

Article

# The strategic role of integrated marketing communication in building brand value

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**Abstract:** The research, guided by an essential question about the optimization of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in the face of current challenges in communication and marketing, focused on studying the active role of this strategy in promoting brand value. The main objectives were to analyze the active role of IMC in consumer perception of brand value and to examine its contribution to strengthening brands. To achieve these objectives, we used bibliographical research with a qualitative approach based on a critical analysis of the literature already published in articles, journals, and books. The results of the research showed the crucial importance of coherence and consistency in the brand message as determining factors for the success of CIM. The continuous adaptation of CIM to changing consumer preferences and market dynamics has become a key strategy for companies. CIM has also proven to be a powerful tool for creating authentic narratives and delivering consistent experiences. Finally, the research concluded that the strategic management of CIM, anchored in an in-depth understanding of brand identity, is crucial to establishing lasting emotional connections with consumers, thus boosting brand value.

**Keywords:** integrated marketing communication; active role; promotion; brand value; marketing strategy

## 1. Introduction

The constant evolution of contemporary business has demanded an increasingly comprehensive strategic approach to brand management and valuation. Companies adopt strategies aligned with the aim of ensuring that their brand is the preferred one at the time of the purchase decision, with the aim of cultivating customer loyalty, reflected in new purchases [1].

During the purchase decision-making process, it is recognized that the buyer conducts research to obtain information from various sources and communication channels [2]. This effort goes beyond simply identifying the options available on the market and includes forming a set of considered choices. In this sense, within this set, the consumer selects the alternative perceived as most advantageous, which culminates in the outcome of the purchasing decision process [3]. This process therefore involves a careful evaluation of the options available before making a final decision. This reflexive approach advocated by the authors [2,3]. reveals the complexity and detail involved in the consumer's choice of brand during the purchasing process, underlining the need for companies to invest not only in brand visibility, but also in creating perceived value that is in tune with the consumer's preferences and values.

In this context of evolution and transformation, it is clear that, with the technological revolution, marketing communication has changed the conventional sequence of the purchasing decision-making process. Instead of starting by identifying needs, consumers get to know new products and services through the various communication tools used by marketing even before they identify their needs [3]. In this scenario, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) stands out as a crucial strategic tool. It is essential for enhancing the value of brands in a business environment characterized by constant technological evolution and increased competition [4,5].

Thus, in the context of current marketing communication practices, we are faced with a wide and diverse variety of contact points and communication options. These tools help marketers to create striking, enjoyable and persuasive experiences with consumers [4,6]. However, understanding the role played by CIM in boosting the value of brands is becoming an essential strategic issue for companies [7]. “The proactive role of CIM goes beyond traditional marketing boundaries. It not only focuses on visibility and financial stability but also aims to build lasting, meaningful relationships with consumers [8]”.

It is crucial to understand that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is not merely a collection of isolated tactics. Instead, it represents a synergistic approach. This approach integrates all the ways in which brands interact with consumers. The goal is to create a cohesive and persuasive narrative [9]. In this context, this article aims to explore the complex interactions between brands and consumers. It will analyze how IMC influences consumer perception and strengthens brand value.

The core of the study lies in the need to understand how CIM can be optimized by companies to face contemporary communication and marketing challenges, such as consumer expectations of brands and the challenges faced by companies in communicating brand value. In order to gain a better understanding of the subject, we used a literature review, which made it possible to gather information and data already published in books and scientific articles, contributing to the construction of the study.

Throughout the research, several key topics were explored. These include exploring the fundamental concepts of IMC and brand value, analyzing the dynamic role of integrated marketing communication in boosting brand value, understanding IMC as a builder of brand narrative and authenticity, and finally, analyzing the strategic construction of perceived value in IMC, with a focus on coherence and consistency in the brand message. This approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the role played by integrated marketing communication in promoting brand value.

## **2. Methodology**

The methodology applied in this research was based on a qualitative literature review approach. This method makes it possible to explore the breadth and depth of existing literature on a specific topic, emphasizing interpretative understanding over quantitative analysis [10,11]. Within this framework, the purpose of this approach was to explore and critically analyse the existing literature relating to the “Active role of integrated marketing communication in boosting brand value”, emphasizing the essential interdependence between these two key elements. To facilitate the conduct

of the literature search, relevant keywords were identified, such as: “Integrated marketing communication”, “active role”, “promotion”, “brand value”, “marketing strategy”.

Data was therefore collected by surveying and analyzing the existing literature, which included a review of scientific articles and books related to topics such as integrated marketing communication and brand value. The selection of bibliographic sources was based on certain criteria to guarantee the quality and relevance of the information obtained. Only publications extracted from academic databases and only peer-reviewed articles, such as Web of Science, Scielo and Google, were included. After the initial search, the studies found were selected and screened. The titles and abstracts were assessed to check their relevance to the research objective, and studies that were not directly related to the topic were excluded at this stage.

Data analysis was carried out using a critical approach, with the aim of identifying existing trends and strategies on CIM and the value of brands. The selected studies were then read in full and critically analyzed. Relevant information on the active role of integrated marketing communication in promoting brand value was highlighted, identifying theories and approaches used by the authors of the studies reviewed.

The information obtained was organized and summarized in a matrix, highlighting the main characteristics, arguments, conclusions and references of the studies analyzed. During this stage, patterns, trends and divergences were identified between the studies reviewed. Data analysis was carried out by interpreting, synthesizing and discussing the information obtained from the selected bibliographic sources. The analysis approach was qualitative, involving the identification of relevant themes, trends and perceptions related to the study. Based on the analysis of the results, the literature review was drawn up following the structure of a scientific article. During this process, it was ensured that the evidence found in the literature was clear, coherent and well-founded.

Given that the research was based on bibliographic data that had already been published, there was no need for direct involvement with human participants. However, research ethics were maintained through appropriate citation of sources and respect for copyright. A potential limitation identified in this study was the reliance on the availability of “free” existing literature ensuring its quality. In addition, there was the challenge of ensuring that bibliographic sources were up-to-date, given the constant dynamics of the marketing and communications environment.

### **3. Literature review**

#### **3.1. Integrated marketing communication**

The strategic approach of CIM aims to harmonize all forms and channels of a company's communication, ensuring that a consistent and coherent message is conveyed to the target audience. By encompassing various channels, such as advertising, public relations, digital marketing and direct communication, CIM integrates these activities to create a complete and unified communication experience [4,9,12]. However, synergy between the different communication channels is crucial. Rather than approaching each channel in isolation, CIM seeks to align messages,

images and actions at all points of contact with the consumer. This strategy aims to create synergy between the different channels, ensuring consistent and integrated communication that strengthens brand perception [8].

One of the main objectives of CIM is to ensure consistency and cohesion in all interactions with the public. This includes maintaining a consistent visual identity, using a uniform brand language and ensuring that key messages are conveyed in an aligned manner across all platforms [9,13]. This stance not only strengthens the brand's presence, but also contributes to building a memorable identity.

According to [12], CIM also considers the customer experience, seeking to provide a cohesive and positive journey at all touchpoints. Furthermore, it recognizes the importance of adjusting its strategies to changes in the market, consumer trends and technological innovations [9]. In this way, the effectiveness of CIM is evidenced not only in the promotion of products or services, but also in building and strengthening the brand as a whole [4,5]. By establishing integrated and consistent communication, CIM contributes to the formation of a positive perception of the brand in the minds of consumers, strengthening loyalty and perceived value [2]. It can therefore be concluded that by unifying messages, channels and experiences, CIM plays an active role in building and boosting the value of brands.

### **3.2. Brand value**

The importance of brand value is undeniable in today's business scenario, playing a fundamental role in competitive differentiation, establishing links with consumers and optimizing the financial performance of organizations [9]. This concept goes beyond the simple financial evaluation of tangible assets, entering the intangible sphere. In it, consumer perception, loyalty and preference converge to shape the valuation of a brand [7,8]. Thus, the importance lies not only in the tangible numbers, but in the subjective influence that the brand exerts on consumer perception and behavior, playing a crucial role in their overall evaluation.

In essence, brand value not only transcends mere financial quantification, but involves the creation of a distinctive and unforgettable identity that connects with the target audience [5,7]. In fact, a valuable brand is one that is not just limited to the accumulation of substantial financial capital but is one that seeks to establish lasting emotional connections, inspires trust and stands out in a saturated market.

However, the construction of brand value is influenced by a series of interrelated elements. According to [14], the perceived quality of products or services, consistency in the delivery of the brand message, the customer experience and the capacity for innovation are all factors that intertwine to form the overall impression that consumers have of the brand. A crucial element in creating strong brands is the company's ability to formulate effective and consistent marketing communication strategies [9]. These strategies ensure that the market perceives and is aware of the brand, thus enabling the growth and preservation of brand value over time and consequently customer loyalty [2,9].

In addition, reputation, corporate ethics and social responsibility also play key roles in the valuation of a brand [15]. However, consumer loyalty is a crucial indicator

in assessing the value of a brand. This loyalty, in turn, is fueled by trust, consistency and the brand's ability to evolve in line with changing consumer expectations [16].

In the contemporary digital environment, brand value is intrinsically linked to online presence and interaction on social networks [17]. Visibility, engagement and an efficient response to the dynamics of the digital environment play a crucial role in building and maintaining a brand's reputation [18]. It is therefore imperative to recognize that brand value is not static; it is a dynamic asset that evolves over time, influenced by changes in the market, cultural trends and marketing strategies [5,17].

It can therefore be concluded that in a constantly changing market environment, brand equity reflects the essence, promise and reputation of a brand, driving consumer preference and loyalty [14]. Therefore, understanding and effectively managing brand equity are essential elements for the success and sustainability of organizations.

## **4. The dynamic role of integrated marketing communication in enhancing the value of brands**

### **4.1. CIM as a builder of brand narrative and authenticity**

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is essentially conceived as an active and strategic mechanism for safeguarding brand identity, playing a vital role in sustaining and enhancing this distinctive dimension [19]. This is configured as a guiding body that ensures cohesion, uniformity and authenticity in communications, encompassing not only the visual aspects, but also the values, personality and fundamental promise of the brand [7,13,14,16]. In addition, CIM ensures consistency in the messages conveyed, guaranteeing that the narrative and verbal communications are aligned with the brand's values and promise [2].

This strategic alignment reinforces the coherence perceived by the consumer, promoting a unified experience and therefore helping to strengthen the brand's value [6]. Preserving brand authenticity is another critical aspect of CIM's role as a builder of the brand's narrative and authenticity. In this way, by adapting to market dynamics and cultural developments, CIM ensures that the brand remains authentic, preserving the distinctive features that make it unique [5,18].

This strategic approach, highlighted by [5,18], underlines the importance of maintaining brand integrity over time, even in the face of changes in the business and cultural environment. This ability to evolve without compromising authenticity is essential for the longevity and continued relevance of the brand [19]. However, this function not only sustains the brand's reputation, but also the conception of a narrative that transcends the mere transmission of information, establishing a deeper connection with consumers that is essential for boosting the brand's value over time [18].

The narrative consistency promoted by CIM is maintained across all communication channels, from traditional advertising media to modern digital platforms and social media interactions. This uniformity in the narrative aims to reinforce the brand's message, preventing discrepancies that could compromise the authenticity perceived by consumers [14,18].

Thus, the meticulous synchronization of the narrative with the brand's values emerges as a crucial aspect of this active construction, in which each element is

strategically aligned with the brand's core values. This process not only guarantees audience attraction, but also conveys the authenticity intrinsic to the brand's identity [6,17, 20]. However, the CIM, as the builder of the narrative, is not limited to the initial creation, but also takes responsibility for adapting the narrative over time. This is because the brand, by monitoring trends, cultural values and changes in the market, seeks to adjust the narrative to ensure that it remains relevant and aligned with the evolving expectations of the target audience [17]. In the same vein, the authors [21] argue that authenticity based on sincerity and transparency is the basis of the credibility that CIM seeks to establish, which not only builds consumer trust, but also nurtures a deeper connection, thus helping to sustain and increase the perceived value of the brand.

In summary, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) takes a central position in building the narrative and authenticity of the brand, going beyond the simple commercial transaction. Its strategic approach to building and constantly adapting the narrative plays a crucial role in creating a lasting, authentic brand identity that is capable of evolving in line with market dynamics and changing consumer expectations.

#### **4.2. The Role of Digital Marketing in Creating Brand Value through CIM**

In recent years, digital marketing has evolved significantly with the rise of social media, transforming IMC by bringing together what were once disparate channels into a more cohesive, omnichannel experience. As a result, brands began to adjust their strategies to connect with an audience increasingly accustomed to the digital environment. This new approach enabled companies to discover innovative ways of interacting with customers, promoting the creation of lasting value in their relationships.

According to [22] digital marketing has played a key role in IMC by offering a variety of tools that help brands communicate clearly and consistently across platforms. With the help of digital channels such as social media, emails and websites, brands can quickly adapt to the needs of their audience, conveying messages that are not only coherent, but also reinforce brand loyalty and identity [23,24] Additionally, by utilizing data analytics, personalized messaging, and interactive tools, brands are able to create more meaningful and authentic connections with consumers [25].

Personalization is, without a doubt, one of the best things that digital marketing has brought to Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC). Thanks to this approach, brands are able to establish deeper connections with consumers, adapting their messages and offers to each consumer's preferences and behaviors [26,27]. By analyzing data about customer behavior, companies can better understand what really interests their target audience. This not only makes marketing campaigns more effective but also increases customer satisfaction. When a brand offers a personalized experience, people feel valued and recognized [23,27,28]. This recognition can, in turn, strengthen the loyalty and trust that consumers have in the brand.

Additionally, personalization helps create a more vibrant dialogue between the brand and the consumer. Instead of sending generic messages that may not impact

everyone, brands are able to offer content and promotions that really matter. This encourages more active and engaging interaction. As a result, this strategy not only improves the return on marketing investment (ROI), but also builds a stronger and lasting relationship between the brand and its customers [18,22,27].

Corroborating the authors [17,19,23,24] digital marketing also allows real-time feedback and interaction, which helps brands perfect their messages on the go. Therefore, digital marketing not only serves as a way to reach customers, but also acts as a listening tool that increases the effectiveness of IMC. [9,12] add that by observing customer responses and preferences, brands can make quick adjustments to stay aligned with their audience's expectations, which increases trust and loyalty.

Another important aspect of digital marketing at CIM is the creation of communities. Social media and brand forums give consumers a place to directly engage with brands and each other, creating a sense of community and belonging [22,27,28]. These platforms often encourage customers to share their experiences, further expanding the brand's reach and delivering more value through consumer advocacy.

In short, digital marketing has made CIM more flexible, personal and responsive. These digital tools have transformed IMC into a data-driven approach that meets consumer expectations for authenticity, consistency and real-time interaction. However, when digital marketing is applied well in CIM, it reinforces brand value, building a presence that resonates with customers, promotes loyalty and fuels growth. This change reflects an evolution towards consumer-centric omnichannel communication, in perfect harmony with the current digital era.

### **4.3. Strategic construction of perceived value in CIM: Coherence and consistency in the brand message**

The strategic construction of perceived value in CIM represents a complex and fundamental process in brand management, in which coherence and consistency in the message play central roles [4,7]. Therefore, by uniting various communication channels, CIM seeks to establish a unified and aligned experience, with the aim of positively impacting consumers' perception of the brand [18]. This consistency is manifested in the uniformity and clarity of the expression of the brand's values, personality and purpose at all points of contact with the consumer. But it can only be achieved by carefully defining the brand's identity and creating clear guidelines to guide communication across all channels, whether in advertisements, social media or promotional campaigns, the central message must be cohesive, conveying a narrative that strengthens the brand's identity [6, 29].

In this context, the brand message must be flexible, but always maintain a guiding line that preserves the essence of the brand. However, this implies using a strategic approach that considers trends, consumer feedback and innovations, ensuring that the brand remains relevant, but without compromising its fundamental identity [7]. Following on from this, visual coherence plays a crucial role in building perceived value and is underpinned by maintaining uniform graphic elements and visual identity, such as logos, colors and design that should be consistent across all marketing platforms and materials, acting as the guardian of brand identity [15,20]. Therefore,

visual standardization ensures that the brand is instantly recognizable, creating a consistent visual connection at all points of contact with the consumer [15].

In addition, uniformity in consumer experiences is a crucial aspect of building perceived value, going beyond mere visual identity [29]. However, this process requires the definition and implementation of precise guidelines, as well as effective coordination between various company departments. In addition, constant monitoring is imperative to ensure compliance with the brand's principles [7,30]. In this way, CIM acts as a catalyst in unifying efforts, ensuring that all aspects of communication are in line with the brand strategy [31,32].

In short, the strategic construction of perceived value in CIM is closely linked to maintaining coherence and consistency in the brand message. Creating a unified, visually cohesive and consistent narrative over time not only contributes to brand differentiation, but also strengthens consumer loyalty and consequently boosts the brand's perceived value in the market. This strategic approach not only sets the brand apart from the competition, but also establishes a lasting connection with consumers, extending the perception of value associated with the brand.

## **5. Case study: Campaign “Share a Coke” by Coca Cola**

The “Share a Coke” campaign, launched by Coca-Cola in 2011 in Australia, is a notable example of integrated marketing communications (IMC) applied to building brand value, and illustrates how an innovative strategy can reinforce emotional bonds with customers. consumers and boost sales. With the slogan “Share a Coke”, Coca-Cola decided to replace the logo on its bottles with popular first names, encouraging consumers to find their own names, those of friends and family on the brand's bottles and cans. This simple change transformed each bottle into something personal, bringing the brand closer to people's everyday lives in a unique and affectionate way [33,34]. The campaign quickly expanded to other countries, including Mozambique, proving that when a brand speaks directly to the hearts of consumers, the impact is authentic and lasting.

For [24], the success of the campaign can be attributed to its integrated communications approach, which used multiple channels and cohesive alignment of messages to maximize reach and impact.

Firstly, Coca-Cola implemented bottle personalization across its main production lines, encouraging people to “Share a Coca-Cola” with someone special. Subsequently, the campaign combined this strategy with a strong presence on social networks and other digital channels, encouraging consumers to share photos, stories and moments with personalized bottles on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. In doing so, Coca-Cola transformed the campaign into a social and interactive experience, allowing consumers to engage with the brand in an organic and spontaneous way [33,34].

Additionally, the campaign made use of traditional media channels such as television and print advertising to ensure a broad and diverse reach. The synergy between digital and traditional media resulted in a cohesive strategy, which strengthened the message and generated a multiplier effect [34,35]. Points of sale were also integrated into the campaign, with special displays that encouraged the search for

personalized bottles and highlighted the personalization experience as a differentiator for Coca-Cola.

The authors state that the impact of the “Share a Coke” campaign was measurable and significant. For example, in Australia, the campaign’s initial market, Coca-Cola reported a 7% increase in sales among young adults, an audience that was beginning to move away from the brand [36]. Armutlu [35] adds that in other markets where the campaign was later launched, the increase in sales was equally significant, with some reports indicating that sales rose by up to 2% during the campaign period. These results not only highlighted the direct impact of IMC on sales, but also show how an integrated and personalized approach can revitalize the relationship with the consumer and strengthen brand value at the same time.

In terms of brand perception and value, research conducted [35,37] after the brand’s termination showed that consumers’ emotional attachment to Coca-Cola increased considerably, especially among young people, a critical segment for the brand. The use of first names and the encouragement of sharing created a personal identification with Coca-Cola, increasing loyalty and preference for the brand. Furthermore, “Share a Coke” received several marketing and innovation awards, consolidating itself as an IMC success story and an example of how a well-structured campaign can build brand value in a sustainable way [33,34,36,37].

This case study demonstrates how an IMC campaign, focusing on personalization and consumer experience, can result in tangible benefits for the brand, both in terms of sales and strengthening brand identity and value. In the authors’ view [29,30] the campaign went beyond short-term results, leaving a deep and lasting impact on consumers’ imagination.

Therefore, we can conclude that by connecting in an authentic and personal way, Coca-Cola reinforced its special place in people’s lives, proving that IMC is, in fact, a powerful tool for building brand value in a sustainable and sustainable way. significant. The “Share a Coke” campaign not only managed to engage the public in an innovative way, but also established a new paradigm for integrated communication campaigns, showing the power of personalization as a strategic tool to build and consolidate brand value.

## **6. Search results**

The study presents a comprehensive analysis of the importance of CIM as a strategic component for strengthening brand identity and perception of brand value. Therefore, it highlights that coherence and consistency in brand messages are fundamental to positively shaping the way consumers perceive brands, since these qualities promote the creation of a unified brand identity across all communication platforms [29,30,37]. Thus, coherent communications become essential for developing trust and credibility with consumers.

The study also highlights the importance of brands adapting their CIM strategies to consumer expectations, which are constantly evolving in a dynamic and competitive market. According to [32], brands that manage to align their communications with consumer preferences are more likely to succeed. In addition, the study points out that a deep understanding of brand identity, combined with strategic CIM management, is

crucial for creating lasting relationships with consumers, resulting in increased loyalty and perceived brand value.

From a practical point of view, the research points to the need for flexibility in communicating brand value, especially in highly competitive markets where consumers attach increasing importance to the visual attributes of products. In this context, visual elements not only complement but, in some cases, surpass the functional needs of products. As a result, CIM strategies must prioritize compelling and authentic visual narratives that provide a consistent and engaging brand experience for consumers.

In summary, the study reinforces the vital role of CIM in promoting brand value. Through efficient management, based on an in-depth understanding of brand identity and the implementation of strategic communication approaches, brands can establish meaningful emotional connections with consumers, strengthening their loyalty and consolidating brand value in a dynamic and highly competitive market environment.

## **7. Conclusions**

This study has provided valuable insights into the strategic role played by CIM in enhancing the value of brands and has highlighted the importance of coherence and consistency in the brand message, emphasizing how these fundamental elements can have a positive impact on consumer perception.

Adapting CIM to consumer expectations of brands has emerged as a crucial strategy for brands to adopt, highlighting the need to understand the constantly evolving dynamics of the market [16,17]. Therefore, strategic CIM management based on an in-depth understanding of brand identity has been recognized as essential for creating lasting emotional bonds with consumers, promoting the continuous enhancement of brands [5,7,8].

In the context of communicating brand value, the research highlights the importance of a flexible approach combined with an attractive visual image capable of adjusting to the highly competitive market and the increasingly attentive consumer [36,37]. According to [15], the product's visual attributes are taking on greater relevance in relation to its essential needs. In this sense, CIM has also been recognized as an ally in shaping authentic narratives and fostering coherent experiences [6,9,17].

In short, this study highlights the crucial importance of CIM in promoting the value of brands where effective CIM management, coupled with a deep understanding of brand identity, becomes essential for companies. In addition, a strategic approach, focused on establishing emotional connections with consumers, offers opportunities to improve communication strategies. In this way, by incorporating best practices, companies strengthen ties with consumers and consolidate the perceived value of their brands in a dynamic market environment.

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ACFCC and BMFG; supervision, BMFG. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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