

Forget Coin - Insert Logic

 By [Grant Shippey](#)

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When your mouth works without your brain's approval, very bad things can happen. Likewise, your business's mouth – marketing – has to be tightly integrated with your business brain, otherwise things could go horribly wrong.

Marketing is the best connection you have to the relationships that support your business. The role of marketing is to know the business you're in, understand the perceptions of your customers, partners, and distributors, and support your sales efforts with materials that communicate your compelling story.

But nothing in life is guaranteed, and the one thing that will ensure marketing failure is a lack of coordination and synergy across your integrated marketing strategy.

The concept of integrated marketing seems easy and logical - it seems smart to bring all the various marketing disciplines – below the line, above the line, online, etc. - together into a cohesive and connected message.

But anyone who works in marketing knows that this remains an elusive and frustrating goal, as it requires getting historically disconnected parts to work together - the holy grail of marketing success.

Marketing Mix(up)

If you have ever had a bunch of disparate service providers pitching an "integrated marketing solution", you would know to tread carefully. And if they all had separate management teams, separate account management and separate execution teams, you would know that the best thing to do is avoid them!

The most significant problem when looking at an integrated marketing solution is a lack of skills – especially when it comes to project management. With disparate companies pitching one solution, there needs to be clear creative or strategic leadership for developing the plan that works on all elements, as well as execution management that is not focused on one element alone.

Many of these service providers also tend to hide behind technology to ultimately solve their problems, but technology cannot replace experience, expertise, and common sense. Sure, choosing the right technology tools can give your company the information it needs to perform critical marketing processes, but these solutions are just so many lines of code without the knowledge to support them.

But just because different providers can't provide a unified solution, it doesn't mean that your company can't utilise a blend

of marketing mediums.

Horses for Courses

Today, an increasing number of marketers are utilising multiple vehicles to improve the overall effectiveness of their marketing communications. Why? Because even though individuals may be exposed to marketing messages in one medium, they often transact in another. For example, someone might see a banner ad for a new CD, and then purchase it at a store.

The importance of a successful marketing mix is that uniform messaging and branding across various channels can provide customers with a consistent experience regardless of the channel selected for a given transaction. This can boost brand awareness and brand preference. It can also build greater ROI by synchronising marketing efforts across these various channels.

An increasing number of customers interact with a brand across multiple channels and marketers who strategically integrate their initiatives will improve each customer's brand experience and ultimately create a competitive advantage.

Your marketing mix, however, should not be limited to offline attempts. Marketing on the Internet at present is especially empowering for companies, specifically in the case of e-mail marketing, which has recently become more credible via support from government through the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act.

The power of e-mail is also unfolding with marketers realising that e-mail can drive sales to marketing channels other than the Internet and play a significant role in brand building.

Marketers and marketing theory have come a long way over the last couple of years. New commercial opportunities exist, as well as new ways to tap them. But in general, the Web is still under hyped as a marketing medium. Online ad spend is on the decline despite the growing prevalence of customer usage and dependence, as well as the fact that consumer confidence is growing (as is evident through initiatives such as Internet banking).

There are a few possibilities why the Internet is not being fully utilised as a marketing medium - media planners may not have the budget; online marketing may just be an afterthought for many marketers; or people are simply not considering doing it at all.

But whatever the reason, the drawbacks of not spending money online are obvious. If you are a marketer not spending money - or not spending enough money - online, you are missing out on efficiencies and losing a potential competitive advantage. Companies not utilising online methods are leaving money on the table...I'm not talking about increasing overall spending, just shaving a little off the top of far more expensive traditional media and spending it on some cheaper – but ultimately more effective - online impressions.

But the marketing mix doesn't stop with the inclusion of online initiatives in your mix - the advent of multiple digital channels, each with unique functionality and utility, means that marketing messages must now be integrated into a completely brave new world – including wireless devices, iTV, kiosks, ATM's and the like.

The real challenge remains to deliver on the promise of integrated marketing campaigns, while making best use of the unique offerings of the marketing options available to you – offline and online.

In the end, however, it doesn't matter how well you integrate the various marketing channels to your disposal, or how many elements are included in your marketing mix. The biggest issue is that you don't neglect certain customers based on certain assumptions. Many marketers don't put the company logo on outgoing e-mail because a small percentage of people can't receive it – they neglect the fact that 90% of their customers can. Ultimately, the success of your marketing campaign depends on the application of logic!

ABOUT GRANT SHIPPEY

Grant is a, technophilic, tie-averted professional loudmouth. He is now the controlling shareholder and ceo of the professional digital solutions stable, Amorphous. Slaving over a hot wok, cleaver in hand, is where the most of the digital strategies for the country's leading corporations are born, diced and steamed to perfection. Grant also serves on the e-commerce committee of the Direct Marketing Association and is determined on making a dent in the universe. He has spoken at numerous events (Marcus Evans and Johnnie) and can talk on topics such as: Branding and marketing on line, ecommerce front ends, loyalty on line, trust, privacy issues etc, etc. His clients are: KPMG, Nedcor, Netbank, Perm Cinema Nuveau, Everite, ABSA, Comair, Ernst & Young. www.amorphous.net or (011) 380-6500.

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