

Integrated Marketing Communication Analysis Project

COMM 101 01

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Integrated Marketing Communication is the coordination and integration of all marketing and communication tools in a company into a seamless program designed to maximize the impact on customers and other stakeholders. Integrated Marketing Communication covers all of the firm's business-to-business marketing, business-to-consumer marketing, and internally directed communication. It is a concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines (promotional mix elements) and combines them to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communications impact. The reason for this type of approach to branding and promotions is that the industry has evolved so much along with the world, therefore causing consumers to think this way now. There is a variety of media available and a plethora of groups to target (IMC notes).

e.l.f. Beauty Inc. (e.l.f.) specializes in crafting and delivering vegan, clean, and cruelty-free beauty and cosmetic products across various brands. It was founded by Joseph Shamah and Scott Vincent Borba in 2004. Their extensive product range includes eye, face, lip, ear, brush, and skincare essentials, alongside beauty accessories, and tools. Under the brand names e.l.f., Well People, e.l.f. Cosmetics, e.l.f. Skin, and Keys Soulcare, the company caters to both domestic and international markets through retail outlets, e.l.f. stores, drugstores, mass and specialty retail channels, as well as e-commerce platforms. With operations extending to the United Kingdom and Canada, e.l.f. Beauty Inc is headquartered in Oakland, California, USA. In my opinion, e.l.f. Beauty Inc. (e.l.f.) is known for its dedication to providing high-quality, ethically sourced beauty products, catering to a diverse clientele across the globe (Global Data, 2024).

Through my observations and studying the company over this semester, I believe e.l.f. Beauty, also known as e.l.f. Cosmetics, targets a diverse audience, primarily focusing on younger demographics, including teenagers and young adults. e.l.f. Beauty is not only the leading cosmetics brand among U.S. Gen Z but also one of the most popular among all demographics in the whole country. In fact, in 2022, brand awareness of e.l.f. was measured at 74 percent among American beauty shoppers (Statista, 2023). Their target audience typically includes individuals who are looking for affordable yet quality beauty products. e.l.f. Beauty's products are often marketed toward those who are interested in makeup and skincare but may be on a budget. They aim to appeal to customers who are seeking trendy and innovative beauty products without breaking the bank. Additionally, their marketing often emphasizes inclusivity and diversity, making their products accessible to a wide range of consumers regardless of age, gender, or skin type.

In my opinion, e.l.f. Beauty effectively positions itself in the beauty market by emphasizing affordability, inclusivity, and accessibility. Positioning is defined as the summary of the perceptions in the consumer's mind regarding the nature of a brand and its products relative to competitors; the place the product/brand has in the minds of the consumers (IMC notes). Their commitment to offering quality products at affordable prices appeals to a wide range of consumers, including students and young professionals. Moreover, their dedication to inclusivity caters to diverse skin tones and genders, fostering brand loyalty. e.l.f. Beauty's products are widely available through various channels, including their own website, major retailers, and drugstores, enhancing convenience for customers. The lowercase logo with a leaf design communicates modernity and natural, clean beauty effectively. Their slogan "Where everyone can own their beauty, without compromise" (e.l.f. Beauty, 2024) illustrates their commitment to

empowering individuals to embrace their unique beauty without sacrificing quality or ethics.

Overall, e.l.f. Beauty's positioning aligns well with the preferences of their target audience in my opinion.

EXAMPLE 1: I have observed that e.l.f. Beauty is very active on their various social media accounts, including Instagram, TikTok, and X. The company participates in many social media trends on these platforms as well, while still promoting its products/services while doing so. Via their various social media platforms, they utilize all of the promotional mix elements. They incorporate general advertising, by posting about their new product launches and providing information regarding how to use the product and what it is for. General Advertising is defined as any paid form of nonpersonal communication about an organization, product, service, or idea by an identified sponsor and is usually persuasive in nature and done through various media (IMC notes). e.l.f. Beauty also uses public relations on their socials by doing collaborations and events with other companies or influencers to create a positive and credible brand image. Public relations is defined as a management function that evaluates public attitudes, identifies policies and procedures of an organization or individual with a public interest, and executes a program to earn public understanding and acceptance (IMC notes). Moreover, e.l.f. Beauty also uses sales promotions in their social media platforms to engage consumers and stimulate sales, using giveaways, sweepstakes, promo codes, and premiums. Sales promotion is defined as a sales activity that provides extra value or incentives to the sales force, distributors, or the ultimate consumer and can stimulate immediate sales. The company also uses direct marketing on their social media accounts by providing links to their website where they sell their products. Direct marketing is defined as a system of marketing by which an organization communicates directly with the consumers to generate a response or transaction, by which no brick-and-mortar location

is needed (IMC notes). By using all these promotional mix elements, they are using the integrated marketing approach. The integrated marketing approach is the integration and combination of all marketing tools in a company into a seamless program designed to maximize the impact on customers and other stakeholders (IMC notes).

EXAMPLE 2: Content marketing, or branded content, consists of providing useful information and product-use solutions to potential customers on a brand's website or microsite (Kenneth E. Clow, 2022). e.l.f. Beauty has utilized this public relations promotional strategy by holding a live-streamed event on TikTok, in which a representative from the organization showcased new products and demonstrated how to use them and incorporate them into a beauty routine. Not only did e.l.f. Beauty showcase and demonstrate the various new products they just launched, but they also offered a sales promotion to the consumers who tuned into the live-streamed event. Sales promotion is defined as a sales activity that provides extra value or incentives to the sales force, distributors, or the ultimate consumer and can stimulate immediate sales (IMC notes). e.l.f. Beauty offered a gift with a purchase of \$15 or more, which is a self-liquidating premium. A self-liquidating premium is a sales promotion tactic in which the consumer is required to spend a certain amount of money to get a gift/reward with their purchase (IMC notes). This content marketing strategy aligns with their broader promotional efforts by tapping into popular trends across different social media platforms. Specifically, they utilize the widespread trend of live streaming on TikTok to engage their audience.

EXAMPLE 3: e.l.f. Beauty also uses general advertising in printed communications. General advertising is defined as any paid form of nonpersonal communication about an organization, product, service, or idea by an identified sponsor and is usually persuasive in nature and done through various media (IMC notes). An example of e.l.f. Beauty incorporating this

promotional mix element into their promotional efforts is putting an advertisement for their new product launch in the Ulta Beauty catalog. e.l.f. Beauty inserted a full-page advertisement regarding their new product, the Power Grip Setting Spray, into Ulta's spring catalog. In the full-page advertisement, e.l.f. includes the price of the product, the purpose/description, the title, and the fact that it is cruelty-free and vegan. I believe this is an effective example of general advertising in the form of printed communications because the advertisement is a paid form of nonpersonal communication about a product from the identified sponsor of e.l.f. Beauty, and persuasive in nature by outlining the benefits of the product. This advertisement is placed in Ulta Beauty's spring 2024 catalog and illustrates e.l.f. Beauty's integration efforts because they are communicating about their new product launch here, as well as various other media, and the company is remaining consistent with their brand position/image by stating that it is vegan and cruelty-free while also sticking to their affordable pricing.

EXAMPLE 4: e.l.f. Beauty uses mobile marketing to reach their loyal customers. Mobile marketing is defined as multi-channel online marketing designed to reach consumers on smartphones, tablets, or other related devices through websites, email, text messages, social media, or mobile apps. Mobile marketing reaches every type of device (Kenneth E. Clow, 2022). Most people access the internet from a smartphone rather than a desktop or laptop computer, especially younger individuals (Kenneth E. Clow, 2022). I've noticed that e.l.f. Beauty, where I am a loyal customer with an account, regularly sends me numerous emails and text messages. These communications often include details about new product releases, exclusive deals, and early access to products for members. This direct marketing promotional strategy not only fosters brand loyalty among consumers but also seems to be a part of their integrated marketing strategy, utilizing multiple channels to engage their target audience.

EXAMPLE 5: e.l.f. Beauty also uses point-of-purchase (POP) displays, a sales promotion tactic, to market their products to consumers. Effective POP displays clearly communicate the product's attributes, incorporating the price and other promotional information. It encourages the customer to stop and look, pick up the product, and examine it. A customer who pauses to examine a product on display becomes more inclined to buy it (Kenneth E. Clow, 2022). POP displays come in various forms, including stand-alone units, posters, banners, and more. They rely on consumer impulse-buying, and are created to showcase specific products, highlight promotions, or reinforce a brand's identity (Nicoletta, 2023). According to the results of Slickdeals' most recent poll, conducted by OnePoll, almost three out of four (73%) respondents stated most of their purchases are impulsive (Tronier, 2022). I have observed that e.l.f. Beauty uses point-of-purchase (POP) displays at retail locations where their products are available, including Target and Ulta Beauty. These strategic placements are designed to capture the attention of potential customers as they shop, leveraging high-traffic areas to maximize exposure and drive sales.

EXAMPLE 6: During this year's Super Bowl, e.l.f. Beauty aired a 60-second general advertising TV commercial that featured a humor appeal to engage viewers while promoting their brand image and strengthening their market position. Humor appeal is a general advertising approach and is intended to make consumers laugh and create an emotional link with the product/service, and can enhance recollection, evaluation, and the intent to purchase (IMC notes). The video advertisement was a parody of the well-known TV show *Judge Judy*. In this spin-off, titled *Judge Beauty*, e.l.f. Beauty featured Judith Susan Sheindlin herself, the real Judge Judy, as the star of the commercial. Not only did the advertisement include popular star Judge Judy, but also many other famous celebrities such as *Suits* co-stars Gina Torres, Rick Hoffman

and Sarah Rafferty, Jury Duty's Ronald Gladden and singer Meghan Trainor (Spencer, 2023). The advertisement depicts a courtroom drama where a woman is accused of using company funds to purchase overpriced and unclean makeup products. The narrative concludes with the judge informing her about e.l.f. Beauty's affordable and clean alternatives. This messaging is consistent with e.l.f. Beauty's brand image and plays a crucial role in their integrated marketing strategy.

EXAMPLE 7: e.l.f. Beauty's "Cosmetic Criminals" campaign is a true crime parody documentary that uses a humor appeal to the issue of "e.l.f.-pinching"—the phenomenon of people "borrowing" e.l.f. cosmetics from family and friends without returning them (Elf Cosmetics, 2024). This campaign creatively addresses what the company has identified as a widespread problem among its customers, framing it as an intergenerational cosmetic theft occurring right within households (Alt Marketing School, 2024). The 15-minute film premiered on Amazon Freevee and in select AMC theaters, playing before the new *Mean Girls* movie, and was directed by Alex Buono and features Niecy Nash-Betts among other stars (Alt Marketing School, 2024). It is available to watch on YouTube and Amazon Freevee (Elf Beauty, 2024). The mockumentary uses a humor appeal and the popular true crime format to engage its audience, making the common annoyance of shared cosmetics disappearances both relatable and entertaining. Humor appeal is defined as an approach that is intended to make consumers laugh and create an emotion link with the product, and can enhance recollection, evaluation, and intent to purchase (IMC notes). In my opinion, this campaign by e.l.f. Cosmetics illustrates their integrated marketing efforts because they are appealing to their targeted audience of Gen Z and millennials in the form of an entertaining parody documentary.

EXAMPLE 8: Furthermore, e.l.f. Beauty's strategy of leveraging user-generated content (UGC) highlights their innovative approach to integrated marketing communications. I have observed that the brand actively encourages its customers to post their own photos and videos using e.l.f. products on various social media platforms. This not only enhances the brand's visibility but also builds a two-way mutually beneficial relationship between the company and its consumers, therefore it is a public relations marketing strategy. By featuring real customer experiences, AKA testimonials, e.l.f. Beauty taps into the power of social proof, where prospective customers see real endorsements from their peers. Testimonials are defined as real customer success stories (IMC notes). This public relations marketing method not only promotes the brand in a real and believable way but also creates a community around its products, fostering a sense of belonging and loyalty. The incorporation of UGC into their promotional strategy demonstrates e.l.f. Beauty's understanding of the digital age's influence on consumer behavior and the importance of an engaged, interactive customer base in promoting brand sustainability and growth. Through this, I believe e.l.f. Beauty effectively grows the impact of its integrated marketing efforts, blending traditional advertising with modern, consumer-driven content creation.

In conclusion and after thorough observations, e.l.f. Beauty's implementation of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategies exemplifies a clean and effective approach to branding and consumer engagement in my opinion. Through a variety of promotional mix elements, including general advertising, public relations, sales promotions, direct marketing, and mobile/social media marketing, I believe e.l.f. Beauty has skillfully positioned itself as a leader in affordable, inclusive, clean, and ethical beauty products. The company's commitment to leveraging both traditional and digital platforms ensures that they

reach a broad audience, effectively communicating its value propositions and maintaining consistency across all messages. I believe that this integrated approach not only enhances brand visibility and market presence but also fosters strong customer relationships and loyalty, particularly among its primary target demographic of young, budget-conscious consumers. In my opinion, by continuously adapting to the evolving media landscape and consumer preferences, e.l.f. Beauty remains a prominent and respected organization in the global cosmetics industry, demonstrating the profound impact of cohesive marketing strategies.

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