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### Essentials for Integrated Marketing

**As More Power Shifts to Consumers, Need Grows for Common Metric and 'Renaissance Marketers'**

by **Bob Liodice**

Published: [June 09, 2008](#)



**Bob Liodice**

Integrated marketing communications isn't new, but it's gaining momentum as power shifts from the marketer to the consumer and as marketers recognize the power and efficiency of taking a holistic approach to engaging consumers.

Several studies, including one recently conducted by the Association of National Advertisers, indicate that achieving effective IMC campaigns is marketers' primary concern. But there is considerable uncertainty about how to staff, design, manage and measure the success of such programs.

Although 74% of firms we've surveyed say they are using IMC approaches for most or all of their brands, only 25% rated the quality of their IMC programs "excellent" or "very good" -- underscoring the need to identify best practices and address the barriers that can impede IMC efforts, including a lack of strategic consistency across communications disciplines; the absence of a common IMC measurement process; the existence of entrenched functional silos inside marketing organizations, as well as within their agency partners; and the dearth of cross-discipline skill sets among marketing staff.

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So what it will take to overcome these obstacles? Four imperatives:

### 1. STRATEGIC CONSISTENCY

An IMC campaign should start with a compelling consumer insight that can be translated into a strong, differentiated marketing strategy. This leads to the development of a creative "brand idea" that drives each discipline's tactics. For many brands, however, a very different process typically takes place. Each discipline articulates its own strategy and develops its own brand ideas, which, executed independently, fail to deliver the exponential power that's possible with a strategically integrated campaign.



Teamwork: All Kraft Foods brands use cross-functional teams to create integrated campaigns. One of the successes of that approach is its South Beach Living line.

are receptive.

MasterCard's marketers took another path in creating the "Priceless" campaign. It was less about linking different media and more about connecting all components of the marketplace -- merchants, issuers and consumers. Each audience received tools that enabled the "Priceless" vision to seamlessly integrate across the business.

Ensuring consistency is the responsibility of the marketer, who must keep all disciplines -- people, messages, tactics and budgets -- performing in unison and must constantly guard against tactics straying from the overarching brand strategy.

### 2. COMMON MEASUREMENT PROCESS

Traditionally, each marketing vertical uses its own measurement protocols. Vertical or function-specific measurements are useful, but we need to go further. Although organizations have become more skilled in crunching numbers, there is no single, consistent set of metrics that transcends discipline-centric measurements.

In [a recent article in Ad Age](#), Jack Neff noted the "new opacity" arising from having a multitude of information but no common way to process it. The lack of a standard measuring process is one of the most serious integrated-marketing challenges. ANA marketers are finding new ways to overcome this impediment and working to create a new, more comprehensive cross-functional approach. Advances in marketing-mix modeling make it especially useful in today's multichannel marketplace because such models can isolate the effects of individual elements -- even when they appear to be working in

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Bob Liodice** is president-CEO of the Association of National Advertisers. Prior to joining the ANA in 1995 as senior VP, he was VP-global marketing and sales for Grupo Televisa, a worldwide broadcaster.



Nestle's Kim Jeffery, A-B's Dave Peacock, and American Airlines' Roger Frizzell Among Those Tackling Our Questions

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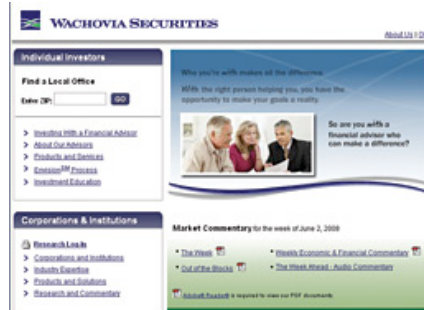
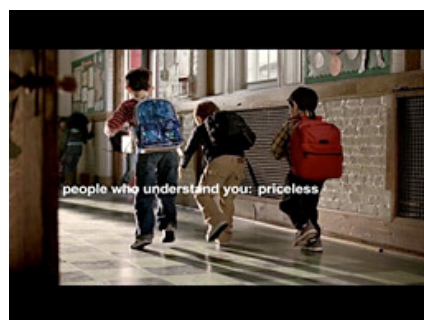
concert. This new thinking requires flexibility, creativity and a willingness to change.

In an ANA Advertiser magazine IMC roundtable, Karna Crawford, director of media and interactive integrated communications for the Sparkling Business Unit at Coca-Cola Co., discussed the importance of having the mentality to think differently and end some "tried and true" measurement approaches. In her opinion, "there is no 'silver bullet' change, particularly when you think of how TV is measured. That's a deeply held, entrenched, traditional approach that has all sorts of financial and systematic factors related to it. It will not be easy to get people or the system to change."

### 3. FUNCTIONAL SILOS

For too long, marketing functions have been vertically organized by media type. This siloed approach is mirrored on the agency side, with rewards based on discipline-specific P&L models. These silos must be torn down.

The client-side strategic integrator must involve and lead a team of colleagues who have the responsibility, vision, understanding and commitment to engage in a media-agnostic planning process. And this team of enlightened marketers must be willing to let strategic goals -- not historic patterns -- drive budget allocations.



Useful links: MasterCard (top) and Wachovia each connected with different parts of the marketplace -- consumers, marketers, analysts -- to make integrated approaches work.

All of Kraft Foods' brands, for example, use cross-functional teams to develop IMC programs -- an approach that has led to many successes, including its South Beach Diet initiative. Wachovia Bank created a triumvirate of resources by merging executives from finance, marketing and analytics -- a unique partnership that created the culture, organization and functional expertise necessary for its vision to succeed.

To eliminate silos, the strategic integrator should lead a multistep process that accomplishes the following: looks at different silos that operate together and determine who should be engaged and the scope of their role; evaluates any resistance, whether it is technical, political or cultural; determines a tactical approach for each in the new initiative; creates purpose-driven teams by focusing on core objectives, not the company organization chart; and takes steps to improve process and technology issues so that all players have the correct information and resources at all times.



2010 America explains what you need to know about the biggest consumer market-research project of the decade: the 2010 U.S. census. Demographics expert Peter Francese, author of this highly readable Ad Age white paper, analyzes what the census will reveal about the changing face of consumers.

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#### 4. PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Achieving strategic integration requires a top-to-bottom reinvention of the marketing organization. This transformation must be led by "renaissance marketers" -- a new breed of holistic professionals who are system thinkers, customer-centric believers, innovators and dreamers.

These individuals should be cross-trained to understand the entire marketing spectrum and learn discipline-specific skill sets. Increasingly, these leaders will need strong quantitative skills -- a key finding in the ANA's Marketing and Media Ecosystems 2010 study -- in order to analyze the data-rich resources and leverage mathematical tools now available, especially if they are to drive cross-disciplinary approaches that fuse disparate consumer-engagement channels. Above all, they need to be superior team leaders who have the insights, talent and passion to take marketing integration to new heights.

##### 1 Comment



By cdobles | Brooklyn, NY [June 20, 2008 12:52:07 pm](#):

In Bob Liodice's article Essentials of Integrated Marketing there is one essential element missing. He recognizes, as many 'new age' marketers have, that the power has shifted to the consumer. In the age of social networking it is the consumer who determining marketing communications. CMO strategies are, now more than ever, dependent on 'personalization'. In fact, the Internet has turned the concept of personalized communications upside down. It is no longer sufficient to show you recognize the individual you must now establish a two-way conversation and surrender the control of your brand message to them for them to be fully engaged with the brand.

So what is missing now that the power has shifted to the consumer? - The recognition that an effective Integrated Marketing Strategy must go beyond incorporating new emerging media and relevant technologies. It must, now that the demographics of the marketplace have shifted as well, incorporate emerging consumer segments through relevant in-culture communications. Not to be politically correct but to be marketing correct.

I emphasize relevant because prominent in our industry is the misconception that it is enough to simply translate the English language creative into Spanish, for instance, to do the job right. Wrong. This practice outright ignores the points addressed by Mr. Liodice. There is no strategic consistency, no common measurement process, no leveraging of functional silos and absolutely no recognition of professional skills.

In-culture expertise must be integrated from the get go in developing the strategy and communications. As the lines between brand and consumer continue to blur in the diverse marketplace, consumer ghettos are no longer a reality.

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