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CLARKE & MARY CAYWOOD
In Honor of F.L. Caywood, J.r. & Professor J.H. Westing

JACK MODZELEWSKI
On Behalf of Fleishman-Hillard

DAN GRUBER
JIM CAREY

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PETER BARNET
Associate Professor of Global Communications
The American University of Paris

JONATHAN BLUM
Senior VP for Public Affairs
Yum! Brands

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Executive Director for Marketing & Corporate Communications, Navigant Consulting

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Ritz Communications

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RSM McGladrey

* Former Editor-in-Chief
The staff of the 2011 edition of the Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications is composed of graduate students in Medill’s Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) program at Northwestern University.

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ABOUT THE IMC PROGRAM

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) education was pioneered at Northwestern University’s Medill School. IMC is a strategic business process used to develop, execute and evaluate marketing communication programs that are coordinated and measurable. The goal is to generate both short-term financial returns and build long-term brand and shareholder value.

Today Medill’s IMC program continues to lead the industry by:
• Combining rigorous research and real-world expertise to create powerful knowledge and innovation in marketing communications.
• Understanding customers and stakeholders in order to identify insights that inform the creation of powerful communications which engage, entertain and connect with audiences.
• Emphasizing an analytical approach to developing, executing and measuring innovative marketing communications strategies and an integrated approach to planning and managing them.

Medill IMC is driven by major forces that shape integrated marketing:
• The challenge to turn the growing avalanche of user information and data into strategies for significant and successful marketing communications.
• A huge growth in consumer-initiated interactions with brands developing through networks, user-created content, advertising, reviews, word-of-mouth and search.
• The integration of communications across multiple stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors, distributors, business partners and the news media.
• A strategic planning approach that requires an integration of media, including advertising, promotion, public relations, direct marketing and e-commerce marketing, in presenting a coherent brand positioning.

GRADUATE IMC CURRICULUM

The IMC graduate curriculum trains the world’s leading marketing communications professionals to engage, activate and persuade consumers by teaching the essential principles of integrated marketing while equipping them to meet the marketing challenges of tomorrow.

The full-time IMC program is a 15-month professional master’s program located on Northwestern’s Evanston campus. The part-time program is a two-year professional master’s program designed for working professionals. Classes for these students take place on Northwestern’s Chicago campus.

The program takes a managerial focus in teaching students to design and manage the integration of effective marketing communications activities, engage with stakeholders and demonstrate return on investment. Dozens of companies including Anheuser-Busch, Coca-Cola, Yum! Brands, Orbitz and AOL have sponsored in-class projects to provide students the opportunity to recommend solutions to real-life business situations and challenges.

Students are exposed to general business topics that emphasize concepts and strategies relevant to integrated marketing communications. Special emphasis is placed on understanding how the media and communications marketplace operates.

For further information, please visit us online at: http://www.medill.northwestern.edu/imc

ADDRESS
1870 Campus Drive
Evanston, IL 60208-2101

PHONE
+1 (847) 467-1882
STAYING AHEAD

Every year, a committed and talented group of graduate students from the Medill IMC programs spends a year planning, reviewing, publishing and publicizing the Journal of IMC.

For so many of those twenty prior years, “what is IMC?” tended to be more of the leading question that made this publication especially valuable and important for us.

Today, that question has given way to ones born from the increased velocity of change in the practice of IMC. The growing impact of stakeholders of all kinds, whether consumers, employees, stockholders or other audiences such as producers, co-creators, reviewers, and participants is powering wonderful new curiosities.

Each edition has introduced new research, cases and views that have been on the leading edge of the practice of marketing and communications. Each Journal has been filled with articles that have asked some of these good questions and provided some new answers.

This year’s edition proudly marks the 21st edition of this work and the articles all live in the same spirit of innovative thinking as those that precede it. Many great questions are raised and insights are brought to them. The collaboration between the students, alumni, faculty, sponsors, authors and practitioners allows this special publication to continue to serve as a magnet for forward thinking ideas.

Thanks go to all who have been part of this twenty-one year project, with particular thanks to the staff of the 2011 edition of the Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications.

Can you imagine what the next two decades will bring us?

Neither can I.

Tom Collinger
Associate Dean
IMC Department Chairman
Putting the “C” Back in IMC

This 21st year is no exception for an outstanding product planned and edited by a highly motivated group of our top graduate student communicators in the Department of Integrated Marketing Communications. Once again they have produced a stimulating and more digitally accessible issue of the Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications. To understand some of the comments below, readers might want to note that the word “communications” is the key and only noun in the department’s field of study title. From a historical perspective, there have been three descriptions of the field of study of this department: Advertising (to 1991), Integrated Advertising and Marketing Communications (1991-1995) and IMC (to-date). In the current title of the department, the terms “integrated marketing” are useful modifiers to the key word “communications.” During my research and writing sabbatical my objective this year is to put the “C” of strategic communications back in IMC. I have two large projects that celebrate communications in a world where effective, efficient and equitable communications is needed more than ever.

Humanitarian Logistics and Communications Relying is one of the most powerful business tools in history (supply chain software from I2). The project will examine how communications can link thousands of corporate donors with excess inventory or willing donation of needed crisis products (food, healthcare items, water, etc.) to provide needed goods to thousands of not-for-profit organizations, such as Feeding America, International Red Cross, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and Medsurplus Network. See www.aidmatrix.org for more detail. Each year Aidmatrix, with fewer than 30 people in the U.S., manages to move 1.5 billion U.S. dollars-worth of food and health care product to hurricane, typhoon, earthquake, and flood victims as well as to others with ongoing needs through free clinics and food banks. This system is on four continents but, using my work this year, we hope to expand to China. My 2010 graduate students thoughtfully suggested in a class project that Aidmatrix “save lives - efficiently.”

The Handbook of Strategic Public Relations and Integrated Communications. This book will be edited and re-published for professional book and text book distribution in hard cover and digital iBook and Kindle form in 2011. The book is the most successfully sold professional book on integrated marketing communications in the last 20 years, since the creation of the IMC department. It has been used as a textbook extensively. With more than 40 chapters on the strategic role of communications in business, government and NGOs, this book clearly has worked to “put the C back in IMC.”

The theme that binds the two projects together is the idea that communications is not simply the arcane tactical use of “selling words” in advertising, direct marketing or PR. The work celebrates a much deeper and wider core concept of communications with stakeholders (including customers) as a key strategic business advantage in the 21st century. PR and IMC professionals and experienced leaders know communications is not simply the use of persuasive words or selling language, as so many traditional sellers and marketers believe. Rather, communications is how humans build relationships; learn to trust one another; study new ideas; and more fully understand the actions of economic, political, religious, educational and other institutions.
Here is how a comprehensive integrated communications strategy works:

Four Part Action Model: As a management profession, IMC can help organizations understand that communications is just part of the strategy. The words we use to talk about an improvement in the economy or in a company’s bottom line must be tied to actions. To do this most effectively, today’s practitioners have a four-part communications model at their disposal, which must perform the following functions:

1. Identify Stakeholders. Recently a senior Chicago area executive, confronted by individuals and organizations who had challenged every aspect of his normally well-run business, summed up his need for help with this gut-felt statement: “I need someone to tell me how to deal with all these groups out there.” We call them stakeholders. For more than 25 years, I have tried to teach my colleagues in schools of business and in schools of journalism where advertising and PR are taught that we need to consider more than customers for building relationships. In a very rough metric, Google counts the two words “stakeholder” and “Obama” as each having more than a million hits. This is the era of the stakeholder, and someone has to manage the relationships for survival.

2. Plan Numerator and Denominator Management. My academic colleagues might be thrilled by this notation: \( \frac{(\delta/\theta)}{(\gamma)} \). It represents the simple idea that both the short-term and long-term value of an organization increase as the increased numerator value is divided by a reducing denominator value. Professionals can use communications to reduce the denominator, i.e., illuminate actions that (1) undermine trust in a brand, (2) increase recalls, (3) create employee turnover, and (4) cause costly crises. Just as important, communications can help identify and build up numerator enhancers that will drive revenue growth - such as brand assets, new competitive alliances, new solutions, new strategies and tools and a highly motivated workforce.

3. Use Technology. IMC and its stakeholders have received a gift that keeps on giving. Social media is not the right term for comfortable use in management or business but, as soft as it is, it is the right term for building strategic relationships with stakeholders. IMC will be there for Web 3.0. What if you think your firm might need a fan page on Facebook, a blog, a Twitter site, or a more interactive Secondlife website? The IMC professional should not only tell you how to use the tool but when, where and why you should use it.

4. Evaluate Metrics. Basic research at universities and think tanks like Mitre and SRI create theory and early models of applied artificial intelligence. Factiva, Lexis-Nexis and Google assembled the words. Companies (Biz360, VMSInfo, Radian6, and Growth Concepts) now offer relatively sophisticated programs that track what reporters, experts, columnists, bloggers, competitors, customers, elected officials, tweeters, Secondlife participants and others are saying about a corporation or other organization. IMC uses these systems.

For the coming year the JIMC will be under the careful and professional leadership of Senior Lecturer Nancy Hobor, Ph.D. She will be a terrific role model as a thoughtful, listening professional. I plan to return to the loosely-held reins of the publisher’s post next year. During my sabbatical, I expect that my work and the work of my colleagues will once again provide renewed collegial direction to IMC students and practitioners to “put the C back in IMC”. Finally I ask that the 3000 JIMC readers, 440 followers on Twitter, 1200 Linkedin and 1400 other followers take my two decade-old successful request to “hire my students!”

Clarke L. Caywood, Ph.D.
Guangzhou China
September, 2010.
About a week before the launch of this edition of the *Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications*, my apartment in Chicago was broken into, and my laptop containing the working draft of this letter was stolen. As I was struggling to re-craft my message, I realized that the old one must not have been very good, because I didn’t quite recall what I wrote. In reflecting on this, I remembered why I wanted to be a part of the JIMC, and why I came to the IMC program in the first place.

My background is deeply rooted in the humanities. Not only did I grow up in a household with writers and musicians, but some of my first loves are jazz, poetry and history. So, if there’s anything I aspire to, it’s to find beauty and truth in the art of doing business. Here, at IMC, I studied crisis communications with Hud Englehart, and from him I learned that in the course of a crisis, we must, above all else, remember to be human.

Often people ask me what IMC is, exactly. Typically, I offer the usual talking points about the importance of breaking down organizational silos and actualizing a consumer-centric way of thinking. Part of the beauty and magic of the IMC model is the emphasis on using the proper metrics to measure results and maximize value. Because shouldn’t what we do be about making people’s lives better? And as we make decisions, not only as marketers but also as consumers, we vote on everything from personal care products to the politicians who represent us with not just our wallets, but by example. It is my hope that the content included in this issue of the JIMC encourages a recalibration of what is of real value and worth, a move away from impersonal, unidirectional big business and a turn towards the IMC 2.0 exchange. With that, as we consider the evolution of B2B communities as a manifestation of interpersonal relationships at the macro level, the trajectory of time and place are of increasing importance as we live more of our lives on-line instead of off.

This past summer I was a resident at EuroRSCG Chicago in the planning department led by Rose Cameron. Rose was gracious enough to be interviewed for this publication, and I’m so glad to include her comments on the past, present and future of advertising, as her innovative thinking and free spirit have so inspired me to subvert the status quo.

As Clarke Caywood and Anders Gronstedt demonstrated in their study on brand and messaging recognition, we are more apt to identify with slogans than the products behind them. The implication, for me, is that we as marketers have a responsibility to be transparent and honest to our employees, customers, communities, suppliers, stakeholders and ourselves. And we must also listen. IMC 2.0 is an interactive conversation. In the previous iteration the emphasis was on outbound messaging to relevant constituents. Now, with the explosion of social media the dialogue goes both ways, and we must absorb information on even the most unsuspecting fronts Companies are now scrambling to generate fan pages and hire in-house twitterati to monitor consumer sentiments, because the price tag of not listening is more costly than ever, now that word of mouth has gone viral.

I’m not sure where all of this is going, and that’s the best part. With that, I’d like to thank the faculty and staff at Medill for continuing to promote a different way of doing things. I’d also like to thank my classmates, especially the staff of this year’s JIMC for their tireless efforts in bringing this publication to life. In addition, I’d like to acknowledge our readers and fellow colleagues in the industry whose dedication to defining best practices provokes and inspires a new generation of thinkers. Finally, it is my hope that we will all work together to develop and promote superior brands, starting with our very own.

Sara E Smith  
Editor-in-Chief
It doesn’t take long after entering the offices of EuroRSGC Chicago to realize that Rose Cameron, Chief Strategy Officer, is a strategic planning presence to reckon with. Armed with a warm Scottish brogue and a sharp attitude to boot, Rose has been a leading mind in the field of market research strategy for top agencies like Leo Burnett, Ogilvy, Wunderman/Y&R, Mullen, TBWA Chiat/Day and most recently EuroRSCG. We spent an afternoon with Rose to get her take on marketing communications – the past, present and the future. From social media monitoring to neuroscience technology, Rose gives us the lowdown on where the field is heading through a planning strategist lens.

**JIMC:** In honor of Northwestern receiving the Albert Lasker archives, the JIMC is focusing on the past, present and future of marketing communications. As a strategic planner and researcher, how have you seen methods for uncovering insights evolve from the past?

In the past, planning started out as a mixture of media planning and strategic account service – which evolved into strategic planning. Quantitative research dominated, but answers were based on a set of pre-determined questions defined by marketing communications professionals. That immediately skews the results- similar to IQ tests, which are generally written by upper-middle class doctorate-level minds, putting those taking the tests at a disadvantage. The same goes for the old modalities of research, which were not flexible and organic enough to be open to the top of mind responses from consumers.

The questions were used not as a diagnostic, but as a validation. The agency and client, quite frankly, either didn’t feel assurance on their idea or their point-of-view was not respected enough from their seniors so they needed verification from consumers. This pass/fail mentality makes the egregious assumption that you’re walking in with a winning idea in the first place.

**JIMC:** What factors do you think have been the drivers of change in consumer research and brand planning?

In the past, if you look at the tracking research, there were assumptions that the measure for success was a certain level of awareness. However, a brand can have very high awareness but a low sentiment (just look at AIG post-recession). When you have something as global in scale as the recession we’re living in right now, it alters your benchmarks. Everything pre-2008 is irrelevant now, because the world going forward is a very different world. Your norms are no longer norms because they were the norms of a different world. With that there are challenges and there are opportunities. The opportunity exists because most people are shackled to historical research, which generally consisted of tracking yourself against yourself. A lot of those historic tracking devices became habit. People weren’t really learning from them. The recession has allowed us to throw out those norms. It’s given people an excuse to reassess, giving them the permission they need to break the norm.
Changes in technology and events such as 9/11 have also broken the historical focus group. During a trip to New York around Sept. 11, 2001, I was scheduled to conduct a focus group for a client. That tragedy understandably kept us from the planned research and we had to figure out different ways to gain those insights without travel. After that event, we started looking towards online modalities, which were new at that point. We could do them quickly without the hassle of travel. They proved to be just as good and you don’t have the hassle of recruiting willing participants, which had previously skewed the results. What you used to get were canned answers since those participants know what answers you want and supply them to you. Digital research meant you could conduct quant, qual or a mix of the two – even across multiple days and with a vaster, national audience.

JIMC: What other ways are changes in technology and research methodologies exemplified today?

Before we thought there was a limited number of people who wanted to give their view. We now realize that it is the vast majority of consumers. There is a very different approach to research these days – I actively avoid focus groups. I actively avoid copy testing. It’s more about testing the idea because our media outlets have expanded so much. Approaching it with a 30-second idea is limiting to what people can react to. What we’re developing now are platform creative ideas that have the elasticity to work across embedded content, mass media mobile telephony, "utilitainment," as well as more traditional media. If you go in to a customer interview and say look at this pretty 30-second ad, you’re not going to get the power of those platforms. We’re dealing with a more educated consumer set where if you give them an idea platform you can do a lot more projective work in the narrative sense. You ask them where they would expect it to come to life and potentially how it could be packaged so that it would be worth people paying money. You have a more co-creating, crowd-sourcing approach to research – an open framework that is not so buffered and takes in stimuli from a top-of-mind approach. The consumer can actually help develop the work.

JIMC: How do you identify the right consumers for such strategy ‘co-creation’?

There used to be worry of wear out of individuals growing tired of answering research questions. Now we’re looking for people who are “passionistas” and how they’re evolving discussion around their respective passion area. We want to see the depth of the dialogue, versus a lot of people’s different points of view. One misconception is that there are universal influentials. The people who love repairing motorcycles or bible studies are generally not going to be the same person. There’s a limited set of people who drive forward categories. In each passion area you have what we call a “pro-sumer” who behaves 8-10 months ahead of their mass peers and is driving the category forward. What clients are doing now is building these “pro-sumer” communities and they’re testing everything—their idea platforms, their product design test platforms. They’re even getting crowd-sourcing to encourage consumers to co-create new products.

Godiva is a great example of this. Every new design is driven by their “pro-sumer” chocoholic female community. Even in the recession, they’ve seen an upturn in sales. When asking women if they want to give up their high quality luxury chocolate in light of the economic downturn, of course they say no. Do women every turn down chocolate? Yet they needed smaller purchases and easier buys, which has led to the development of products such as chocolate lollipops. Chocolate is an “emotive” category, and Godiva was able to tap into that with the pro-sumers. It’s only in these communities where you build the rapport and a sense of trust that enables insights like that – in this age, it’s all about trusted engagement.

JIMC: As marketers, we’re hearing a lot about two-way communication and engagement with consumers. How do you see that happening successfully today?

The old modality consisted of pushing messages out and testing whether it would really break through. You have measures like breakthrough or awareness – which are all push media measures.
The new measures are all about engagement, so the modalities are changing to be more engaging—whether it’s with online communities or with larger communities for qualitative and quantitative. For example, I test a quantitative set number and then select out a subset of them who are the right fit — then move to a deeper, more qualitative stage, sometimes anthropological in nature—to get further at the insight.

The reality is that clients still want quantitative because they want to see that the idea will be readily embraced by a representative sample of the target group. Every client still knows it’s critical that their idea is backed by a consumer insight — so you still need the qualitative research to uncover those insights. We all know now that its optimized if you can link a utility to that brand, so that’s where anthropology work is very handy.

I would argue that this is the age of the observational-engagement model. The earlier model was a constructed model. Observational-engagement is clear with online monitoring tools out there now: Crimson Hexicon, Radian6, Buzzmetrics, etc. The challenge with dealing with data as vast as the internet is that your results are constrained by your selection of key words. This depends on the level of sophistication of the software’s ability to create associations with your key words, driven by algorithms. How smart are your algorithms to recognize the topics, but also related topics you didn’t define? Also, how can your software measure sentiment? Just because consumers are talking doesn’t mean it’s positive—just ask AIG again.

You also have to look at the reporting of your research. Many of the services are step-children of the media metrics world. What you get are bar charts. I don’t need any more bar charts in my life. I’m far more keen on companies like MotiveQuest who combine really smart algorithm science with killer three-dimensional charting and strategy reporting done by marketing planners who can understand the larger implications of what the buzz is saying.

You’ve also got to be aware of how each layer of social media is used. Forums, blogs and websites show organic depth of conversation. Facebook and Twitter are much more of the moment and lack a lot of depth you see in the former. Then, it’s the ability to parse out the dialogue beyond just buzz, to get at the dialogue of advocates who are influencing others through directive actions.

JIMC: What would you suggest for organizations that are just beginning to monitor consumer dialogue through social media and other online tools?

Are you ready for 2.5 million discussions and how you will deal with that? Is that college intern you hired to deal with it qualified to handle the complaints that come with joining that dialogue? When you enter these modalities you need to ask yourself whose responsibility within your organization this will be as it crosses so many pillars that have been well-defined and stratified for a significant period of time.

Monitoring tools report on what people say, but do not get at what they really mean. What does that mean for your category? What are the full implications? Monitoring tools are aggregators. They’re a reporter. But the results are not directional. Algorithms are not enough. You need to overlay strategic marketing professionals to look at it and say, this is what that means.

A lot of the monitoring mentality is pitched with the ability of “doing it on the fly.” While there are some instances where this works – it does not for HUGE planning of future products! You need research, but that research takes time. The whole dotcom era has altered people’s perception of the time it takes for quality research and planning. We’re in an observational-engagement era now and that takes time. It’s fascinating. The people doing it well are open to crowd-sourcing, open to listening, and are going to make a lot of money.

JIMC: It seems that the challenge right now is the need for organic engagement paired with the emergence of social media that is getting marketers in a twist. How can marketers find a balance and commit to best practices for managing all of that information?
As we know, marketers are control freaks. We’re all control freaks. What we need to remember is that you can’t control emotions. You can’t sell anything on purely rational processes. With rational decisions, you have to sit and consider something. Emotion has the word “motion” inherently built in it. It gets you off your arse, behaving differently, and that’s essentially what marketing wants you to do – that is, unless you’re already a customer.

Each of our brands’ narratives should feed an emotional purpose with customers. And in this new engagement model, we can no longer say, “Excuse us, our brand guideposts are x, y and z.” They don’t want to hear that. They want to be able to express how they share our beliefs, passions and ideals. So, we need to make sure we are open to engaging with them on that level versus a purely transactional push model.

JIMC: So, where do you see these trends in technology and engagement moving to in the future?

We’re moving to an arena of biological and neurological research. It’s about seeing what is not to be seen, hearing what is not supposed to be said – that which is unconscious even to the people who are reacting to it.

The Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) is currently conducting a massive study right now with neuroscience research on how people react to brands and communications purely organically. So, rather than calling it biological, I would even call this a movement towards organic engagement. We’re really going scientific on this sh**. The goal is to get a sense of whether this stuff is real.

In 2000, I would argue, we saw people beginning to use MRIs for more than just pure science. Body heat, eye movements, and neurological reactions are all telling to a person’s internal reactions to a brand. We’re not necessarily talking to your conscious mind, we’re taking to your subconscious mind and your biology. How you react organically on a visceral level, the animal level – which unearths reactions on areas you may not feel comfortable about. Ask consumers about Viagra – barrier, barrier, barrier; about body image, barrier, barrier; or take items that have become commoditized where people don’t even know how to react anymore. That’s where this research is immensely helpful.

Communication is so core to human behavior; it is a core driver to how we behave and why we feel good. Researchers are starting to see brain interaction with social media as fulfilling to some people as good food or good sex – because its recognition, its affirmation. Brain researchers are now teaming up with marketing companies to fund this research. One company that is specializing in this area is completely booked up, they can’t build fast enough.

What’s happening is a merging of utility, emotional space, experience and this organic biological analysis. Watch this space. There’s a lot going on. What matters is how marketers are able to interpret the findings, whether it’s paired with people who are knowledgeable enough to recognize the actionable implications.

JIMC: That type of collaboration would obviously require a high level of integration across an organization. How do you see the principles of IMC, namely integration, playing out in the future of organizations?

If what you design only lives in your outbound communications, but customers don’t experience it in your customer service level or product level or retail level, etc., you’re dead. If, on the other hand, your brand vision lives across all levels, you flourish. You can see this manifested by Apple, a company that builds new things for newness sake. You see that ethos and archetype across every layer of their infrastructure. They’ve incorporated it in the DNA of the brand.

What I’m seeing now is strategic planning researchers getting further embedded into the client organizations and creating “consumer insights departments.” These departments develop brands that impact design, how staff is briefed on their role, compensatory details, etc. It’s becoming part of the DNA and that’s how strategic brand strategy planners are growing beyond marketing firms.
The biggest issue right now for clients is complexity. You’ve got these ideas that can inevitably live across anything because the virtual world is making the sky the limit. All of the church and state boundaries have dissolved now. Print media is now online, television ads are streaming online. You don’t just buy a page in a Conde Nast magazine, you buy into Conde Nast print, the website, a special event... its crazy! How do you manage that? Sure, it can be bought by one media group, but how do you execute and manage across those different types of media?

**JIMC: What will it take to manage that kind of complexity?**

Good question. You need people who are willing to create teams of the right individuals. There was one point in time, specifically in the strategic planning and research arenas, where the roles were almost stereotypical. The reality is you need a big picture kind of person, you need someone who is warm and cuddly, you need the quant jockey, the social media whiz. You need people with all these different skill sets. You can’t just say a great planner is this or a great planning department is that. There are plenty of generalists but I don’t know anyone whose mind can switch back and forth like that. You need a leader that acts as a magician in the kitchen, knowing from which shelves to pull from. There is no silver bullet –it’s all about combos and finding the right combination. You need a collaborative ringmaster that’s able to tap into all sorts of resources, not an all-knowing strategic planner with an Oz complex.

Along with collaboration, you need an open mind and an exploration of the modalities in what works and what doesn’t. Allow yourself to make mistakes. Put aside some budget solely for experimentation. That may be challenging now for organizations that only function on safe bets. The minute your mind closes and you get stuck in the way things are done as the way you think things will always be done, you’re dead. The people who never age and are always relevant are the people who keep their minds open.
I. INTRODUCTION: Lasker & The Delphi Project

It has been 100 years since Albert D. Lasker, credited as “The Father of Modern Advertising Communications” by the American Business Hall of Fame, forever shaped the profession we now call Marketing Communications. Northwestern University recently received the gift of Lasker’s papers from his leadership years at Lord & Thomas, the world’s largest and most profitable agency in the early 1900s. Those archives join the University’s own Walter Dill Scott papers, also an early pioneer of consumer understanding and communication. For this reason, Medill’s Integrated Marketing Communications faculty and students, along with industry leaders, are celebrating the past, present and future of Marketing Communications.

To reflect on the current state of Marketing Communications, and predict the next 100 years, the Delphi Project was born. Medill IMC assembled 19 dynamic industry leaders from around the country for a three-round online panel in which students analyzed an array of observations and predictions about the marketing practice. The panel consisted of: Scott Bergren, President & Chief Concept Officer, Pizza Hut; Ron Bess, President, EuroRSCG/North America; Rick Carpenter, President, DDB Chicago; Howard Draft, Chairman, Draftfcb; Andy England, CMO, Miller Colors; Jeff Goodby, Co-Chairman and Creative Director, Goodby, Silverstein & Partners; Clive Humby, Chairman, dunnhumby; Marlena Peleo Lazar, Chief Creative Officer, McDonald’s; Jim Lecinski, Managing Director, U.S. Sales & Service, Google; Jack Rooney, President, Ogilvy & Mather Chicago; Don Schultz, Professor Emeritus, Medill IMC; Rich Stoddart, President, Leo Burnett Company; Howard Tullman, CEO, Tribeca Flashpoint Academy; Tony Weisman, President, Digitas; Dave Marsey, SVP Digital Media, Digitas; Linda White, Marketing & Communications Director, Accenture; Dana Anderson, SVP Chief Strategy Officer, Kraft; Tom Collinger, Associate Dean, Medill IMC and Keith Reinhard, Chairman Emeritas, DDB Worldwide.
The process began with broad questions, and by the third round, the most poignant issues were identified and reflected upon. The following is a condensed version of the panel’s responses surrounding issues of the consumer, brand, marketer and communication channels.

It is no surprise that, in today’s fast-changing environment, some respondents had opposing viewpoints on topics such as social media, the role of the marketer and media consumption. However, it is encouraging to see common themes emerge to validate the role of Integrated Marketing and enable the study of major trends and issues facing the industry. The panel identified the consumer as the prime focal point for marketers. They emphasized the importance of brands being human in order to connect with consumers, by listening and engaging socially through conversations. Many mentioned that it continues to be essential to offer differentiated value in a commoditized world. And finally, a major theme was the insistence that marketers now and in the future must analyze and measure both outbound and inbound communication on an ongoing, real-time basis.

It is our hope that this exercise provokes further discussion and groundbreaking change to help predict the years to come.

II. The Consumer

In the field of Integrated Marketing Communications, it is difficult to argue against the value of putting the consumer first. How this is best applied, however, drew a variety of opinions from panel members. How are information seekers empowered, and what are marketers doing with the new influx of inbound information? How are consumers discerning value in brands and their content? How do marketers hold the consumer’s attention and measure loyalty and trust?

A few perspectives remain heavily favored among industry leaders looking toward the future. First, consumer empowerment and the consumer’s need for personalized attention means the marketer must listen and respond more than ever. Next, technology and social networks now play a major role in brands gaining consumer loyalty and trust. Finally, there is a shared emphasis on the consumer experience, which begs attention to new communications media, content and timing. As one industry leader says, “The possibilities involved with inviting (and gaining) people’s participation in your brand is creating a new marketing paradigm that is much more collaborative, creative and much less insular.” Brands doing this well include Pepsi’s Refresh Project and Doritos, which are inviting consumers to create their own Super Bowl ads.

**Consumer Empowerment**

Empowering the consumer has always been a nail-biting experience for marketers and brands. They cheer when consumers become their biggest public advocates, and lament when ill-informed or negative consumers take center stage. Marketers are moving beyond the predicament of choosing consumer empowerment as a threat or an opportunity. All people have content and publishing power. Panel participants acknowledge that how marketers engage consumers – with content, value and experiences – determines a positive or negative outcome, both today and in the future.

**Building Trust**

Consumers have virtually unlimited options of sources to seek out the goods and services they purchase, as well as the brands they advocate and the content they trust. To earn that trust and long-term loyalty, technology can be a marketer’s best friend. Technology advancement has allowed marketers to act on consumer points of view in real-time, in some cases on a moment-to-moment basis, resulting in greater consumer trust and reliability towards brands. Greater attention and response to inbound messages, that are both positive and negative, must be paid if brand trust will survive in the future. However, caution must be paid. One industry expert says, “Marketers are trying to force their way into the conversation where there is no interest and no invitation. Gobs of money will be wasted on these new media forms until marketers learn they must have new models and new approaches to really connect with consumers.” We consider this a real opportunity to provide unmet needs.

**Attention, Please**

All panelists agree that one of a marketer’s greatest challenges is gaining the consumer’s attention amidst an increasing amount of media clutter. They also agree that the best way to engage a consumer is to listen and respond, rather than corner them with messages. Nearly half the panel believes that creative, behaviorally relevant messaging is the key, and the other half believes communicating consumer-derived value is the most important way to gain and hold attention.
In reality, the two viewpoints are connected, as creative messaging without utility is meaningless, and delivering utility without creativity is ignored.

Despite differences in opinion, one crucial fact for the future of marketing remains: If marketers are successful, consumers will become inspired to act on the brand’s behalf – whether advocating a brand’s value to peers or co-creating additional value opportunities with the marketer. It is clear that value resides in the hands of the consumer rather than the marketer. And to extract this value, marketers of the future must get the consumer the right information at the right time.

III. The Brand

What is a brand, and what is its purpose? The panel delivered an array of uniquely defined views, but the commonalities among them provide the steps to prepare any manufacturer, retailer, or service provider for the future. The experts agree that marketers of the future must first and foremost understand consumers’ wants and needs so that they are able to innovate brands that form relationships.

The Role of a Brand

The argument guiding the conversation focuses on the future of the brand itself. All panelists were interested in what the role of the brand will become as information and choices become increasingly available. While the panel was divided on their views, opinions fell either on the side of thinking that brand relationships will continue to drive the consumer relationship, or that as available information increases, brands will become commodities in the consumer’s mind.

Those in agreement with the latter believe relationships are defined by the value and experience delivered, which result in increased consumer knowledge, allowing them to navigate through a number of daily decisions. It is also this knowledge that makes them more and more dependent upon the brands that help them shortcut decisions and arrive at their desired end goal. As one panelist states, “They will become increasingly loyal to those that give them what they want - which is a combo of dynamism and trust. Dynamism will be seen as the level at which brands respond to direct consumer input around product enhancements, innovation or even promotion. And trust will increasingly be measured by the power of word of mouth, considering metrics like NPS, promotions shared, etc.”

Alternatively, the other side believes that as the amount of available information increases, consumers will disregard brands altogether in their choices. Although people have proven that they are able to navigate the information blitz, a panelist argued, “With extensive consumer knowledge from multiple sources, it becomes more and more difficult to differentiate and sustain a brand as has been done in the past – most brands will be commoditized.” People have already begun to resent the overwhelming amount of information that surrounds them, and in the future, the effects of this will transfer to the brand level.

Although information is not the only grounds for which brands must adapt to be successful in the future, it was the focus of the panelists.

Emerging Opportunities

Regardless of the outcome in the near future, both sides agree on certain opportunities to be seized by brands, which are best illustrated by the following two responses:

(1) “The opportunity exists for active brands to help people by giving them relevant information and providing them a service that is indicative of what and how a brand will behave in its product experiences. The most effective way for a marketer to change people’s attitudes is to change their behavior by helping a brand do things for people.”

(2) “A company’s branding strategy will be developed from the way consumers connect with and relate to the product and service they use or find valuable for themselves in the marketplace. Brand experiences will occur when consumers access the multiple forms or experiences in which they encounter the brand. Therefore, marketers should have much broader view of how brands are built, maintained, supported and even valued going forward.”

The Best Players in the Field

Not surprisingly, a majority of the panel agrees that Apple is a brand doing it right, followed by a mix of retailers and service providers including Google, Virgin, McDonald’s and Best Buy. These companies are creating interactive experiences by making consumers part of the brand. They are clear, simple and transparent with messaging, while remaining consistent with the company’s core brand concepts. Additionally, they are innovative and successfully utilizing social media. In this space, success is defined by a brand’s ability to integrate its online and offline role as well as listen, act and generate dialogue.
The more frequently a brand is able to analyze feedback, and the more meaningful it can create content for the consumer, the more trust and reliability it will earn.

**Recommendations for Creating Tomorrow’s Brands**
The panel provided a number of recommendations on how to create successful brand communications for tomorrow’s brand. The brand must have: (1) interactive, response-driven communication; (2) clear audience identification and insights; (3) a better understanding of online behavior as a way to more highly optimized communication mixes; (4) the development of a ‘human model’ that includes both online and offline information; and (5) the ability to tell the brand story. All of the above culminate to make the brand indispensable.

**IV. The Marketer**

Some believe the golden days of advertising are behind us; the power of ads in the mid-twentieth century relied on the marketer knowing more than the consumer. Now the tides have turned, and with the increasing availability of information, consumers are growing more knowledgeable. As we see this trend continue to grow, will the need for marketers disappear, as communications transact from seller to buyer as an exchange of data? What will become of the brand manager, the agency model and the advertisement?

The answer is nothing and everything. Selling to humans will always be more than a numbers exchange, but future advertisements won’t resemble those of today. Marketing teams and agency models will likely be configured and directed in very different ways. If the marketing revolution has already begun, the next 100 years promises to re-write the rules.

**The Changing Definition of Advertising**

In the early 1900’s, Albert Lasker defined advertising as “salesmanship in print.” He and his Lord & Thomas colleague Claude Hopkins believed great advertising did the same work as a great salesman multiplied many times over. Enter today’s world and an industry leader who equates that definition with persuasion, and says we have moved beyond it: “There is no need for advertising, since buyer and seller share the same knowledge base and understand the same value streams.”

Yet, to develop this mutual understanding remains the job of a marketer. It will involve a shift from persuasive communication to interactive and response-driven communication.

“Advertising today is self-service salesmanship,” says another marketer. “It’s sharing in pixels, creating demand for your brand, moving towards an intensely personalized, social engagement with consumers – every element of communication undertaken on behalf of selling a brand, and a story people want to be a part of, and want others to see that they’re part of it.” In the future, businesses will still need marketers to create messages – stories, explanations of benefits, collaborations and activities – that stick in consumers’ minds.

**The Need for Alignment**
The biggest challenge facing marketers today is alignment – of business units, geographies, the brand, measurement and communication. In order for agencies and brands to thrive, today’s fragmentation must give way to a more cooperative, reciprocal system. The agency model continues to evolve. “The issue of scale is less relevant,” one marketer notes, “as the internet and other digital communications grow the role of the marketer, agency and consumer.” Moving forward, agencies may represent both the client and the consumer. Another expert predicts, “agencies will know as much about consumers in the future as they do about products and buyers today, giving them tremendous power.”

What about the opposite trend of agency specialization? Some point to evidence that younger generations are homogenizing culturally as reason to doubt the existence of multicultural agencies in the years to come. But the forecast is more strategic than that. A marketer explains, “It may not matter if the agency is multicultural, specialized or general. What will be important is that the agency is able to help the brand re-think authentic consumer relationships based on a broader cultural environment and connect those values to those of the new America.”

This opinion foretells the same need for multinational corporations and the marketers they employ.

**The Essential Composition of Tomorrow’s Marketing Team**

Today’s debate is focused on analytics versus new design elements. Tomorrow’s will be about how many jobs are centered around “listening” and how the marketing team will be characterized years from now. All panelists agree that Chief Marketing Officers must have an intimate understanding of the consumer’s wants and needs. As for supporting roles, one expert lists four positions considered essential in the future: insight leader; idea architect/builder; data miner; and delivery wizard. Current roles such as account or brand managers may evolve into more specialized roles like these in the future.
Tomorrow’s marketing team will also be more data-driven than its predecessors, considering all points from consumer behavior to measuring the success and optimizing sales initiatives.

Another expert predicted that teams would be more fluid, like task forces: “Best-of-breed specialist firms may be selected to work alongside internal marketing people in a virtual ‘super team,’” the panelist says, “coached/inspired by a CMO who disbands them when the project is over, only to reassemble them in a different configuration for the next project.”

V. The Channel

Media consumption patterns have changed dramatically just one decade into the digital age. According to panelists, they are due for another seismic shift in the years to come. Based on current channels, multi-tasking across screens will lead to a demand for more content. One expert explains, “The quick advancement in media technology is paving the way for a next generation of highly stimulated consumers who will excel at multi-tasking but perhaps struggle with productivity.”

With the inevitable rapidly approaching, how will the marketing industry best serve this changing audience? How will it measure media exposure among all the screens? And how will it take advantage of the proliferation of content?

Shares of Viewing

All panelists predict a decline in home TV viewing, which corresponds with a rise in viewing on laptops and smart phones. “While home viewing will never vanish,” a panelist says, “it will probably plateau from the rise of digital video recording, streaming video and mobile. Major events, live sports and other destination-viewing media opportunities will continue to be in demand.”

Out-of-home theater and in-store viewing are a mixed bag. While some expect a decrease, others see potential for growth, particularly in point-of-sale displays. Yet one panelist warns it will “increasingly be ignored and become visual wallpaper.”

Devices that fit into the pocket or purse received votes for viewership increase from all panelists. “Better capabilities on tablet screens, as well as pocket screens will drive more use across the board,” one panelist predicts. (See Chart in Appendix)

Blending of Screens

Several panelists concur that the advancement of online networking will lead to video sharing with others and across one’s own devices. One respondent calls this a “blending” of screens: “The faster consumers learn how to use interactivity, the less important time and the use of media will be. We need to move from efficient delivery of messages to measures of effectiveness of communication systems.”

Leaning – Backward and Forward

The methods of delivery will change even more than the content itself, according to some panelists. When asked about YouTube’s longer-form shows – a “lean-back” viewing initiative – it led some to discuss whether or not viewers will differentiate online video from cable TV in the future. “To the viewer, the content and quality are more important than the delivery system,” one panelist says. The panelists acknowledged elsewhere that consumers are looking for and expecting more proactive communications methods. Whether they’re targeting consumers in “lean-forward” or “lean-back” entertainment consumption mode, interactivity and co-creation should be considered in marketing initiatives of the future.

Brands as Content Providers

“How media channel planning is done today could become media opportunity,” says one panelist. It may take the form of increased product integration with content or sponsorship. Another panelist believes that this shift towards highly engaging “tainment” will lead to a more precise ROI measure immediately, and allow for brands to once again be part of the entertainment landscape.

In this era, the future for one-to-one communications from brand to consumer is promising to many panelists. One explains, “In the new ‘communications systems’ that will likely develop, all marketing communication becomes direct marketing.
VI. Conclusion

The beauty of the Delphi Project was the meshing of minds to discuss issues affecting us all as marketers. We were fortunate to assemble such an esteemed panel of industry leaders to formulate a vision of the current atmosphere and forecast the future. The answers reveal a common thread, and proof of how important integration has become to the communications process – and must continue to be.

The project also shed light on very real areas of dissonance, which exist among industry leaders. What some experts view as an opportunity, others view as a threat. Encouraging public communication from consumers is still polarizing, viewed as risky by some and as a godsend by others. New communication techniques and technological advancements are still without proven methods. However, the Delphi process proves the importance of opening the floor and producing thought-provoking banter surrounding these challenges.

Key themes emerged which marketers should pay close attention to heading into the next 100 years: Assemble your marketing team around the consumer. Understand their thoughts and behavior. Offer value. Engage socially. Listen and respond. Tell a story. Generate dialogue. Be human. Analyze and measure – both inbound and outbound communication.

Over the course of the next 100 years, in the spirit of Albert Lasker, it is our hope that the conversation continues to be fueled. As methods and opinions are challenged and reinforced, it will only accelerate the performance and value of marketing communications. Here’s to a new generation of marketing pioneers.

VII. Appendix

Twelve panelists reported their predictions in numerical form, in response to this question: What do you perceive are the shares of viewing across the four video screen segments... today, five years from now and in ten years?
Abstract:

This article explores the growing use of strategic place branding to assist declining urban and rural neighborhoods with their revitalization efforts. Place branding research and its strategic application is well-documented across international contexts, but is currently emerging in the U.S. as a viable strategy for struggling communities to reconfigure and build strong brand identities. The dynamic process is initiated at the grassroots level by internal stakeholders and then evolves into developing creative strategies for promoting the distinctive brand to external markets. Branding low profile contexts is complex, due to negative image perceptions among external publics and internal conflict over competing identities. Case studies of communities engaged in place branding efforts illustrate challenges associated with the application of current process models.

Long ago in a Dark Age, townspeople gathered in the Market Square of Ieper, Belgium to witness a medieval ritual – live cats, no longer useful on rodent patrol, were hurled from the Tower of the Cloth Hall in an effort to ward off evil spirits. Fast forward, or skip a few century tracks into the Information Age, and see townspeople gather to witness a ritual called Kattenstoet that draws tourists to Ieper on a global scale. Long known for its historical association with cats (for better or for worse,) Ieper has rebranded itself as the Cat City, complete with a Festival of the Cats Parade and a ritual tossing of stuffed toy black cats from the Cloth Hall Tower into the arms of eager children below. Throughout the year, Ieper’s multitudes of Belgian chocolate shops display a decadent array of creations in feline form.

While this tale of Ieper may represent an effort to creatively rebrand both the maligned cat and a beleaguered city, it also stands for much more – the ability of a place to overcome the odds and to reinvent itself as a distinctive destination and intriguing locale. Throughout its history, Ieper survived not only medieval superstition, but also more tangible destruction during WWI, when only fragments of the Cloth Hall Tower remained intact – it rose literally from the ashes as a completely rebuilt city. The lesson may be that places looking to reinvent themselves need to base their brands on an exploration of cultural values – in Ieper’s case, survival despite the odds, a reflection of the tenacious feline spirit.

Over the past decade, the emerging concept and process of place branding has generated lively theoretical discussion and an expanding repertoire of applied practice. Heightened competition on a global scale makes it imperative for locations, large and small, to differentiate and distinguish themselves as viable entities to sustain economic development, foster quality of life and satisfy consumer needs. Most European countries have an infrastructure that supports and funds place branding efforts.
In the United States, place branding is often a grassroots initiative funded by private developers or small grants, spearheaded and maintained through community coalitions of entrepreneurs, residents and local nonprofit or governmental agencies working as a team.

In its inception, place branding focused mainly on countries, regions and cities. Simon Anholt, dubbed the father of place branding, has advised governments around the world on developing a competitive identity that must be earned, not constructed or invented. A clever logo or tagline does not solely make the brand; there must be substance, strategy and symbolic actions as the supporting structure. Anholt stresses that brand equity reputation is a valuable asset that needs to be nurtured and sustained by stakeholder coalitions over the long term.

This deeper identity issue differs from the image focus of destination marketing, or conventional tourism promotion. There are many struggling urban and rural neighborhoods that are far from a destination status. Yet, these low-profile, or even no-profile locations may have an even greater need to reinvent themselves by finding their competitive identities. Philip Kotler’s seminal work, Marketing Places, described how chronically troubled and decaying locales could experience healthy transformation. In this era of the “comeback kid,” place branding may provide the motivation and focus for declining Main Streets and small towns to survive.

Perspectives on Definition and Process

At the heart of place branding is the cultural process of identity co-creation among diverse stakeholders. In their exploration of “meaning creation on Main Street,” Susie Pryor and Sanford Grossbart defined the place branding process as one of inscribing symbols and images representing enduring and distinctive characteristics that actors assign to their place (294). The focus of identity comes from within – branding from the inside out.

Challenges arise with this form of branding, as multiple stakeholders constructing the brand often have competing or conflicting perceptions, needs and interests, coupled with a lack of marketing experience. In initial stages of the process, a place brand facilitator can serve as a catalyst and guide for communities - this role is more of a brand translator, rather than a brand prescriber. Since conflict will arise among diverse stakeholders as they attempt to negotiate brand meaning, an effective facilitator must encourage collaborative tactics in order for a shared identity to emerge. Later in the process, the role of facilitator evolves into a management function to forge public and private partnerships that foster political unity, in order to maintain and sustain a strong identity and image over time.

In their 2009 presentation at the Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy, Robert Aitkin and Adriana Campelo stressed the need for managers to take an inclusive approach that taps into embedded cultural meanings, along with understanding the interactions and relationships that define the place. Sicco van Gelder, founder of Placebrands, an international consulting firm, recommends the formation of brand management partnerships, where stakeholders, residents, businesses and visitors share responsibility for brand definition. Strategically, the brand becomes the community’s decision making tool as to whether plans, programs and promotions are on-brand, reinforcing the place identity, or off-brand and counterproductive in maintaining a consistent image.

Chairman of Meritleader International, Seppo Rainisto, identified several critical factors that ensure success in place branding. A strategic analysis phase forms the foundation of the process, so that a community planning group can develop a clear vision. This clarity comes from research to determine place identity, the key factors and unique set of core values that distinguish this place from other surrounding areas. It is helpful to examine a place’s umbrella brand, or its relationship with the region or a central city – the place needs to be examined as a brand within a brand. Another critical aspect in the analysis is determining place image, the actual perceptions of external audiences. Once the research is in place, the community may examine gaps between identity and image. Place brands built on this firm foundation are enduring and sustainable.

Strategic Stages for Places in Search of Themselves

Research and current practice in place branding points the way toward the following multi-stage action model to guide struggling locales in search of an identity that will function as the foundation of their integrated marketing communications strategic plan.

• Stage One: Achieving Internal Identity Clarity

This stage engages internal stakeholders in a process to define who they are. A pivotal role of a brand facilitator is necessary to ensure that a diverse and representative sample of the community is included in this critical discussion.
The facilitator may utilize survey research, focus groups and secondary research to gather data within three domains. The Legacy Domain captures the historical perspective of the place, including core values of the founders, and relevant turning points that shaped its distinctive development. The Present Placement Domain taps perceptions of internal stakeholder identity, in contrast to external image. Lastly, the Envisioning Future Domain challenges stakeholders to address the question – who will we become?

- **Stage Two: Collaborative Brand Creation**

Based on the identity/image research, a stakeholder team forges a brand mission statement that will provide the grounding for their integrated marketing communications strategic plan. At this stage, the brand facilitator works to produce a coherent visual symbol and tagline that melds internal identity with desired public image. Brand facilitators monitor the pre-testing of creative concepts with internal and external stakeholders.

- **Stage Three: Brand Sustainability**

Structures are created to ensure that the brand is maintained consistently across the community and to external audiences. This stage requires a commitment to the brand on the part of local government, business and residents. Creation of a second pivotal role, that of a brand manager is essential in centralizing the brand maintenance function. The sustainability factor requires monitoring how the brand may be evolving - periodic evaluation of identity/image is necessary, with a special emphasis on measuring discrepancies or widening gaps between perceived internal identity and external image. Continual adaptation is a must in nurturing place brands and ensuring their growth, authenticity and competitive value.

The process of place branding is grounded in relationship marketing that forges strong ties of identification among internal and external audiences. Working through the place branding process will result in a consistent, coherent message that ensures the success of future strategic integrated marketing communications. Projected outcomes should be generated and assessed at each of the critical stages. If the process becomes stalled at any stage, the role of brand facilitators and managers is to intervene and keep the momentum going. Place brand sustainability rests ultimately upon the development of a holistic IMC approach, as the following case studies reveal.

Real Life Challenges of Place Branding Stages

Case applications of place branding illustrate challenges faced by consultants and communities at all levels of the process. The multi-stage place branding process includes analysis of findings drawn from communication audits, focus groups, field and survey research. Strategic message objectives provide the framework for the creation of communications tactics including logos, taglines, social media, websites and a broad range of print and electronic campaign materials. This process is at work in various stages in the urban and rural communities highlighted in this section. These community branding efforts are supported through partnerships among independent consultants, developers, a nonprofit Alliance for Business Growth Downtown Revitalization Program, neighborhood coalitions and IMC agency teams from a public university - brand management partnerships in action.

Branding through an Arts Approach: No logo – No tagline – No problem

FUHGEDDABOUDIT – this sage advice proclaimed from billboards across a re-branded Brooklyn, New York, is probably the only vestige of a recognizable tagline, while a completely revitalized Red Hook Pier serves as a living logo in the saga of this borough’s recent rise as a vibrant artisan colony. Arts and Business Consultant Brenda Parkerson observes that culture and the arts are increasingly being used as key components of place marketing campaigns and urban regeneration. Parkerson sees individual handicrafters, artisan communities and creative industries as key players in shifting a place’s culture, and ultimately, its brand.

Historically, the Red Hook area of Brooklyn was a thriving maritime hub that became an emblem of mid-20th century urban blight, according to the Center for an Urban Future. Today, Red Hook is known for its eclectic mix of light industrial, entrepreneurial and artistic venues, attracting retailers like Fairway and Ikea, along with a cruise ship terminal. The real coup however, was luring artisans from high-rent lofts in the Tribeca area of Manhattan to newly renovated and reasonable housing in Brooklyn – a key strategy in achieving a brand of artisan colony status. An artisan colony is generally not located on an island, however, but the key to the global marketplace is the internet – enter etsy.com, the e-bay of the handicraft world. Etsy’s entrepreneurial founder established a base at Red Hook and is eyeing global expansion,
proving that, with e-commerce, a place today does not have geographical limitations.

Despite its successes, the brand challenge of Red Hook in Brooklyn lies in maintaining an authenticity to its historic maritime and industrial roots. A recent study conducted by Columbia University’s Historic Preservation Program urges civic and community leaders to approach development and branding with an appreciation for the industrial nature of the waterfront. Many of the abandoned warehouses are historic vestiges of a vibrant past and can be preserved for contemporary industrial adaptation. Pier 41 at Red Hook provides a model for this development-branding mindset. The renovated Civil War era warehouse is home to cabinetmakers, an architectural glassworks company, Key Lime Steve’s famous pies, and artists’ lofts. Red Hook’s image was not altered by a short-lived media blitz, but rather, through the collaboration of public and private partnerships working toward transformation by creating a lifestyle and substantive product brand that can be successfully marketed—a clear identity seamlessly intertwined with a rising reputation—a fit that is evolving over time.

Parkerson poses the question: can this Brooklyn model of successful place branding be duplicated? Well, the villagers of Mount Morris, a rural upstate New York town are giving it a try. The developer of Pier 41 in Red Hook, Greg O’Connell is attempting a renaissance of a small rural upstate community that had a historic Main Street consisting of abandoned storefronts and upstairs apartments beckoning restoration. The claim to fame for Mount Morris is that the city is the birthplace of Francis Bellamy, author of the Pledge of Allegiance, and residents had been branding themselves in shades of red, white and blue for many years.

Although the patriotic brand had a high level of identification for internal audiences, its effectiveness was less significant for external publics who held the image of a decaying Main Street, rather than one steeped in history. The discrepancy between the emerging Mount Morris internally, and the image of decline held by external publics proved challenging in terms of articulating a new brand. With buildings being restored to their quintessential small town glory—including upstairs artists’ lofts and the launch of a variety of new small businesses—a reconfigured brand was needed to reflect what this place had become. The new brand could be a more subtle approach to Americana, or it might speak to the value of inclusivity—still steeped in its Italian heritage, Mount Morris is now home to Hispanic and growing Amish enclaves.

Unlike Brooklyn’s tagline-free approach, community brand partners in Mount Morris are pre-testing a variety of taglines to raise awareness of their revitalized Main Street. The process of tagline development begins in the context of the umbrella regional brand. In this case, rural Livingston County brands itself with the invitation to “Have a Field Day,” complete with sheaves of wheat imagery. This umbrella brand is destination-oriented, and can facilitate drawing an external tourist public to a newly restored Main Street and potential artisan colony.

Consultants Derrick Daye and Brad VanAuken recommend that a tagline should capture the essence of the brand promise, using an economy of words. They suggest two approaches: credibility or visionary. The credibility approach configures the brand in the process of growth and celebrates transformation, while the visionary approach communicates the emotional benefit of living in the place, post-transformation. A proposed tagline, “We Pledge to Impress,” combines the most internally recognizable patriotic association with a promise to the external consumers the village hopes to attract. Developing a consistent message will provide for seamless alignment across print and electronic communications channels in any future marketing campaign.

The branding team continues to explore the Brooklyn artisan colony model, coupled with an Americana theme that returns to the roots of the word artisan, a specialized craftsperson. This craft might range from folk art to contemporary graphic arts, or even specialty-crafted beers and wines of the Finger Lakes region. The true historic legacy of the village reaches far beyond the Bellamy era—back to the Seneca Indian heartland settlements—so the inclusion of early native arts and crafts may add a unique dimension. Two branding concepts, “The Artistic Heartland,” and “The All-American Artisan,” speak to an expanded understanding of patriotism, and move the community toward a more inclusive and deeply-rooted Americana approach.

Quality of Life Rebranding — A Return to Simple Pleasures

While Rochester, NY brands itself as “Made for Living,” one of its neighborhood sub-brands seems to be “Made for Parking.” Perched on the edge of Lake Ontario, the Charlotte neighborhood’s most successful venue is drawing huge crowds to enjoy summer concerts in the community park, complete with quaint bandstand and historic Dentzel Carousel.
successful venue is drawing huge crowds to enjoy summer concerts in the community park, complete with quaint bandstand and historic Dentzel Carousel. Numerous parking lots have dominated the aesthetic landscape and become an important identity asset in the minds of internal publics. Much like Brooklyn’s historic roots, Charlotte was a busy industrial seaport. In the mid-19th century, it became the “Coney Island of the West,” with a thriving boardwalk filled with tourists arriving via the New York Central Railroad.

The Great Depression marked the end of Charlotte’s run as a prime amusement park, and the late 20th century brought the massive downsizing and global quest of the region’s prime employer, Kodak. Like other Great Lakes RustBelt areas, Rochester and its neighborhoods were in search of new identities. The “Made for Living” campaign was an attempt to tap into the area’s quality of life and to stem the tide of brain drain, the exit of young professionals choosing to relocate. Economically fueled by the rise of high-tech optical industries, Rochester was reconfiguring as “The Silicon Valley of the RustBelt,” according to a study by MIT’s Industrial Performance Center.

With the central city of Rochester’s brand evolving, its panoply of neighborhoods, once villages annexed by the city, were challenged to rebrand. Each of the neighborhood villages had distinctive identities at some point in their histories, but the current challenge is to articulate their unique competitive advantages within the central city brand. With no coherent identity or marketing strategy in place, a neighborhood will often engage in fragmented promotions that result in conflicting messages across print and electronic media. Without coherent identity or marketing strategy in place, a neighborhood will often engage in fragmented promotions that result in conflicting messages across print and electronic media.

Besides the image of parking lots, Charlotte had been branded as the Port of Rochester and home of a Fast Ferry to Toronto. Unfortunately, the short-lived maritime project failed and the harbor village was left with a nearly-abandoned ferry terminal and an image in need of repair. A communication audit revealed a critical problem of message and channel fragmentation, as diverse community organizations vied for tagline dominance on multiple websites, brochures and signage. The burgeoning identities ranged from signage boasting “The Community that Cares,” to websites and brochures urging unidentified target audiences to get “Hooked on Charlotte.” The challenge of place branding in such cases is to unify community identity and re-align strategic channel optimization.

Currently, Charlotte is poised to rebrand with the launch of a harbor-front development of condos, boardwalk of shops and a marina. In the case of the Charlotte neighborhood’s search for brand consistency, the first step was an identity survey administered to residents that revealed clarity on core values, visual, images and words that described

![Charlotte Logo](image)

**FIGURE 1**

**Charlotte**

**Simple Pleasures**
life in this place. The most enduring image was the historic brick lighthouse, while the quality of life in their harbor home was highly valued. External image surveys showed that visitors liked to savor a relaxing walk on the pier, an old-fashioned ice-cream cone from an iconic frozen custard stand, and a nostalgic ride on the legendary carousel with its carved menagerie from a by-gone era.

Since both identity and image intersected at the point of low-key living at its best, one concept proposed by the branding team was “simple pleasures.” Trends of “staycations” and a return to simplicity fuel the rise of the hometown tourist – a nearby respite from the intensity of relentless multi-tasking lifestyles. Figure 1 displays an initial logo and tagline supporting this theme, and Figure 2 illustrates its versatility for website links and creative promotions across a broad range of target audiences. An over-arching branding strategy, “Where the City Meets the Lake,” may function as a regional identifier for greater Rochester target audiences.

Are all these cases works in progress? The answer is a resounding yes - that is the nature of a place brand-fluid, dynamic and ever in flux. As Brooklyn, Mount Morris and Charlotte continue to craft genuine identities, they need to be diligent in their continuing efforts to monitor, repair and rebuild shifting external image perceptions. The role of place brand facilitators and managers lies in being catalysts for communities in their quest to leverage internal identity clarity, while building external reputational image. Key factors are maintaining a flexible approach, and acknowledging that people and places evolve, presenting an ever-growing knowledge set of challenges and opportunities - much like the tenacious poppies that continue to bloom in Flanders Fields surrounding Ieper, Belgium.
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary L. Mohan is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at the State University of New York at Geneseo. A Cleveland, OH native, Mohan earned her A.B. in English and Journalism at Ursuline College, an M.A. in Mass Communication at The University of Akron, and a Ph.D. in Organizational Communication from Kent State University. Her areas of specialization in research and consulting include: public relations, place branding, organizational culture, and conflict mediation.
SUPPORTING UNCLE SAM: IDEAS FOR A UNIQUE INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS GOVERNMENTAL STRATEGY

BY MARK MEUDT

Abstract:

Forget most of what you know about effective business-to-business marketing--this is business-to-government, or “B2G” marketing. At times B2G marketing flies in the face of basic integrated marketing communications principles, requiring a much deeper dive into the nuances of reaching tightly controlled and hard to reach procurement decision makers and influencers within government agencies, departments and military commands. New communications and marketing ideas and innovations are also important to cut through the extremely cluttered mix of marketing messages coming out of thousands of government contractors. The answer is: take advantage of and utilize tools that penetrate the many unique opportunities for reaching your target audience that are present in this market—from GWACS to ID/IQs, “set asides” to cooperative programs and more. This can be a very lucrative and exciting marketplace in which to ply an innovative and unique brand of B2G integrated marketing communications.

Introduction

Making the philosophical commitment to target your communications and marketing toward the federal government can be an appealing proposition to many businesses. The federal government is typically not as affected by economic ups and downs as the private sector – resulting in steady and predictable business opportunities. However, communicating to the federal government is vastly different from marketing to commercial consumers and businesses. Companies looking to expand or refocus their marketing into the federal space must take the time to really understand that the federal market is not just another vertical industry, like the financial or education market; in fact, it is not a vertical industry at all.

The unique market dynamics and decision making intricacies require a different view of marketing and communication, and in many cases, a completely different business model for each federal agency or military command. The federal government is not just one market, driven by common acquisition methods and agency missions. To be successful, a company shifting its marketing into the federal space requires a much deeper level of understanding and patience than it would need in perhaps any other major marketplace. However, the rewards can be both financially stabilizing during an economic downturn and economically advantageous over a very long period of time.

“Know your customer” is a well-known tenet in any marketing discipline, but it is perhaps even more important in marketing to the federal government. Government officials and decision makers have different motivations than their counterparts in the private sector. They are usually driven by their commitment to public service, must follow specific and laborious purchasing procedures, and are typically very risk-averse. Therefore, marketing messages must be crafted in ways that add value to the agency mission. Self-serving marketing messages usually are self-defeating.
An introduction to the world of government marketing will involve a host of unfamiliar rules, confusing restrictions, a multitude of contract vehicles and seemingly unjust and long processes. However, with the proper background knowledge and established industry partners, companies entering this market can routinely minimize complexity and achieve great marketing results.

**How is Business-to-government Marketing Different from Business-to-business Marketing?**

Business-to-government marketing requires a different mix of marketing and communications tools and an unusual level of emphasis on elements of the marketing and communications arsenal, drawing on more educational, cause-related and value-added innovative strategies and tactics, compared to typical business-to-business marketing. While effective government marketing certainly makes use of traditional marketing strategies — like advertising, media relations and event participation/sponsorship — it typically places a different emphasis on these channels.

For example, print advertising typically plays more of a superficial role even in a well-funded government marketing program; it’s just the frosting on the cake. Most successful programs place a greater emphasis on one-to-one communication and techniques that build relationships and credibility. As mentioned above, sales cycles can be long, but slow and steady is what it takes in the federal government marketplace. Relationship building is paramount. The government customer must feel that the selling organization truly understands the challenges within the context of both the agency’s mission and departmental goals and consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to addressing them. No carpetbaggers are welcome.

As such, organizations successfully marketing to the government often place a greater emphasis on strategies and tactics that add value to the overall agency mission first – like supporting key conferences where relevant information is exchanged, underwriting specific educational programs, participating in editorial roundtables that take on relevant agency and department issues, and then developing targeted media relations campaigns to promote these activities. These tactics all provide clear value to the customer’s mission, drive relationship building and position the company as a thought leader.

These methods, deployed as part of an integrated communications campaign, are used to build awareness where a company’s brand is unknown and ultimately to generate an understanding of what the brand has to offer to further advance the agency’s mission. An integrated campaign provides a platform that will allow for the credible and contextual presentation and promotion of the company’s skill set, and includes developing partnerships with similarly aligned organizations to help inform the federal customer.

Many effective government marketing efforts target a number of niche groups and make use of individual, personalized communication outreach. As such, tactics like lead generation and direct response outreach are usually not as effective or efficient marketing tactics for the government market, as these methods are too broad, impersonal, and focus on mass quantity results that will not be found in this market. While government marketing can leverage some tactics that can be very successful in the business and consumer marketing arenas, other tactics from these markets are not effective, and in some cases, are actually illegal when dealing with federal agencies.

**No Gifts in Government**

As mentioned above, effective government marketing is based heavily on educating and supporting the customer and his/her agency mission through partnerships, relationship building and peer communications. Business-to-business tactics often focus on relationship building as well, but the two markets can take two very different approaches when connecting with potential customers. Government marketers tend to establish a relationship with a customer based on a common requirement — identifying a specific need for a product or service and proposing a solution to address the challenge. While a business-to-business relationship can also be formed on a similar common bond, marketers in the commercial space also often “sweeten the deal” with incentives. The exchange of gifts such as tickets, trips, and other luxury material items to help secure a business deal is commonplace in the commercial world, but this practice is illegal in the federal marketing arena and is closely monitored. Even relatively small gifts — like a $20 giveaway at a trade show or food and drinks at a networking event — are not allowed by the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR). Organizations looking to market and sell to the federal government should familiarize themselves with the FAR (https://www.acquisition.gov/Far/), the principal set of rules in the
government acquisition system, to ensure they are following the appropriate guidelines.

The U.S. Office of Government Ethics provides additional information about government ethics and the use of gratuities. This resource notes what federal employees are allowed to accept from outside sources, including:

A gift valued at $20 or less, provided that the total value of gifts from the same person is not more than $50 in a calendar year

A gift motivated solely by a family relationship or personal friendship

A gift based on an employee’s or his spouse’s outside business or employment relationships, including a gift customarily provided by a prospective employer as part of bona fide employment discussions

A gift provided in connection with certain political activities

Gifts of free attendance at certain widely attended gatherings, provided that the agency has determined that attendance is in the interest of the agency

Modest refreshments (such as coffee and donuts), greeting cards, plaques and other items of little intrinsic value

Discounts available to the public or to all Government employees, rewards and prizes connected to competitions open to the general public

**Know the Right People and Events**

Instead of personal incentives, effective government marketers typically invest in peer programs more aggressively than their commercial enterprise counterparts. The government market features a large number of professional associations that enable peer and public-private communication and collaboration with key media and government customers. Government marketers leverage their involvement to connect with peers and potential partners, as well as to network with prospective customers. As a suggested starting point, the largest government associations include TechAmerica, Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association (AFCEA), the Professional Services Council, The American Council for Technology - Industry Advisory Council (ACT/IAC), and American Small Business Coalition (ASBC).

Sponsorship of and participation in industry trade shows or charity and community events are also popular ways for organizations to elevate their brand understanding among partners, as well as customers, and stand out to key decision makers. Government marketing executives rank trade shows and conferences as the number four most important element in overall marketing success. Identifying priority shows and budgeting appropriately for marketing pre, during, and post show is critical. Pre-show mailings, advertisements in the show program guide, sponsoring sessions or participating on panels and conducting follow up calls and meetings with show attendees are all examples of how to make the most of your trade show investment. But once again the primary goal of federal market trade show participation is not typically lead generation, but relationship building. This can make it very difficult to create a metric for your return on investment (ROI); however the value of developing these customer and partner relationships can pay huge dividends. Industry award opportunities and speaking engagements can showcase an organization as a thought leader focused on an agency’s mission. Resources like MeriTalk (http://www.meritalk.com/home.php) and PRSourcecode (http://prsourcecode.com/) are valuable tools to help identify government related events, trade shows, editorial opportunities, and speaking and award opportunities. MeriTalk specifically serves the government IT community and provides an online community full of industry news, events, and resources. PRSourcecode can help ease the tedious task of searching for editorial opportunities with leading technology and business publications, as well as prime speaking and award opportunities.

**From Mail to Social Media**

Direct mail campaigns are limited in their effectiveness as a primary tool reaching federal customers. Not only are there many stringent physical security measures at government buildings that block and prevent a mailing from getting to the recipient, it is also not an efficient way to convey the breadth of your offering and skill set to the federal customer. Information can travel through several rounds of gate keepers before reaching the desired recipient and through this process can easily be discarded or lost. As a result, reach cannot typically be verified. Mass mail and email programs are typically viewed as an impersonal way of self promotion vs. value-added.
communication by the government customer; this cuts against the foundation of credible government marketing. In fact, government marketers spend less than two percent of their marketing budgets on direct mail campaigns, whereas commercial companies of the same revenue bracket spend approximately five percent of their marketing budget on these campaigns.

Currently, federal agencies are also less receptive than their private sector counterparts in their use of social media. A recent survey concluded that government marketers do not use any of their marketing budgets to support blogs whereas commercial organizations of the same revenue bracket spend approximately .5 percent to 1.5 percent of their budgets supporting the use and management of blogs. A recent study conducted by Marker Connections, a research firm that serves the public sector and commercial firms contracting with the government, evaluated the federal government’s familiarity and use of social media tools. The study found that nearly 40 percent of federal employees were not using social media at work or in their personal lives and five percent of government employees did not know what the term “social media” means.

However, the tide may be turning. While security is still a highly regarded factor when discussing social media, government contractors are seeing the value of using social media tools – “to form relationships, reach new audiences and engage in existing audiences in a more personalized, strategic manner.” These tools can also help contractors maneuver around the multiple gatekeepers that can prevent or slow direct contact with key federal decision makers. In fact, this most recent survey found that the number of federal decision makers who consider social media important rose to 25 percent.

Previously, many agencies had policies banning the use of social media, but in late April, the Obama administration released new guidelines that require agencies to provide business cases demonstrating why their employees may not use social media. So, now the default rule is that agency employees are allowed to use social media. A recent Government Accountability Office report said that 22 of 24 major agencies are using social media. Although social media use among federal agencies may be in its infancy, many agencies are beginning to leverage these tools for marketing communications.

Popular tools specific to government social networking include outlets such as GovLoop, LinkedIn and MeriTalk. These are viewed as professional ways to network and build relationships with government decision makers. Other social networking channels that are slowly being adopted by government agencies include Twitter and blogs. Outreach and promotion through videos, Webinars, podcasts and whitepapers are also popular.

Additionally, a fundamental tool in connecting with and educating government customers is developing a Web site that is dedicated to the federal government. In addition to being user friendly, informative, and visually appealing, it also must be organized by customer, not your products and services. Straightforward, clear information about contract vehicles, capabilities and solution offerings is what customers are looking for and will evaluate when selecting contractors. Providing a history of work and case studies of successful programs will also prove to be invaluable to potential customers and partners who are seeking companies with experience. Constructing your Web site with the right information is only half of the equation; the other half involves knowing how to help people find your Web site and access the information. Innovative search engine optimization strategies must be utilized to ensure that common key words are used in distinct ways to make the Web site stand out among competitor Web sites.

Does it Make Sense to Get in?

Once an organization has decided to make the leap and has done the necessary due diligence, a likely first step is to secure a General Services Administration (GSA) schedule (http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104447). The GSA maintains the GSA Schedule – a collection of contracts – which enables other agencies to buy goods and services from more than 11 million suppliers and service providers at a pre-negotiated rate without needing to go through a competitive bidding process. By becoming a GSA Schedule contractor, an organization is prequalified for many types of government work, including competitive bids.

However, it can be very time consuming to get a schedule contract, and securing one is no guarantee that you will actually make any money. Many organizations make the mistake of spending a lot of time and money to obtain consultants and lawyers to help them secure a position on the GSA Schedule, but then think the hard work is over and that the government business will start rolling in.
But, getting on the GSA Schedule is just step one, and government marketers must concurrently focus on identifying appropriate opportunities, getting in front of the right decision makers, and building critical relationships with customers and potential partners already well entrenched in the government market in order to actually win deals. Getting on as many of the right contract vehicles for your products and or services as possible, with an aggressive marketing plan, is key to being successful in this market place.

Organizations can start at FedBizOpps (www.fbo.gov) to review requests for proposals (RFPs) for the vast majority of competitive bids. The site also includes spending forecasts for each agency. It is also important to review agencies’ short and long-term strategic plans, as well as to keep a finger on the pulse of Congress and the administration – tracking key bills and the President’s priorities to identify future business opportunities. Understanding where the opportunities lie is half the battle in positioning an organization as a viable candidate to meet an agency’s needs.

The FAR is another useful resource in evaluating prospective Federal agency opportunities. Specifically, government marketers can reference the FAR for the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), which is the standard system used by Federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy. This system was developed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and replaced the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code system. The code system can be found in FAR chapter 19, the contract and grant manual, and is useful because it provides background data on how the Federal government conducts economic activity, and offers insight into where money is spent among the NAICS industry categories, as well as the numbers of employees for services. NAICS categories include finance and insurance, health care and social assistance, information, manufacturing, professional, scientific, technical services, transportation, warehousing, utilities and more. Being familiar with this system and knowing the popular or priority categories can help marketers identify which agencies are best positioned for business and are best to pursue.

Additionally, government marketers, especially those new to the market will also want to review chapter one of Title 48 of the FAR, which provides information about acquisition pricing and cost analysis. This is a helpful resource in learning about the role of the acquisition team and the acquisition pricing process. ([http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_05/48cfr1_05.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_05/48cfr1_05.html)) This information is issued by the Secretary of Defense and Administration of General Services Administration and is maintained by the Defense Acquisition Regulations Council (DARC) and the Civilian Agency Acquisition Council (CAAC). These councils stay closely in sync with government agencies, associations and other industry related parties to oversee and manage all proposed changes to the FAR.

A key time to be aware of and be prepared for is the end of the federal government’s fiscal year, which occurs in September and can be a time of great potential for government contractors to connect with agencies and secure awards. In fact, a study of government spending conducted by FedSources found that as of August 2010, the federal government still had $114 billion to spend before the end of September. The study also reported that end of year purchases tend to be commodity-based or based on researching and planning projects to prepare for the next fiscal year. Agencies may begin planning for end of year spending in August but contractors should start preparing and evaluating possible opportunities as early as March or April.

**Picking a Partner**

After determining when it makes sense to enter the government market, companies must also determine if it makes sense to go after an RFP alone or to develop partnerships with other organizations and pursue opportunities in the marketplace together. Each approach can prove to be beneficial depending on the contract. Partner decisions should include consideration of small businesses, 8a companies, value-added reseller (VARS), as well as larger government contractors. There are advantages of partnering with each of these company types. Working with small businesses and disadvantaged (8a) companies can provide a win-win scenario for both parties in the partnership.

Small businesses provide niche expertise and skill sets that can enhance the offering and make it unique among competitors. Small businesses also benefit from working with larger companies by gaining experience and exposure to federal agencies. As indicated by the name, partnerships with VARS can add value to the contract by integrating additional features to existing products or service offerings.
Determining the appropriate partners for a target contract is critical in developing and packaging your offering for the customer.

In addition to deciding if a partner is necessary when developing an RFP, and if so, what type is best, there are various types of team arrangements that must also be considered. Contractor team arrangements (CTA) and prime contractor/subcontractor arrangements should both be evaluated to determine which method is best to meet the needs of the RFP. A CTA requires each team member to have a GSA Schedule contract, share responsibilities for duties, and allows each team member to have direct interaction with the government. A prime contractor/subcontractor arrangement differs in that only the prime contractor must have a GSA Schedule contract, can delegate responsibilities and can have direct interaction with the government.

It is important to note that it is not worth taking on all contracts that seem like a good match. There must be some selectivity based on the estimated time and monetary costs associated with pursuing the contract. Organizations should make decisions based on realistic evaluations of the means it will take to complete the mission and account for potential additional costs.

Understanding the Process

The government marketing process may be elaborate but the system serves a functionality and purpose to connect customers with the best contractors. Being closely attuned with the government’s budgeting process and schedule, as well as purchasing regulations and contract vehicles, is equally important as knowing how to properly develop and submit proposals.

There is more to the government contracting process than the timeline. There are various types of contract vehicles and it is important to understand each to know which is best to pursue.

The most common GSA types of award contracts include:

- A multiple award schedule contract held by you or one of your partners
- A contract held by your business partner under which subcontracting is an option
- A sole source, credit card purchase (usually under $2,500) by a government buyer
- An open market, small purchase (under $25,000)
- Any program giving preferences to a defined class including small businesses, small disadvantaged businesses [this includes 8(a) business development programs], women-owned businesses, veteran-owned businesses, businesses located within a HUB zone, etc.
- A public procurement contract (the least preferred route)

Other contract types include:

Indefinite Delivery / Indefinite Quantity (ID/IQ) - This refers to a procurement of an indeterminate quantity of services with an unspecified delivery date and is used when the government cannot predetermine the precise quantities of supplies or services required during the specific contract period. The contracts are typically used to procure technical expertise in areas such as cost estimating, architect and engineer services, seismic, structural, blast services, construction management, inspection, general construction, repair and alteration, design-build, demolition and remediation services.

Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs) - GSA is authorized to conduct task orders and delivery contracts for information technology for use by other agencies and these contracts have unique contracting features and specialized benefits for GSA customers. GWACs are multiple-award, indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity, (MA/IDIQ) contracts that help agencies meet their technology requirements through a customizable, solutions-based approach.

Once you understand the types of contract vehicles and the specific features of each, you can determine which best suits your business plan and will support your marketing strategy. Then it is a matter of identifying which agencies or companies leverage these vehicles and are seeking the services you provide. These contract vehicles are used by Federal agencies to procure a variety of products and services that can fall into the following categories outlined by the GSA: acquisition services, professional and technical solutions, office and furniture, security, fire, law enforcement, energy and environmental solutions, technology and telecommunications, property for disposal/sale, facilities, supplies, equipment and tools, and travel, transportation and vehicles.
Beyond understanding contract vehicles, it is also important to understand the RFP process. An article by CIO explains how simple the RFP process can be, stating “an RFP is issued, proposals are evaluated, a vendor is selected and a contract is negotiated.” But, these seemingly simple steps can be quite complex. Vendor selection and negotiation are the most critical parts of the process and can require the most time. It is important to note the sequence of events, selection/negotiation vs. negotiation/selection, as this can greatly impact the competitive nature of negotiations and dictate how quickly the process is finalized. Typically the process follows the order of selection then negotiation. It is possible though for a contract to follow a model in which “the negotiation process begins parallel to the vendor selection process but prior to actual vendor selection.” This method allows agencies to select several vendors as finalists, identify the most desirable attributes of each offer, create a new offer and then put out a call for best and final offers. It is best to know going into an RFP process which model the agency will use so you can adequately prepare and allow enough time for either model.

Once the selection and negotiation processes are complete, the agency announces the contract information publicly. It is important to note that the process can be extended if a vendor chooses to protest the RFP. A vendor may protest the solicitation process within seven days after the information is made public by submitting the protest in writing to the Chief Procurement Officer. A protest is typically made if a vendor has any discrepancies with the specifications of the RFP or the vendor selection and award process.

The process of submitting a response to an RFP requires a delicate mix of intellect, savvy, and faith. First, you need a solid understanding of where your product/service is needed. Thoroughly researching the opportunities available and carefully selecting the best matches for your solutions offering is key and is equally as important as knowing how to time your response and connect appropriately with key decision makers. It’s not always a good idea to go it alone. As discussed in the section above about partnerships, knowing the companies that have contract vehicles in place and how your products and services can complement theirs is important in striking partnerships that can help you get your foot in the door. Finally, once you complete your RFP response, you must have faith that you have presented the right combination and that your work, past performance and relationships will speak for themselves.

What Works

Integrated marketing campaigns are extremely important in the federal government, as there is a strong brand competition in the market and there is no silver bullet solution to make one brand rise above the rest. It is key to make use of multiple tactics in a cohesive way to effectively penetrate the market. Taking this approach will show government customers that you understand the industry.

Government marketers must crystallize their message, the target market, and the timeline. Then it is a matter of selecting the most effective set of marketing tools to get the message to the targets in the appropriate time. Planning advertising and public relations campaigns around a critical trade show, or executing regional media and community outreach in conjunction with a new facility opening, or sponsoring an industry association aligned with a common mission are all examples of how integrated planning can boost brand awareness and better position an organization for partnership opportunities and contract wins.

Relationship Building

Media relations and outreach, as well as relationship building and educating customers, typically account for the majority of a government marketing budget. Establishing close relationships with key, target media contacts and outlets is the best way to establish credibility in this market as media relations efforts can be extremely cost effective and produce a very high return on investment. The only down side of this strategy is that the return is not instant. It takes time to identify the key contacts, initiate the relationship, and build trust. With today’s economy, media outlets are constantly adapting and often times downsizing. Reporters are wearing even more hats these days and covering multiple beats – meaning their time is stretched incredibly thin. Selecting specific targets to pitch and reach out to is best, rather than sending information to a large, broad media list. It is important to present concise yet detailed, newsworthy information and relate it to each reporter’s typical work. It is alright to follow up often, but it is wise to be considerate of tight time constraints and show that you are there to help them meet their deadlines.
If you are pitching an interview, identify the subject matter experts for the topic and confirm that they are available and comfortable with speaking to media.

In addition to developing strong relationships with key media contacts, attention and resources should also be placed on continuing to invest in relationships with key customers to build a reference base. Relationship building and customer education efforts can support customer retention, which is critical as it is more costly to secure new customers than it is to retain current customers. Continually taking a temperature check of client relationships and ensuring that you are gaining mindshare is imperative and will keep competition at bay.

Federal marketers must pay close attention to the behaviors of peers and build strong relationships with clients. In fact, government IT executives ranked peer-to-peer evaluations, analyst reports, and associations as the top three most trusted sources of information. As government customers pay close attention to these resources, so should the companies trying to bide for their attention.

Additionally, a method that proves to be very successful in government marketing is cause marketing. This strategy involves aligning your message with what is most important to the Federal agencies you are targeting. Leveraging relationships with industry-related associations or supporting community events, fundraisers or educational sessions are examples of cause marketing. While this provides opportunities to engage with peers to share information on priorities and challenges, and network, it also demonstrates support of the industry and a dedication to its progress, both of which are highly valued in the government community. Cause marketing shows that your organization is invested beyond just securing a contract and is committed to overall well-being of the industry, its associated organizations and its future.

Measuring Success

To know how a program should work and to know how to properly measure its success are two completely different things. Measuring the success of a government marketing campaign may seem simple—was the contract secured or not? But, there are many other factors to evaluate to determine what methods work best and contributed most to the campaign’s success. Identifying the results of each piece of a campaign can be important. How many clicks did the online banner ad receive? How many visitors stopped by the trade show booth? How well-attended were the events? How many pieces of quality media coverage were secured? Noting and comparing these goals and metrics is key to measuring the success of a campaign and to fine tuning future efforts for continued success.

Keeping a pulse on the competition is critical. Savvy government marketers conduct an annual market survey to evaluate the competitive landscape and measure their own reach, brand awareness, and understanding among key targets and regions in the federal industry. Extracting feedback and insight from popular industry publications, competitors, and customers helps the organization to determine which campaigns are most successful, as well as why, and which campaigns produce weaker results.

Conclusion

Achieving success in government marketing can be challenging, but it is an exciting market with a world of opportunity. Though complex, procurement processes are for the most part, open and transparent. Requests for proposals, by law, must be made public – creating a level playing field and enabling organizations to partner before RFPs hit the street. Before entering the market, organizations must know how to identify appropriate opportunities, build relationships with key decision makers, and navigate the complex procurement process. If you are willing to do your homework, take the time to understand and connect with potential government customers, build your brand through thought leadership programs and relationship building campaigns, and be patient, the federal government offers a dynamic, rewarding and innovative marketplace that can help grow your business.
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Meudt is currently the Vice President of Communications and Marketing for the Information Technology sector of General Dynamics, a large government contractor. He has served as a senior level communications and marketing executive in the business to government market for over 25 years, responsible for launching numerous national and international corporate brands and integrated marketing and public relations campaigns targeting the US federal government.

He holds a master’s degree in public communications from the American University in Washington, DC, and his bachelor’s degree in journalism from the University of Maryland in College Park, MD.
WHEN A “SELLING WORD” STRATEGY JEOPARDIZES YOUR BRAND:
“THE OTHER WHITE MEAT” AS “THE OTHER INTEGRATED BRAND STRATEGY”

BY CLARKE L. CAYWOOD, Ph.D. NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY & ANDERS GRONSTEDT, Ph.D. GRONSTEDT GROUP

Abstract:
Marketing communications becomes more than a mere consumer strategy for high risk industries, products and services. The National Pork Board’s highly successful message “The Other White Meat” faced serious challenges by competitors. A 2010 Trademark Trial and Appeal Board found that earlier research and the broader integrated marketing stakeholder strategy of the pork industry protected the rights of speech and the industry brand.

Following a landmark decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that confirmed the constitutionality of commodity checkoff programs as “government speech,” the U.S. Appeal Board for the 3rd Circuit in Philadelphia affirms the constitutionality of the dairy producer-funded checkoff program, reversing an earlier decision. ((2005 http://www.dairycheckoff.com/DairyCheckoff/AboutUs/WhatIsDairyManagementInc/HistoryOfDairyPromotion))

From, the U.S. Trademark Trial Appeal Board in June 2010: We find especially compelling the evidence from the Northwestern Study of 2000 showing that only four other consumer messages in the United States had a greater degree of recognition than THE OTHER WHITE MEAT.

This finding supports a conclusion that Opposers’ mark is extremely well recognized by a broad spectrum of consumers, and that this degree of recognition among the general consuming public of this famous mark also supports the conclusion that dilution by blurring is likely upon the introduction of applicant (lobster)’s message into the marketplace. The case is a mark infringement case. (Hearing: Mailed: December 16, 2009 June 11, 2010 Bucher UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE Trademark Trial and Appeal Board National Pork Board and National Pork Producers Council. Supreme Lobster and Seafood Company, p. 59).

So much of marketing communications can seem trivial. The mere selling of words and phrases seems disconnected from the integrated brand objectives of a company. These objectives should be for a company to exist, with permission of society, in order to provide products, services, employment, investment and a clean environment (www.awpagesociety.com). As a society, we should expect so much more than merely a “new, proven, free, dependable, convenient and advanced product X.”
See list of common selling words below from:
Proven, Improved, Guaranteed, Free, Tested, Pure,
Best, Fresh, Sure, Healthy, Natural, Refreshing,
Energizing, Safe, Quality, Dependable, Secure,
Advanced, Easy, Convenient, Quick, Instant, Save,
Personal.”

When the Supreme Court, deciding on the Dairy
case, or the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board,
making a decision on the recent Pork case, rules on a
challenge as to whether you should be able to promote
or market your product as a matter of Constitutional
and Trademark law, it seems logical that the marketing
goals and practices of that industry probably have
more to say than merely “buy me.” In both cases,
the decisions are groundbreaking examples of more
advanced integrated marketing and communications
in which the customer is just one of the stakeholders
that determines the success of the food industry and
other industries that increasingly come under the rule
of law and legal challenges.

Based on professional experience and a direct linkage
to the Trademark Office decision, this paper will fo-
cus on the second case, since our research was used
as evidence in the case. In part, this is the story of
how “The Other White Meat” and other commodity product messages have gained marketing notoriety
and success. It is also a story of integrated marketing
communications managers building an integrated to-
tal branding effort that goes well beyond mere selling
language. As addressed in the cases cited above for
commodity marketing associations, some marketers
must build more integrated strategies that recognize
the risks their industries face from regulation and ex-
pectation of the market and stakeholders. The chal-
genle can be much greater than building a specific
brand identity for a single company.

In the decision of the “pork case” on June 11, 2010,
Bucher, UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADE-
MARK OFFICE, Trademark Trial and Appeal Board,
National Pork Board and National Pork Producers
Council v. Supreme Lobster and Seafood Company,
two works of marketing and law are examined. First,
a seemingly out-of-date piece of research from 1990
by the authors gained new life and policy impact as
an important piece of evidence for the “pork case” in
2009-2010. One of the authors testified as an expert
about the research. Second, the authors’ research was
quoted extensively by the Trial judge as one of the
factors to determine the outcome of an appeal to pre-
vent a corporation from using the brand messaging of
the pork industry.

**Pork Case Brand Research**

A decade ago, the authors were asked by Tom Hayden,
J.D., then Executive Vice President, Bozell Advertis-
ing, Chicago IL, now faculty member in Northwestern
University’s Integrated Marketing Communication
(IMC) Department, to help conduct a study for
their client, the National Pork Board in 2000. It was
not a simple brand study. The owners of the brand
were thousands of pork producers or farmers who an-
nually contributed a portion of their hard earned in-
come to a checkoff program to market their commod-
ities in the U.S. and world markets. The experience
of one of the authors with other industry associations
in the U.S., such as the beef and dairy associations,
had demonstrated the more complex policy politics
of shared governance through which thousands of
members who paid the checkoff fees demanded proof
of success and a strong governance role. These organi-
zations also provided extraordinary research and edu-
cation to society on increasing risk issues regarding
their products, from “mad cow” disease to nutrition,
health and food preparation safety. The original re-
search and this summary might be called a casebook
example of what universities with research-based pro-
fessional schools call “research with impact,” through
which rigorous academic work has policy or decision-
making impact beyond knowledge for knowledge
sake.

The concept of the marketing checkoff is not usually
taught in business schools or IMC programs. (Kaiser,
Commodity Promotion Programs in California:Economic
Evaluation and Legal Issues. New York: Peter Lang Publishing,
of Generic Advertising on Brand Preferences.” Journal of Consumer
Research 30:487-502. See also, Wikipedia “Check-off”). The
checkoff programs, with the support of the U.S.
Congress, have given commodity industries a way for
producers to cooperate to promote their products
where the market buys. Checkoff industry examples
include those related to dairy, pork, beef, avocados,
peanuts, honey and dozens of other agricultural
products in highly fragmented industries (Wikipedia,
“Check-off”). The process is a not always positive.
The Cattlemen’s Beef Association’s experience with “Beef, it’s what’s for dinner” was not positive, with one spokesperson found to be a vegetarian and one suffering cardiac arrest. Still, as the research reported here notes, the message has been a strong one for the industry. In another slightly humorous case the Governor, a doctorate in communications, of an upper mid-western state referred to honey as “bee poop” while he recognized the state honey queen. The dairy industry’s experience with their selling message “Got Milk” won a lot of advertising awards, but industry research in the 1990s by the Leo Burnett agency showed that it did not sell as much milk as the producers wished. With the cooperation of one of the author’s stakeholder integrated models, the industry association, representing the dairy farmers or producers, moved away from the message to successfully sell more milk-enriched cheese and cheese-infused pizza to younger consumers. As the trademark case reveals, in the 1990s and in the past decade, these industries began to use a much wider range of communications channels other than traditional mass TV and magazine advertising.

Research Findings

The key work of research finally used in a trademark case, decided in May of 2010, was conducted for the National Pork Board a decade before by the authors. The national survey concluded that “The Other White Meat” was the fifth most recognized message in the United States in the year 2000. We estimated that as many as 69% of the adult population recognized the message and could correctly identify it with pork.

Table 1 shows the top 25 messages identified in phase one of the research study in rank order along with the percentages of people that could correctly identify the brand, company or product associated with each message; i.e. said “Yes” on the question as to whether they had heard or seen the message and also correctly identified the product, brand or company. It ranked higher than such household messages as Nike’s “Just do it” and State Farm’s “Like a Good neighbor.” In fact, it was among the top ten most recognized messages among all demographic sub-segments analyzed. Moreover, it had one of the strongest associations with the correct brand or product groups of all messages; as many as 88% of respondents who recognized the message would also associate it with pork. This power of the message suggests that the language was far more effective than a mere selling message.

“The Other White Meat” ranked universally high, among the top nine, with any of the demographic subpopulations. It ranked number five among women. Among men, “The Other White Meat” dropped one spot, edged out by Budweiser’s “King of Beers” and Wheaties’ “Breakfast of Champions,” but still ranked sixth with more than two-thirds of the male population recognizing it and correctly identifying it with pork.

“The Other White Meat” is slightly less recognized among the youngest 18-24 year old demographics, ranking ninth. Not surprisingly, slogans by the Army and Budweiser surpassed “The Other White Meat” in this group. But again “The Other White Meat” is a top-ten slogan with a large majority of the population recognizing and correctly identifying it. No fewer than three out of four 25-34-year-olds recognize and correctly identify “The Other White Meat.” “The Other White Meat” slogan is most recognized among 35-44-year-olds, by a whopping 85%, ranking fourth of all slogans. That’s a number that constitutes almost the entire meat-eating population of middle-aged Americans (4-10% of the population consider themselves vegetarians). “The Other White Meat” moves up the rank as people get older from seventh (45-54-year-olds), to fifth (among 55-64-year-olds), and fourth (among 65+-year-olds). The percentage of people recognizing it drops as people get older, but clearly not as rapidly as in the case of other slogans.

The first part of the study established that “The Other White Meat” was among the most widely recognized slogans in the U.S. The next part of the study suggests that it had one of the strongest associations with the correct brand or product groups of all slogans. The research shows the degree to which respondents claimed to have seen or heard the slogan but failed to correctly identify the product, brand or company associated with the slogan. It demonstrates that a majority (52%) of people who recognized the slogan “We Bring Good Things to Life” were not able to identify it as the slogan for GE. This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as “vampire creativity” in marketing jargon and implies that you can get a high information memorability that is only marginally related to the selling message while the product or brand gets lost. However, only 11.96% of the people who recognized “The Other White Meat” were not able to identify it with pork. In other words, almost nine out of ten people who recognized “The Other White Meat” slogan were also able to identify it as the slogan for pork.
Research Methodology

The first phase of the study consisted of 126 personal interviews, testing the recognition of a list of 114 messages. The list was generated through research of secondary sources and input from a panel of advertising professionals from Bozell Advertising. The personal interviews were used to narrow down the list to 25 messages. It was a combination of 50 mall intercept interviews in Boulder, Colorado and 76 classroom surveys at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. To qualify for participation, respondents had to be over 18 years of age and have command of the English language. The respondents were read the list of 114 messages and were asked to identify the product, brand or company behind the message.

In phase two, the top 25 messages were tested in more than 1,000 professionally-conducted phone interviews, later validated by the researchers. The interviewer asked the respondents if they had heard or seen the message and the respondents who answered affirmatively were asked to identify the brand, product or company behind the message. A national sample was used and the qualifier was that the respondents were over 18 years of age and did not work in the field of marketing or advertising. The margin of error for the study is +/- 3 percent for the total sample and +/- 5 percent for the subgroups, at a 95% confidence level. It is interesting to note that none of the top ranking messages use what are overtly called selling words or phrases, but they have nevertheless penetrated the memory of the audience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Slogan</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>You’re in Good Hands (Allstate)</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Please Don’t Squeeze the _____ (Charmin)</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Snap, Crackle, Pop (Rice Krispies)</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Breakfast of Champions (Wheaties)</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Other White Meat (Pork)</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>No More Tears (Johnson’s Baby Shampoo)</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Double Your Pleasure, Double Your Fun (Doublemint)</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The King of Beers (Budweiser)</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The Un-Cola (7-Up)</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Like a Good Neighbor (Statefarm)</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Be All That You Can Be (Army)</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Just Do It (Nike)</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Got _____? (Milk)</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Place with the Helpful Hardware Folks (Ace)</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>When you Care Enough to Send the Very Best (Hallmark)</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>They’re Great (Frosted Flakes)</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Don’t Leave Home Without It (American Express)</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>The Coppertop (Duracell)</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Built _____ Tough (Ford)</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The Fabric of Our Lives (Cotton)</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>How America Spells Cheese (Kraft)</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Did Somebody Say _____? (McDonalds)</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Drivers Wanted (Volkswagen)</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>We Bring Good Things to Life (GE)</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>The Soup that Eats Like a Meal (Chunky)</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample size: 1,003
The Legal Case: Pork and Lobster

In this review of a recent national trademark law appeal case, we point out that checkoff marketing faced a serious integrated messaging challenge. The case documents the critical issues of this form of marketing to communicate with a host of stakeholders including Supreme Court, Federal Court and Trademark Trial Appeal Board judges. The Appeal Board judge notes the far-reaching effort of the marketing program beyond point of purchase. The judge seems to be an advocate of a more integrated approach, which provides support for the pervasive impact of the brand message of “The Other White Meat.”

As IMC researchers and practitioners know, a lack of integration means that the creative message may be an isolated and independent group of words that are not linked to key stakeholders, including employees, media, shareholders, government, community, suppliers and others. (“Integrated Marketing Communications: Practice Leads Theory,” Philip J Kitchen, Ilchul Kim and Don E Schultz, Journal of Advertising Research, Vol. 48, No. 4, Dec 2008, pp.531-546; Caywood, ed. The Handbook of Strategic Public Relations and Integrated Communications, 1997, revision 2011.)

A look at any recent Wall Street Journal article reveals that the public, as represented by the press, is not very interested in selling words. People are reading about takeovers, reduction of workforce, CEO salaries, corruption, the EURO, China business, trade and other substantive issues (September 29, 2010). The challenge in marketing communications is to make the selling messages relevant, important and supportive of a wider range of reasons to put a buyer’s confidence in a product or service. Some companies, as revealed by research, understand this better than most by supporting their brand message as a product message and a corporate/organizational reputational message: their message is incorporated into an overall strategy of integrated communications (Caywood 1997, revision 2011.).

More than ever, rigorous and impact targeted research is needed to protect not only the trademark but also the reputation of the fragmented, risk commodity industries. The story of how the National Pork Board protected its message of pork as “The Other White Meat” as a leading brand message reveals the value of such messages, the importance of their being more than “selling words.” This case is about a message becoming a larger brand message supported by the public and protected by the law.

How the U.S. Trademark Trial Appeal Board Used the Research

Clearly, the Appeal Board judge was impressed with the original Northwestern study, but this discussion is more about how the ruling illustrates the value of a fully integrated marketing program that even those trained in the law understand and appreciate as evidence of impact.

“With the breadth of such commodity promotional messages in the marketplace, there can be no question that consumers recognize these messages for what they are, marks designating the promotion of an industry group as a whole. As such, these messages function quintessentially as trademarks.”

The Opposers in this case were the National Pork Board with the National Pork Producers Council and the “Applicant” was the Supreme Lobster and Seafood Company. The seafood company had tried to use the well-known brand developed by the pork industry and Bozell Advertising by altering it to the “The Other Red Meat” with other variations of use to possibly mimic “The Other White Meat.” As the Trademark Trial and Appeal Board (U.S. Patent and Trademark Office) recounts, the Pork Board had taken their message to a very high and broad level of use to ensure that the highly-recognized message was also linked to many marketing channels, customer experiences and frames of mind when thinking about food, family, romance and more.

This rich and integrated use of the creative message was first articulated by Professor Stanley Tannenbaum, one of the four faculty team founders of integrated marketing communications at Northwestern University ((Whitepaper, Tannenbaum, Schultz, Caywood and Scissors, 1992). (Caywood and Ewing, Public Relations Review, 1992.))
In 1992, Professor Tannenbaum, with great verbal and gesticular drama, would often note that the integrated message should be “one voice, one look, one feel” across all channels of communications.

To emphasize the IMC linkage, the Trademark Trial Appeal Board documents an A-Z list of marketing communications tactics (Harris and Whalen, *A Marketer’s Guide to Public Relations* 2006.) They list “shirts, jackets… recipe books, cooking utensils…etc. bearing the mark THE OTHER WHITE MEAT…” The Court was also impressed with the early website (July 2007) www. theotherwhitemeat.com, which “received almost one-hundred thousand daily, unique visitors, with a total of almost six hundred thousand page views.” With some astonishment, the Court writes:

The highest volume traffic goes to Opposers’ (Pork) web pages having recipes - an informational service that has proven to be most popular.

Although these tactics are usually logical to modern marketers and IMC practitioners, the Court seemed amazed at the breadth and depth of ways that a message can be employed when it went on to list other creative uses of the slogan:

Opposers (Pork) have run local and national advertising playing off the mark with tag-lines that read:

“The Other Backyard Barbecue,”

“The Other Stir-Fry,”

“The Other Romantic Dinner,”

“The Other Sunday Brunch,”

“The Other TV Dinner,”

“The Other Way to Spice Up Your Love Life,”

“The Other Steak Dinner,”

“The Other Prime Rib,”

and

“The Other White Protein”

Here, in black and white, is where we separate the wheat from the chaff of marketing and messaging. The challenge was to show that the applicant (lobster) did not fully understand the nature of stakeholder marketing by associations such as the National Pork Board, Dairy Management or the National Cattlemen’s Association or dozens of other commodity marketing organizations. The Court gives credit to commodity marketing organizations for promoting the commodity but not acting as a government agency to guarantee the product or not.

However, applicant (lobster) argues that consumers will be misled and deceived by commodity promotion messages, and that all such agencies should be scrutinized because of their inability to control the quality standards of the commodity being sold.

In an age of increasing food safety issues (Food safety in the age of recalls: What the government is doing to protect us, and what you can do, Rosemary Black, DAILY NEWS, Saturday, July 18th 2009) it may be that the associations should be more diligent in showing how they do work closely with government agencies and other stakeholders to protect the quality of their members’ product. Examples of such programs are the “Pork Quality Assurance Plus” program and the work of Dairy Management with programs of food safety research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.


In this important case of pigs vs. lobsters, the Appeal Board sees the challenge as pertaining to more than a simple single brand. The Appeal Board clearly understands the larger stakeholder issues facing the pork industry.

Additionally, this is not a product mark for identifying a brand of pork. Clearly, the owner of a product mark for fresh pork who does not control the quality of a licensee’s products risks a finding that its trademark has been abandoned.
By contrast, the owner of a commodity promotion message is concerned with the marketing effectiveness of all the producers, suppliers and vendors within its industry sector as a whole, whatever the principal product may be.

Opposer (Pork) herein maintains a precise message and focus by controlling the ways in which their message/mark is used on the promotion and packaging of pork and pork products. The ultimate measure of this effort is the level of pork consumption in the United States as a share of all meat products, ultimately translating into economic benefit for all pork producers.

The Appeal Board has a warning that has bearing on valued communications regarding an industry and its producers to the consumers, the media and government. They decree that the Pork Industry (and many other groups) only allow their message to be used in cases of high standards. The message is positioned as a validation of the reputation and totally integrated brand of the industry: [(Contra Midwest Plastic Fabricators Inc. v. Underwriters Laboratories Inc., 906 F.2d 1568, 15 USPQ2d 1359 (Fed. Cir. 1990) [Underwriters Laboratories certifies with its well-known symbol that electrical equipment meets safety standards]; In re Celanese Corp. of America, 136 USPQ 86 (TTAB 1962) [CELANESE certifies plastic toys meeting certifier’s safety standards]).

Conclusion and Opportunities for More Research

Linking social science-based research and logic with legal research and logic is a challenge. We believe that the two examples above of research, woven together by a bit of history, the U.S. legal system and a broader definition of an integrated market, clearly demonstrate the true importance of the integrated message.

In addition, the original study and ensuing legal case provide opportunities for more research. Three researchable questions seem to provide opportunity for more inquiry: 1. Do risk industries such as the commodities and checkoff products require a more advanced integrated marketing communications strategy? 2. Would a replication of the year 2000 research document many of the same findings a decade and world of change later? 3. Are the theories and practices (and teaching) of integrated marketing and communications elastic enough to accommodate the demands of a stakeholder-driven marketplace today, where the government, non-governmental organizations, the traditional and digital press, the employees and others have a greater hand in the future of business?

For example, the stakeholder message strategy is even more important in newsworthy “risk” industries. Certain industries are frequently under attack by the media, government, competitors or NGOs, which is why research, public relations and issues management play a key role in their success (Caywood, 1997). Risk industries develop products or services that create greater risks to life and health, the environment or to publics who may require greater protection. Often risk products or services are those that taken internally (drugs, food, beverages), applied to the skin (cosmetics, hair care, drugs) or used for transportation (autos, motorcycles, airplanes, boats, etc.). They can also produce products sold to children, the elderly, the poor or other less-protected social groups.

The risk category normally contains food products because of ingestion, safety issues, commodity status and chemical content or use. It is not marketing for beginners. How many brand marketers and agency leaders have the ability to respond to attacks by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), such as their substitution of “Got Pus” for “Got Milk”? [(www.latimes.com/2007/dec/13/business/)].

The beef commodity industry was also under attack by NGOs and individuals with harsh counter messages such as “Heart attack on a bun,” featuring a billboard picture of a hamburger. Commodity foods demand more serious marketing thought and planning beyond mere selling language. In these cases the messages must appeal to higher courts – figuratively and literally.

The authors also expect to address some of the questions posed by the Appeal Board. We are embarked on a replication of the original research, a study of stakeholder market concepts in developing nations such as China and more. There is a new marketplace for research that constantly challenges the application of Western developed theories and practice in the East, but the rapid changes in the marketplace in the West compels researchers and practitioners to test and try new ideas.
REFERENCES


ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Clarke L. Caywood, Ph.D. is a full professor and tenured member of the Integrated Marketing Communications Department at Northwestern University. Professor Caywood teaches classes in social and business media, crisis management, communications management and public relations. He was named by *PRWeek* as one of the most influential 100 PR people of the 20th century (*PRWeek*, October 18, 1999) and one of the top 10 outstanding educators in 2000 (*PRWeek*, February 7, 2000). He was named Educator of the Year by the Public Relations Society of America in 2002-2003). For 2010-2011 he is on a sabbatical conducting research for his second edition of *The Handbook of Strategic Public Relations and Integrated Communications* and on humanitarian logistics and communications with Aidmatrix.org.

Anders Gronstedt, Ph.D. is an established management consultant and speaker, whose global firm specializes in improving frontline performance through use of customized simulations, podcasting, Second Life virtual experiences, and other innovative learning solutions. His global client list includes Dell, ADT, FedEx, and Volvo. A former faculty member of the graduate Integrated Marketing Communications program at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Gronstedt also authored *The Customer Century: Lessons from World-Class Companies in Integrated Communications*, which was selected by Soundview Executive Summaries as one of the top 30 business books of 2000. He hosts a weekly meeting on Second Life called Train for Success, and has written for publications such as the *Harvard Business Review* and *Communication World*. 
INSTANT BRANDS IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

BY WENDY WONG

Abstract:
Brands have always been, in some respects, social movements. Whether or not the consumer is consciously aware, brands organize people and move them to action. Brands have always required the power of consumers. However, spurred on by social media, brand participation has been redefined, accelerated, intensified and changed. In fact, we now live in an era when new products, new experts and new social norms can be established in the viral marketplace so quickly that the means and methods of marketing and brand-building are really being revised.

The speed at which a brand can mobilize its audience has become a new social phenomenon. Beyond the social networking sites themselves, what are some examples of brands that broke through virally? Although much has been written about the use of viral marketing by big brands, relatively little has been written about examples of viral marketing that really made the brand, driving it to success through the use of social media. This article documents some examples of “instant brands” that deserve a place in marketing history.

The strength of a brand has always been in its loyal consumer base. Brands have always been, in some respects, social movements. Whether or not the consumer is consciously aware, brands organize people and move them to action—whether that action is to buy, to join or to recommend. Brands have always required the power of consumers. However, compared to just ten years ago, brand participation has been redefined. Spurred on by new social media tools, brand participation has accelerated, intensified and changed. In fact, we now live in an era when “instant brands” can come to be. New products, new experts and new social norms can be established in the viral marketplace so quickly that the means and methods of marketing and brand building are really being revised. The speed at which a brand can mobilize its audience has become a new social phenomenon.

Mobilizing Brand Audiences – Faster and Better

Mobile devices and social networking sites have given consumers the ability to participate in how brands, celebrities and political movements are made. The overall connectedness of people has given voice to the crowds and to specialized niche markets.

At the beginning of this millennial decade, American Idol was just becoming part of every American household. Within its first two years, many of its top Idol winners were catapulted to phenomenal careers because millions of viewers voted through their cell phones – an example of a brand mobilizing its audience to action.
In roughly the same years (2001-2004), MoveOn.org mobilized political fundraising via email and credit card transactions by rallying thousands of small donors and proving that ordinary people are willing to put their wallets behind social causes.

Other nonprofit fundraising sites introduced a Gen-X wave of social entrepreneurship and ePhilanthropy in this first millennial decade. iTunes, launched in 2001, changed the way consumers access music – including how they buy, share and recommend – which has created new lifestyle expectations and social norms around earpiece fashion and music at work.

When did social activity become “social networking?” Was it with the invention of the mail coach or the telephone? The Internet, the mobile phone or LinkedIn? At some point in this past decade, “social media” – coined in 2007 to mean social networking sites but often used interchangeably to mean user-generated content or Web 2.0 – became a bona fide marketing and communications channel. Setting aside the debate over a universally accepted definition of “social media,” suffice it to say that we have witnessed a social phenomenon that has changed integrated marketing communications forever. We live in a world where the Internet, mobile devices and social networking sites make available more choices, more opinions and more participation. Consumer decisions have become hyper-influenced by other consumers: peers, friends and even total strangers. We “Yelp” about our favorite performers and restaurants, we “Digg” blogs that we want to bookmark and share, and we demand our favorite artists tour our towns through sites like Eventful. Advocacy for products and brands is being performed by both individuals and crowds.

In the very short span of a few years, new social media tools have enabled a profound ability to create “instant brands.” The speeds at which Facebook, Twitter and YouTube gained market adoption set new records for startup success and market capitalization. Within only five years of its launch, YouTube has become part of our everyday entertainment and connection experience. The ability to “broadcast yourself” has led to new communications expectations, new forms of outreach and new ways to establish “instant brands.” Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube have become the requisite logos proudly displayed on every website, blog, email and TV commercial trying to convey a sense of “I get it.” Just about every brand manager spends part of every day now thinking about how to achieve the same kind of instant, exponential success using social networking tools.

**Instant Brands Built Upon Viral Success**

Beyond the social networking sites themselves, what are some examples of brands that broke through virally? Although much has been written about the use of viral marketing by big brands, such as Nike, Coca-Cola, Old Spice and Starcraft, relatively little has been written about examples of viral marketing that really made the brand, driving it to success through the use of social media.

**Obama.** In 2008, Fast Company ran a cover story titled “The Brand Called Obama” that described the creation of a presidential campaign that tapped into the Internet, social networking, viral marketing and online communities.

His campaign has deputized soccer grandmoms and hipsters alike to generate new heights of viral support. And he has been exceptionally successful at converting online clicks into real-world currency: rallies in the heartland, videos on YouTube, and most important, donations and votes . . . They’ve also taken advantage of messages created by others. The “Yes We Can” mashup by the Black Eyed Peas’ will.i.am, starring a handful of his famous friends, cost the campaign nothing and became a viral hit.

Remember Obama Girl? The young actress starred in a series of viral videos that showcased her admiration for presidential candidate Barack Obama. The first, “I Got a Crush on Obama,” was posted to YouTube in June 2007 and immediately became an instant viral hit, quickly aired by mainstream television programs such as Saturday Night Live, The O’Reilly Factor and Geraldo. The video further popularized Obama among a young audience of previously politically disengaged voters. Viral video contributed to the perception that supporting Obama was hip. Above all, the Obama campaign mobilized youth by linking them together through the forums they were already using – Facebook, Twitter, iPhone apps and text messages – and the brand conversation made them feel they were part of the political change.
Blendtec. Founded in 1975, Blendtec was a little-known blender company that became an Internet legend through a viral video campaign launched in 2007. The premise of the campaign: Blendtec can blend anything: not just smoothies or sauces, but golf balls, cell phones and small appliances! According to social media blogger Jackie Peters on Mashable.com:

Before “Will It Blend,” Blendtec was a faceless company that manufactured blenders . . . The videos were distributed online and Blendtec employees reached out to their personal networks to let them know. Word spread and “Will It Blend” became a viral phenomenon, garnering 100 million views in total. Blendtec’s marketing now serves as a profit center for the company, the videos have made over $50,000 in ad revenue.iv

In 2007, Blendtec became a recognizable brand through the power of pass-along.v The company gained so much credibility and popularity through viral methods that it received coveted shelf space at Costco and Bed, Bath & Beyond. The “Will It Blend” campaign moniker is now being co-promoted by brands like Old Spice and iPad. Video captured the drama (and the humor) of the campaign, and helped the company accomplish a messaging strategy fueled by the user-generated culture.

Zappos. First launched in 1999, Zappos managed to convince consumers to buy shoes without the benefit of first trying them on. With a free shipping policy – even on returns – a consistent work ethic and a relentless focus on customers, Zappos found a way to overcome the traditional practice of shopping for footwear at brick-and-mortar stores. As reported by Hoover’s:

For marketing, the executives believed word-of-mouth testimonials were more important than traditional media spending – though Zappos did spend about 15 percent of its revenues on advertising, usually for ads with online browsers and portals. Customer referrals, however, proved far more effective as more and more shoppers visited the Zappos site and literally walked away happy.vi

Since June 2007, when Zappos joined the Twitterverse, CEO Tony Hsieh has amassed 1.7 million followers, one of the largest Twitter followings for a CEO. Hsieh explains how Twitter has helped him to personally grow, clarifying and revealing the authenticity of his own voice, his values, and by extension, the company and brand he leads:

For me, it comes down to these four things:

1. Transparency & Values: Twitter constantly reminds me of who I want to be, and what I want Zappos to stand for
2. Reframing Reality: Twitter encourages me to search for ways to view reality in a funnier and/or more positive way
3. Helping Others: Twitter makes me think about how to make a positive impact on other people’s lives
4. Gratitude: Twitter helps me notice and appreciate the little things in lifevii

Zappos is known for “its relentless use of social media from the top to bottom of the company.”viii The viral effect of social networking played a big part in helping the company break through as a household brand. But what is important to note is that the company’s leaders had already established a culture of trust and empowerment that was crucial for Zappos’ success. They possessed a strong comfort level with social media – encouraged and even insisted upon by Hsieh – and an organizational readiness for every employee to personify the brand in the social media space. Zappos had developed an authentic voice that reflected its culture of employee empowerment, and this culture was revealed through social media.

“Zappos’ brand strategy evolved over time: first it was efficiency, then service, then delivering happiness. This didn’t happen overnight,” cautions Charlene Li, coauthor of Groundswell and founder of Altimeter Group. “Not every organization is ready for that. Be aware of the comfort level and readiness of the organization to engage in the customer relationship. You can build the comfort level over time, by starting with social media for internal communications first. Companies like Intuit, Dell, and Starbucks had been using social media as an internal communications tool since 2006, and used it for years before leveraging it externally. Some companies, like GoreTex, use social media only for internal communications.”ix
Instant popularity is not the same as an instant brand. Zappos had developed a brand so strong and powerful that its employees became its most avid and authentic brand ambassadors.

**Groupon.** Started in 2007 as the Point, a collective action site, Groupon was introduced a year later as a way for people “to make it easier (and cheaper) to experience all the great stuff” in their cities, according to founder Andrew Mason. Groupon connects members with local finds and makes it fun and affordable for them to experience cool things in the cities where they live. From 2008 to 2010, Groupon amassed 14.2 million subscribers and replicated its local daily deals in more than 90 cities in the US.

Groupon has experienced atmospheric success in the space of 18 months, largely due to referral: friends telling friends. The site has become the ultimate source for consumers to access great bargains by leveraging collective buying power. With an estimated market cap of more than $6 billion, Groupon reports that it has 18 million subscribers in 29 countries and now also has dozens of imitators. Because there is often a minimum number of customers required for the daily deals to go through, people tend to share the offers with their friends through social networking sites.

**Restaurant.com.** Although founded in 1999, Restaurant.com did not truly emerge as a mainstream brand until December 2008 with its “Feed It Forward” online giving campaign. During a holiday season when the world economy was teetering on the verge of another Great Depression, those in the restaurant business were already feeling the strain. The campaign helped almost 10,000 eateries give away $30 million in $10 restaurant gift certificates in the 30 days leading up to Christmas. Visitors to Restaurant.com could send the free certificates to up to three people per day – friends, family and coworkers – at no cost to themselves, until the $30 million was used up.

The campaign was a brilliant stroke of marketing and created a viral buzz that boosted Restaurant.com over the tipping point. The site is now the de facto market leader in online restaurant couponing.

**“Ordinary Celebrity” Brands.** Several young, previously unknown personalities have been able to establish a loyal following on YouTube and other social media sites and translate their fame into significant income streams. They represent “the ordinary celebrity”: individuals with a special gift who have been able to access and engage an audience directly through the power of social networking and viral pass-along. The intensity and speed at which this is taking place is increasing at a staggering pace. In fact, the powers of social networking and new media have introduced many new brands, almost instantly it seems, into our consciousness.

Probably the greatest YouTube success story is **Justin Bieber** (aka Kidrauhl) who at 14 posted videos of himself singing songs and quickly caught the attention of hip-hop music manager Scooter Braun. Justin Bieber – the teenage idol whose concert tickets now sell for as much as $2,450 – was discovered on YouTube and became an instant brand.

Another example is the phenomenal success of Panacea81, the YouTube identity of **Lauren Luke**, a young British woman who self-reportedly had no friends but had a huge passion for makeup. Sitting in front of a mirror and a video camera, Luke taught an unseen audience of interested women how to create the look of “smokey eyes” with eye shadow and other makeup. Her YouTube video quickly surpassed 1 million hits, and now she has more online friends than she could ever ask for. Within months of her first video, she was taken under the wing of YouTube’s sponsored advertising model and began making money off every click. A year later, she was offered a private label line of makeup by Sephora.

The authenticity of Luke’s story is key to her brand success. Throughout her surprising journey, she has been herself – a mix of vulnerable, unpopular and longing for social success, a persona that so many young girls can relate to. On the surface, her brand may seem to be ostensibly based on her acumen for makeup; but in fact, it may be the underdog in her that has won her this massive following. Whether it is her expertise or vulnerability that has contributed most to her instant success, she has inarguably established a strong brand. Having launched her brand online, Luke is now welcomed on the shelves of brick-and-mortar retail and has published a book in traditional print format.

In a similar category is the video success story of **Michelle Phan**, whose makeup and style videos won her a job as an online video producer for Lancome, as well as a feature profile in Forbes Magazine (at age 22).
With no formal education in video production, Phan accomplished with her MacPro what thousands of professional marketers have not been able to crack for their mature brands: a connection with a vibrant young generation of connected consumers that share their opinions and recommendations like wildfire.

In the spring of 2009, Justin Halpern was an aspiring screenwriter who was so broke that he had to leave Los Angeles and move back in with his parents in San Diego. Making the most of his situation, he started a Twitter feed called Sh*t My Dad Says, tweeting out funny things that his 74-year-old dad said: aphorisms, foul-mouthed life observations, uncanny wisdoms. Within months he had 300,000 Twitter followers. A year later, he had more than 1 million followers and was offered a book contract. His title became a New York Times bestseller and led to a television sitcom on CBS starring William Shatner.xv

One of the most sensational YouTube success stories is Fred, a fictional six-year-old character with anger management issues, created by teenage actor Lucas Cruikshank using his mom’s video camera. The first official Fred video was posted in April 2008. Almost immediately, it went viral and steadily topped YouTube’s most-viewed and most-shared videos. Within a year, the channel had more than 1 million subscribers, making it one of the top YouTube channels. Fred: The Movie aired on Nickelodeon in September 2010. Cruikshank and Halpern are two creators of Web properties who have been able to cross over to television.xvi

No doubt, more celebrities will be discovered and made successful through social media. This is a fascinating moment to document some of the “instant brands” that have set this phenomenon into motion. The above examples show that social media and viral marketing efforts don’t necessarily have to be media-rich; they simply need to offer a compelling reason to pass along a link.

The Genre of Social Media

The single biggest game-changer in branding has been social media. New possibilities for ongoing engagement and conversation have transpired. New forms of brand conversations are now taking place, in intimate, two-way connections that were never before possible. New ways to listen to customers and to respond immediately to their needs are changing the way companies operate. Social media is not just a new channel; it’s a new genre of social communication and marketing.

For most consumers, the most credible source for information about a brand is another consumer. While this was likely always the case, the ability for peer communication among consumer groups is now far more enabled and efficient on the Internet, due to the rise of social media. Even as companies become more active on social networks, consumers tend to trust their peers more than the official brand voices. A January 2010 research report from InSites Consulting revealed that 32% of respondents trust “the brand itself” on social networking sites, while 38% trust a fellow consumer.xvii

This new genre of social media demands immediacy. It also forces transparency. For traditional marketers, it means committing to yet another responsibility area, spawning new conversations at a pace that can feel intimidating because it is “always on.” Traditional marketers have to become comfortable being center stage, rather than behind the curtain. In the world of social networking, what matters is showing up in the raw. The brand voice that consumers now expect is one that’s more spontaneous and more approachable. Brands – like people – have to be comfortable in their own skin and come to terms with their values so that they can reveal their authenticity. Consumers want to participate in the real essence of the brand. And that essence needs to be consistent, engaging and believable.

Does every brand need to have a presence on social media?

“While most brands will find that creating a Facebook page and a Twitter account will pay dividends – sometimes huge dividends – not every brand requires social media,” says J.D. Lasica, founder of SocialBrite.org, a distributed network of social media thought leaders from the United States and Europe that relies on social tools to collaborate and share ideas and materials on shared projects.

Having one or more profiles on social networks doesn’t necessarily mean that you’re effectively leveraging social media.

“Being social – as an individual or a company – is not about the channel,” says Jonathan Kopp, Partner and Global Director of Ketchum Digital.xviii “It’s about
constructively engaging in a dynamic conversation. Word-of-mouth isn’t new to the digital era. It’s as old as neighbors talking over the back fence. The difference in the era of the social Web is that word-of-mouth is amplified to everyone they know, and beyond – instantly.”

Brand strategy is still as critical as ever. Brands need to know who they are, with or without social media tools. Substance matters. “If you don’t have an authentic strategy based on audience insights, social media tools will expose that more quickly,” Kopp says.

Consider what you can gain from social media. “Whether social media is a part of a brand’s strategy really depends on whether an ‘advocacy strategy’ is appropriate for that business or brand,” Li says. “Are there opportunities to amplify and activate the quiet voices to strengthen the advocacy of your brand?”

Why aren’t more brands becoming instant successes?

The velocity of social networking has introduced new opportunities for every brand marketer. The making of brand value can be accomplished without a big budget. Access to the consumer is direct and instantaneous. Yet as we saw in the case of Zappos, brand strategy remains crucial.

Great brands, online or offline, have to deliver:

• a memorable product or service experience
• economic value – whether it’s in the form of saving money, obtaining a needed product or service, accessing entertainment and unique content, or learning a new skill
• positive outcomes – such as allowing individuals to feel part of an “in” group, advancing a social cause or offering self-improvement

Whether internal employees or external customers, audiences demand:

• immediacy – having direct, trustworthy interactions without bureaucracy or “spin”
• consistency and commitment – hearing from a familiar voice on a regular basis
• transparency – seeing your strengths and weaknesses
• honesty and authenticity – experiencing the strength of your character even when tested by challenges

What are some social best practices for IMC professionals?

1. Make the conversations two-way. Many marketers make the common mistake of using Facebook or Twitter as a one-way broadcasting mechanism, especially when they are new to these platforms, rather than as a way to engage customers in two-way conversations.

2. Use social media to listen to your customers, even if you aren’t putting your messages out through social media channels. Every mid-sized or large brand should be using listening posts, one of the marketer’s major gains from social media. Your employees can do a great deal of listening by using Twitter, blogs, Google Alerts, Comment Sniper, RSS readers and other free tools.

3. Connect with diverse audiences through social media. Leverage social media to intermediate conversations between brands and customers, as well as between executives and rank-and-file employees.

Consumer opinion has always been an important part of a brand’s success. In this age of social networking, peer opinions can find an audience instantly. Brand managers need to adapt to an environment in which they do not control the message. They collaborate with many voices to reveal the authenticity of the brand. Sometimes that collaboration takes place with employee brand ambassadors. Sometimes that collaboration happens with the help of advocates in the brand’s buyer base, or by engaging in dialogue with critics of the brand. Social media provides the tools to accelerate the interaction between brands and their consumers, between consumers and peers, and between brands and their dissenters.

“We often hear concern that brands will lose control to the crowd if they engage in social media,” Kopp says. “The truth is, marketers don’t control their brands. But I doubt they ever did. The customer has always been king, long before digital. Control is an illusion. We need to learn how to steer.”

It is this environment of instant messaging and mobility that has created an exciting marketplace in which brands rise and fall – sometimes instantly.
This is a vibrant channel for publicity seekers—but don’t underestimate your audience. For products without a strong value proposition or messaging strategy, social media will return market feedback faster than ever before.

Audiences are sophisticated, and they have many choices. To be heard – and to be successful – be clear about your own positioning, and make sure your entire organization is prepared to deliver on that positioning. Work on your messaging strategy. With social media, much about branding has changed, yet some things remain the same. Online or offline, focus first and always on the authenticity of the brand.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Wendy Wong is Vice President of Marketing for The Ken Blanchard Companies, a distinguished leadership development firm that advises senior leaders on creating winning workplace cultures that result in organizational and performance improvement.

Her experience in publishing, financial services, leadership training, and information services gives her an understanding of how integrated marketing communications is a critical competency of brand management. She has led marketing communications and branding at HNC Software/Fair Isaac; and strategic marketing and e-commerce initiatives at the D&B Corporation, where she held a dual leadership role in strategic planning and marketing communications.

Wendy holds an undergraduate degree from Cornell University and an MBA from UC Berkeley’s Haas School of Business.
Behavioral economics can help firms improve online and other customer touch point marketing efficacy. Behavioral economics has been defined as “the combination of microeconomic concepts, principles and measures along with concepts, principles and experimental methods developed by behavior analysts” (Madden, 2000). As such, behavioral economists offer insight into how customers really make decisions – especially purchase decisions based upon the choices available to them – not just how they should rationally make decisions.

Behavioral economics differs from classical economics in that the strict assumptions regarding rational thoughts and choices are lessened to allow for emotion, poor judgment, and various cultural influences. As such, behavioral economics employs psychological approaches to decision making in addition to purely economic considerations. The psychological component is important because:

1. Customers do not necessarily have well-defined preferences created in advanced; preferences are constructed as needed.

2. Individuals have limited information processing capabilities.

Behavioral economics, however, offers a formal framework usually omitted by marketing. The key dependent variables in marketing are consumer spending and consumption. The key independent variables are:

- The consideration set of choices available to the consumer
- The purchasing power of the consumer
- The price of a certain behavior
- The time between the behavior and the realization of the benefit
The management of consumption and spending is at the core of marketing. Consumption and spending are the results of the mental processing that occurs while making choices. Marketers must manage the precursors of choice by creating opportunities and removing barriers. Furthermore, they must reinforce choice consequences by creating the most appealing cost-benefit bundle in order to alter long-term behavior and customer value. This can be achieved as a result of optimizing various types of choice architecture as well as various social marketing techniques. These social marketing techniques utilize insight into the sometimes irrational and emotional behavior of consumers – the heart of behavioral economics - to incentivize profit-maximizing behaviors and enhance long-term customer value.

There are three decision making perspectives: normative, descriptive and prescriptive. Normative deals with how customers should make decisions, focusing on the rational, optimizing, and forward-looking processes involved. Essentially, this is the approach assumed via classical economics. Descriptive deals with how customers make decisions, dealing with bounded rationality and limited cognitive capacity, which can be a myopic view. Prescriptive deals with how firms or individuals can incentivize customers to make better decisions, which includes removing biases, making repairs and taking preventative measures.

Firms can better influence purchase decisions by employing choice architecture that applies prescriptive techniques to online and other touch point customer decision making. Choice architecture relates to designing the environment in which customers make decisions, which can be classified under three techniques:

1. Framing

Choice presentation or ‘framing’ can have a profound effect on the propensity to purchase. Framing is effective because consumers are generally passive decision makers. Effective usage of framing can help firms incentivize profit maximizing behaviors. An example of framing is the timeframe of benefit realization. Customers are more influenced by products that offer near-term benefits – so construct value propositions accordingly. Also, inclusion of a frame of reference helps give customers context in their decision making. Such context allows customers to have satisfaction that the decision they have made is optimal – or at least reasonable given all factors involved. Therefore, configuring offerings can influence a customer’s current and future decision making.

2. Loss aversion

People are much more influenced by aversion to loss versus seeking of gain. Loss aversion leads to inertia – a strong desire to stay with the current situation. As such, consumers are willing to pay a premium because of their loss aversion – that is to avoid risk. Eliminating the perceived probability of loss can dramatically increase purchase propensity. Potential loss or risk in the purchase decision generally takes several forms – potential pricing loss (where customers think the price may go down or where a lower price might be available), potential satisfaction loss (where there is a plethora of choices), and potential process loss (where customers do not understand the steps in the purchase process).

3. Option optimization

If consumers are offered an excessive number of options, they are often overwhelmed and encounter analysis paralysis. When they actually choose an option, they are generally less satisfied with their selection relative to others. Some causes include opportunity cost and the raising of expectations. From an opportunity cost perspective, it is sometimes difficult for customers to evaluate value received versus value forgone. Raising expectations entails comparison of multiple options, which raises doubts about the actual one selected. Firms must optimize the number of available choices to encourage investigation and purchase but minimize negative factors arising from option excessiveness.

Conclusion

Marketing strategies can and should include behavioral economic principles and especially choice architecture in order to optimize customer value. Behavioral economics accounts for the fact that the ‘rational’ customer purchase decision is influenced by irrational factors such as psychological biases, emotion, and cultural influences. Choice architecture can effectively be employed to the construction of customer experiences and treatments in order to achieve this. In particular, customer options should be: one, framed so as to account for various customer biases, two, structured so as to account for individuals’ aversion to loss, and three, contain an optimal number of options so as to offer perceived choice but not be overwhelming.
Framework for Marketing Optimization

The following methodology can be utilized to optimize online and other channel response rates and maximize customer profitability.

- Determine Hypotheses – Analyze data to determine hypothesis around needs of each segment.
- Target customers and channels – Utilize customer segmentation schemas to target appropriate customers through which channels they will be communicated.
- Determine value proposition and create offer – Develop appropriate value proposition based upon the needs of each segment and channel preference, and then create relevant offer(s) accordingly.
- Multivariate testing – Using a multivariate approach, develop different campaign management test and control scenarios.
- Evaluate results – Analyze campaign results of both test and control groups to determine optimal offer/channel bundles by customer segment. Refine hypothesis accordingly.
- Implement offer – Float optimized offering to larger population of potential customers.
Avis Budget Group

As part of its customer loyalty and differentiated customer treatments program, Avis Budget Group is leveraging behavioral economics techniques to increase customer response and purchase, improve the customer experience, and optimize customer lifetime value according to the following formula:

\[
CLV_j = -A_j + \sum_{t=1}^{\infty} (1 - c_{jt}) \cdot \frac{(R_{jt} - C_{jt})}{(1 + d)^t}
\]

In looking at customer lifetime value (CLV$_j$), behavioral economic techniques and especially choice architecture can be used to minimize acquisition costs (-A) by allowing customers to make more efficient decisions, maximize relationship duration (1 - c$_p$)$_t$ by incentivizing customer recency and increase switching costs, and maximize revenue (R) and profitability (R-C) by increasing customer frequency and selection of ancillary products at its key customer touch points, including the web, customer service center and counter.
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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

David J. Nash is Director of Strategic Marketing for CIGNA Healthcare where he is currently leading development and implementation of its Client Value Management initiative. Previously, he was a Principal at CSC Global Business Services-Americas in its Strategic Services Group-Customer Intelligence, which focuses on helping clients develop strategies and achieve customer-centered growth via information management, analytics and process design and execution. His list of consulting clients includes numerous Fortune 1000 clients in the investment management, banking, health care, technology, telecommunications, transportation, and distribution and manufacturing industries. Dave recently graduated with high honors from the executive MBA program at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business and previously earned a master’s of science in Integrated Marketing Communications from Northwestern University. He resides with his wife and daughter in Glen Ellyn, Illinois near Chicago. Dave can be reached at dnash@chicagobooth.edu.

John Peebles is Vice President, Online Advertising for Avis Budget Group. His areas of responsibility and interest, in addition to online advertising, include SEM, SEO, enterprise content management, branding, web analytics and Internet retail operations. John has a BA in economics and English from the University of Virginia. He resides with his family in suburban New Jersey and can be reached at john.peebles@avisbudget.com.
CORPORATE AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: THE CHANGING CONTEXT FOR MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PRACTICE

BY ART STEWART, MPM

Abstract:

As corporate organizations across the spectrum of industry, markets and cultures grapple with the unrelenting fallout of economic upheaval, a surprising upside is being revealed amidst the clearing toward recovery and the resurgence of growth: It is a context for business premised upon a paradigm shift for more responsible behavior. This new paradigm is engendering dramatically changing expectations for accountability, transparency, competency and leadership integrity across society. There are new demands upon organizations to advance their ambitions within a context of demonstrable, even measurable, adherence to public interest values. As new business models are developed in alignment with changing behavior, and modes for transactional exchange and communication are modernized, a next-generation understanding of what constitutes contemporary marketing communications practice is taking hold. Marketing communications professionals stand at the horizon of reinvention as caretakers in service to corporate reputation and credibility.

As corporate organizations across the spectrum of industry, markets, and cultures grapple with the unrelenting fallout of economic upheaval, a surprising upside is being revealed amidst the clearing toward recovery and the resurgence of growth: It is a context for business premised upon a paradigm shift for more responsible behavior, rooted in a necessity for new approaches to efficiency, productivity, utilization, consumption, and profitability.

Widely characterized in the public discourse and media as a “new normal,” it is engendering dramatically changing expectations for accountability, transparency, competency, and leadership integrity on the part of public and private leaders, and their organizations, across society.

Other than a quantifiable comparison to the Great Depression, or the personal testimony of seniors who were alive in the early 20th century, it is difficult to comprehend the extent to which we have been on this road before.

The uniquely American experiment of democratic free enterprise has always encountered inherent tensions in the cycle of boom and bust: On one hand, there is the obligation of defending the provisions of liberty and the ‘public interest’ that enable civil society to perpetuate and thrive; on the other, one must ensure a marketplace devoid of unnecessary obstructions for the free flow of commerce and the pursuit of profitability.

While economic individualism and market-based values are the hallmark of the American system that so many foreign capitalists admire in pursuing financial opportunity in the U.S., the economic crisis has brought about new concern for the domination, perceived or real, of this prevailing independence at the expense of the interdependent common good; as if the two are mutually exclusive, one not vitally dependent upon the other.
As we progress into the second decade of the 21st century, what is occurring around us now appears to transcend the historic vagaries of the western business cycle. It is evident that many instruments of our government, culture, economic, and political system are experiencing a fundamental realignment in character and purpose, authority, impact, and connectivity.

There are new demands upon organizations to advance their ambitions within a context of demonstrable, even measurable, adherence to public interest values. A greater consciousness for new ways of comprehending and acting on both individual and collective notions of responsibility has corporations sustaining shareholder value by focusing on delivering stakeholder value. This new responsibility paradigm goes beyond the buzz in social responsibility theory of the triple-bottom line (people-planet-profit) to encompass a macro-transformation.

As new business models are developed in alignment with changing behavior, and modes for transactional exchange and communication are modernized, a next-generation understanding of what constitutes contemporary marketing communications practice is taking hold. Marketing communications professionals stand at the horizon of reinvention as caretakers in service to corporate reputation and credibility.

**Evolutionary Tensions: Public Versus Commercial Interests**

Our understanding of what constitutes the ‘public interest’ and its interplay with commercial (business) imperatives is undergoing considerable scrutiny as this “new normal” demands detachment from the prevailing historic assumptions.

Market-based evidence today points to public interests as encompassing a broad range of issues that have impact on the sustainability of communities and the business enterprise, regardless of the type of organization entity or its societal role. “From local to global, public interests now involve environmental stewardship, economic impact, social maladies, business sustainability and continuity, and the triple-bottom line,” explains Mari L. Snyder, vice president of social responsibility and community engagement at Marriott International. “There are also sub-sets, such as human rights, workforce development, governance, business ethics, transparency, and economic development. There are quite a few themes that need to be filtered into business decisions and development as it relates to the continuity, growth, and sustainability of the business - and the communities in which it is operating.”

**Scandal Brings Harsh but Important Lessons**

It is widely recognized that the economic challenges of the past two years have been made more complex by reverberations from decisions and their resulting actions that transpired years before. Whether the systemic nature of the current crisis is attributable to what is popularly referred to as “Black Swan” events or manmade over-indulgences, the impact upon the reputation of corporations, nonprofits, and a host of institutions - to say nothing of their leaders - is far reaching.

Unprecedented breaches have impaired the historic relational ties between people (stakeholders) and various institutions across society, from the erosion of trust and confidence in leader competency to a decline in the inherent dependency upon institutions to fulfill their promise to ‘provide.’ Nonprofits are no longer shielded by traditional deference. Many religious institutions are retrenching, seeking to restore the mantle of credibility that’s been lost to scandal. A growing American wealth class has widened the gap between the haves and have-nots. Dependability upon government as a competent safety net has bottomed out.

The awakening to a greater consciousness for responsibility has produced a resiliently punitive mindset on the part of the American public, consumers, and corporate watchdogs. The fear factor of organization leaders and boards for accountability from these constituencies is now on par with that for regulatory and legal impositions. One aspect of scandal that is abiding is its indiscriminate nature: No matter where bad behavior resides, scandal will find it. In this environment, stakeholder confidence in organizations and their leaders can be fleeting at best and maintaining public trust requires an every-day effort.

Persistent vigilance is now required of brand organizations to close their walk-talk gaps and reinforce credible, responsible behavior as a supporting mechanism of choice for profitability. Achieving sustainable competitiveness in this new context requires an affinity of purpose with all stakeholders. Therefore, the natural role marketing communications professionals may now assume is one of active arbitrator between executive or corporate actions and the public responses to those actions from an ever-widening array of individual stakeholders, groups, and communities.

Communicators must now be as focused on honing evidenced-based messaging strategies that can withstand sophisticated forms of relentless scrutiny as much as they need to sharpen their ability to convey context and meaning to achieve an understanding of organization actions. Communicators are evolving from being crafters of messages and designers of dissemination vehicles to “explainers in chief” in which the objective is to identify and affirm the values orientation of stakeholders, and then educate them in order to build mutual understanding that leads to consensus for corporate actions.
A Rapidly Transforming Context

In U.S. business sectors, a more enlightened understanding of what constitutes corporate “responsibility” and “sustainability” is emerging, due in no small part to stakeholder pushback against the natural tendency of executive leaders to behave reactively rather than proactively during a crisis. As corporate leaders are forced to examine their convictions about growth and competitiveness, they are taking a broader approach to “sustainability” that moves beyond materiality, such as environmental impacts, to a strategic view of holistic sustainability across the enterprise. In this context, marketing communications also broaden to a more balanced combination of strategic management and tactical functionality, with an increased focus on the correlations between planning, development, execution, and (transactional) behavior.

This more expansive and comprehensive understanding can literally infect the organization DNA with principles of responsibility, influencing everything from strategic planning and strategy execution, business process and decision-making, financial systems, and manufacturing operations to human capital management, materials sourcing and supply chain relationships, corporate philanthropy and community reinvestment, and the public leadership behavior of senior executives.4

The impact on organization performance is measurable and impactful: A greater continuity in supply chain practices helps protect against reputational risk; well-defined expectations for employees and democratic HR practices play a vital role in the recruiting and retention of best-of-class employees; CSR reporting embeds sustainability into the corporate culture, enhances brand equity, and promotes responsibility linkages to the corporate mission; consistency in facilities, logistics, and operations programs reinforces C-suite and board room compliance; and designating the financial and accounting functions as guardians of corporate data promotes ethical standards in accuracy, accountability, and transparency.

From Seduction to Greater Meaning

As consumers have become smarter and hyper-discerning, our culture has matured in its relationship to technology and barrier-free information exchange. We have migrated from the earlier era of seduction and an intrigue for gadgetry to a new phase involving technology utilization in service to greater meaning. It is a time of overdue equilibrium between invention and experience. The challenge for brands and their communicators is to harness the right proportion of technology as a tool in fulfilling stakeholders’ desire to find, connect to, and sustain essential meaning as they define it.

The quest for greater meaning has consumers wanting to know more about a company within a shrinking decision-making cycle, factoring in values-based data about manufacturing processes, customer service and employment policies, supply-chain partners and sourcing relationships, and executives’ professional and personal behavior. A host of interactive platforms, such as mobile devices, social dashboards, and micro site-based communities are being utilized to seed and nurture community, access and assimilate a wide range of perspectives, aggregate and transfer knowledge, and mobilize for collective action. In essence, these platforms are facilitators for empowerment that have stakeholders adopting a ‘self-centered consciousness,’ whereby they increasingly expect, and demand, that brands not only meet their personal needs but positively impact society.

Conversely, brands marketers and communicators use the same platforms to envelop constituents in various forms of perpetual conversation, crowd sourcing, and collaborative consumerism. They are able to acquire far deeper insights into their customers’ online behavior patterns around decision making and the nuances of their relationship to, and usage of, content.

However, this superhighway to enhanced competitive agility is paved with inherent hazards. Brand organizations must also contend with a host of intermediaries (i.e., players, operators, advocates, influencers, bloggers, tastemakers, and trendsetters) that have changed the dynamic between industry, retailers, and consumers. Advocacy organizations, watchdog groups, and cause-related institutions (i.e., NGOs) have become more sophisticated in mass mobilization as well as in their scrutinizing of responsible business behavior. Potentially damaging information – perceived or real, grounded in fact or fiction (rumor) – may be virally disseminated across the globe in an instant.

Now a single act can be a direct result of, and have an effect upon, another single act of the same; good or bad corporate behavior will reverberate vastly beyond its immediate target into a potentially cavernous echo chamber. As a result of this new context, marketing communications practitioners must juggle a multitude of equal but constantly-shifting priorities; in one moment devoting attention and resources to capturing marketing opportunities, in the next responding to an unexpected antagonist that overnight generates a new threat to reputational equity.

Correspondingly, the public is more capable than ever of significant conversions to new, untested ideas that necessitate big shifts in their preferences and allegiances, making the “best available” choices at a given moment for the right reasons.
Is there any wonder as to why brand organizations are in a hurry to get out in front of such developments? According to research compiled by social media guru and best-selling author Erik Qualman (SocialnomicsTM), and sourced on his blog, “Social Media Revolution 2” (May 5, 2010):

There are now more than 200,000,000 blogs

34% of bloggers post opinions about products and brands

25% of search results for the world’s 20 largest brands are links to user-generated content

78% of consumers trust peer recommendations

Only 14% trust advertisements

Only 18% of traditional TV campaigns generate a positive ROI

90% of people that can TiVo ads do

50% of the mobile Internet traffic in the U.K. is for Facebook (what does that means for bad customer experiences?)

**Good-to-Go: Broadening MarCom Competencies for a Changing Context**

As the profession and practice of marketing communications transitions in alignment with the onset of a new responsibility paradigm, the broadening of competencies naturally follows. In evaluating how organizations have migrated from earlier generations of the CSR discipline to today’s concept of holistic sustainability of the enterprise, the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship (BCCCC) has developed a Corporate Citizenship Leadership Competency Model to organize a set of primary leadership competencies that the most effective practitioners should master.5

While aimed at CSR, the BCCCC model is arguably applicable for the new context that communications professionals increasingly find themselves in. Despite CSR and communications remaining as two separate functions, they are maturing in parallel as strategically interdependent drivers of organization competitiveness. Indeed, many communications units retain jurisdictional control over certain aspects of CSR, particularly sustainability reporting, as well as numerous other integrated functions such as cause branding; reputation, issues and crisis management; and policy dissemination.

In brief, the competencies of the BCCCC model are: Change Driver – the ability to combine vision with persistence to mobilize people around a higher purpose; Strategic Influence – the ability to leverage organizational awareness to influence the commitment of others; Visionary Thinking – the ability to connect the dots in pursuit of enhancements to corporate citizenship; System Perspective – the ability to comprehend how system components relate and interact to frame risks and opportunities; Collaborative Networker – the ability to empathize and relate to build mutually beneficial and engaged relationships; Peripheral Vision – the ability to discern new opportunities and risks from universal interests; Optimistic Commitment – the ability to leverage personal conviction in the potential of corporate citizenship to overcome social and business challenges; and Personal Maturity – the ability to selflessly empower others.

CSR and communications practitioners alike are finding themselves responding to a dramatically increasing volume of requests for environmental performance information from customers as well as socially responsible investors. Sustainability disclosures are playing a significant role in enriching – or diminishing – brand equity and corporate reputation from their “marketing value” as a tool to leverage with independent third-party influencers. More companies are entering the demanding realm of sustainability reporting in order to maintain competitive parity.6 Consensus is developing among executive leaders across various management disciplines that transparency about responsibility policies and initiatives as well as their challenges via public communication programs can focus and drive internal execution in a powerful way.

**Opportunity Knocks For the Right Leadership**

The current awakening to greater responsibility exposes public interest issues as more intertwined with core business values and competitive sustainability than previously assumed. If leaders ignore public sentiment beyond their immediate domain they invite attack or a prolonged backlash. Social issues must be captured and leveraged in the everyday process of steering the enterprise toward mission fulfillment – making it a strategic function for corporate action reflective of its importance to the business. Executives need to educate and engage their boards of directors, develop broad metrics, and utilize technology and analytics to aggregate lifecycle data on external impacts. They must empower their marketing communications practitioners with the necessary jurisdictional authority to act strategically and engage with the CSR function in a relationship based on interdependency.

In today’s changing context, as corporations are held to increasingly higher standards regarding their values, mission, business strategy, and the content of their commitment to their communities, those that fail to act and credibly communicate from intentional alignment with stakeholder expectations may trigger a deficit in business focus. A responsibility to public interest values, therefore, becomes either a facilitator or inhibitor of corporate progress.

2 A “Black Swan” event or “Black Swan Theory” refers to the thesis developed by author Nassim Nicholas Taleb in his 2007 book (revised in 2010), The Black Swan. Taleb regards almost all major scientific discoveries, historical events, and artistic accomplishments as “black swans”; they have a disproportionate role of high-impact, are hard to predict, and go beyond the realm of normal expectations.

“Black Swan Theory” refers only to unexpected events of large magnitude and consequence, and their dominant role in history. Taleb contends that such events collectively play vastly larger roles than regular occurrences. These include the rise of the Internet, the personal computer, World War I, and 9-11.
The widely accepted definition of “corporate citizenship” is the management of a company’s economic, social, and environmental impacts beyond philanthropy and compliance. It consists of intentions, articulations, actions, and continual fulfillment on doing what’s right as a direct input to improved business value.

In its preferred term, “corporate citizenship” is what academics and business practitioners recognize as the portfolio of socioeconomic activities that companies embark upon to accomplish their defined obligations as responsible global “citizens”. In the U.S., the term has matured in both understanding and application to become community involvement, sustainment, economic development, and multi-sector collaboration – the business world’s reinvention of “democratization.”

Currently, some 3,900 CSR directors or professionals annually disclose their social and environmental performance through the issuance of sophisticated report documents, many of which are posted online and employ the latest interactive and social media technologies.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Art Stewart, MPM, has twenty-five years of experience across the spectrum of the communications profession, including seventeen years as President of his own Washington, DC-based consulting firm - Stewart Strategies Group, LLC. He writes and speaks widely on the ‘New Responsibility Paradigm’, a strategic analytical framework he developed from two years of research. Beginning in 2011, he will teach a custom course he designed on corporate and social responsibility for Emerson College in Boston. Art holds a mid-career graduate degree from Georgetown University’s Public Policy Institute, a post-graduate certificate in Senior Executive Leadership, also from Georgetown, and an undergraduate degree in communications from Emerson College. www.stewartgrp.com
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2011 STAFF BIOGRAPHIES

The staff of the 2011 edition of the Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications is comprised of graduate students in Medill’s Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) program at Northwestern University.

KELLY BORDEN
Kelly graduated from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2005 with a bachelor’s degree in business administration. She then worked for four years for Quiznos Corporate in Denver, CO, managing the in and out-of-store marketing materials for more than 5,000 franchise locations. Kelly came to the IMC program to further develop her skills in consumer insights, data analytics and strategic planning. She plans to pursue a career in brand management after graduating from Northwestern.

LINDSAY BUHAGIAR
Lindsay received her bachelor’s degree in public relations from Eastern Michigan University and began her career in internet marketing for the luxury automotive industry. She moved on to work for the American Cancer Society as a Senior Income Development Representative in Evanston, IL. Annually, Lindsay had the opportunity to manage four major fundraising events, including recruiting and managing volunteer steering committees, corporate relations and sponsorship, marketing and public relations. Lindsay is a member of the Junior League of Chicago.

KEVIN BYRNE
After graduating from the College of William & Mary with a bachelor’s degree in biology, Kevin spent the last decade working in college admissions, theater and internet advertising. While in the IMC program, he’s discovered an ability to find and communicate customer insights gained through behavioral data. Kevin has been active in his class with the Cause Marketing Initiative and the Student Advisory Council.

KATHRYN DAVIS
While earning her bachelor’s degree in advertising from the University of Colorado, Katie gained experience through several marketing communications internships. Most recently, she interned with the Denver Nuggets (NBA) and Colorado Avalanche (NHL), where she worked with corporate sponsors, including Qwest and Porsche. Katie entered Northwestern University’s Integrated Marketing Communications program right after college.

SARAH FROMSON
Sarah graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill in 2006 with a bachelor’s degree in journalism and mass communication and a second major in psychology. While in school, she was a public relations intern for Carolina Donor Services and a member relations intern with the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce. After graduating, she moved to Washington, D.C. to work for Ketchum Public Relations. As an account executive in the Consumer Health and Wellness practice, she worked with clients such as Kellogg Company, Aetna and Wyeth Pharmaceuticals. After spending three years at the agency, Sarah left to pursue her master’s degree in Integrated Marketing Communications at Medill. She is completing the direct and interactive and brand and advertising concentrations.
KATRINA GREENWOOD
After earning her bachelor’s degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Katrina began her career in advertising working at AbelsonTaylor, one of the largest privately-owned pharmaceutical advertising agencies in the country. She worked to help generate campaigns for a range of specialties from cardiology to dermatology. Her experience was invaluable, as she was exposed to the creative minds of her peers and clients in the healthcare industry. Katrina has also worked for an online retailer and planned/hosted charity events for the Domestic Abuse Intervention Services, Inc.

FILIPPIA IBOKO
Filippia graduated from Howard University, receiving a bachelor’s degree in business administration and marketing. Throughout her career, she has acquired a breadth of experience, specializing in pharmaceutical sales, digital advertising and non-profit marketing. Filippia decided to pursue a master of science in integrated marketing communication, in order to strengthen her analytic and strategic problem solving skills. She looks forward to pursuing a career in brand consultancy or marketing analysis.

BENJAMIN JOACHIM
Originally from Wilmington, North Carolina, Benji earned his bachelor’s degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in business administration. After graduating, he worked as a Brand Ambassador for Peaceworks, LLC and as a Business Development Intern for Universal Buzz Media, attending to clients in the fashion, technology and entertainment industries. Benji enrolled at Northwestern University as a graduate student in the hopes of further developing his analytical and strategic marketing skills.

KELLY KROSS
Kelly is a 2007 graduate of Boston College, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in finance and marketing. She worked in the financial services industry for two years before deciding to pursue a career in marketing. At Medill, Kelly concentrated in both analytics and brand strategy, which have helped her develop her quantitative and strategic marketing skills.

MEGAN O’MALLEY
Originally from Overland Park, KS, Megan graduated from The University of Kansas with a dual-degree in journalism and political science. While in school, she spent two years working in Corporate Communications and spent time in South Africa developing an HIV/AIDS communication program. After graduating, Megan followed her passion for cause marketing and communication to the Medill IMC program, where she has specialized in public relations and brand strategy.

PRANAV RAMANTHAN
Pranav graduated from Arizona State University in 1998 with a bachelor’s degree in architecture. He spent the last ten years of his career working in a marketing capacity at technology consulting, non-profit and media companies. Prior to re-entering academia, he served as the online marketing director for a business media unit of The Nielsen Company. His IMC experiences include media management coursework at the Kellogg School of Management and a residency at Procter & Gamble. Pranav’s perennial goals are to enable philanthropic projects and to become a gourmet cook before age 40 (so far he’s mastered the eating, not the cooking part.)
ALEXANDER SEYFERTH
Originally from Ann Arbor, Michigan, Alex received his bachelor’s degrees in philosophy, politics and economics from the University of Pennsylvania in 2009. During his time as an undergraduate, Alex had internships with Under Armour, Euro RSCG and Major League Baseball before spending the past summer at Fenway Sports Group in Boston, MA as part of the IMC Residency Program. Upon graduation he hopes to pursue a career in sports marketing.

SARA E SMITH
Sara is a 2002 graduate of The Honors Program at The University of Colorado at Boulder where she studied history and creative writing. After a stint in Den Haag, she headed out to San Francisco where she worked for the Archdiocese, and then as an editor of financial documents at RR Donnelley & Sons. She then returned to her native Chicago, where she continued to work for Donnelley and finally decided on graduate school to study Integrated Marketing Communications. Most recently she was a summer resident at Euro RSCG Chicago, and after graduation, plans to continue working as a messaging strategist and planner. In her free time, Sara enjoys being on Lake Michigan and negotiating city traffic.

LAUREN TRIFFLER
After graduating from Hofstra University with a bachelor’s degree in public relations, Lauren pursued her master’s degree at Northwestern in order to broaden her knowledge base before entering the industry. While interning in both the marketing and public relations areas in New York and Chicago, Lauren gained copywriting, relationship management and media relations experience. She hopes to stay in her native Chicago upon graduation.

AMANDA WILCOSKY
Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, Amanda graduated from Ohio University in 2009 with a bachelor’s degree in journalism and minors in psychology and business. Throughout her undergraduate career, she pursued communications internships at various media outlets and, most recently, in the healthcare industry. She joined the IMC program with a desire to transition fully into the marketing field. Her time at Medill has allowed her to strengthen her talents in strategic communications while developing a passion for brand strategy and digital marketing.
CALL FOR ARTICLES

Articles are solicited annually from professionals and the academic community. At the beginning of each calendar year, the JIMC staff issues a call for abstracts. Interested authors should develop their article idea into an abstract and submit it to the double-blind review selection process. A double-blind review process ensures that each submission is judged on its merits and ability to further the marketing communications profession.

EXAMPLES OF SUITABLE ARTICLES

• Case studies: An overview of an IMC plan, problem or opportunity
• Point/counterpoint: Two articles from different authors expressing opposing viewpoints
• Theoretical or conceptual: An introduction of new concepts, explanations or viewpoints
• Reviews: A critique of published IMC material
• Research: A presentation of original research and methodology

BASIS FOR SELECTING ARTICLES

• Potential impact on marketing communications practices or on an individual industry
• Identification of an emerging trend
• Ability to provoke thought and discussion
• Timeliness

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

• Provide a concise overview of the article’s main points and conclusion regarding IMC trends, tools, research, etc.
• As appropriate, authors should mention new research findings and/or methodologies used to arrive at the conclusion
• Approximately 250-500 words
• Separate cover page should include: contributor’s name, title, company/school/affiliation, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address

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Evanston, IL 60208-2175