media contact, each touch-point with the customer should elicit that same emotional response. And at its peak, not only should the same emotion be activated, but the customer should feel it at the same level of intensity as the initial contact.

Say for example you receive a direct mail piece from a company selling fitness equipment. You're interested in losing weight and getting fit. The next day you see a TV spot for the same piece of equipment with even more information and a fuller set of benefits, shown to you in living color, and you're pumped up all over again. That afternoon on the radio driving to the grocery store you hear a radio spot for that equipment. When you get excited, and when you get to the organic foods aisle of the grocery, you see a dispenser with coupons for \$10 off organic foods for owners of that equipment, just by sending in the coupon or going online and registering with your equipment's serial number. You've gotten that same level of excitement in all five cases, and it's driven you to seek out the equipment and make the change in your life, for purely emotional reasons – there are probably lots of different pieces of equipment that would provide the exercise you need, but that one got you excited in a repeated, intensive way at a very deep emotional level, and kept up that intensity throughout all the different media

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and offer sets. That's a truly effective integrated campaign, and it provides maximum return for your marketing dollar.

All three levels offer advantages over the traditional, less coordinated campaign. The higher a level of engagement you can achieve, the higher the level of effectiveness you're going to experience. There is a direct correlation between the degree of integration you can achieve compared to response levels among the target audience.

Level I offers significant gains over any single medium alone, and is the most cost effective, in terms of the number of different media used and the level of effort required compared to cost to execute.

Level II requires a bit more in terms of resources, but can provide a strong boost in response, especially for existing programs that have some brand awareness among the target audience but that need some refreshing to re-engage the audience.

Level III requires a very strong effort to coordinate all the various elements, to time them to launch together, and requires more media exposure initially to drive traffic toward the goal, but the ultimate response level can be incredibly high. Double-digit responses from the selected target are not unusual, and on higher-ticket offers that can represent significant revenue.

Of course, all of this coordination and integration cannot happen without the technological infrastructure in place to support it. The databases involved in handing off the leads from one medium to another, the online backbone and processing software that allows prospects to see exactly what they are supposed to see when visiting the target site, to be able to take advantage of offers referred by other medium, to be able to print custom coupons with matching response codes and list numbers, and all the rest of the necessary back end that provides the intelligence for all the activity behind the scenes cannot be overlooked.

Overall, integration is a valuable key to attaining pushdown marketing response levels that are unrivaled by singular media levels. The extra expense and effort at the outset provides significant payback in the long-term, and sets the stage to expand your efforts to new products, new approaches and the creation of an extremely loyal purchasing audience for a long time to come.

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