

Introduction to Marketing Communications

Introduction to Marketing Communications (MarCom)

Key concepts, components, and practical steps for creating effective communication programs.

1. What Is Marketing Communications?

Definition	Purpose
The set of messages and media a company uses to inform, persuade, and remind target audiences about its products, services, brand, or ideas.	Build awareness, shape perceptions, drive interest, stimulate purchase, and foster loyalty.
• Integrated: All tools work together toward a single, coherent message. • Customer-focused: Starts with the needs, motivations, and media habits of the target market. • Strategic: Aligned with overall marketing and business objectives.	

2. Core Elements of the MarCom Mix (The “Promotion” Ps)

Element	Typical Tools	Typical Goal
Advertising	TV, radio, print, online display, social media ads, outdoor	Reach large audiences, create awareness & preference
Public Relations (PR)	Press releases, media kits, events, influencer outreach, crisis management	Build credibility, manage reputation
Sales Promotion	Coupons, contests, rebates, samples, loyalty programs	Stimulate short-term purchase or trial
Personal Selling	Face-to-face meetings, telesales, virtual demos	Provide tailored information, close sales
Direct Marketing	Email, SMS, direct mail, telemarketing, QR codes	Generate measurable response, nurture leads
Digital/Content Marketing	Websites, blogs, SEO, podcasts, webinars, social media content	Educate, engage, and convert online audiences

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Element	Typical Tools	Typical Goal
Sponsorship & Events	Sports/team sponsorships, trade shows, webinars, community events	Associate brand with experiences/values
Word-of-Mouth & Referral	Customer reviews, referral programs, user-generated content	Leverage trusted recommendations

Note: Modern practice often blends these categories (e.g., “advertorials” combine advertising & editorial content).

3. The Communication Process

1. **Sender** – Brand/organization that creates the message.
 2. **Encoding** – Translating ideas into symbols (words, images, sounds).
 3. **Message** – The actual content delivered.
 4. **Medium/Channel** – Channel(s) used (TV, Instagram, email, etc.).
 5. **Receiver** – Target audience who decodes the message.
 6. **Decoding** – Interpretation based on prior knowledge, attitudes, culture.
 7. **Feedback** – Response (purchase, comment, share) that informs the sender.
 8. **Noise** – Anything that distorts the message (clutter, competing ads, poor signal).
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4. Developing a Marketing Communications Plan

4.1 Situation Analysis

- **Market/Industry Overview** – Trends, growth, competitive landscape.
- **SWOT** – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats related to communication.
- **Target Audience Profile** – Demographics, psychographics, media habits, pain points.
- **Current Communication Audit** – Existing messages, channels, performance metrics.

4.2 Objectives (SMART)

Criterion	Example
Specific	Increase brand search volume.

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Criterion

Example

Measurable 20% rise in website traffic from social ads.

Achievable Based on past 10% YoY growth.

Relevant Aligns with product launch goal.

Timebound Within the next 6 months.

4.3 Strategy

- **Positioning