

INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR ENTREPRENEURS IN THA SADET MARKET, MUEANG DISTRICT, NONG KHAI PROVINCE

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Abstract

This research aimed to: 1) examine the current state of marketing communication among entrepreneurs in Tha Sadet Market, 2) analyze factors influencing their marketing communication, and 3) develop appropriate integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategies for the entrepreneurs. The study utilized a mixed methods research approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations from 30 entrepreneurs in the market and questionnaires from 200 consumers. The findings revealed that: 1) the most commonly used marketing communication method was word-of-mouth (85%), followed by social media (60%) and advertising signs (40%). A major challenge identified was the lack of digital technology knowledge. 2) The most influential factor in marketing communication was understanding customer behavior ($\bar{x} = 4.35$, $SD = 0.78$, $r = 0.75$), followed by access to technology ($\bar{x} = 4.21$, $SD = 0.87$, $r = 0.72$). 3) The proposed IMC strategies include: (1) fully utilizing digital media by promoting the use of Facebook, Instagram, and Line Official Account along with content marketing focused on storytelling about local products; (2) integrating offline and online channels through QR codes on leaflets and advertisements to connect customers to online platforms; and (3) building a distinctive brand identity for Tha Sadet Market by developing a unique logo or tagline that highlights the market's strengths and organizing promotional activities.

Keywords: Integrated Marketing Communication, Tha Sadet Market, Entrepreneurs

Introduction

Tha Sadet Market in Mueang Nong Khai District, Nong Khai Province, is a significant tourist destination and trade center in the northeastern region. It offers a diverse range of products including local goods, handicrafts, and imports from neighboring countries. With the advancement of communication technology, electronic communication devices have become crucial in daily human life, enabling rapid global connectivity. Communication is essential and vital for human existence, being an activity humans face daily in business operations and marketing. Professor Philip Kotler, a marketing academic, views the current era as the ASEAN marketing age, with trends moving towards the Social Media era. Therefore, communication must play a crucial role in all marketing activities

Current technological developments have resulted in consumers receiving information beyond their needs, coupled with increasingly complex social lives. Consumers have limited time to process abundant information, leading to confusion. Business operators must therefore find methods to present information to consumer groups. Marketing communication is a crucial factor in effectively delivering this information to consumers in ways appropriate for creating organizational value through revenue, credibility, and good reputation (Somwong

Pongsataporn, 2006). Business operators must employ marketing communication strategies, meaning using all forms of communication tools to reach consumers amid business competition.

Research Objectives

1. To study the current state of marketing communications of entrepreneurs in Tha Sadet Market
2. To analyze factors affecting entrepreneurs' marketing communications
3. To develop appropriate integrated marketing communication guidelines for entrepreneurs in Tha Sadet Market

Scope of the Research

Population and Samples

The population consists of entrepreneurs operating businesses in Tha Sadet Market, including retail and wholesale store owners, and customers who purchase goods or use services in Tha Sadet Market. The research sample includes 30 entrepreneurs selected through purposive sampling and 200 consumers selected through convenience sampling.

Research Methodology

This research is applied research using mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) to obtain comprehensive data aligned with the study objectives. The steps are as follows:

1. Research Planning: Study related documents and establish conceptual framework
2. Data Collection:
 - Interview entrepreneurs
 - Distribute questionnaires to consumers
3. Data Analysis: Process both qualitative and quantitative data
4. Report Preparation: Present research findings and recommendations

Research Tool

The research methodology employed a comprehensive set of instruments designed to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. These instruments were carefully selected to ensure thorough data collection and analysis.

Qualitative Data Collection Methods

The qualitative research phase utilized two primary instruments. First, in-depth interviews were conducted using structured interview guides to explore entrepreneurs' needs and perspectives in detail. These interviews provided rich, contextual data about business operations and marketing challenges. Second, systematic observation was implemented to examine the market environment and study entrepreneurial business practices in their natural setting.

Quantitative Data Collection Methods

For the quantitative phase, a structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument. This questionnaire was methodically designed with three distinct sections to capture comprehensive information from market consumers. The first section gathered demographic data and general information about respondents. The second section focused on consumer behavior patterns and satisfaction levels. The third section specifically addressed consumers' perspectives on marketing communications strategies.

The combination of these instruments enabled a thorough investigation of both the operational and consumer aspects of marketing communications within the Tha Sadet Market context.

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed both qualitative and quantitative data in accordance with the three research objectives: analyzing the current state of marketing communications at Tha Sadet Market, examining factors affecting marketing communications, and developing integrated marketing communication guidelines.

1. Current State of Marketing Communications at Tha Sadet Market.

The interviews with entrepreneurs revealed significant insights into their current marketing communication practices and challenges. Word-of-mouth marketing emerged as the predominant communication channel, with 85% of entrepreneurs relying on this traditional method. Social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Line, represented the second most utilized channel at 60%, while traditional market advertising signage was employed by 40% of the entrepreneurs.

The research also uncovered several significant challenges facing entrepreneurs in their marketing communications efforts. A substantial majority (70%) reported lacking knowledge in digital technology implementation, which hampers their ability to leverage modern marketing tools effectively. Financial constraints posed another significant barrier, with 60% of entrepreneurs citing limited advertising budgets. Additionally, half of the entrepreneurs (50%) identified competition from online marketplaces as a major challenge to their business sustainability.

These findings indicate a notable gap between traditional marketing methods and the increasing need for digital presence, suggesting an opportunity for targeted interventions to enhance the market's overall marketing communications strategy.

2. Factors Affecting Marketing Communications

Table 1: Relationship Between Factors Affecting Marketing Communications

Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Correlation (r)
Technology Access	4.21	0.87	0.72**
Marketing Budget	3.85	0.95	0.68**
Understanding Customer Behavior	4.35	0.78	0.75**
Market Competition	3.90	0.92	0.65**

The analysis of factors influencing marketing communications revealed significant impacts across all examined variables. Understanding customer behavior emerged as the most influential factor, demonstrating the highest mean score of 4.35 (SD = 0.78) with a strong positive correlation coefficient of 0.75. This indicates that entrepreneurs' comprehension of their customers' needs and preferences plays a crucial role in effective marketing communications.

Technology access ranked as the second most significant factor, with a mean score of 4.21 (SD = 0.87) and a correlation coefficient of 0.72. This finding underscores the growing importance of digital capabilities in modern marketing strategies. Market competition showed a moderate influence with a mean of 3.90 (SD = 0.92) and a correlation of 0.65, while

marketing budget considerations scored slightly lower with a mean of 3.85 (SD = 0.95) but maintained a significant correlation of 0.68.

These statistical findings demonstrate that while all factors significantly influence marketing communications, the ability to understand customer behavior and leverage technology are particularly crucial for successful marketing strategies in the Tha Sadet Market context. The strong correlations across all factors suggest their interconnected nature in shaping effective marketing communications. Note: ** indicates statistical significance at the 0.01 level.

3. Integrated Marketing Communication Guidelines

Based on the research findings, we propose a comprehensive framework for integrated marketing communications at Tha Sadet Market, encompassing three primary strategic approaches:

1) Full Digital Media Implementation

The first strategic pillar focuses on maximizing digital platform utilization through two key initiatives. First, the systematic deployment of social media platforms, specifically Facebook, Instagram, and Line Official Account, will establish a strong digital presence. Second, the implementation of content marketing strategies, particularly through storytelling about local products, will create meaningful connections with customers and showcase the market's unique offerings.

2) Online-Offline Channel Integration

The second strategic approach centers on bridging the gap between traditional and digital marketing channels. The primary implementation method involves incorporating QR codes into traditional marketing materials such as brochures and advertising signage. This integration creates seamless pathways for customers to transition from physical to digital touchpoints, ensuring a cohesive customer journey across all channels.

3) Brand Identity Development

The third strategic element focuses on establishing a distinctive market identity through two key initiatives. The first involves developing a compelling logo and messaging that effectively communicates the market's unique value proposition. The second encompasses organizing promotional events, particularly local festivals, to strengthen community engagement and market recognition.

Table 2: presents a structured overview of these integrated marketing communication guidelines

Approach	Implementation Details	Strategic Objectives
Digital Media Utilization	Creation and management of Facebook pages and Line Official Account	Expand reach to new customer segments
Online-Offline Integration	QR code implementation in traditional marketing materials	Attract and engage all customer demographics
Brand Identity Development	Logo development and promotional event organization	Enhance market memorability and recognition

Research Results

This research aimed to explore integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategies for entrepreneurs in Tha Sadet Market, Nong Khai Province. The key findings are summarized as follows.

1. The Current State of Marketing Communication in Tha Sadet Market

Interviews with entrepreneurs revealed that the most commonly used marketing communication channels include word-of-mouth (WOM), social media platforms such as Facebook and Line, and advertising signage within the market. Challenges faced by entrepreneurs in marketing communication include a lack of digital technology knowledge, limited advertising budgets, and competition from online markets.

2. Factors Influencing Marketing Communication.

The study found that overall, factors influencing marketing communication were rated at a high level. The most impactful factor was entrepreneurs' understanding of customer behavior, followed by access to technology, market competition, and marketing budget constraints. Additionally, the relationship analysis showed that access to technology and understanding customer behavior had a strong positive correlation with the effectiveness of marketing communication. Budget limitations and market competition were also significant factors influencing the success of marketing communication.

3. Integrated Marketing Communication Strategies.

The recommended IMC strategies include Promoting the use of digital media: Leverage platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Line Official Account to expand customer reach. Integrating online and offline communication channels: Utilize QR codes to bridge information between businesses and customers effectively. Building a unique brand identity for businesses: Achieve this through storytelling and special events to highlight the unique characteristics of each business.

Discussion

The research on integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategies for entrepreneurs in Tha Sadet Market, Mueang District, Nong Khai Province, presents several key findings worthy of discussion.

1. The Current State of Marketing Communication in Tha Sadet Market

The study revealed that the most commonly employed marketing communication channel is word-of-mouth (WOM), as it is straightforward and requires minimal resources. This aligns with the findings of Wareerat Sampattapong (2024), who studied marketing communication models for community products by safe agriculture enterprises in Khlong Ha Subdistrict, Pathum Thani Province. That research also highlighted the reliance on traditional promotional methods, such as WOM, advertising signage in communities, and online channels like social media to reach diverse audiences. Support from government agencies for showcasing products at events was also identified as a vital factor. Additionally, community enterprises expressed a desire to diversify their product offerings and integrate online and offline marketing tools to enhance uniqueness and competitiveness in the market.

2. Factors Influencing Marketing Communication.

The findings indicated that understanding customer behavior is the most critical factor influencing marketing communication effectiveness. This is consistent with the research by Nicha Thongjamroon, Thanyarat Linruesee, and Nucharee Tiyaboon (2023), which examined consumer behavior and marketing mix factors influencing market selection in Chiang Mai. Their study showed that consumer behavior, such as frequency, timing, and spending patterns, significantly impacts market strategy. Marketing mix elements were found to play a substantial role, with differentiated approaches based on age and income levels demonstrating statistical significance. The use of online content creation to attract and retain customers was suggested as a means of increasing sales and engagement.

3. Integrated Marketing Communication Strategies for Entrepreneurs in Tha Sadet Market.

Based on the data, the researcher proposed three primary strategies for effective IMC

- Maximizing digital media usage: Encourage the use of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Line Official Account, as these are cost-effective and widely used. Content marketing, emphasizing storytelling of local products, is also recommended.

- Integrating offline and online channels: Use QR codes on brochures or signage to seamlessly connect customers to online platforms.

- Building a unique brand identity for Tha Sadet Market: Develop a distinct logo or tagline highlighting the market’s unique characteristics and organize promotional events such as local festivals.

These strategies align with the findings of Prapasri Phongthanapanich (2023), who examined the relationship between marketing factors and technology adoption on Generation Z students' purchase intentions through social media in Bangkok. That study highlighted the high level of technology acceptance, emphasizing perceived benefits, ease of use, and compatibility as crucial factors. Marketing elements, such as process and physical attributes, were positively correlated with technology adoption, influencing purchase intentions through perceived trust and risk management. The integration of these strategies can effectively enhance the marketing communication capabilities of entrepreneurs in Tha Sadet Market, helping them compete in an increasingly digital and competitive environment.

Recommendations

1. Comparison of Marketing Communication Among Local Markets in Other Areas.

Future researchers should expand the scope of the study by comparing marketing communication strategies in other local markets. This would help identify successful factors in different contexts that could be adapted for use in Tha Sadet Market. For instance, analyzing communication methods popular in similar markets, such as border markets or markets focusing on community products, could provide valuable insights.

2. Studying the Impact of Implementing IMC Strategies in Other Markets.

Future research should focus on assessing the outcomes of implementing the recommended IMC strategies in other markets. This would involve evaluating the effectiveness and impact on various aspects, such as increasing sales, building brand awareness, or enhancing customer satisfaction. The findings from such studies would help refine the IMC strategies to ensure flexibility and applicability across different contexts.

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