

MODULE 10 OF 11 · FOUNDATIONS OF MARKETING

Marketing Communications & Integrated Campaigns

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Explain integrated marketing communications (IMC) and describe the loyalty ladder.

KEY VOCABULARY

Integrated marketing communications

The loyalty ladder

Prospect

Customer

Client

Supporter

Advocate

WHY THIS MATTERS

A single great advert means little if it contradicts everything else a customer sees elsewhere. This module ties the promotions mix (module 7) together into one coordinated voice, and shows how one-off buyers become long-term advocates.

WARM-UP QUESTION

“Think of an ad campaign you've seen recently across more than one platform — did it feel consistent?”

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Which stage of the loyalty ladder do you think is hardest for a business to move a customer past, and why?

DISCUSSION QUESTION

What's an example of a brand's messaging feeling inconsistent across different channels?

Core Concepts

IMC coordinates every channel around one message

Advertising, social media, PR, email and in-store messaging should all reinforce the same core idea rather than sending mixed signals.

Example: A phone brand's TV advert, website and in-store posters all using the same tagline and imagery is IMC in action.

The loyalty ladder has five stages

Prospect, customer, client, supporter, advocate — each rung represents a deeper relationship and more value to the business.

Example: A one-time customer becomes a client through repeat purchases, then a supporter who recommends the brand casually, then an advocate who actively promotes it.

Moving customers up the ladder is a communications goal

Different messages suit different rungs — a first-time discount to attract prospects looks very different from a loyalty reward aimed at existing clients.

Example: A coffee shop's loyalty stamp card is specifically designed to move a customer into a client, not to attract a first-time prospect.

COMMON MISTAKE TO AVOID

Running a single campaign with a different message on every channel — IMC exists precisely to stop that from happening.

Running the Lesson

TEACHING OUTLINE

1. Introduce IMC — coordinating every channel around one consistent message.
2. Walk through the loyalty ladder's five stages.
3. Discuss which communications tools suit which ladder stage.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Groups plan which communications tool they'd use to move a customer up one rung of the loyalty ladder.

MINI CASE STUDY

A gym ran a single "New Year, New You" message across its website, social ads and in-branch posters at the same time (IMC), then followed up new joiners with a separate loyalty-focused email sequence designed specifically to turn first-month customers into long-term clients.

RECAP

- IMC coordinates every communications channel around one consistent message.
- The loyalty ladder runs from prospect through customer, client, supporter to advocate.
- Communications should be designed for the specific rung a customer is currently on.

HOMEWORK / EXTENSION

Plan which communications tool you'd use to move a customer up one rung of the loyalty ladder, and explain why.

Full lesson & free auto-marked quiz: marketingteacher.com/courses/foundations-of-marketing/lessons/the-loyalty-ladder-planning-a-campaign-from-prospect-to-advocate/