

**STRATEGIC INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION
IMPLEMENTATION: TOWARDS A SOUTH AFRICAN
CONCEPTUAL MODEL**

by

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Declaration

I declare that the Doctoral script, which I hereby submit for the degree PhD Communication Management at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at another university.

Ilse Niemann

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Abstract

Change on various levels in globalised markets necessitates organisations to adopt a stakeholder-based approach to communication management and marketing management. In order to meet the needs of these stakeholders, organisations need to create and nourish long-term relationships between the organisation, its brands and its stakeholders. Strategic integrated communication is fundamental in relationship building between these components to ensure that the organisation is viewed as cohesive. However, after almost 15 years of existence, the concept of integrated communication is still seen as a difficult concept to implement in organisations. Literature proposes various implementation models (predominantly developed in Europe and America) for the implementation of integrated communication. While these models could in theory be applied on an international scale, the South African context calls for specific communication approaches, as the country is in a unique situation in a post-apartheid era. It is therefore contended that there is a need for a strategic integrated communication implementation model for the South African business landscape, based on the specific needs related to this distinct environment.

Therefore, the primary research objective of this study was to develop a conceptual model for strategic integrated communication implementation in the South African marketplace. The research was conducted through three phases, based on the Mitroff *et al.* (1974) model of systematic problem solving. Phase 1 consisted of the literature review to determine the theoretical status of the concept of integrated communication. Phase 2 explored the state of integrated communication implementation among advertising and communication agencies in South Africa empirically, through in-depth interviews. These interviews were conducted with the strategic planning directors (or an equivalent) of the top ten advertising and communication agencies in South Africa, to establish the extent to which integrated communication is practised by these representatives of the field. Phase 3 consisted of the development of the conceptual implementation

model of strategic integrated communication in the South African marketplace, based on the findings from the first two phases.

The proposed conceptual model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication in the South African marketplace is based on the fundamental principle that the *strategic intent* of the organisation drives all communication and that *learning organisational principles*, amid profound global and national changes, incessantly reposition the organisation based on the consequent changes in the marketplace. In order to promote unity of effort in relationship building, the organisation needs to be integrated on three levels, namely the organisational, stakeholder and environmental levels, which form the centre of the conceptual model. At the core of the organisational integration area is the renaissance communicator, which could be the key to strategic integrated communication implementation. The renaissance communicator contributes to the organisational success through the alignment of communication objectives with the strategic intent of the organisation and the subsequent changing business landscape, thereby ensuring unity of effort in all organisational efforts through strategic consistency.

Opsomming

Verandering op verskeie vlakke in die globale mark noodsaak organisasies om 'n belanghebbende-gebaseerde benadering tot kommunikasiebestuur en bemarkingsbestuur aan te neem. Organisasies behoort langtermyn verhoudings tussen die organisasie, sy handelsnaam en sy belanghebbendes te ontwikkel en te bou, om sodoende die behoeftes van hierdie belanghebbendes aan te spreek. Strategiese geïntegreerde kommunikasie is fundamenteel tot die bou van verhouding tussen hierdie komponente om te verseker dat die organisasie as samehangend beskou word. Nietemin, na 'n bestaan van amper 15 jaar, word die konsep van geïntegreerde kommunikasie steeds as 'n moeilike konsep beskou in sover dit die implementering daarvan in organisasies betref. Literatuur stel verskeie implementeringsmodelle (meestal in Europa en Amerika ontwikkel) vir die implementering van die konsep in organisasies voor. Hoewel hierdie modelle in teorie op 'n internasionale skaal toegepas behoort te kan word, vereis die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks spesifieke kommunikasie benaderings, aangesien die land homself in 'n unieke situasie in 'n post-apartheid era bevind. Dit word dus geargumenteer dat daar 'n behoefte bestaan vir 'n strategiese geïntegreerde kommunikasie implementeringsmodel vir die Suid-Afrikaanse sake-omgewing, gegrond op die spesifieke behoeftes wat verband hou met die bepaalde omgewing.

Gevolgtik, was die primêre navorsingsdoelwit van die studie om 'n konseptuele model vir strategiese geïntegreerde kommunikasie implementering in die Suid-Afrikaanse mark te ontwikkel. Die navorsing is uitgevoer deur drie fases, gebaseer op die Mitroff *et al.* (1974) model van sistematiese probleemoplossing. Fase 1 het bestaan uit die literatuuroorsig, om die teoretiese status van die konsep van geïntegreerde kommunikasie te bepaal. Fase 2 het die toestand van geïntegreerde kommunikasie implementering onder adverterings- en kommunikasie-agentskappe empiries bepaal, deur in-diepte onderhoude. Hierdie onderhoude is met die strategiese beplanningsdirekteurs (of 'n

ekwivalent) van die top tien adverterings- en kommunikasie-agentskappe in Suid-Afrika gevoer, om die mate vas te stel waartoe geïntegreerde kommunikasie beoefen word by hierdie verteenwoordigers van die vakgebied. Fase 3 het bestaan uit die ontwikkeling van die konseptuele implementeringsmodel van strategiese geïntegreerde kommunikasie in die Suid-Afrikaanse mark, gebaseer op die bevindings van die eerste twee fases.

Die voorgestelde konseptuele model vir die implementering van strategiese geïntegreerde kommunikasie in die Suid-Afrikaanse mark, is gebaseer op die fundamentele beginsel, dat die *strategiese doel* van die organisasie alle kommunikasie dryf en dat *lerende organisatoriese beginsels*, te midde van diepgaande globale en nasionale veranderinge, voortdurend die organisasie herposisioneer volgens die gevolglike veranderinge in die mark. Ten einde eenheid van verhoudingsbou-pogings te promoveer, behoort die organisasie op drie vlakke geïntegreerd te wees, naamlik die organisatoriese-, belanghebbende- en omgewingsvlakke, wat die middelpunt van die konseptuele model vorm. In die kern van die organisatoriese integrasie area is die renaissance kommunikator, wat moontlik die sleutel tot strategiese geïntegreerde kommunikasie implementering kan wees. Die renaissance kommunikator dra by tot die organisatoriese sukses deur die belyning van kommunikasie doelwitte met die strategiese doel van die organisasie en die daaropvolgende veranderende besigheidslandskap, om sodoende ooreenstemming van pogings in alle organisatoriese pogings deur strategiese konsekwenheid te verseker.

Table of contents

CHAPTER 1

Orientation and motivation

1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1.1	Integration in business management	2
1.1.2	Integration in marketing management	3
1.1.3	Integration in communication management	3
1.2	PROBLEM STATEMENT	5
1.2.1	Globalisation directs a stakeholder-based approach	6
1.2.2	A stakeholder focus	8
1.2.3	Complexity in integrated communication implementation	8
1.2.4	The need for a South African integrated communication implementation model	9
1.3	PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	10
1.3.1	Primary research objective	10
1.3.2	Secondary research objectives	10
1.4	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	11
1.4.1	The Mitroff model for problem solving in systems thinking	12
1.4.2	An application of this model for systematic problem solving	16
1.5	CONCEPTUALISATION AND META-THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	19
1.5.1	Grand theory	21
1.5.1.1	<u>Systems thinking</u>	21
1.5.1.2	<u>General systems theory</u>	21
1.5.2	Theoretical domains	23
1.6	DEFINITION OF TERMS	24
1.6.1	Strategic management	26

1.6.2	Integrated marketing communication vs. integrated communication	27
1.7	DELIMITATION OF STUDY	30
1.8	DEMARICATION OF CHAPTERS	31

CHAPTER 2

Business management, marketing management and communication management in a changed marketplace

2.1	INTRODUCTION	34
2.2	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT IN A CHANGED MARKET	38
2.2.1	The management of change in business management	39
2.2.2	A greater emphasis on strategic management in a changed market	40
2.2.2.1	<u>Strategic thinking and strategy formulation</u>	41
2.2.2.2	<u>Strategic and operational planning</u>	42
2.2.2.3	<u>Levels of strategic management</u>	43
2.2.3	Strategic management in a changed market necessitates a learning organisation	45
2.3	MARKETING MANAGEMENT IN A CHANGED MARKET	46
2.3.1	Marketing management's emphasis on a customer approach	47
2.3.2	A value-chain perspective of building customer relationships	49
2.4	COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT IN A CHANGED MARKET	49
2.4.1	Communication management's emphasis on a stakeholder approach	51
2.4.2	A value-field relationship-building perspective of communication management	53
2.4.3	A stakeholder approach to strategic communication management	54

2.4.3.1	<u>Communication management and the levels of strategic management</u>	57
2.4.3.2	<u>Communication strategy in strategic management</u>	59
2.5	THEORETICAL COMPONENTS OF INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION	61
2.5.1	Two-way symmetrical communication	61
2.5.2	Managing stakeholder relationships	61
2.5.3	Brand relationships and brand equity	63
2.5.4	“One voice, one look” vs. “sophisticated” integrated communication	64
2.5.5	Cross-functional processes and planning	65
2.6	CHANGED ORGANISATIONS IN A POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA	66
2.6.1	The shift towards globalisation	68
2.6.2	The re-engineering of organisations	69
2.6.3	The outsourcing of functions	71
2.6.4	Organisational restructuring	71
2.6.5	Downsizing	72
2.6.6	The empowerment of employees	73
2.6.7	Democracy in the workplace	74
2.7	CONCLUSION	75

CHAPTER 3

The evolution and definition of integrated communication

3.1	INTRODUCTION	77
3.2	THE ESSENCE OF INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION: TEN STRATEGIC DRIVERS	80
3.2.1	Drivers relating to corporate focus	81

3.2.2 Drivers relating to corporate processes	82
3.2.3 Drivers relating to corporate infrastructure	84
3.3 THE HISTORY OF INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION	86
3.4 CHANGE FACTORS STEERING INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION	89
3.4.1 The growth and diffusion of information technology	90
3.4.2 The shift in management’s view of communication accountability	91
3.5 DEFINING INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION BASED ON ITS EVOLUTION	92
3.5.1 First evolutionary era in defining integrated communication	92
3.5.2 Second evolutionary era in defining integrated communication	93
3.5.3 Third evolutionary era in defining integrated communication	95
3.5.4 Fourth evolutionary era in defining integrated communication	97
3.5.4.1 <u>Contributions by the Gronstedt (2000) definition</u>	97
3.5.4.2 <u>Contributions by the Duncan (2001) definition</u>	98
3.6 THREE MARKETPLACES IN WHICH INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION HAS BEEN PRACTISED	99
3.6.1 The historical marketplace – the product century	100
3.6.2 The twentieth century marketplace – the customer century	102
3.6.3 The twenty-first century marketplace – the stakeholder century	103
3.7 INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION AS A CONCORD OF ALL ENDEAVOURS	105
3.8 CONCLUSION	106

CHAPTER 4

Integrated communication implementation models

4.1 INTRODUCTION	108
4.2 AN EVOLUTIONARY INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION MODEL	111

4.2.1	Awareness integration stage	112
4.2.2	Image integration stage	112
4.2.3	Functional integration stage	113
4.2.4	Coordinated integration stage	113
4.2.5	Consumer-based integration stage	113
4.2.6	Stakeholder-based integration stage	114
4.2.7	Relationship management integration stage	114
4.2.8	Comments and critique on the evolutionary integrated communication model	115
4.3	A STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS MODEL FOR INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION	116
4.3.1	Stakeholders	118
4.3.2	Receiving tools	119
4.3.3	Interactive tools	119
4.3.4	Sending tools	119
4.3.5	Comments and critique on the stakeholder relations model	120
4.4	HUNTER'S MODEL FOR INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION	121
4.4.1	Stage 1: coordination and cooperation between public relations and marketing	123
4.4.2	Stage 2: top management's view of public relations and marketing	123
4.4.3	Stage 3: the communications department	123
4.4.4	Stage 4: communication as part of the dominant coalition	124
4.4.5	Stage 5: communication as part of the relationship management approach	125
4.4.6	Comments and critique on Hunter's model for integrated communication	126
4.5	INTEGRATION THROUGH THE PUBLIC RELATIONS FUNCTION	126

4.5.1	Comments and critique on integration through the public relations function	129
4.6	THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION MODEL	130
4.6.1	The 1 st dimension: external integration	133
4.6.2	The 2nd dimension: vertical integration	133
4.6.3	The 3 rd dimension: horizontal integration	134
4.6.4	Comments and critique on the three-dimensional approach to integrated communication	135
4.7	AN EIGHT-STEP INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION MODEL	135
4.7.1	Step 1: global database	136
4.7.2	Step 2: customer value	138
4.7.3	Step 3: contact point/preferences	138
4.7.4	Step 4: brand relationships	140
4.7.5	Step 5: message development and delivery	141
4.7.6	Step 6: estimate of return on customer investment (ROCI)	142
4.7.7	Step 7: investment and allocation	143
4.7.8	Step 8: marketplace measurement	144
4.7.9	Comments and critique on the eight-step integrated communication model	144
4.8	CONCLUSION	145

CHAPTER 5

Issues in the implementation of integrated communication

5.1	INTRODUCTION	148
5.2	WHEN SHOULD INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION BE IMPLEMENTED?	151

5.2.1	Complexity of target audience	151
5.2.2	Complexity of product or service	152
5.2.3	Complexity of distribution	152
5.3	WHAT SHOULD BE INTEGRATED?	153
5.3.1	Employees	153
5.3.2	Customers and other stakeholders	154
5.3.3	Corporate learning	155
5.3.4	Brand positioning	155
5.3.5	“The big creative idea”	156
5.3.6	Corporate mission	156
5.4	MINIMAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION	157
5.4.1	Structural requirements	158
5.4.2	Customer-orientation requirements	159
5.4.3	Brand requirements	160
5.4.4	Management requirements	161
5.4.5	Cultural requirements	162
5.4.6	Uniqueness requirements	163
5.5	PROBLEMS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION	164
5.6	BARRIERS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION	166
5.6.1	Structural barriers	166
5.6.1.1	<u>Organisational structure barriers</u>	167
5.6.1.2	<u>Organisational character barriers</u>	170
5.6.1.3	<u>Technological barriers</u>	172
5.6.2	Manager’s perceptions of integrated communication	173
5.6.2.1	<u>Resistance to change</u>	174
5.6.2.2	<u>Politics and power</u>	175
5.6.3	Compensational barriers	176
5.6.4	Marketing trends as barriers	176

5.6.5 Organisations think they are already integrated	177
5.6.6 Short-term planning	178
5.6.7 Lack of a core capability in communication	178
5.7 CONCLUSION	179

CHAPTER 6

Methodology: empirical research

6.1 INTRODUCTION	181
6.2 A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM FOR THE STUDY	183
6.3 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	185
6.3.1 Primary research objective	185
6.3.2 Secondary research objectives	186
6.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY	186
6.5 PROPOSITION RESEARCH	188
6.5.1 Research propositions	188
6.5.2 Theoretical statements	189
6.6 RESEARCH METHOD	190
6.6.1 In-depth interviews	191
6.6.2 Face-to-face approach to in-depth interviews	192
6.7 SAMPLING DESIGN	194
6.7.1 Population	194
6.7.2 Sampling technique	195
6.8 PILOT STUDY	195
6.8.1 Execution of the pilot study	196
6.8.2 Consequences of the pilot study	197
6.9 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD ACCORDING TO THE MORSE AND FIELD APPROACH	198
6.9.1 Comprehending in the Morse and Field approach	198
6.9.2 Synthesising in the Morse and Field approach	199

6.9.3	Theorising in the Morse and Field approach	200
6.9.4	Re-contextualising in the Morse and Field approach	200
6.10	CONCLUSION	201

CHAPTER 7

The implementation of integrated communication in South Africa

7.1	INTRODUCTION	202
7.2	RESEARCH METHOD FOLLOWED	204
7.3	AIMS OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	205
7.4	INTERVIEW QUESTION IN RELATION TO PROPOSITIONS AND INTERPRETATION CATEGORIES	207
7.5	REPORTING METHOD OF THE RESULTS	209
7.6	REPORTING AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS	210
7.6.1	Category 1: The understanding of the concept of integrated communication	210
7.6.1.1	<u>Sub-category (a): The South African context</u>	210
7.6.1.2	<u>Sub-category (b): Integrated communication</u>	214
7.6.2	Category 2: Implementation of integrated communication	217
7.6.2.1	<u>Sub-category (c): Holistic orientation</u>	219
7.6.2.2	<u>Sub-category (d): Internal communication</u>	220
7.6.2.3	<u>Sub-category (e): Dialogue</u>	223
7.6.2.4	<u>Sub-category (f): Stakeholders</u>	226
7.6.3	Category 3: Barriers to the implementation of integrated communication	228
7.7	ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF PROPOSITIONS FORMULATED FOR THIS STUDY	234
7.7.1	The concept of integrated communication	235

7.7.2	A strategic perspective of integrated communication	235
7.7.3	The link between communication and organisational objectives	235
7.7.4	Structural alignment to ensure cross-functional planning	235
7.7.5	Mediums used to ensure interactivity	236
7.7.6	Mission marketing in integrated communication implementation	236
7.7.7	Strategic consistency measures	236
7.7.8	Evaluation means in determining integratedness	237
7.8	CONCLUSION	237

CHAPTER 8

A conceptual model of integrated communication in South Africa

8.1	INTRODUCTION	239
8.2	REVISITING THE PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL	239
8.3	RESEARCH DESIGN FOR MODEL BUILDING	242
8.4	PRIMARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVE REVISTED	243
8.5	CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE PROPOSED MODEL	243
8.5.1	A systems approach to the implementation of integrated communication in South Africa	245
8.5.2	Summary of the proposed conceptual model	245
8.5.3	Explanation of the graphical representation of model	246
8.6	PRINCIPLES OF THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL	247
8.6.1	The strategic intent of the organisation drives strategic integrated communication	247
8.6.2	Learning organisational principles continuously reposition the organisation	247
8.7	THREE DISTINCT AREAS OF INTEGRATION	248

8.7.1 Organisational integration area	248
8.7.1.1 <u>CEO/top management integration</u>	249
8.7.1.2 <u>Renaissance communicator</u>	250
8.7.2 Stakeholder integration area	255
8.7.2.1 <u>Interactivity integration</u>	256
8.7.2.2 <u>Brand contact point integration</u>	258
8.7.3 Environmental integration area	260
8.8 INCORPORATING THE ESSENCE OF INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION IN THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL	261
8.9 ADDRESSING CRITIQUE ON OTHER EXISITING MODELS	262
8.10 ADDRESSING BARRIERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION	264
8.11 CONCLUSION	265

CHAPTER 9

Conclusions and recommendations

9.1 INTRODUCTION	267
9.2 CONCLUSION OF FINDINGS RELATED TO RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	267
9.2.1 Strategic integrated communication in integrated communication implementation	269
9.2.2 Existing universal concerns in integrated communication implementation	269
9.2.3 A global theoretical approach to integrated communication implementation	270
9.2.4 The current state of integrated communication implementation in South Africa	271
9.2.5 A conceptual model for integrated communication	

implementation in South Africa	272
9.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS	272
9.4 RELIABILITY OF THE STUDY	274
9.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	276
9.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	276
List of references	278

List of tables

1.1	Relation of the phases to the objectives and chapters	12
1.2	Demarcation and content of chapters	31
3.1	Evolution era in relation to marketplace	100
6.1	Advantages of qualitative research methods	184
6.2	Disadvantages of qualitative research methods	185
6.3	Research propositions for phase 2	189
6.4	Advantages of in-depth interviews	191
6.5	Disadvantages of in-depth interviews	192
6.6	Advantages of face-to-face interviews	193
6.7	Disadvantages of face-to-face interviews	193
7.1	Interview timeframe	204
7.2	Interview questions, aims and related theory chapters	205
7.3	Interview questions, research propositions and interpretation categories	208
7.4	Codes for agencies	209
7.5	The general state of the industry	211
7.6	Financial state of the industry	212
7.7	The South African market and integration	213
7.8	Integrated communication	214
7.9	The implementation of integrated communication	217
7.10	A holistic orientation in the implementation of integrated communication	219
7.11	Internal communication in the implementation of integrated communication	221
7.12	Dialogue in the implementation of integrated communication	223
7.13	Stakeholders in the implementation of integrated communication	226
7.14	Barriers in integrated communication implementation	228
7.15	Research propositions revisited	234

8.1	Strengths of a model-building study	242
8.2	Limitation of a model-building study	243
8.3	The essence of integrated communication in relation to the conceptual model	261
8.4	Addressing criticism against other existing models	262
8.5	Barriers in implementation addressed	264

List of figures

1.1	A system view of problem solving	14
1.2	An application of the model for systematic problem-solving of the study	18
1.3	Conceptualisation and meta-theoretical framework	20
1.4	Key concepts and constructs underlying the study	25
2.1	Chapter 2 in relation to meta-theoretical framework	37
2.2	The relation of the fields of management in a changed market	54
2.3	Integrated communication in relation to the fields of management in a changed market	60
3.1	Chapter 3 in relation to meta-theoretical framework	79
3.2	Ten strategic drivers of integrated communication	81
3.3	The relation of the fields of management with ten strategic drivers of integrated communication	86
3.4	Strategic integrated communication in relation to fields of management in a changed marketplace	106
4.1	Chapter 4 in relation to meta-theoretical framework	110
4.2	The evolutionary model of integrated communication	111
4.3	Stakeholder relations model	117
4.4	Hunter's five-stage model for integrated communication	122
4.5	The three-dimensional approach to integrated communication	132
4.6	An eight-step integrated communication model	136
5.1	Chapter 5 in relation to meta-theoretical framework	150
6.1	Application of systematic problem-solving model: phase 2	182
7.1	Revisiting the application of systematic problem-solving model: phase 2	203
8.1	The application of systematic problem-solving model: phase 3	241
8.2	A conceptual South African model for the implementation of strategic integrated communication	244

**9.1 The application of systematic problem solving model in relation
to Chapter 9**

268

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Interview questions

303