

Chapter 4

Modeling Integrated Marketing Communications for SME Environments

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the concept and planning of integrated marketing communication (IMC) in the context of the SME environment. The chapter explains the communication process in SME context along with above-the-line, below-the-line, through-the-line channels and different communication tools. Relevant examples and empirical study are addressed in this chapter, and a proper guideline of IMC in the field of SME for the very first time in the area of service marketing is developed. Policymakers, entrepreneurs, and even academicians will get the insights and impactful ideas from this SME context IMC study.

INTRODUCTION

The business world is changing so fast due to an advanced communication system, progressive analytics, and introduction of new ideas. The marketers are trying to set up their marketing communication process at the highest level to get a competitive advantage. So, the concept of 'Marketing communication' is - The process of interaction between buyer and seller regarding a product, service or a company. Marketers always try to create value for the customers to generate more revenues from the market. Marketers must concentrate on the

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communication process as it helps to educate customers about the company, product or services (Nagle and Müller, 2017). The communication process must be integrated to deliver more value to the customer. Marketers in general set up the communication process based on the company's objective and the resources they have to perform the activities. Most of the researches and studies applied Integrated Marketing communication (IMC) tools by focusing on large firms. However, there is a lack of study on IMC in the context of SME. This chapter takes an attempt empirically to identify the essential marketing communication tools for SME. Consequently, the Policymakers, academicians will be able to consider this paper as a guide to establish their strategies particularly in the sector of SME.

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

Marketing practitioners and scholars in the field of business started to conduct the research on the topic of integrated marketing communication (IMC) since 1990 (Schultz & Kitchen, 1997). The idea and application of IMC are getting more importance due to the impact of advanced information technology in the competitive business world (Kitchen, Brignell, Li, & Jones, 2004). The application of IMC helps to disseminate various information about the product and business to the target customers. IMC process helps to convey a clear and attractive message to audiences (Gabrielli & Balboni, 2010). As a process, IMC is essential for the SMEs as to promote and position brands in the mind of the target customers (Yeboah & Atakora, 2013). Although, many types of research mentioned that IMC tools are essential for all kind of business like large to small but no researchers have identified the most appropriate factors of IMC in the context of SME. The reason is, only the limited number of studies have been published in the context of SME (Chaston & Mangles, 2002).

The Need for Marketing Communication in SMEs

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of developing countries economy where SME is providing not only product also services, offering job and paying a considerable amount of tax to the Government. In this chapter, the author selected Bangladesh as a perfect example of a developing country where the country's SME service sector plays a significant role in terms of increasing economic transaction. In SMEs, there is more intense

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