

Integrated Marketing Communications

It's a term you've likely heard at planning meetings, especially during branding initiatives when a new logo, tagline or color is debated. But, what does it mean?

The [American Marketing Association](#) defines integrated marketing as a business "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."

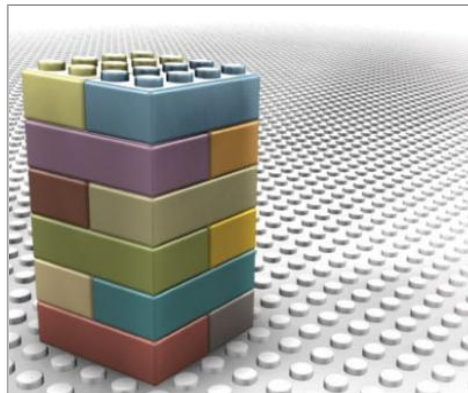
Now, more than ever, the integration of all offline (traditional) and online (new media) communications is critical to achieving your business objective.

Customers (whether consumers or businesses) are more "brand savvy" than ever. They expect consistency and discipline of brand presentation as a threshold of your professionalism.

Relevant and consistent brand outreach – that's what integrated marketing communications is truly about. So how do you start?

- **Understand which communications channels are meaningful to your audience.** Do they listen to peers more than media? Are they online researchers, avid Sunday newspaper readers or both? Do they prefer experiences like conferences or special events?
- **Connect complementary communications channels.** If your key audiences seek information from online sources, new campaigns might be best

shared through a micro site or Facebook. E-mail updates with links to those pages can be sent to your mailing list. Bloggers and Tweeters who follow your company can direct their followers back to your online information. Press releases, advertising and other marketing materials can also provide links to the sites. Each channel supports and builds upon the other.



- **Have a consistent and cohesive message and brand image.** Integrated communications must be completely seamless and speak from one voice. It's important that all people touching the brand are on the same page regarding the messages they share about the company and its product or services, the tone in which the message is delivered (if your company were a person, would it wear a pin-striped suit or flip flops?) and how the message is presented through presentations, collateral materials, graphics, packaging and other design elements.

Ensuring consistency and cohesiveness are good reasons why your internal

communications department or communications firm should be involved in any communications program. Too many times, especially with the rise of social media, companies allow a tech-savvy employee to create a Facebook page or blog without an understanding of the larger communications strategy.

The result can be online communications that aren't in-line with the company's carefully developed messaging and appearance.

If you begin thinking about integrated communications as you think about integrated production processes, or integrated sales and services processes, or integrated accounts receivables and payables processes, its significance become obvious.

Finding an edge in a competitive market place can be the difference between winning and losing. Relevant and consistent brand outreach may provide just the edge you're looking for.

At Vehr Communications, we can help you integrate your strategic marketing communications. Please don't hesitate to contact us. Check out our [Web site](#) to learn more about us.

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