



Holger Sievert, Daniela Bell (eds.)

Communication and Leadership in the 21st Century

The Difficult Path from Classical Public Relations
to Genuine Modern Communication Management

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Introduction

With the economization of society, corporate communications with relevant stakeholder groups is becoming increasingly important and complex. As society grows more sensitive to economic, social and ecological concerns, companies and organizations are under increasing pressure to legitimize themselves, and they are finding that their room to maneuver has been reduced, sometimes dramatically. Moreover, economic action always goes hand in hand with the opportunities and risks inherent in the tension between economic efficiency and social responsibility. Accordingly, companies and organizations are increasingly scrutinized by the public and play an important role in media-driven opinion formation. In this context, it is important to note that transparency and socially responsible action on the part of all members of society are crucial requirements of today's civil society.

As a result of these trends, leadership responsibilities in the sphere of communications are more complex than ever and involve dialogue with a wider variety of increasingly demanding partners. Overall conditions (political systems, regulatory mechanisms, etc.) have become more and more complicated, while there is heightened sensitivity at the interface between society and the business sector in the international context. Comparably to large nonprofit organizations, private companies are now in the public eye internationally and the consequences of this attention are sometimes quite dramatic.

Corporate leaders are responsible for conveying corporate goals, defining their own ethics regarding corporate communications and providing open and transparent information about corporate actions and economic issues. These tasks are central and critical to successful corporate leadership. Trust and responsibility are key values in the field of communications. In modern civil society, this responsibility

includes strategic dissemination of future-oriented information that sheds light on all relevant issues. Accordingly, general management personnel must be extremely competent in strategic communications in addition to having basic managerial skills. The more leadership responsibility an individual has, the more important his or her communication skills become.

The Bertelsmann Stiftung is guided in its project work by the conviction and vision of its founder, Dr. Reinhard Mohn, that the principles of entrepreneurial action are capable of producing a humane and viable society. Together with the Heinz Nixdorf Stiftung and the Daimler Fund, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is providing training for executives to help them live up to new entrepreneurial and organizational responsibilities. In addition to good business skills, next-generation executives must also be able to reflect on and communicate their actions clearly with a strategic view to the future.

This is where the joint initiative of the Bertelsmann Stiftung, the Heinz Nixdorf Stiftung and the Daimler Fund comes into place. In collaboration with the Technische Universität München, these foundations have developed the ¡communicate! Qualification Program, with the goals of establishing closer links between management and communications and to promote the transfer of know-how in research and in practice. In concrete terms, the objective is to enhance the business management and leadership skills of a company's communications staff, while at the same time helping general management personnel gain a better understanding of strategic communications efforts. With this dual approach, the ¡communicate! initiative seeks to make communications between the business sector and society more professional, more transparent and hence more effective. The ¡communicate! Program is designed to provide advanced training in management and communications to up-coming and top executives.

A core element of the ¡communicate! Qualification Program is the international *Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) in "Communication and Leadership"*, which was launched in May 2005. This program is intended for communications personnel and executives with an academic degree and, in most cases, five years of professional experience who are seeking to upgrade their professional qualifications. This customized EMBA program focuses so far specifically on communication and management and covered five content areas:

management foundations, integrated market and corporate communications, communication management and media, organizational communication and change and leadership communication and strategies. More than 80 national and international experts in theory and practice provided input into the program's content areas, all of which are covered in the present volume as well.

The *Executive Training Courses* combine theory and practice to focus on important topical issues. These two- to three-day workshops are tailored to the needs of general management personnel and communications specialists with professional experience. They differ from the three other modules with respect to their participant group and objectives, among other things.

The *Summer School* is a comprehensive advanced training program for top-level executives, particularly in the fields of corporate communications and marketing. It offers one-week intensive courses geared to a very exclusive participant group, providing an opportunity for international networking, individual coaching, the latest information on topical aspects of strategic communications, and an attractive program of social events.

Customized Training refers to personnel-development programs tailored to the goals of a specific company and to the requirements of the respective industry. Focusing on "communication and leadership", we work together with our experts in business and research to design individual executive training programs for our clients. The content, timing and methodology of these programs are designed to achieve the highest possible degree of long-term effectiveness for the company. More details about jcommunicate! can be found at the end of this book.

We are pleased that the initiators of this program have found in the Technische Universität München an outstanding partner who has actively supported this project from its inception. The Technical University obtained leadership of the program in cooperation with the foundations until 2007, after which it will continue on its own until 2012, guided by the foundations' overarching goals of promoting "communication and leadership". The qualification program owes much of its success to the members of the two jcommunicate! teams: the staff of the program's headquarters at the Technische Universität München and the project team at the Bertelsmann Stiftung. Over the past five years, they have developed the format and contents of indi-

vidual courses, organized the ¡communicate! Program and succeeded in making it an integral part of the continuing-education market. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to both teams, as well as to all of the experts in both the theoretical and the practical realms who have contributed, often without compensation, to pursuing the worthy goals of this program.

My thanks go particularly to the academic directors, professor Helmut Krcmar and professor Ralf Reichwald, and to managing director Claudia Paul-Helten, who have shown great commitment to the Executive Program at the Technische Universität München and worked untiringly on its behalf. I would also like to thank my colleagues at the Bertelsmann Stiftung, who have never lost sight of the overarching goal, which is to enhance the professionalism of corporate and organizational communications, both internally and externally, and in so doing to contribute to a well-functioning civil society. Particular mention should be made of the project's leadership team, Daniela Bell, Dr. Claudia Langen and especially Dr. Holger Sievert, who has guided ¡communicate! through every phase from the very beginning, and who continues to actively support the program's objectives.

Last, but certainly not least, my thanks go to Dr. Horst Nasko and Hartmut Schick, who in their respective positions at the Heinz Nixdorf Stiftung and the Daimler Fund joined forces with the Bertelsmann Stiftung to bring this qualification initiative into being.

Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Heribert Meffert
Former CEO of the Executive Board
of the Bertelsmann Stiftung

I Integrated Market and Corporate Communications

Planning Integrated Marketing Communications¹

Manfred Bruhn

1 The significance and necessity of integrated marketing communications

Companies face increasingly difficult, constantly changing competitive conditions. The ever-growing selection of services available, increasing homogenization of products and services and high level of consumer satiation all force companies into 'communications competition' (cf. in detail Bruhn 2006a: 1 ff.). The most obvious communications challenges and tasks are gaining the attention of target groups, differentiating from the competition and generating preferences for the company's services.

The conditions under which these communication tasks must be accomplished have intensified. First, there is the development of available communications offerings, for instance, the sharp rise in advertising investments and the increasing media offerings, which are now so diffuse as to be termed the atomization of media (cf. ZAW 2006). What is more, the increasing number of advertising and communications stimuli leads to specific changes in communications demand.

The multiplicity of communication stimuli results in an 'information overload' conditioned by time restrictions and consumers' limited capacity to absorb and process messages (cf. Kroeber-Riel and Esch 2004: 16 f.), reduced interest in communication and reaction against advertising. This is expressed in rejecting behaviors on the part of consumers, such as avoiding advertising through "zapping". Moreover, those requesting communications are often confronted with inconsistent, contradictory content, which can lead to frustration.

As a result of these structural changes and the developments in communications and media markets, communications efforts must be concentrated in order to facilitate quick and easy receipt of com-

munications that enhance the recipients' perception of the company or the communicative reference object. Companies must search for new forms of communications and ways to integrate various communication tools in order to be credible and to avoid contradictions in their image.

Due to constant changes and the adaptability required to keep up with change and new tasks, communication has become a 'strategic factor for a company's success' (cf. Bruhn 2007: 34). These challenges can be addressed by deploying 'integrated marketing communications' (IMC), a systematic approach for the planning and implementation of communications. The harmonization, standardization, continuity, integrity and detailed coordination of communications are aimed at more effective and efficient representation of the company in the public eye, with customers, with employees and with other target groups (cf. Bruhn 2006a: 4 f.).

2 Fundamentals of terminology and content in integrated marketing communications

2.1 Concept and features of integrated marketing communications

For years now, there has been a demand for integrated marketing communications, and the issue has been discussed in great depth in conceptual research (cf. for example Kroeber-Riel 1993; Schultz, Tanenbaum and Lauterborn 1995; Thorson and Moore 1996; Duncan and Moriarty 1997; Sirgy 1998; Esch 2006; Belch and Belch 2001; Fill 2001; Szyszka 2003; Cornelissen 2003; Schultz and Kitchen 2004; Bruhn 2006a), in empirical studies (cf. for example Duncan and Everett 1993; Rose 1996; Davidson and Ewing 1997; Schultz and Kitchen 1997; Bruhn and Boenigk 1999; Gould, Lerman and Grein 1999; Kitchen and Schulz 1999; Low 2000; Angerer and Essinger 2001; Kirchner 2001; Serviceplan 2001; Bruhn 2006b; Bruhn and Bobolik 2006) and in practice.

However, the term *integrated marketing communications* is still not precisely comprehended and has not been defined in the literature. There is no clear definition coming from research or practice. This lack of consensus has led to different understandings of the term and various opinions with regard to content, tasks and goals.

The following 'definition of integrated marketing communications' forms the basis of this essay (cf. Bruhn, 2006a: 17): "Integrated marketing communications is a process of analysis, planning, organization, implementation and monitoring that is oriented toward creating unity from diverse sources of internal and external communication with target groups to convey a consistent impression of the company or the company's reference object."

This understanding of the term combines a variety of features:

1. IMC represents a goal of communications. With the corresponding orientation of communication, it facilitates 'strategic positioning' of the company or its reference object and the utilization of communication as a competitive factor and an integrative component of marketing strategy.
2. IMC is a 'management process', i.e., there are analysis, planning, organization, implementation and monitoring of communication activities in a definite direction. To this end, specific procedures are deployed to permit integration.
3. The design of IMC is dependent on 'brand strategy'. Consequently, communications planning must follow a prioritized strategic marketing decision and the reference object of integrated communications must be determined (for example, individual brands, family brands, product groups, lines of business, etc.).
4. IMC encompasses all 'internal and external tools of communication'. Inclusion and analysis of specific functions, target groups, tasks of and relationships among the various tools are necessary in order to ensure meaningful integration.
5. IMC is oriented toward creating 'unity in communications'. Unity is understood to mean a common, overarching goal and framework of orientation for the integration of all communication tools.
6. IMC offers the possibility of 'increased efficiency of communication'. Efficacy of IMC is measured on the basis of synergistic effects that can be traced back to a common communicative image. This results in more effective and efficient deployment of the communications budget.
7. The result of IMC should be a 'uniform image' with regard to content, form and timing in order to positively influence the target groups' decision-making through succinct communication that is free of contradiction and therefore credible.

2.2 Tasks and goals of integrated marketing communication

Integrated marketing communications fulfill a number of functions that companies pursue in order to accomplish various goals (cf. the results of empirical studies such as Duncan and Everett 1993; Schultz and Kitchen 1997; Bruhn and Boenigk 1999; Kitchen and Schultz 1999; Angerer and Essinger 2001; Hölscher Market Research Consultant 2003; Stumpf 2005; Bruhn 2006b). Internal company goals that are implemented during the development phase of an IMC program are often very important. For instance, better coordination among various departments can limit duplication of effort, realize synergies and increase efficiency.

However, the most important goals are the external, 'psychological goals' that relate to the impact communications activities will have on target groups. Companies hope to increase the effectiveness of their communications by realizing communicative synergies and multiplication of impact through the combined action of individual tools of communication. Another important goal is the creation of a uniform company or brand image, which results in increased acceptance of the communication and increased trust in the company's services. A clear image differentiates a company from the competition and improves the educational impact on target groups with regard to the message communicated. What is more, companies also pursue 'economic goals' through the harmonization of communications tools, for example, exhausting cost-reduction potential or increasing sales figures. In practice, however, proving a direct connection between communication activities and economic numbers is often fraught with difficulties.

Based on the goals above, the tasks of integrated marketing communications are formulated (cf. also Ahlers 2006: 5 f.) as follows:

1. 'Integration tasks related to IMC planning' include embedding the IMC process within the planning and monitoring systems. This means performing situational analysis, formulating goals, determining target groups, analyzing tasks and functions of communications tools, developing a strategic concept, content planning and monitoring communication measures.
2. Companies also have 'organizational integration tasks' to fulfill. A structural organization must be created and supporting procedural organizational measures developed that promote the integration of communication tools.

3. Considerations regarding the improvement of the working and communications climates within the company involve 'personnel integration tasks'. The goal is to improve cooperation and coordination readiness of communications personnel.
4. 'Cultural integration tasks' are closely connected to personnel tasks. These tasks involve creating an integration-oriented company culture and culture of communication, both of which are carried out at the company or department level.
5. 'Informal integration tasks' involve the deployment of communications media and databases to ease the determinations involved in communications planning and to ensure the integration of communications activities.

In the end, all efforts are directed toward making company communications processes more integrated.

2.3 Forms of integrated marketing communications

Integration efforts of a company include comprehensive harmonization of all individual communications tools. The harmonization considers formal image, compatibility of messages and the sequence of their deployment. Consequently, there are various forms of integration, as is illustrated in diagram 2-1 (cf. Bruhn 2006a: 66 ff.).

Content integration

The thematic harmonization of all communications tools and media is a primary focus of IMC. Harmonization occurs through a variety of connecting lines, for example, through the use of uniform slogans, core messages and arguments, key images (on image communication, cf. Kroeber-Riel 1993), uniform acoustic signals and others. The goal of content integration is to convey uniform content related to an image.

Formal integration

Formal integration in this context refers to the standardization of different communications media. Design principles (e.g., uniform company or brand symbols and logos), as well as font styles, colors and sizes facilitate the combination of tools and media. By consistently complying with these design principles on both the horizontal (i.e.,

Diagram 2-1: Overview of IMC

Forms of integration		Object	Goals	Aids	Time line
Content integration	Directions of integration Levels of integration	Thematic harmonization using connecting lines	• Consistent • Autonomous • Congruent	Uniform • messages • arguments • images	Long term
Formal integration		Compliance with formal design principles	• Presence • Concision • Clarity	Uniform symbols/ logos • font style • size • color	Medium to long term
Integration overtime		Coordination within and between planning	• Consistency • Continuity	Timing	Short to medium

Source: Bruhn 2006a

across instruments) and vertical (i.e., across target groups) level, a company can ensure a uniform image for the communicative reference object. The goal is to create easy recognition, to enhance the educational impact among target groups, and to anchor the brand in the recipients' consciousness.

Integration over time

As part of integration over time, all communications activities, tools and media within and over various planning periods must be coordinated. Part of this involves the harmonization of different communications tools in order to ensure mutual support in their synchronized deployment. In addition, continuity over time within a single tool of communication must be guaranteed. Change of communication concepts must be avoided in order to generate repetition and maximize the educational impact of communicated content.

Integration of content is the most difficult to achieve in practice because the multiple variables involved in the communications tools deployed are not easy to control or direct. Integration over time requires close attention to time limits on communication measures because they often have differing lead times.

Direction of integration

These three forms of integration must be undertaken both horizontally and vertically. 'Horizontal integration' involves connecting communications measures on one market level. A company must find commonalities in the form of address to the target groups and coordinate messages across any communications tools and channels used. These measures ensure that the respective target group perceives a uniform image.

'Vertical integration' refers to the multiple levels of certain markets. The goal is to harmonize communications tools across market levels in order to convey consistent content and to support consistency of communicative address to multiple target groups (cf. also Esch and Redler 2004: 1478 ff.; Esch 2006: 69).

Levels of integration

To ensure efficient and effective deployment of all communication tools and media in the sense of IMC, the content, form and timing of integrated communications must occur on two levels.

At the 'inter-tool level', all communications policy activities must be coordinated with measures involving other tools of communication. Thus inter-tool integration is a component of the holistic, networked planning process required for IMC. An ideal starting point is the creation of a communications platform to serve as the central point for the coordination of various communications tools.

Integration at an 'intra-tool level' refers to the networking within the individual communications tools, i.e., to the harmonization of communications media and individual communication measures. All this ensures a uniform communicative image while simultaneously giving due consideration to individual measures and the communication needs of target groups.

3 Planning concept of integrated marketing communications

3.1 Levels of integrated marketing communications planning

Planning for IMC takes place at two corporate levels: the level of overall communications and the level of individual communication tools or communication departments. This means that it is necessary to

‘strategically plan’ communications policy at both levels simultaneously. Thus, the challenge of IMC is to merge and integrate these two strategic orientations.

In contrast, ‘tactical planning’ refers solely to individual communications departments, which determine specific implementation and individual communications activities.

3.2 Integrated marketing-communications planners

The various levels of communications planning imply that there must be planners at two hierarchical levels: the level of responsibility for overall communications and the level of individual communication tools. The ‘responsibility for overall communications’ must be at the leadership level, since only at this level of the hierarchy are there the expertise and implementational authority to commit all participants in communications to a common strategic policy. IMC strategy must be developed at this level, which in turn serves as the standard for individual communications tools or from which communications rules are derived.

‘Responsibility on the level of individual communications tools’ lies with the directors of the various communications departments. They must fulfill certain planning tasks, taking into account the framework developed at the leadership level.

3.3 The integrated marketing-communications planning process

Since communications planning takes place at various levels, there are two distinct planning processes. On the level of ‘overall communications’, there is ‘top-down planning’ in which corporate management or the brand manager plan IMC for the reference object or the entire corporation, including all subordinated communications departments. The goal is a uniform orientation of all communications measures in order to guarantee a harmonized image.

Individual communications departments deploy ‘bottom-up planning’ at the level of ‘individual communications tools’ (e.g., advertising and sponsoring). Within the framework of this management process, the isolated deployment of communications tools is deter-

mined within the plan. The planning of individual tools must be integrated into the various phases of the top-down planning process.

Many IMC planning steps are similar on the level of overall communications and communications tools, but there are some significant differences. The starting point for communications planning is the 'analysis of the communications situation' and all relevant dimensions of influence, both on the level of overall communications and on the level of communications tools.

Goals and target groups must also be determined for both levels. This is based on the corporation's communications situation or the reference object of the communication.

The next step in terms of overall communications is the selection and categorization of 'communications tools' to be deployed within the scope of a communications campaign. It must be determined whether communications instruments are to assume a key role in reaching target groups or whether they will play a more supportive role. At the level of communications departments, the 'communications strategy' for the respective communications tools is determined, i.e., the medium to long-term direction of communications activities.

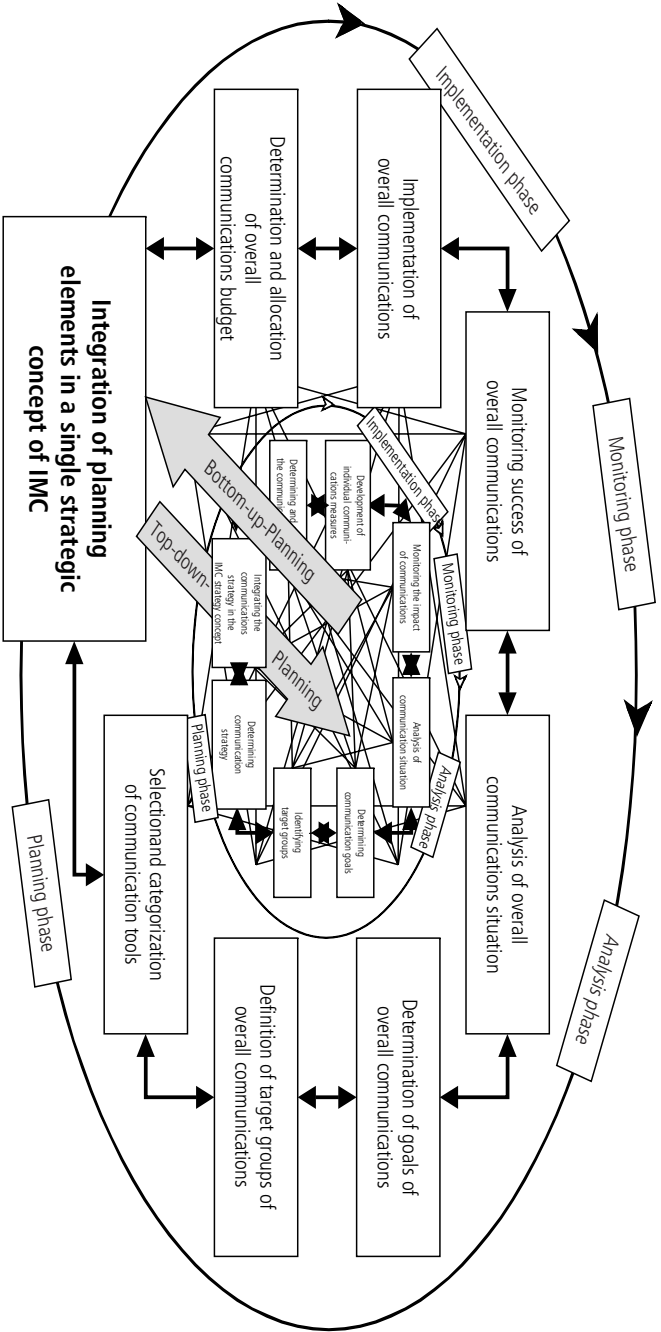
Classification of individual tools within the 'strategic concept of overall communications' or IMC is especially relevant. The development of the strategic concept is the most important and also the most difficult element in IMC planning. That concept comprises the determination and coordination of consistent, long-term, credible and synergistically oriented communications programs for the deployment of communications tools.

Next, on the level of overall communications, the 'communications budget' is determined and allocated to the individual communications tools. During this phase of planning, specific communications measures and media should be proposed in the scope of the individual communications departments or tools.

Finally, communications departments must develop specific 'communications measures' based on those budgeting and budget-allocation decisions. These individual communicative measures and activities must fit together within overall corporate communications and complement one another to form an image that can gain internal and external target groups for corporate communications.

'Monitoring the success' of communications completes the planning process. This includes first monitoring the success of individual

Diagram 3-1: Integration of management processes within the meaning of down-up planning



Source: Bruhn 2006

communications tools and assessing the impact created by a specific communications tool, measure or activity. In addition, at the level of overall communications, monitoring must be carried out in relation to IMC and the deployment of various tools harmonized.

In order to create a basis for integrating various planning phases, one must ensure that the planning procedures do not run independently of each other. Instead, bottom-up must be combined with top-down planning so that integration efforts “from above” flow together with integration efforts “from below” and individual plans can be integrated (see diagram 3-1).

‘Down-up planning’ (or ‘iterative countercurrent procedures’) is the term for this synthesis of both planning procedures (cf. Staehle 1999: 543), which includes harmonizing the individual planning phases and merging them into one common planning process. This is not a single observation but rather a planning process repeated several times, taking into consideration the relationships between the individual phases.

4 Planning the design of integrated marketing communications

4.1 Elements of an integrated marketing-communications concept paper

As already explained, the development and formulation of an IMC strategy form the central component of the planning process. The strategy must be finalized and organized in such a way that it can be applied in daily practical communications work. Documentation of the strategy is presented in the form of a ‘concept paper’ so that there is a tangible framework for operative work. The concept paper has something of the character of rules and directives, and its specific standards give it a certain binding quality for all participants in communications. Ideally, the concept paper includes the core elements illustrated in the diagram 4-1.

Strategy paper

The results of strategic IMC planning should be represented in the form of “strategic principles of communication” within the scope of the strategy paper. The subject matter of this building block includes

Diagram 4-1: Elements of an IMC concept paper

I. STRATEGY PAPER
1. Integrated Marketing Communications Strategy Formulation of strategic positioning, key communicative idea and key tools for overall communications
II. COMMUNICATIONS RULES
2. Positioning paper Formulation of strategic positioning, the interim and individual communication goals
3. Communication platform Formulation of key communicative idea, core and individual statements for the communication (system of statements and argumentation)
4. Rules for deployment of tools Determination of key tools and design principles for communication, additional communication tools and media
III. ORGANIZATIONAL RULES
5. Rules of cooperation Formulation of structural and procedural organizational processes for cooperation between central and non-central communications department

Source: Bruhn 2006a

strategic positioning, the key communicative idea and the determination of the key tool of communication.

Communication rules

Communication rules are developed on the basis of the strategy paper. They are more comprehensive and specific. They contain precise statements on the positioning and communication goals (positioning paper), formulations regarding the messages of the communication (communications platform), and standards for the deployment of various communication tools and media (rules on deployment of tools).

Organizational rules

The subject matter of organizational rules includes regulations (a) regarding the organization and situating of communications and (b) the determination of duties and responsibilities.

4.2 The strategy of integrated marketing communications

The strategy of IMC is the central component of the concept paper. The strategy attempts to create “unity in communications”. This unity is an intellectual construct that conveys the entirety of communicative measures and their common orientation, and all communications activities are to be integrated into it. At the same time, through its integrative, orientating and coordinating functions, this unity encompasses a number of tasks. It serves to ensure the integration of individual communication measures in a common intellectual framework and to specify the content and form of corporate communications. In addition, it permits the derivation of communications strategies for individual communications tools and serves as the foundation for determining and allocating the communications budget.

The strategy of IMC is determined by the following three core elements:

Strategic positioning of the corporation

Strategic positioning represents the target image of the corporation or the reference object of communication. This should be anchored in the perception and consciousness of the recipients, so strategic positioning is the overriding goal of communication. Here a formulation should be sought that sets forth the contents at a high aggregate level, as independent as possible from any particular target group.

Definition of the key communicative idea

Strategic positioning must be reflected in the contents of the communications message and thus must be translated into a key communicative idea. This key idea is aimed at making the contents of the positioning easily understood, quickly learned, and effectively conveyed to target groups.

Specifying key tools

Strategic orientation of overall communications requires a clear assignment of the functions and tasks of individual communications tools. This, in turn, requires analysis of the significance of communications tools for overall communications and identification of those that assume a leading function in communications. The key tools thus identified are central to achieving the desired strategic positioning.

From these core elements of the IMC strategy, the next step is to derive the communications rules that specify the contents of the strategy and promote implementation of communication by setting forth directives or rules.

4.3 Integrated marketing-communications rules

The task of communication rules is to concretize the connections between strategic positioning, the key communicative idea, and the key tools for the individual target groups and the individual communications tools or measures. By deriving rules, they represent directions for the communications departments with regard to communications implementations. They contain precise statements on communications positioning, the formulation of central messages and standards for the deployment of communications tools.

Positioning paper

Strategic positioning and both interim and individual goals are formulated in the positioning paper. Strategic positioning refers to the overriding and central goal of IMC. It represents the position of the entire corporation or the reference object in the market in comparison to the competition (target position). So, strategic positioning must formulate validity for the individual target groups independently of each other.

Since all communications activities are oriented toward supporting the realization of strategic positioning, the overriding goal must be concretized in the form of so-called interim and individual goals. A system of communications goals for various levels must be created with the aid of the principle of 'hierarchizing goals'.

Interim goals are derived from the established overriding goal as a first step. These interim goals often have a tactical character and medium-term validity, and they are differentiated by target group. Interim goals must be harmonized across the various tools in order to ensure a common orientation within the various target groups.

The interim goals are further concretized in a second step, and firmly outlined individual goals of communication are formulated. They should display a high degree of specificity, since they refer to the particular deployment of various communications tools and measures. The individual communications contacts with the target groups