

Integrated Marketing...the Holistic Approach

By Hugo R. Trux, IV

Many years ago, I had a hospital client. They wanted an ad campaign but after I finished my market research, I discovered that their greatest weakness was the fact that their doctors did not like to communicate with patients or referring doctors. Therefore, I developed a strategy for correcting that problem, but to no avail; they wanted to advertise. I learned many lessons there, one of which was that I was a marketing consultant, and not necessarily an advertising man. Conceptually what grew out of that experience was a need to emphasize integrated marketing, a marketing approach that includes not only the traditional four "P's" of marketing (product, price, place, promotion), but more.

Aware that "advertising promises" but "operations produces," there needed to be a way to integrate the marketing process into the total business strategy. This can be accomplished several ways:

- *Add a fifth "P" to the marketing paradigm.* This "P" stands for "people." Adding people to the equation means that the job descriptions include marketing input. It means that ALL employees understand the marketing program and function as part of the marketing team.

Do your employees see and understand your advertising and marketing campaign before it is unveiled? Do they understand what is expected of them in the marketing scheme of things—do they know how to answer questions, where to refer people? Do they have ownership of the product or service? Do they understand who the boss really is (*i.e.* the customer)?

- *Do not make marketing or production decisions in a vacuum.* Marketing leadership needs to be represented at the table when production decisions are made, and vice versa, production leadership needs to be present when marketing decisions are made.

When you decide to change your hours, your places of doing business, your production schedule, your quality standards, are marketing concerns raised? When marketing makes claims about your efficiency, quality, service, prices, etc., are they based on research and based on standards set and met?

- *Unify marketing decision-making.* I worked with a client that had separate sales activities for different departments, a separate PR function, and a separate development department. These staff members would call on the same clients, unaware of each other. Brochures and ads had no standardized look, feel, theme or message. Because of the politics involved and the need to avoid additional overhead, it was not possible to develop a position of VP Marketing; instead, we developed a marketing roundtable, with revolving chairs. This forum started integration of marketing without stepping on any toes. It was not until a strong and empowered CEO was appointed that marketing activities finally got totally integrated.
- *Stand for something—add a sixth "P" to the marketing paradigm.* This "P" stands for "positioning." Positioning describes where you fit in the market place (leader, follower, overtaker, nicher, etc.) and how you fit into the minds of the customer. Much has been written on this topic, most notably *Positioning* by Ries & Trout, so it need not be discussed further here. Nonetheless, it is a vital concept for drawing a ribbon around the integrated marketing approach.

A holistic approach, a popular concept in healthcare, refers to the need to treat the whole person, not just one organ. Similarly, the holistic approach to marketing refers to the need to integrate marketing efforts; all aspects of the company or organization need to work seamlessly together.

Hugo Trux is a principal at Trux Marketing/Management Solution, LLC a consultancy and outsourced management firm founded in 1980. Reach him at 614.736-8789 <http://www.trux.us/tmms.htm>

© Trux Marketing/Management Solutions, LLC, 2006. All rights reserved.