

Score's PARTNERS IN SUCCESS Newsletter

Dedicated to helping businesses thrive and prosper

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Welcome to SCORE's monthly Partners In Success Newsletter

Dear Reader:

SCORE's *Partners In Success* is a monthly newsletter dedicated to business owners in any industry and market sector. Its purpose is to provide insight to business owners/managers looking for a practical, innovative and a bottom line approach on how to better manage their finances, access SBA loans, leverage social media marketing, better manage human resources and access a variety of digital resources. Each issue of the newsletter will address a different topic. In this issue we'll discuss **The value of having an integrated marketing strategy; why integrated marketing is effective and how to build a campaign that improves brand loyalty and boosts revenue**. As always, your feedback and input are welcome and encouraged.



A Guide to Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

Integrated marketing communications (IMC) is the process of unifying a brand's messaging to make it consistent across all media that the brand uses to reach its target audience. It's a strategic approach that guides communication and tactics used across all marketing channels.



The **American Marketing Association** defines IMC as *"a planning process designed to assure that all brand contacts received by a customer or prospect for a product, service, or organization are relevant to that person and consistent over time."*

Focusing on multiple marketing channels at once is a necessity for many companies. This **omnichannel** marketing requires a strategic approach to make it all work together toward achieving marketing objectives. This is when IMC comes into play. There are four main reasons why IMC is important:

- ◆ Need for consistency throughout the whole customer journey
- ◆ IMC helps with brand-building
- ◆ Properly using right mix of marketing channels helps boost campaign effectiveness
- ◆ IMC contributes to marketing channels reinforcing each other

Omnichannel marketing is the integration and cooperation of the various channels organizations use to interact with consumers, with the goal of creating a consistent brand experience. This includes physical (e.g. stores) and digital channels (e.g. websites). The goal of an omnichannel marketing strategy is to create a convenient, seamless user experience for consumers.

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Why are integrated marketing campaigns effective?

While integrated marketing campaigns can differ in their goals (e.g., converting views, building brand awareness, etc.), they should all have one component in common: to align your marketing channels to present a united marketing “front”.

It’s also more effective to run integrated marketing campaigns than campaigns on individual channels. Integrated marketing campaigns are impactful for a few reasons:

- ◆ They reach a wider audience than a single marketing channel.
- ◆ They have a greater chance of being seen on multiple channels, thus keeping your brand top-of-mind and pushing visitors closer to conversion.
- ◆ They build trust with visitors as they see a consistent message on multiple channels.
- ◆ They save you money since your content is being shared repurposed for different marketing channels. Depending on your campaign, customers can help you market your product or service for you.

How to Build an Integrated Marketing Campaign

Establish your campaign goal

Before you consider what channels will be part of your integrated marketing campaign, you must consider the goal of the entire campaign:

- ◆ Launch a new product or service
- ◆ Promotional initiative
- ◆ Re-branding

Whatever your campaign goal may be, always remember to make it [SMART](#):

specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.... This will help you stay focused, track your campaign success, and learn how to improve the next time.

These goals should also relate to at least one of the following key performance indicators (KPIs) and their subsequent metrics, which you can track when you launch your campaign.

KPI	KPI related metrics
Traffic / Reach	Unique page views by channel and source
Engagement	Bounce rate; average time on page
Impact	Click-throughs; conversions; backlinks
Sentiment	Comments; social shares
Lead Generation	Total leads; total sessions; session to lead conversion rate
Sales	Lead to marketing qualified lead (MQL); MQL to sales qualified lead (SQL); customer purchase/closed-won business

Choose your marketing channels and set goals for each one

Now that you know your overarching integrated marketing campaign goal, you probably have a better idea of what channels can help you reach that goal.

Choosing your channels depends entirely on what you’re trying to achieve through your integrated marketing campaign. There are 10 major marketing “channels” that you can use to [distribute your campaign content](#).

All Content Marketing Should Be SEO Content

What is SEO-Driven Content Marketing?

SEO-driven content (otherwise known as SEO content marketing or content marketing SEO) is a type of content with the primary purpose of ranking for search queries.

Essentially, you can look at a blog post as a “product,” and SEO is an acquisition strategy for that product that leverages search engines as a distribution channel. Viral content or social media content marketing may leverage social platforms such as X/Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, or Pinterest to “acquire users” to read your content.

Content written without intent tends to be ineffective.

It’s like saying “[build it, and they’ll come](#),” which is untrue in most cases.

In SEO content marketing, you typically align topics with a keyword and optimize the written word to rank for that keyword. If I wanted to rank for “content marketing SEO,” I may drop that keyword several times in the article itself, add it in the title tag directly, and make my URL slug something like **/content-marketing-seo/**.

This is so people can find the content via search engines and that their query is answered when they search “content marketing SEO” or any of its variants.

Search engines represent a predictable distribution channel, an amazing pool of audience insights, and an expected value.

All content doesn’t need to be written with the explicit intent of driving SEO traffic, but if you bring that lens into your content marketing program and try to apply it wherever possible, you’ll unlock obvious and additional growth opportunities.

- [Advertising](#) (print and [PPC](#))
- [Email marketing](#)
- [Personal selling](#)
- [Social media](#)
- [Events](#) and sponsorships
- [Direct marketing](#)
- [PR](#)
- [Sales promotions](#)
- [Social mediaDigital marketing](#) (website, content marketing, SEO)
- [Packaging](#)

Your integrated marketing campaign should include a variety of marketing channels to reach the widest audience and drive home your campaign message. If you see one or more channels plateau, don't hesitate to add, remove, or test new ones.

Define your buyer personas by channel.

Every marketing channel targets its specific [buyer persona](#). For this reason, instead of defining a broad persona for your campaign, you must define your audience by channel.

There will be some overlap, but it's wise to understand exactly who you're talking to on each medium and how to tailor specific messages and content to that audience.

Note: With some campaigns, you may be targeting a specific audience. In this case, define your buyer persona first and then decide which channels can help you reach that audience.

Create marketing assets (audio, video, visuals, text) and messaging

Now that you have your campaign goal, target audience, and marketing channels. It's time to create your integrated marketing campaign content. This is where [copywriting](#), [graphic design](#), and other creative processes come into play.

Let's talk about an essential component of integrated marketing content: **adaptability**. To keep your campaign consistent (and ease your workload), you should be able to repurpose any content to use on different channels.

For example, let's say your integrated marketing campaign focuses on the launch of a new 3-minute brand video. You could repurpose this video into:

- 30-second and one-minute "trailer" videos
- Still images
- Quotes
- GIFs
- Hashtags
- Blog posts
- Soundbites

As you develop and repurpose these creative assets, keep them aligned with your brand guidelines *and* consistent with each other. Create your brand guidelines for your integrated marketing campaign to share with your team, and consider the following:

- ◆ Visual guidelines (logo, color palette, typography, etc.)
- ◆ Any developed and repurposed assets in multiple file formats
- ◆ Voice and tone guidelines (taglines, preferred language, words to avoid, etc.)
- ◆ Messaging guidelines (pain points, goals, types of content, resources, etc.)
- ◆ Buyer persona information and guidelines

Integrated marketing is all about a consistent brand experience. Be sure your campaign reflect that, regardless of what channel your audience visits or sees.

Launch, measure, and iterate your campaign

Ready to launch your integrated marketing campaign? It might be time to put your campaign to work — but it's not time to rest.

Remember those KPIs and metrics? Whichever KPIs relate to your campaign goal (e.g., boosting brand awareness, rebranding, new product, etc.), start tracking those subsequent metrics each week, month, and quarter (depending on how long your campaign is running) to see how successful it is at reaching your goal.

As always, apply what you learn from each integrated marketing campaign to future campaigns. With the right strategies, managers, and tools, you can create a never-ending cycle of integrated marketing campaigns — and wins.

Consider the channel transition

Integrated campaigns receive traffic from several sources. Consider how a visitor may view/experience each marketing channel:

- 1) If it was their first visit and,
- 2) If they transitioned from another channel.

Think about how each channel can help others convert.

For example, say a customer saw/heard your new ad on Facebook on their way to work and, once they arrived, visited your website. Imagine if, on your website, the customer couldn't easily find whatever your Facebook ad was marketing. How confusing would that be? That customer would likely drop off immediately.

Don't neglect the small overlaps

When preparing to launch your integrated marketing campaign, it's tempting to think about each channel and its respective media assets. However, this thought process inherently goes against the ethos of integrated marketing. Integrated marketing exists to eradicate the silos of traditional marketing and bring together a cohesive campaign experience.

For this reason, don't neglect the places in which your campaign overlaps. Here are a few examples:

- ◆ Your [email signature](#), where you can plug your social media handles, website URL, or video links
- ◆ Your social media bios and posts, where you can include links to your website, blog posts, content offers, or other digital content
- ◆ Your blog and website, where you can [incorporate social sharing buttons](#)
- ◆ Your standalone landing pages, where you can [optimize for relevant keywords and SEO](#)
- ◆ Your PPC copy, where you can test subject lines to see what your audience responds to

While these overlaps might not directly support your campaign goals, they help your audience transition seamlessly between channels, enjoy that consistent, cohesive brand experience,

Why integration?

Many companies still rely on one or two communication tools. Marketers need to assemble various media properties and services in a integrated communication program.

Integrated Marketing Communications can produce stronger message consistency, help build brand and create greater sales impact.



An integrated marketing campaign (IMC)

is a cross-channel strategy to deliver a cohesive message, maximize brand visibility, and drive desired business outcomes.

Identifying the right channels for the right audience. Different channels in an IMC might include social media, PPC, email, and blog.

Developing a uniform, cohesive message across all touchpoints; maintain consistency in colors, layout, wording, and tone throughout. This consistency helps enhance brand recall and resonance with your audience.

Determining logistics in planning, execution, and promotion; details like target audience, scope, budget, goals, and timing. It's a good idea to centralize these details to keep everyone aligned.

How to create an integrated marketing campaign

Set high-level goals: Start by defining specific and measurable goals, like increasing sales by 20% or improving brand awareness with engagement metric benchmarks.

Determine your target audience: Understand your target audience's demographics, behaviors, and interests. Then, tailor your messaging and channels.

Create a channel strategy: Determine which ones align with your target audience and goals; plan for how you'll differentiate your campaign across different channels, considering their strengths and limitations.

Develop content that scales across channels: Craft high-quality, engaging content that's adaptable and that can be repurposed across multiple channels for brand consistency and efficiency. This includes creating compelling ads, blog posts, videos, infographics, podcasts, or any other content format that fits your goals and channels best.