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## The evolution of marketing communication: from selling to integration

### *ABSTRACT*

Marketing communication is not a new phenomenon. Communication has been part of the marketing process for as long as people have exchanged goods. However, the advent of technology and research, among other reasons, has made the marketing communication process increasingly sophisticated in recent decades and has given rise to integrated marketing communication (IMC) and the integrated communication phenomenon.

To understand this new approach to marketing communication, one has to go back to the roots thereof and scrutinise the path of development. "Innovation begins with abandonment. It's not what you start; it's what you stop that counts", says Drucker (as quoted in Schultz, Tannenbaum & Lauterborn, 1994:1). This statement underlines the importance of knowledge about the development of marketing communication in order to understand the importance and effective application of this new approach called integrated communication.

In this study historical research was conducted to seek out the implications of, and/or relationships between, approaches in marketing communication from the past and their connections with the present. The paper explores the different phases that occurred in the development of marketing communication from a mass communications focus in the 1960s to the integrated communications imperative of the present. It became apparent that integrated communication, which envelops integrated marketing communication, is crucial to an organisation's overall success.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The need for marketing is universal. However, the fundamental tenets of marketing have shifted to a large extent. As Reich (1998:27) points out, it is of necessity that marketing communication is an evolutionary process. It must satisfy the ever-increasing demands and the emphasis placed on it as the single surviving, sustainable, competitive edge in the marketing environment, an environment where parity and look-alikes abound today. The marketing phenomenon has moved through an evolution of thought with the recent phase of integrated communication. Integrated communication takes relationship marketing and integrated marketing communication one step further. It still retains the focus on the customer and customer service, but now adds to the scenario the fact that the marketing function should be integrated into the core of the organisation with all marketing and communication activities co-ordinated to deliver a “one face, one voice” message to the customer.

The organisation will survive only if it can win the trust of the customers or clients and supply what they want. Until recently, marketing was largely taken to mean selling. As will be seen in a discussion later in the article, selling refers to part of marketing communication that is again only one part of the entire marketing system. Marketing is more than the sum of many management activities – it is the guiding principle of the operation of the entire organisation.

Marketing communication is a critical aspect of a company’s overall marketing mission and a major determinant of its success. As Shimp suggests (as quoted in Schultz & Kitchen, 2000:53):

Indeed, it has been claimed that marketing [in the next millennium] is communication and communication is marketing. The two are inseparable.

## 2. RESEARCH STATEMENT AND AIM

This study is mainly guided by the point of departure that marketing communication is a complex phenomenon that can be explored and understood in its complexity only if one focuses on the diversity of its sustainable factors. Moreover, the point of view here is that knowledge about the development of marketing communication is essential in order to understand the importance and effective application thereof. The aim of this paper is two-fold, namely:

- To engage in an exploratory and descriptive investigation of the development of marketing communication in order to prompt a better understanding of the phenomenon in question.
- To document and structure the above-mentioned aspect for academic purposes.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main aim of this article is to structure various popular views on the development of marketing communication for academic use and prompt a better understanding of the phenomenon among learners and practitioners. In order to achieve this objective, historiography was employed. Historiography or historical research attempts to fashion a descriptive written account of the past. According to Matejski (as quoted in Berg, 1995:161), it is at once descriptive, factual and fluid. Historiography attempts to recapture systematically the complex nuances, the people, meanings, events, and even ideas of the past that have influenced and shaped the present (Leedy, 1997). It is a study of the relationships between issues that have influenced the past, continue to influence the present and will certainly affect the future (Glass, 1989). The major impetus in historical research is, as with other data-collection strategies, the collection of information and the interpretation or analysis of this data. In this study, historical research was conducted to seek out the implications of, and/or relationships between, approaches in marketing communication from the past and their connections with the present.

During the analysis phase of the study, the data were interpreted. The researcher reviewed the material that had been collected and evaluated it carefully. The data were sorted and categorised into various topical themes (illustrated in Figure 2). This content analysis strategy allowed the researcher to identify patterns within and between the sources. A literature review on articles (both printed and electronic) and textbooks published from 1960 to 2002 was done.

### 4. MARKETING: THE CONTEXT IN WHICH MARKETERS HAVE TO COMMUNICATE

Marketing means many things to many people. Some people think that it means the same as personal selling, while others think that marketing and advertising are one and the same thing. Marketing actually includes all these activities and more. Strydom, Jooste and Cant (2000:5) describe marketing as the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, marketing communication and distribution of ideas, products and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organisational goals.

Simply stated, marketing means that a company should satisfy consumer wants and needs at a profit. By doing so, the business creates happy customers, which translates into increased sales and profits.

The term "marketing mix" has been used to describe the important elements or the so-called four Ps that make up a marketing programme. The four Ps theory was articulated

in 1960 by Neil H. Borden, a Michigan State University Professor, and comprises the product, place, price and promotion (Boyd & Levy, 1967:2). However, this theory is perhaps not the most relevant theory to use today. The evolution and growth of economies across the globe and the development of technology and research (to name only two contributing factors) have altered the face of marketing communication and provided increasing opportunities for the use thereof.

## 5. THE GROWTH OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION

The latter part of the previous century saw considerable growth in the use of marketing communication driven by a wide variety of factors. Koekemoer (1989:7-9) suggests that the following factors contributed to changes in marketing practice:

- The nature and extent of communication methods
- Infrastructure and improvements in transportation
- Target audiences growth in number and sophistication
- Access to specialist companies in the field of marketing communication
- The growth of manufacturing and services
- Proliferation of brands

Almost ten years later Yeshin (1998:6-8) added the following factors to the list:

- Increasing manufacturer separation from the consumer
- Relative decline in personal selling
- Changing face of distribution
- Growth in technology
- Increased use and sophistication of market research
- Increased improvements in living standards
- Use of credit facilities
- Wider reach of the media
- A growing understanding of the use of marketing communication

In the section that follows the origin and development of marketing communication will be discussed and then charted. The inception and nature of integrated marketing communication and integrated communication will also be explored.

## 6. THE PRODUCTION ORIENTATION (1960s)

The discussion on the development of marketing communication began in the 1960s with what became known as the production stage. In the production-oriented phase the production function was considered to be the most important in a successful enterprise (Cant & Machado, 1998:1). The production process became popular when Henry Ford

began to market the Model T. One of the quotations attributed to Mr Ford was that the customer could have any colour car he wanted as long as it was black. Mr Ford had, in other words, a production orientation (Ogden, 1998:5). The goal in this phase was more goods in less time. Design did not matter, and quality was relative (Schultz, *et al.*, 1994:3).

In most books on marketing published in the 1960s the word communication did not feature once (Tousley, Clark & Clark, 1962; Westing & Albaum, 1964 and Stanton, 1967). The only reference made to the contact between products and consumers was called selling. These sales-producing elements were designated as “the marketing mix”, and they included the product, the brand, the package, personal selling, advertising as well as the price and the channels of distribution (Tousley, *et al.*, 1962:386-387). All these elements had one thing in common – the produced product that had to be sold.

What is interesting is that the term “brand” was already used in the 1960s. The general purpose of a brand was described as a way of providing product identification for assistance in buying and selling (Tousley, *et al.*, 1962; Westing & Albaum, 1964).

In the late 1960s the word “promotion” became prominent (Boyd & Levy, 1967; Stanton, 1967). The promotional mix was seen as the most strategic combination of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and other promotional tools that could be devised to reach the goals of the sales programme (Stanton, 1967:493). Brink and Kelly (as quoted in Boyd & Levy, 1967:1) defined promotion as “the coordination of all seller-initiated efforts to set up channels of information and persuasion to facilitate the sale of a good or service, or the acceptance of an idea”. Promotion was basically seen as an exercise in information, persuasion and influence.

During this period the two most widely used methods of promotion were personal selling and advertising (Stanton, 1967:494). Selling and marketing were often used as synonymous terms. Hence, much emphasis was placed on personal selling and many books included chapters focusing on selling as a description of the contact between the marketer and the consumer. Examples thereof are ample and include *The management of personal selling*, *The management of advertising* (Stanton, 1967) and *Selling* (Tousley, *et al.*, 1962), *Personal selling and advertising media* and *The source* (Boyd & Levy, 1967), which referred to the seller.

The production orientation was followed by the sales orientation, which resulted in selling activities becoming more important. The reason for the change to the selling orientation was that products were not made to order but produced in mass. The supply of these products eventually became greater than the demand. According to Strydom

(1998:17), this resulted in a change in the management perception of the importance of marketing.

## 7. THE SALES ORIENTATION (1970s)

Mass marketing was invented to sell standardised mass-produced products to a similarly standardised, undifferentiated mass of consumers. A top-down, in-out approach was followed, that is, it was imposed from the top and was product – rather than consumer – oriented. The manufacturer decided to make a product because it could, priced it to cover costs and to yield as much profit as possible, placed it on store shelves through the distribution chain and promoted it shamelessly (Schultz, *et al.*, 1994:5). The media were similarly mass oriented, driven by advertising budgets. Although the promotional mix was still seen as a blend of personal selling and advertising (Boyd & Massy, 1972; Gist, 1974), at this point discussions on the promotion element began to include sales promotions and publicity (Baker, 1971; Downing, 1971 & Robin, 1978) in the equation. The promotion element referred to the communication undertook to persuade others to accept ideas and/or concepts (Johnson, House & McDaniel, 1974). Thus, promotion was persuasive communication to potential buyers or users (Robin, 1978:219).

Personal selling, non-personal selling and the promotion mix were the major topics of any analysis of the promotion strategies in the 1970s (Shaw, Willenberg & Stanley, 1971; Downing, 1971 & Robin, 1978). The influence of promotional efforts, persuasive communication, the source or marketer, the influence of the source, source power and personal selling were topics addressed in this period (Robin, 1978).

## 8. THE MARKETING ORIENTATION (1980s)

After the sales orientation phase, the focus shifted to marketing as the important function with much emphasis on the so-called marketing mix and the four marketing instruments. Marketers began to realise that there is a difference between marketing and selling (Holtz, 1982) and now recognised that the importance of marketing lay in the fact that in order to be successful in the marketplace, companies must meet and exceed their clients' or consumers' needs rather than try to reshape them (their needs) to fit existing products or services. A change from sales-oriented management to marketing-oriented management resulted in an emphasis not only on sales messages and the price, but also on the quality of the products, the packaging thereof, the methods of distribution and the need to provide information by means of advertising (Strydom, 1998:18). Consumers developed more sophisticated needs and were financially in a better position to satisfy these needs. There was also a large variety of competing products from which they could choose. All this led management to realise the importance

of the marketing function. Schultz, *et al.* (1994:6) coined the term “demassification” to denote this course of action.

Discussions on the promotion mix then almost always included some mention of communication or the communication process (Cravens, 1982; Mc Donald, 1984; Baker, 1985 & Assael, 1985) or even the term marketing communication (Koekemoer, 1989). At this point, the basic elements of the promotional mix were regarded to be advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and publicity (Kotler, 1984:603; Assael, 1985). But it gradually became clear that the consumer should, in fact, be the focus of all marketing activities (Cant & Machado, 1998:1). A consumer orientation thus became one of the main principles of the marketing concept. Furthermore, the customer orientation became one of the key business and management issues of the 1980s and in most sectors companies adopted some form of “customer care” programme.

Marketing communication was then seen as fundamentally concerned with the needs and wants of people, both as individuals and in groups (Koekemoer, 1989:23). As this author suggests:

Successful marketers understand people or, more technically, consumer behaviour. Knowing what makes his customers ‘tick’ and formulating a product/service offer to satisfy their needs, wants, hopes, aspirations, dreams and desires is the hallmark of the successful marketer. The means by which this is achieved is effective marketing communication.

Marketing communication was seen as the holistic approach that included the promotional mix. Koekemoer (1989:23) implied that an effective marketing communication strategy must encompass the whole promotion mix. The author also pointed out that the elements of the promotion mix must work in total harmony. This was one of the first suggestions of the integration of the four elements of the promotion mix in a South African textbook.

According to Cant and Machado (1998:2), the lack of success achieved by companies that pay only lip service to consumer orientation can perhaps be ascribed to a very narrow interpretation not only of the four marketing instruments, but also of the necessary contribution to customer service that must be made by all, even the non-marketing departments, in the business enterprise. What was needed was a broader perspective on the marketing task. Relationship marketing was born.

## 9. RELATIONSHIP MARKETING (1990s)

In the nineties there was an increased acceptance of the relationship concept. In the mid-1990s it became clear that one-way forms of communication were no longer effective

in terms of trying to influence consumers. In this period the threshold towards where it was not so much a matter of consumers being apathetic towards marketing communications, but rather of consumers being more conditioned not to accepting an agenda set for them, were crossed.

The move towards relationship marketing was the result of several factors. First, companies recognised that customers had become much more demanding. Schultz, *et al.* (1998:8) described this stage as the empowerment period. Customers wanted personalised products and services tailored to their specific needs and wants. They also desired superior value, which they defined as high-quality products that were competitively priced and supported by excellent customer service (Belch & Belch, 1998:8). The media systems had also changed so dramatically that two-way systems were required (Schultz, *et al.*, 1994:52). A two-way system meant that the marketer and his/her customer are involved in an exchange of information.

Another major reason why marketers were emphasising relationships was that it was often more cost effective to retain customers than to acquire new ones. Most marketers realised that they needed more than just a one-time exchange or transaction with customers. The focus of market-driven companies shifted to developing and sustaining relationships with their customers. This led to a new emphasis on relationship marketing, which involved creating, maintaining and enhancing long-term relationships with individual customers, as well as other stakeholders for mutual benefit (Belch & Belch, 1998:8). According to Cant and Machado (1998:2), there was an increased emphasis on consumer retention, product benefits, a long time-scale, high-quality customer service, high-quality customer commitment, high-quality customer contact and quality in the relationship-marketing phase. The *lifetime value* of customers became increasingly important to marketers.

“If you understand that your best customer is the one you already have, then creating a rational system for deepening customer relationships is the logical next step”, suggest Leppla and Parker (1999:13). It is only through integrated marketing communication, however, that relationships can be built and deepened. So while relationship marketing was the buzzword of the 1990s, integrated marketing communications became the manner in which to make relationship marketing possible. Schultz, *et al.* (1994:52) believe that relationship marketing is the key to all future marketing efforts.

## 10. INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION (late 1990s - 2000s)

Integrated marketing communication is a comprehensive approach to internal and external organisational communication. It combines the power of all the marketing and marketing communication techniques to deliver consistent communications messages



to an organisation's different stakeholders. It begins by analysing the needs and priorities of stakeholders, and then tailoring marketing and communications programmes to address these needs and priorities. A definition of IMC is hard to come by, but if one analyses existing definitions, one will see that it is nothing less than the management of all organisational communications that builds positive relationships with all stakeholders (Keegan, Moriarty & Duncan, 1992:631; Belch & Belch, 1998:9-10). Everything organisations do, from the way the phone is answered to product packaging, billing and service responses, sends a message to the audiences. This is crucial to an organisation's success.

Integrated marketing communication is more than the expansion of the promotion element of the marketing mix. It is essentially the recognition of the importance of creating dialogue and long-term relationships *inter alia* by cultivating trust and communicating the same message to the stakeholders. In addition, it is the recognition that all the IMC techniques communicate and that there is an overlap in the communication that these variables provide.

Each of the IMC variables affects the overall marketing programme, so all of them must be managed to exploit their effectiveness. Successful marketing requires managing and co-ordinating marketing messages at every contact point the brand or company has with its target audiences. Burnett and Moriarty (1998:8) differentiate between planned and unplanned messages, where planned messages are delivered through the five formal marketing communication techniques, namely advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and personal selling. Other forms of communication that are also considered as delivering planned messages are point-of-purchase or merchandise materials, packaging, specialities (such as free gifts), sponsorships, licensing (the practice of selling the right to use a character or logo – e.g. Mickey Mouse on products) and customer service. Unplanned messages include all the other elements associated with the company or brand that are capable of delivering implicit messages to customers.

Traditional marketing communication, that is the type produced regularly by marketing and communication managers, is being challenged by the major changes brought about by the widespread acceptance of electronic communication – primarily the World Wide Web and the Internet. The development of these interactive systems that allow marketers and customers to communicate directly is changing the way in which marketing is done.

In integrated marketing (the context within which IMC is practised) the marketing process is taken a step further in relation to customer satisfaction. It helps an organisation to rethink the definition of marketing and to expand it by replacing the words “satisfy customer needs” with “exceed customer expectations”. It is far better to exceed the expectations of the consumer than simply to meet them.

Duncan and Moriarty (1997) summarise the differences between traditional marketing and integrated marketing (in other words the contexts within which marketing communication takes place) by showing the change in focus in key areas. These differences are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Focus of traditional marketing	Focus of integrated marketing
Transactions	Relationships
Customers	Stakeholders
Mix of MC tools	Strategic consistency of messages
Mass media	Interactivity
Monologue	Dialogue
Cause marketing	Mission marketing
Adjust prior year's plan	Zero-based campaign planning
Functional organisation	Cross-functional organisation
Specialisations	Core competencies
Mass marketing	Data-driven marketing
Stable of agencies	Communication management agency

Figure 1: The differences between traditional marketing and integrated marketing (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997:19)

Strydom (1998:18) wholeheartedly supports the findings of Duncan and Moriarty when he describes the differences between traditional marketing communication (TMC) and integrated marketing communication (IMC). He points out that in TMC the focus was on a single sale where product features were normally highlighted. This led to short-term relationships with little emphasis on customer service. Little customer contact took place and there was very little commitment by the customers. Above all, the general feeling of the employees was that quality was the concern of the production department only.

As opposed to the approaches followed when practising TMC, in IMC the focus shifted to customer retention. Product benefits are now stressed and high value is placed on long-term relationships with stakeholders. Strong emphasis is placed on customer service; regular customer contact is an imperative and high customer commitment is a major objective. Quality has now become everyone's concern.

Viewing the activities of marketing from an integrated marketing perspective, Lauterborn suggested that the four Ps should change to four Cs where the *product* becomes the customer/dient, *place* becomes *convenience*, *price* becomes *cost* and *promotion* becomes *communication* (Schultz, *et al.*, 1994:12). In 2001 Schultz claimed that the historic four Ps had changed to five R's. He contended that the 5Rs of 21<sup>st</sup> century marketing were *relationship*, *relevance*, *receptivity*, *recognition* and *response* (Schultz, 2001:12). These suggestions were designed to refocus, redirect and examine the true market engine, i.e. the customer (Reich, 1998:27).

According to Watras (1995:22), integration is all about strategy, not execution. It means taking an established brand's positioning and translating it, as appropriate, into the medium. It does not mean taking a creative concept and force-feeding the same imagery, language and tag lines across all communication materials. A strong thematic link should exist between different marketing communication media, but only if the message is meaningful to the target audience and the specific medium. The integrated marketing communication campaign should also solidify the company's image.

Sophisticated IMC planning focuses on the task to be done and is a disciplined way of searching for great ideas and determining which marketing communication functions to use and to what extent, and requires zero-based communications planning (Duncan, 1993:11). According to him, this means not starting with last year's plan (tradition driven), but rather with what needs to be done (task driven).

The benefits of integrated marketing are numerous. By using this approach, the *customer becomes the primary focus* of everyone in the organisation – the bottom line of integrated marketing. There is *no needless duplication of services*. The PR messages combine with advertising, marketing and internal communication. Therefore everything is congruent and clearer to the customers. There is almost no likelihood of “the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing”. Smith and Taylor (2002:15) add that it can create competitive advantage, and boost sales and profits, while saving time, money and stress. The organisation simultaneously consolidates its image, develops a dialogue and nurtures its relationship with its customers.

It fosters *intra-departmental co-operation* in the company. The workers will experience more harmonious working relationships with their peers and senior management. Studies even verify increased productivity, which impacts positively on the bottom line. The core processes of the organisation become much clearer and people start pulling together rather than in several directions at once. Marketing programmes become more effective because they are focused and more efficient. They are more powerful in *delivering the key message without waste and overlap*.

However, the integration of the communications function in advertising, public relations, promotions, direct marketing and personal selling is not complete if the integration only involves these fields. Integration implies (and a managerial approach to communications demands) that communications be regarded as a strong element in the total management process. This insight led to the recognition that the practice of integrated communication is not negotiable; it is of crucial importance.

## 11. INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION (IC)

Marketers realised that the integration process should extend beyond marketing, to blend the full spectrum of communications disciplines and help senior management best preserve a company's corporate reputation (Drobis, 1997/1998:1). Barker and Du Plessis (2002) define integrated communication as the application of analysis, communication and evaluation techniques to create and manage integrated, multi-faceted communication interventions combining information, collaboration, business process design, feedback and incentive systems to improve human performance and productivity in the workplace in order to achieve organisational communication goals and objectives. Integrated also means that everything is in line: a product's industrial design, the way the phone or email is answered, the quality of the paper of a direct mail piece, and even the events sponsored (Lepla & Parker, 1999:31). All the actions should deepen the relationship with the customer.

In companies where there is no effective co-ordination, the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing, and the lack of truly integrated communications can lead to a gradual or sudden deterioration of the company's credibility and reputation (Drobis, 1997/1998:2). This comes about when all stakeholders do not receive the same messages. Credibility is only achieved by telling all the stakeholders the same thing in a timely fashion. Consistency is critical. Inconsistent messages create confusion and contribute to misinformation and speculation. This damages corporate reputation, trust and, inevitably, relationships.

In marketing, integrated branding and integrated communication go hand in hand. Integrated branding is an organisational strategy used to drive the company and product direction – where all actions and messages are based on the value the company brings to its line of business. Integrated branding impacts on what has been the traditional area of brand focus – communication (Lepla & Parker, 1999:2). When the brand promise meets customers in an integrated way, through products, services, communications and culture, it produces a unique and valuable customer relationships (Lepla & Parker, *ibid.*).

The integrated communication process came to involve a full range of relationship management, both internally and externally (Duncan & Caywood, as quoted in Thomson

& Moore, 1996:32) and gave rise to the popularity of CRM (customer relationship management). At the core of CRM, as its name implies, is the customer. By using almost every tool and resource at their disposal, companies that practise CRM strive to build unbreakable relationships with their clientele. A large and important component of CRM is software and technology products used to build customer data collection and analysis infrastructures that help manage relationships with customers. Given the highly visible role of technology, CRM has become synonymous with database/data mining, collection and analysis systems. However, the foundation of CRM is not technology, but the underlying business strategies and objectives. Piercy (2002) argues that in IC technology is used to improve on what has always been done. CRM is forged by anticipating and learning customer needs, then serving them in the best possible way (Cross, 2001:51). As stated by Harbison (Anon., 1997:8): "This involves tracking and managing all customer moments, and getting the resulting information into a usable, productive format." Reich (1998:29) argues that it is these relationships that provide the glue for bonding loyalty and for sustaining long-term revenues.

Because in marketing, customer perception is reality, people involved in communication management must be sure to create the correct expectations for the customer and then try to exceed them. According to Cross (2001:53), CRM is being revived as an efficient, effective way to develop closer, more beneficial links to clients. However, this is not an easy task. For this to happen, every member of the organisation has to be involved in the IC processes and understand what is being communicated to the customer. With the inception of the integrated marketing phenomenon, managers began to recognise the importance of the role that employees play in the whole marketing process. An employee relationship management (ERM) strategy should be employed to enable a company to upgrade its capability for satisfying the needs of the external customers. Clemons and Hughes (2003:46) suggest that informed employees understand their business better. This helps them to do their jobs more effectively.

To summarise the shift in focus regarding marketing communication from 1960 to the present, the following chart (Figure 2) was compiled.

The development of marketing communication charted						
	Production Orientation	Selling Orientation	Marketing Orientation	Relationship Marketing	Integrated Marketing comm.	Integrated Communication
Approximate time period	1960s	1970s	mid 1970 – 1980	1980-1990	1990s – late 1990s	late 1990s – present
Prominent technique used	personal selling	Advertising sales promotions	promotion mix	direct marketing	Personal communications technology	interactive media
Focus of Communication Component	source	source	Channel	receiver	feedback	feedback
Communication Approach	monologue	monologue	Monologue	dialogue	dialogue	dialogue
Approach	mass production	mass selling	mass marketing	customisation	mass customisation	data-driven communication
Focus	product	product	target audience	customer	individual	individual
Person responsible	sales manager	advertising agency	advertising agency	specialising agencies	communication management agency	marcom manager

**Figure 2: Development of marketing communication charted**

## 12. TRENDS THAT NECESSITATED NEW WAYS OF COMMUNICATING

What is really changing IC and how IC is being practised increasingly is not originating from or being driven by communicators. Instead, the demand for change is originating from two separate, but distinct, major forces. One of these change drivers is external to the organisation – it is information technology in all its many and varied forms (as discussed earlier). The second is internal – it is senior management’s new requirements for accountability and stewardship on the part of communication practitioners (Schultz, 1998:2).

Some of the events driven by information technology (Schultz & Barnes, 1999:9-10) that are playing an important role in IC are:

- universal product codes (UPC) in combination with optical scanners;
- new forms of communication and message distribution that became available (cellphones, faxes, email and the World Wide Web); and
- the shift in power from marketer and channel to consumer (consumer can search worldwide for information easily and quickly).

Thomson and Moore (1996:15-16) highlighted the following trends and changes as primary factors driving organisations to adopt integrated communication, namely:

- decreasing message impact and credibility;
- decreasing cost of using databases;
- increasing client expertise;
- increasing mergers and acquisitions of marketing communication agencies;
- increasing “mass” media costs;
- increasing media fragmentation;
- increasing audience fragmentation;
- increasing number of “me-too” products;
- increasing power of the retailer;
- increasing global marketing; and
- increasing pressure on bottom line.

Whatever the driving or major forces are, the fact of the matter is that new ways of communicating within a marketing context have become essential and the name given to these new methods is IC.

### 13. CONCLUSION

So, what do carbon paper, slide rules, four-function calculators and marketing have in common? They were all developed, refined and achieved business prominence during the 1950s/60s. Marketing is however, the only one to have survived almost intact. Carbon paper has been replaced by photocopiers; slide rules by computers; and calculators by electronic spreadsheets. Unfortunately, however, in most organisations marketing is still practised in almost the same way as when it was developed and implemented some forty to fifty years ago. And therein lie many of the marketing and communication challenges faced today.

Communication integration, in which every aspect of the communications mix is brought together in a master strategy, is the future of effective organisations. Today's consumer simply cannot be sold through mass media alone. As a result, leading marketing and communication strategists are focusing on creating one-on-one, data-driven, customised customer relationships that utilise every possible advertising, promotional and relationship medium to enhance brand performance. If all the elements of the marketing communication mix work together, magic could be created.

Companies will no longer be differentiated by their products or their industry categories. They will be defined by how they connect their offers with current and future customer preferences. As Mader and Semenchuk (1999/2000:1) suggest, the shift is from production to connection!

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