

Integrated Marketing Communication

Integrated Marketing Communication:

*Putting the Human Person
at the Core*

By

Jerry G. Kliatchko

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To my dearest mom Aleli and my dad Jake
My brother Jacobson, and my sisters Anne, Mariel, Lala, and Nessie
My in-laws Monette, Jebe, Ariel
My nephews Karl, Angelo, Jacob (Chem), Nicky, Jacob (Coby), Jay,
Jacob, Joseph, Jaime, Juanma, Joaqui, and Julian
My nieces Annica, Mariela, Sophia, Zhanna, Mia, Zhavelle
and our most adorable and loveliest baby, Ava Grace!

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FOREWORD

DON E. SCHULTZ, PH.D.

GLOBAL FATHER OF IMC

PROFESSOR EMERITUS, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, USA

IMC: More Than Ever, Integration Is All About People

In the 1980s/1990s, when IMC first began evolving at Northwestern University, the two most radical conceptual features of the approach, when compared to other existing forms of commercial marketing communication at that time were: (a) IMC was about starting with the needs and interests of the customers or audiences for the communication, not with the goals/objectives of the seller for his or her product/service, and, (b) the communication focus was to be on sharing created value and building relationships. It was to be all about generating reciprocity between those two communication parties. Inherent in and underlying these concepts was the premise that IMC was about connecting people at all levels and in all areas, i.e., buyers and sellers, distributors and consumers, media and audiences and all the other connections and relationships that occur in the marketplaces around the world. IMC, while it had its genesis in advertising and promotion, was based on the larger system of people interacting and exchanging ideas, values and cultures in an interlocking and ever evolving system.

Clearly, IMC was different from the then existing forms of marketing communication that had developed earlier. For example, traditional advertising was based on persuasion, i.e., the seller trying to influence the buyer to take some favorable action on his or her behalf as a result of media exposures. Other forms of marketing communication followed along the same line. Sales promotion focused on price cuts, discounts and special offers to encourage consumers to act or react during specific time periods. Direct marketing was all about targeted direct selling through supposedly laser-focused offers to previously identified and selected audiences. Public relations were focused on influencing the media to provide further support for the seller's planned merchandising activities, i.e., get editorial or journalistic support for various products or organisations. Even the internet/interactive

systems, darlings of the 1970s were simply the seller using technology to get messages out and responses back from prospective buyers with less interference and more speed. In short, the entire marketing communications system was tilted in favor of the seller who controlled when and where messages and incentives would be distributed and to whom and received most of the benefits from those interactions.

As a result, in every marketing communication situation until that point, the focus of the tool or tactic was on the products/services to be sold, the channels through which the products and services were to be offered, the price or the discount off the original price that the buyer might obtain. Most of those offers were delivered free or at no cost to the audience, i.e., they were subsidised by the advertiser. Thus, most of our media systems which were supposed to educate, enlighten and amuse the audiences were essentially paid propaganda channels for the seller who had a vested interest in recouping his/her investment in the shortest time possible.

The most important factor was that all these activities were outbound, using systems developed, directed and distributed by or for the seller. The buyer was simply the end point who had the resources the seller was trying to acquire. Put simply, the marketer's goal was to make a sale and move on. That was the marketing communication mantra at the time of the development of IMC and it dominated all the thought, planning and execution in the marketplace.

And, the system worked. Successfully. In many cases, very successfully. And, it was still working when the IMC concept was developed. That was one of the reasons many marketers and communicators saw no reason for IMC. Why challenge or change a system which was still vibrant and in some cases, still growing?

There were external force(s) on the horizon, however, which would challenge these traditional forms of marketing communication. Many of them were all technology-focused and data driven, using tools and techniques which most marketing communicators knew little about and thus, simply avoided.

The first inklings of change came when marketers began to shift their focus from traditional longer-term media advertising to more short-term oriented activities such as sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations and the like. That separation of long-term and short-term results raised the first questions of integration which was how was the marketer to focus and fit

these new communication tools, techniques and tactics together? In short, how could the seller integrate all of his or her activities into a coherent whole? Thus the concept of integration or IMC was born in the late 1980s and was based on trying to reorganise a rapidly changing marketing communications landscape.

Jerry Kliatchko first encountered IMC during his graduate studies at the University of Navarre in Spain. He recognised early on that integration and a holistic marketplace were the future. Since that time, he has been a leading proponent of the discipline and one of the global IMC thought leaders. Today, from his present position as Dean of the IMC program in the School of Communication at the University of Asia and The Pacific in Manila, Jerry has developed IMC not just in the South Pacific and East Asia regions but around the world through his research, teaching and leadership for more than 20 years.

In this seminal text, Dean Kliatchko provides the foundation for fulfilling the IMC promise, that is, seeing the human person as a whole, not just as a consumer or customer. That next level, as you will see in this text, is basically the next step in a total IMC process. It is an extension and refinement of the work he started more than 20 years ago. Start with the customer and develop marketing communications to fit them and their needs.

The first four chapters of this text show clearly how and why Kliatchko has made that journey. It demonstrates his journey to this point. It provides solid evidence that his clear thinking and organised critical planning have evolved over the years and now encompass the entire human system.

One thing you will note in this text is the heavy emphasis placed on developing a solid base for IMC, that is a clear, coherent definition of the concept and the boundaries within which it operates. It is the solid foundation for IMC that has continued to evolve over time but it has never wavered from Kliatchko's belief that the customer is the base of all IMC-based development and execution.

What you will observe as you read this text is the evolving nature of Kliatchko's premise. He clearly observes the singular nature of the consumer/customer and how that concept has evolved over time. To deal with that "human persona", he has developed a very complete approach on how to plan and implement an IMC program in the 21st century. It is robust.

It is complete. It is detailed. But, most of all, it is comprehensive. Nothing is left to chance. No areas are short-changed.

This text truly is IMC for the 21st century. Follow the thinking and the guidance that Jerry Kliatchko provides you here and you will get the true meaning of Integrated Marketing Communication. And, you will understand why and how marketing communication must change and change for the good.....for the good of the planner, for the good of the marketer but most of all, for the good of the “human person at the core”.

INTRODUCTION

Integrated Marketing Communication: The Human Person at the Core is a collection of four of my past academic articles (chapters 1 to 4) on the subject of integrated marketing communication (IMC) published in peer reviewed academic journals. They are reprinted here with permission from the *International Journal of Advertising* and the *Journal of Marketing Communications*. The last chapter (chapter 5) on the IMC Planning Framework is a new piece written specifically for this book. The first four chapters deal with the theoretical foundations of IMC while the last chapter focuses on the “how to” or the practical application of IMC through the framework presented. This book may serve as a helpful resource for students and researchers who are interested in the field of IMC.

The title of this book gives emphasis on the *human person*. At the core of IMC is the consumer – the starting point and constant reference point from which every element of the IMC plan pivots. But the consumer is not just a number, a target, a user of a brand, a buyer, or a source of revenue and profit. Obvious as it may seem – but at times neglected and overlooked – the consumer, customer, or prospect is above all a human person, free and intelligent, whose inherent dignity and worth, well-being, development, and yes even spirituality, must be upheld, respected, and nurtured at all times, in business, economic, social, and political activities. And this is especially true for marketing communication. In this era of continuous disruptive technological growth – VR, AR, AI, robots, data science, big data engineering, and so on – there is an even greater need to be firmly grounded on being human. Marketers *must* view and treat consumers and audiences *as* people at every step of the way, in developing and implementing marketing campaigns. This integral view of the consumer as a human person is yet another dimension of integration, one that provides deeper, more holistic, and richer insights into the various facets of a consumer’s life.

The past decade has seen a rising global trend and interest in marketing and advertising for social good, enabling brands to act as catalysts for change and uplift lives of people and societies around the world. Brands have become “more human,” so to speak, more meaningful, more purposeful, in their marketing communication efforts. Consumers today have also become

more critical and discerning than ever, more demanding, and only show support for brands that stand for something relevant in their lives. Moreover, almost every advertising award show everywhere in the world today gives recognition to campaigns that change the world for the better and do good. In this regard, the *Asia Pacific Tambuli Awards*, an award recognising *creative and effective brands with purpose*, organised by the School of Communication of the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P) was said to be ahead of its time, when the awards launched in 2005, way before the global trend on advertising for good came into being.

Marketing communication has always been, and will always be about people – understanding them, providing solutions for their needs, and improving their lives for the better. Only when the human person is placed at the core will marketing communication be truly relevant and effective.

CHAPTER 1¹

TOWARDS A NEW DEFINITION OF INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION (IMC)

Since the inception and formal conceptualisation of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in the late 1980s, the concept continues to gain widespread attention and interest among academics and practitioners around the world. However, a review of the literature on IMC over the past decade suggests that contentions on definitional and theoretical issues still remain unsettled. IMC proponents acknowledge and recommend that more extensive research in the field is needed to further consolidate its theoretical foundations. In this article, some IMC definitions are reviewed and analysed by examining their merits as well as inadequacies. A new definition of the concept is then proposed, suggesting three distinctive attributes, or pillars, of IMC as a contribution to the theory building on IMC.

Background

More than a decade after its inception as a concept of marketing communications, Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is still subject to varying terminology, bearing names such as “new advertising”, “orchestration”, “360 branding”, “total branding”, “whole egg”, “seamless communication”, “relationship marketing”, “one-to-one marketing”, “integrated marketing” and “integrated communications” (Kliatchko 2002). But no matter what it is called, this new approach to business and marketing communications planning has become an irreversible prevailing tendency among academics and industry practitioners.

Rather than being considered as a revolution in marketing thought, IMC emerged as a natural evolution in marketing communications, brought about by drastic changes in at least three main areas: the market-place, media and

¹ Originally published in the International Journal of Advertising, 24(1), pp. 7–34. Jerry Kliatchko (2005) *Towards a new definition of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)*, DOI: 10.1080/02650487.2005.11072902

communications, and consumers. These changes have been driven primarily by advances in information technology, and have caused a major shift from the mass marketing, product-centred theories of marketing popularised in the 1950s and 1960s, to the more customer-centric, database-driven, interactive and measurable approaches of integrated marketing communications (Schultz 2003a). Schultz and Kitchen (2000a) opine that four elements impel the changes in today's marketplace and, therefore, the practice of marketing and marketing communications – digitalisation, information technology, intellectual property and communication systems.

Clearly, the methods, practices and ways of thinking about marketing and communications prevalent in the era of mass marketing and mass communication have given way to the new realities affecting the marketplace and communications landscape of the twenty-first century (McKenna 1988, 1991, 1997; Achrol 1991; Clancy & Shulman 1991; Webster 1992; Tedlow & Jones 1993; Blattberg *et al.* 1994; Hunt 1994; Lazer *et al.* 1994; Reitman 1994; Schultz *et al.* 1996; Newell 1997; Peppers & Rogers 1997, 1999a, 1999b; Pavlik 1998; Zyman 1999; Schultz & Kitchen 2000a; Schultz 2003a, 2003b).

A review of the IMC literature shows that, for the most part, authors and scholars in the field of marketing communications have not reached an agreement on the general concept and scope of IMC. Kitchen and Schultz (1999) claim that since the early 1990s, with the exception of the US, there has been little progress in understanding IMC beyond the “one-sight”, “one sound” view. Over the past decade, various scholars have examined the many facets surrounding the IMC concept as demonstrated in the following citations.

Duncan and Everett (1993) claimed that since IMC is both a concept and a process, there is difficulty in arriving at a definition of IMC.

Nowak and Phelps (1994, p. 51) observed three broad concepts of IMC, which were mainly found in practitioner-based literature. The first was the “one voice” concept where integration was seen as having a “clear and consistent image, position, message and/or theme, across all marketing communication disciplines or tools”. Second was the “integrated” marketing communications concept, which focused particularly on advertisements that not only strengthened brand image but also influenced consumer behaviour. The third was the “coordinated” marketing communications concept, which emphasised the coordination among the various marketing communications tools, such as advertising, sales promotion and public relations, with the aim

of producing holistic communications campaigns.

Brown (1997) also enumerated several other views reflected in the IMC literature on what IMC is or should be: “attitude of mind”, “one spirit”, “one strategy”, “synergy”, “equal status”, “merging disciplines”, “stakeholder emphasis” and “marketing orientation”.

Beard (1997) argued that aside from a lack of agreement on IMC definitions, the issue of viewing IMC as both a concept and a process is also unsettled. Nevertheless, he singled out two principles of IMC that have appeared consistently in his review of the literature: “campaign messages designed to speak with one voice” and “campaign messages attempting to elicit a measurable, behavioural consumer response”.

Eagle *et al.* (1999), in a study among marketers and ad agency executives in New Zealand, tackled among other issues the “new” versus “nothing new” paradigms in relation to the IMC concept. One of their conclusions is that IMC is not just a management fad but is in fact a fundamental change in the practice and perception of marketing and communications among advertising agencies and clients.

IMC literature: different voices

In 1991, Northwestern University, in cooperation with the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4As) and the Association of National Advertisers in the United States, conducted the first national survey among consumer goods advertisers on the subject of IMC (Caywood & Ewing 1991). The study sought to understand the concept of IMC, to examine the extent to which IMC is being practised by major US advertisers, and to understand the importance and value of traditional advertising agencies in a marketplace where IMC has grown in importance.

This initial study on the understanding and practice of IMC was followed by several others, not only within the USA (Duncan & Everett 1993; McArthur & Griffin 1997; Schultz & Kitchen 1997; Gould *et al.* 1999) but also across cultures including, among others: New Zealand (Eagle *et al.* 1999); a multi-country study from the UK, USA, New Zealand, Australia and India (Kitchen & Schultz 1999); Thailand (Anantachart 2001); South Africa (Kallmeyer & Abratt 2001); the Philippines (Kliatchko 2002); and Australia (Reid 2003).

Cornelissen and Lock (2000) and Cornelissen (2001), however, seem to uphold the contrary opinion and have revisited the issue on the validity of the IMC concept. They suggest that IMC is but one more among many management fashions propagated by so-called gurus and that it is theoretically underdeveloped and ambiguously defined. Schultz and Kitchen (2000b) rebut such claims and explain that IMC is still in a “pre-paradigm stage of development” and that its value will become more evident as further research and experience are obtained through the years.

Kliatchko (2002) opines that IMC may be considered “conceptually old but operationally new”. It is conceptually old insofar as two fundamental principles surrounding the IMC concept are concerned, which are neither new nor exclusive to it: the principle of integration or coordination itself, and consumer orientation. It is, however, operationally new because technology today has made it possible for marketers to put integration and customer focus into actual practice and not merely pay lip-service to them.

Phelps and Johnson (1996) explained the difficulty of identifying which IMC measures to use when assessing research studies on IMC application in organisations, due to the lack of a clear understanding of the IMC concept.

Hutton (1996) posited that IMC can help redefine the purpose of marketing communications towards a more humanistic approach to marketing relationships.

Hartley and Pickton (1999) introduced what they call the mindscape of marketing communications. This “mindscape”, composed of corporate communications management, marketing communications management, and consumer contact management, refers to the various activities in the marketing communications mix that allow for a way of thinking towards making the various elements work together.

Issues affecting the organisational integration between agencies and clients and its role in effectively implementing IMC programmes have also been examined by Gould *et al.* (1999).

An important milestone in the conceptual development of IMC was introduced by Schultz and Schultz (1998), where they proposed a shift in focus from marketing communication tactics and operations to viewing IMC as a “business process”. This perspective, they believe, covers the present as well as the future scope of IMC as it has developed through the years.

In addition, Schultz (2003b) advocates what he calls the “next generation IMC”, a concept that addresses the new requirements of consumer-focused organisations in the new marketplace, involving the acquisition, maintenance, growth and migration of customer groups, and their income flows over time.

Peltier *et al.* (2003) highlight the growing importance and potential of the interactive nature of the new media and its role in generating interaction with customers through the “Interactive IMC” approach they propose.

Issues on the measurability of IMC programmes have also been a focus of discussion among academics and practitioners since the early stages of the development of the IMC concept. Jeans (1998) highlighted that, in a workshop organised by the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, the delegates underscored the importance of integration and its direct relation to market share. There were concerns, however, about whether the effects of integration can be quantified and how it can actually be achieved.

A study conducted by Low (2000) showed that implementing IMC may be strongly related to better marketing results in terms of sales, market share and profits for an organisation. More recently, Schultz (2003a) provided an overview of the developments in IMC thinking through the years, including the growing demands for marketing and marketing communications managers to be accountable for marketing communications investments. Schultz and Grindem (2002) also proposed the appointment of a chief performance officer (CPO) in organisations to directly oversee the efficient implementation of brand communication programmes to boost sales, market share and profit margins, among other things.

Despite the lack of agreement on the definition of IMC even up to the present (Dipasquale 2002), and the varying opinions on the understanding and practice of it, the study conducted by Kitchen and Schultz (1999) shows that both academicians and practitioners regard IMC as the major communications development of recent history. In fact, research studies on IMC since the early 1990s to the present show that industry practitioners continue to see the value and benefits of an integrated approach to marketing communications.

As shown in various studies (Duncan & Everett 1993; Schultz & Kitchen 1997; Kitchen & Schultz 1999; Anantachart 2001; Kliatchko 2002; Spickett-Jones *et al.* 2003), among the benefits brought about by IMC are: the reduction of media waste and a more positive effect on client budgets; improved coordination, centralisation and greater consistency of marketing

communication programmes (Duncan & Everett 1993; Moriarty 1994; Schultz & Kitchen 1997; Schultz & Schultz 1998; Kitchen & Schultz 1999; Anantachart 2001; Kliatchko 2002); and increased message impact and creativity, flowing from a focused and well-defined strategy (Schultz & Kitchen 1997; Kitchen & Schultz 1999; Anantachart 2001, 2003; Maskulka *et al.* 2003; Spickett-Jones *et al.* 2003).

The advancements in technology have also benefited IMC in a very crucial way. Not only has technology provided new and innovative channels of communication, it has also made the availability, development and management of databases an indispensable tool in managing customers today (Schultz & Schultz 1998). A most important advantage of the IMC approach is greater focus on more specific and well-defined target markets (Schultz & Kitchen 1997; Kitchen & Schultz 1999; Calder & Malthouse 2003). Because of technology, the IMC approach can more accurately capture empirical behavioural data on consumers, employ valuation tools and techniques, and differentiate customers beyond merely economic criteria (Schultz & Schultz 1998).

Finally, the benefits of integrating the use of various marketing communications disciplines, and in particular public relations, have also been discussed and recommended by academics and practitioners (Moriarty 1994; Kitchen & Moss 1995; Gronstedt 1996; Caywood 1997; Harris 1998; Hutton 1999).

Needed: a deeper understanding of IMC

As the previous citations indicate, it is not uncommon to encounter different articulations of the definition, principles and applications of IMC. What is immediately evident is that there is very little agreement on the concept. Among the points of difference reflected in the review of the IMC literature, the following may be identified:

- disagreements on the definitional issues and scope of IMC
- difficulties arising from the view that IMC is both a concept and a process
- contentions on whether IMC is merely a fad or a management fashion
- debate over measurement methods used in evaluating IMC programmes.
- controversy over turf battles and on who leads the integration process
- conflicts on agency–client relationships, organisational structures and compensation issues.

Furthermore, much of what has been written about IMC so far has focused more on the elements, tactics, tools, procedures and applications of IMC, and on the various advantages and opportunities it can bring to an organisation.

There remains, however, a vast area of research that has to be undertaken in attempting to formalise and build an IMC theory. The emphasis of most works has clearly been placed on the practice and implementation of IMC. While its application is of great interest, especially to marketing and marketing communications professionals, it is nonetheless primordial to reach a theoretical understanding of the general concept of IMC before further emphasis is placed on how it is developed, applied, implemented and evaluated.

Even if the emphasis of most studies has been placed on the application of IMC, there still remains a dearth of research that could ascertain the extent and depth to which IMC is actually practised in organisations. To date, a few cases on actual brands may be cited, such as Saturn, Xerox, Federal Express, Hewlett-Packard (Gronstedt 2000) and Tylenol of Johnson & Johnson (Deighton 1996). Even in these cases, IMC has not been applied as extensively at all levels of implementation, as described by Schultz and Schultz (1998) in their analysis of IMC application.

Finally, Schultz and Kitchen (1997) also affirmed in an exploratory study of IMC in US advertising agencies that the literature on IMC to date has focused largely on applying it rather than on understanding its basic principles and theories. They concluded that theory building on IMC, and the development of a more relevant and acceptable IMC definition, are crucial for furthering the growth and practice of IMC in organisations.

A look into the definitions of Integrated Marketing Communications

Five definitions of Integrated Marketing Communications are presented and briefly discussed in this chapter. These definitions were selected on the basis of their apparent acceptability among academicians and practitioners who have done exploratory work on IMC, as reflected in the various citations and references contained in their works. Three definitions come from the pioneers of IMC from Northwestern University, such as Schultz, one definition by Duncan, and the contributions by Nowak and Phelps.

IMC definition by the American Association of Advertising Agencies (1989)

The first formal definition of IMC was developed at Northwestern University in 1989. This definition was used in a survey of major advertisers and advertising agencies in the US, jointly sponsored by the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4As), the Association of National Advertisers, and Northwestern University (Schultz & Schultz 1998). A review of the literature indicates that this 4As definition has been the most widely used since 1989 up to the present, and the most often cited by academics and practitioners, even if it has not been universally endorsed (Duncan & Everett 1993; Nowak & Phelps 1994; Belch & Belch 1995; Baldinger 1996; Duncan & Caywood 1996; Lloyd 1996; Petrison & Wang 1996; Phelps & Johnson 1996; Russell & Lane 1996; Beard 1997; Brown 1997; Caywood 1997; Shimp 1997; Burnett & Moriarty 1998; Grunig & Grunig 1998; Harris 1998; Koekemoer 1998; Schultz & Schultz 1998; Sirgy 1998; Wells *et al.* 1998; Eagle *et al.* 1999; Gould *et al.* 1999; Kitchen & Schultz 1999; Anantachart 2001; Kallmeyer & Abratt 2001; Peltier *et al.* 2003). This definition states that integrated marketing communications is:

A concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines – general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations – and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact. (Duncan & Caywood 1996)

This definition emphasises the need for a synergistic marketing communications plan that uses multiple tools of marketing communications other than traditional advertising, and capitalises on the strengths of each, with the goal of achieving maximum communication impact. It highlights the importance of having one communications strategy or plan as the unifying element and the integrative factor of the various tools or disciplines employed, and of achieving greater synergy that would otherwise be absent if the tools were to be used independently without supporting and reinforcing each other (Brown 1997).

This definition further implies the creation of a “one spirit”, “one voice”, “one look” effect by coordinating effectively the various disciplines at a strategic level to achieve clarity and consistency of image in all messages delivered through the various communication tools (Nowak & Phelps 1994; Brown 1997). Moreover, it implies the creation of a “seamless” and “classless” marketing communications field, where the walls that used to

separate the various tools are now broken down and where all communication disciplines are elevated to have equal status without prejudice to any of the tools. This in turn brings about the merging of these various disciplines to work together effectively without losing the identity and the individual differences and strengths of each discipline (Brown 1997).

The multi-country study on IMC among advertising executives conducted by Kitchen and Schultz (1999), however, reveals that this definition presents certain inadequacies. Respondents claim the definition lacked certain elements, such as measurability and quantification analysis, drive for results, consumer orientation, aspects of creativity, cost-effectiveness, cost-efficiency and interactivity. Duncan and Caywood (1996) have also earlier noted similar weaknesses of this definition, such as the exclusion of consumers or prospects and how effectiveness might be achieved.

There are at least three major implications that may be deduced from the limitations of this definition. First, the emphasis put on the advantages that may be derived from employing a combination of a variety of communication tools further accentuates the limited understanding and prevailing notion among industry practitioners that IMC is concerned merely with the effective use of multiple communication disciplines. Second, the absence of references on consumers, prospects and other relevant publics in the definition seems to ignore the centrality and due importance placed by IMC on them, as the very essence that differentiates traditional marketing approaches from IMC. The relevant public is at the crux from which the whole IMC process and planning model emanates and develops. Third, for IMC to be more widely accepted and practised, measurement issues cannot be de-emphasised. The financial models and valuation tools proposed by IMC scholars (e.g. Schultz & Walters 1997; Schultz 1998; Schultz & Kitchen 2000a) ought to be explored and applied more fully to further strengthen the potential of IMC programmes to drive greater accountability and contribution to achieving business results.

Definition by Don Schultz, Northwestern University (1991)

Two years later, in 1991, Don Schultz and his colleagues at Northwestern University proposed another definition of IMC. This definition states:

IMC is the process of managing all sources of information about a product/service to which a customer or prospect is exposed which behaviorally moves the consumer toward a sale and maintains customer loyalty. (Duncan & Caywood 1996)

This definition introduces other dimensions of IMC that had not been articulated in the earlier definition. For example, Duncan and Caywood (1996) opine that this definition focuses on the customer or prospect, which is at the very heart of the IMC concept. There is also an implicit emphasis placed on nurturing a relationship between the brand and the customer. Moreover, it highlights the need for behavioural responses from customers or prospects for an IMC campaign to be effective. Attention is likewise given to “all sources of information” about a brand, which is no longer just limited to advertising, public relations, and so on (those that can be controlled and initiated by the organisation in coordination with its communications agencies), but includes all possible contact points between the brand and the consumer.

This definition, however, leaves out the fact that IMC is also a concept and not just a process. It also seems to miss out the elements of strategic thinking and measurability in the IMC planning process.

Definitions contributed by Tom Duncan (1992 and 1994)

Tom Duncan’s first definition was introduced in 1992 when he viewed IMC as:

The strategic coordination of all messages and media used by an organization to collectively influence its perceived brand value. (Duncan & Caywood 1996)

This definition supports the view that IMC seeks to achieve a synergy through the coordination of all messages and communications tools employed by an organisation and its communication agencies. A study on IMC conducted by Low (2000) used this definition by Duncan as a basis for the interviews he conducted among 15 senior marketing managers in the US. Having asked each interviewee to define IMC, he found that all 15 managers defined it as a management practice. His study also showed that the most common element in the responses was the coordination of marketing communication tools. Low claims that this finding further supported his adoption of Duncan’s definition.

Duncan and Caywood (1996), however, posit that this definition limited the messages and media used to those that the brand and its agencies sought to deliver. Duncan then revised this definition in 1994 as follows:

IMC is the process of strategically controlling or influencing all messages and encouraging purposeful dialogue to create and nourish profitable

relationships with customers and other stakeholders. (Duncan and Caywood 1996)

Duncan and Caywood (1996) explain that this revised definition focuses on building relationships with all stakeholders and moved away from a merely attitudinal to a behavioural change or response by saying that IMC “creates and nourishes profitable relationships”. This has also expanded the concept of the target market to include, aside from consumers and prospects, all employees, regulators and other parties that may have a direct involvement in the organisation. Moreover, this definition has placed considerable emphasis on creating long-term effects by fostering customer relationships and not merely creating short-term impact.

The inclusion of the phrase “controlling and influencing all messages” in this definition, however, may be misconstrued. While control and influence of messages are desirable and necessary, they may nevertheless mislead others into the traditional marketing thinking that most, if not all, marketing communications messages are under the control of marketers. As previously cited by Duncan and Caywood (1996), this same concern was a major consideration in revising Duncan’s 1992 definition. In this revised version, however, the use of the term “control” may still imply a one-way viewpoint of controlling only those messages that marketers sought to deliver. As Schultz *et al.* (1996) point out, the outside-in perspective that IMC takes highlights the fact that messages may be both controlled and uncontrolled, and thereby requiring the management of both favourable and undesirable communication coming from all possible sources, with some of it beyond the control of marketers.

Another downside of this definition is its failure to mention or specify the means or channels of communication to be employed in order to obtain the goal of “encouraging purposeful dialogue”. While the channels may be implied in the concept of “dialogue”, it seems appropriate to explicitly state it in a definition. In contrast to the 4As definition cited earlier, which highlights the variety of communication disciplines, the absence of any reference to communication channels in Duncan’s definition downplays an inherent concept in IMC of examining closely the relevant contact points and most effective channels of reaching out to multiple targeted markets.

Furthermore, the aspects of measurability and evaluation of IMC programmes are also not made explicit in this definition. Similar to an earlier observation on the 4As definition, measuring and evaluating IMC programmes are among the top concerns of marketing communication

professionals, as evidenced by various studies conducted on IMC in the past (e.g. Duncan & Everett 1993; Schultz & Kitchen 1997; Kitchen & Schultz 1999).

Conceptualisations of IMC by Nowak and Phelps (1994)

Nowak and Phelps did not propose a straightforward definition of IMC. However, they sought to contribute by conceptualising the notion of IMC through what they termed as three broad “conceptualisations”, which they found in most practitioner-based literature on IMC (Nowak & Phelps 1994). These conceptualisations are “one-voice” marketing communications, “integrated” marketing communications (i.e. advertisements), and “coordinated” marketing communications.

One-voice marketing communications is integration that creates “a clear and consistent image, position, message, and/or theme across all marketing communication disciplines or tools”. *Integrated communications* refers to the creation of both a brand image and a behavioural response that emanate directly from marketing communications materials such as advertisements. *Coordinated marketing communications* associates “integrated” with the concept of “coordination”. This refers to the coordination of all marketing communications tools such as advertising, public relations and direct marketing. The goal is to produce a holistic campaign to achieve synergy that both develops awareness and builds brand image, at the same time evoking a behavioural response from the target audiences.

While the conceptualisations presented by Nowak and Phelps provide some explanations to the understanding of the IMC concept, they primarily dwell on the most basic notions of the concept – that is, one voice, coordination of marketing communication tools and eliciting behavioural responses – and fail to transcend these fundamental ideas.

Definition by Don Schultz and Heidi Schultz (1998)

Schultz and Schultz (1998) proposed a new definition of IMC, which in their opinion captures the current as well as the future scope of IMC as they have seen it develop. This definition is based on the studies of IMC that have been conducted in the past as well as on the experiences of organisations that have implemented the IMC approach. Schultz and Schultz (1998) defined IMC as follows:

IMC is a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute, and evaluate coordinated, measurable, persuasive brand communication programs over time with consumers, customers, prospects, and other targeted, relevant external and internal audiences.

Schultz and Schultz (1998, p. 18) claim that what differentiates this definition from others is the focus it gives to the business process. This definition seems to encompass the entire spectrum of concepts associated with IMC. While it implies most, if not all, of the concepts that have been cited previously in earlier definitions, it further enriches them with the inclusion of concepts such as “business process”, “evaluation” and “measurability”.

The use of a strategic approach provides a clear and consistent concept for a given brand promoted by an organisation and minimises the risk of constantly changing that brand concept, with the goal of building lasting relationships with consumers. Schultz and Kitchen (2000, p. 5) further comment on this definition by saying that:

This definition first focuses on strategy – a strategy of communication that is clearly related to corporate mission, values, and needs, but relates equally to brand mission, values, and needs. At both levels executives will need to develop resonance and consonance in terms of brand identity.

This definition also expands the understanding of the term brand communication programmes from its traditional view (i.e. advertising, public relations, and so on) to all other contact points between the organisation and its brands and the consumers or prospects.

Finally, the phrase “relevant internal and external audience” suggests that IMC programmes seek to address all publics relevant to the organisation and are not solely limited to marketing communication programmes focused on consumers. IMC thinking believes in nurturing positive relationships with, and addressing the needs of, all stakeholders, beginning with those from within the organisation as well as all external audiences.

In a qualitative study (through in-depth interviews) conducted by the researcher among CEOs and senior executives of ad agencies and marketing directors of client organisations in Manila (Kliatchko 2002), he sought to examine how IMC was understood, accepted and practised by the respondents in their organisations. Among other issues and concerns addressed in the study, the respondents were asked to react to the IMC definition of Schultz and Schultz (1998). The author chose this definition for the study since it was the most recent definition available during the time the research was

conducted. Moreover, the Schultz and Schultz definition has also not been used extensively in recent studies on IMC.

Findings of the study show that both agency and client respondents found the definition correct and holistic. Most respondents particularly agreed with the inclusion of such terms as “strategic”, “measurable” and “over time”. However, almost all of the respondents claimed that they found the definition too long, rather generic and unclear on the immediate benefits of the IMC concept.

While the Schultz and Schultz (1998) definition appears to be more comprehensive in scope than those previously posited by other scholars, one drawback of this definition is that the immediate value, benefit, uniqueness and specific difference of IMC are not immediately captured and made evident. The generic and obscure phraseology risks the possibility of it being easily interchanged or substituted by other notions or concepts once the IMC label is detached from the definition itself.

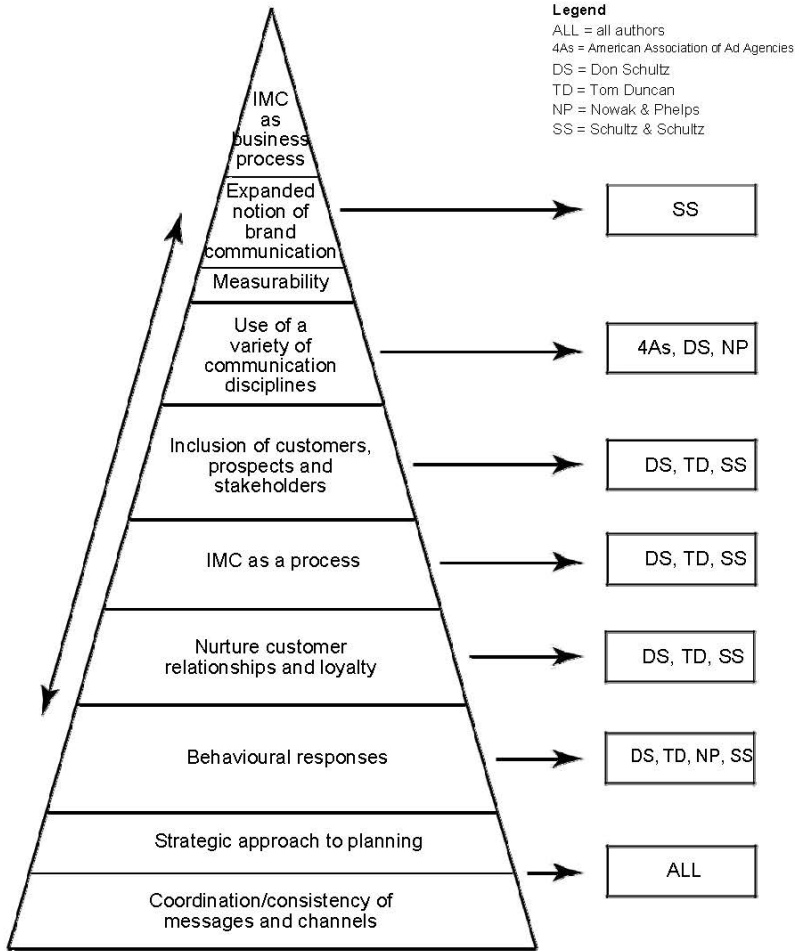
A new IMC definition by Jerry Kliatchko

A review of the five IMC definitions cited suggests that the conceptualisation of the IMC construct has developed considerably since its initial formulation and articulation in the late 1980s. It has expanded and evolved from the one-voice, coordinated, and consistent notion to a more strategic, consumer-oriented and measurable approach to brand communication planning. A summary of concepts introduced by the various authors, and the emergence of their definitions over time, is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Emergence of IMC definitions over time

Author/year	Concepts introduced
American Association of Advertising Agencies (4As) (1989)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and consistency of messages and communication channels • (“one sight, one sound”) • Use of a variety of communication disciplines to work in synergy based on a comprehensive plan • IMC as a concept
Don Schultz (1991)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of consumers, prospects • Behavioural responses • Nurture relationship and customer loyalty • IMC as a process
Tom Duncan (1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profitable relationships • Expanded audience scope from customers to other stakeholders
Nowak & Phelps (1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforced notions of consistency, coordination and behavioural response
Schultz & Schultz (1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic business process • Expanded notion of brand communication • Measurability • Specified more explicitly the multiple markets – inclusive of external and internal audiences

Figure 1: Convergence/divergence of IMC definitions



Cathey and Schumann (quoted in Anantachart 2001) claim that in their analysis of IMC definitions, three main ideas seem to recur: (1) definitions accentuating the audience; (2) definitions concentrating on message and media integration; and (3) definitions revolving around the evaluation of outcomes.