

New Business – New Model – New Profit: An overview of the DMA IMW 2014 event, a potential resource of new business for smart print providers – by Thad Kubis

Your new business strategies should be based on intellectual capital—becoming subject matter experts on profit advocacy and becoming a trusted advisor within the verticals you target.

I did find that the mention of print was hidden, covert, and mostly mentioned as “well if I’ve got to tell you, yes we do still use print.” And in a few instances, print was positioned as an almost embarrassing but highly effective and results-based tool. Print in the age of digital—NO WAY!

Yes WAY!

Why? Well, I can think of few reasons: the world is digital, and marketing is seen as a digital channel only. Wrong! The use of digital media is a belief in success as much as it is a hope, and I wondered openly if many of the presenters were simply trying to convince themselves of the reasons to go digital, or did they just not wish to look “more current,” and digital was the shiny trend on the horizon? Understand, I have nothing against digital anything, I just believe strongly that marketing works better when FULLY integrated, and that includes using print as a member of the results and ROI-oriented team of advertising, marketing, and communications.

If marketing is customer-driven, print has the credentials to be near the top of the list!

I have outlined below the key takeaway’s from the innovation- and knowledge-based IMW 2014 event held in New York City! I did tweet 76 tweets on the first day and picked up a few dozen new followers, so that worked well. As an observation, I feel that the act of tweeting live comments is very distracting for me and, based on a “look” directed by a few presenters toward tweeters(not at me BTW), was regarded as an annoyance or insult to those presenting. I like to hear and think about what is being said, then tweet my observations. Oh, how we can come to dislike what we once very recently loved so!

The mood at the event was upbeat and positive, and there was a level of excitement that I have not seen within the DMA for the past few years. A change to new management that seems to be more focused and in control seems to be adding good/positive change to a valued association like the DMA.

Are Integrated Marketing Communications the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde of marketing communications?

Based on my experience and attendance at the IMW 2014 event, I would say the answer is yes—in a humanist and positive sense, of course.

Observations:

Takeaways from the Keynote Addresses!

Penry Price of LinkedIn shared the keynote with Shane Snow of Contently. One sidenote: Shane was listed in the program as the CEO, but he is actually the CCO—content is everything. That minor error did not deflect from the discussion.

LinkedIn is looking to change its business model from an ad-based revenue stream to a content-sharing knowledge-sharing professional (white collar) sponsor-based network. Not a bad idea, since I think the model for ad-based revenue on these sites is doomed.

According to Price, there are more than 600 million white-collar executives in the world, and LinkedIn currently “touches” 300 million and is targeting the balance, not a bad 50% share. The need for sponsored and highly relevant media is, to me, a cornerstone of the next stage of marketing—Media Convergence. I wholeheartedly endorse this new business model.

The new model is key to the success of future “social type” marketing, since it focuses on thought leadership, subject matter experts, and corporate transparency. All of this is wrapped around relevance and being business professionalism-centric and fee-based or paid sponsorship-supported.

Shane stated that to truly reach your sales goals the marketer needs to look beyond relevant content and include regional, referral, shared common needs, and broad-based goals. All this makes sense since, for many like me, social media are in part verification media, and verification means more than posting a selfie. Verification by its definition means depth; today, depth is both content and context!

Price stated corporations like LinkedIn need to contribute to a greater need than profit alone. They must contribute to and lead the way to creating a better earth, a better place to live and work, as well as assist the masses in gaining employment.

Really? Yes, sure, but in the end, profits will define what any corporation will actually do, and I think the wish list here is wonderful and hope it can be delivered on. LinkedIn will, in the end, provide a level of services that is based on its profit. Cause

marketing is a powerful tool in sales promotion, but most businesses exist to be profitable. That is one key reason Integrated Marketing is used. Yes, ROI means more money to use and perhaps more money to “contribute,” but profit—share value at this stage of LinkedIn’s life—will drive its future. It’s a nice thought.

Other takeaways from the keynote speeches include the need to use networks such as LinkedIn to build markets and redefine the behavior of a consumer (professional) and to consider the future of LinkedIn as a replacement for professional based websites (*my insight, not Price’s or Snow’s*).

Content is King, but context is Queen and will wear the pants in the publishing household. Price and Snow agreed, as do I. All this will be driven by demanding consumers and business professionals who will define their needs, based on a varying formula of media, interest relevancy, and need for knowledge.

Price did mention the desire to move to an automatic online sales tool but also mentioned that Google, the leader in this trend, has now expanded its sales team and uses traditional media in the sales process. BTW, other media, traditional media and direct media often are used to designate a print-based tool.

I did find the link from the keynote to the conference theme a bit confusing, since during the keynote little discussion concerning other media was covered. That to me is a reason Integrated Marketing Communications is the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde of marketing communications (your call as to which, Jekyll or Hyde?). Is LinkedIn and its model an example of integrated media or integrated marketing?

Other observations:

A number of new terms, some terms that I would say are out of place, kept popping up, or were “revocabulated”—that’s my contribution of creating a new word that’s not a word. Terms included *viewport*, *timeslag* (yes, I am not sure what this means either), and *mobile desktop actions*. One term in particular, *cohorts*, did not seem to fit. *Cohorts*, a term based on ancient Rome (an ancient Roman military unit, comprised of six Roman Centurions, equal to one-tenth of a legion or a group of people banded together or treated as a group) seemed to be a forced term to replace “human” terms such as *group*, *associates*, *partners*, *buddies*, or *cronies*. I don’t see the need for this new term. If we are all attempting to develop dialogue and extend engagement, “cohorts” a hard name and does not work for me nor fit within my definition of my targeted consumer, B2B, or B2C.

The discussion of online and offline (*offline*, *legacy*, and *traditional* are often used to describe print or direct mail, direct marketing, advertising, or a sales promotion tool) IMC was interesting, and I took in a few related sessions. Here is where the confusion

or the dual personality of IMC shows its face(s). *Online* seems to be defined as any “digital” marketing effort that can be digitally tracked; *offline* seems to be defined as anything else with a sort of dotted line to legacy technologies. I call that integrated media, not integrated marketing—what would you say?

The State of Industry presentation hosted by Stefan Tornquist, VP, Research US, Econsultancy, presented a detailed and well-executed overview of the future of modern marketing. Which can be summed up in three descriptions, you are either: a disruptor (good), an average (middle of the road), or a disrupted (not so good) corporation. If you ever saw the 2006 movie *Idiocracy* you may be familiar with Lead, Follow, or Get out of the way—sort of the same end result.

Interestingly, the level of comfort and knowledge of a digital-based marketing program was low, under 50% in the executive suite and under 25% in the mid- to lower-management levels. I hope the final study due in a few weeks will answer which strategy has the highest level of comfort and knowledge, based on the marketing need and management level. It may be a print-related or digital/print-linked integrated effort. This is my assumption, and you know about assumptions, right?

Stefan’s presentation was very number heavy but did ask a great question—“Are you and your marketing team (corporation) built for today or tomorrow’s marketing needs?” I think this is the key takeaway from Stefan’s effort. Concepts such as corporate culture, technology, influencers linked to the digital future blurred the concepts and contributed to a lack of digital marketing knowledge within the C-suite (perhaps they need a greater dose of the new LinkedIn model), and, more importantly, to the very low level of digital knowledge within middle management. The recommendations of the not-so-defined and not-so-focused orders from the not-so-informed C-suite will just add to the confusion of IMC and IM? (Note: see *Idiocracy*) If you think of marketing as cold calling, non-integrated media and marketing, multiple messaging across non-targeted media (such as mobile-to-web) you are done, toast, and fini!

I would suggest a hash tag for Stefan **#believeinstefan – (not a real hash tag)**. His presentation was a very cool look into the future and beyond!

Responsive design was my next stop on the attendees’ journey (BTW, *journey* was a very overused word at the event). I found the panel to be very well informed and of value, in a strategic way. What I did not find was a great deal of tactical information that I could or you could use that would benefit your next responsive design. Key takeaways were to make your responsive design based on the following order: Fun, Fast and Simple. Link this to action items that can be measured, tracked, and

repeated, and you will have success and perhaps lower cost since the ROI will improve. This may have been the only session I attended that did not mention or relate to print, but I do have a few notes that the panel mentioned “other media”—hint, hint.

The panelists indicated that a correctly designed (which means a correctly devised) responsive-design program would result in more results, response, and cost reduction.

I left the world of responsive design and entered the world of Modern SEO; this was a great overview of **integrated media** not **integrated marketing**. Amy Simpson, VP, Operations of Ethology, offered an excellent process flowchart of the use of integrated social and related media. Simple charts but loaded with occult information made me smile; I like charts. Search, according to Amy—once defined as research, tactical execution, and measurement—now is a bit more complex but can still be explained using those three defined points of Research, Tactical Execution, and Measurement. WOW! No Jekyll and Hyde here!

Amy explained how Farmer’s Insurance (her client) used Ethology as a subject-matter expert, and how this relationship has led to a redevelopment of the RFP process. It seems that Farmers (a very smart company) has determined that they can write an RFP, but they need to have an internal and external team to truly develop the needed elements and clearly define the goals and objectives of modern SEO. Brian Borkowski and Sarah Karpinski from Farmers linked social with their other media use, including sales calls, social heroes, big media and direct marketing, sales promotion, sales tools, and other traditional (hint, hint) media. Very nicely done, Farmers, nicely done!

It does show that even in the world of digital marketing foundational elements such as clearly defined goals and objectives still rise to the top of the list of things that will make the program succeed or fail. Great job, Amy!

Failing is not a bad thing if you look to failing as learning process. A number of the presenters took this line as a major element in their presentation, which I find of great interest since, in my career, I have had many more successes than failures, but I have learned more for the failures than from all of the successes combined.

My favorite presentation of the first day was Integrating the Offline with the Online. I liked this Analyze and Optimize session for many reasons, but mainly because the discussion provided a look into the other identify of IMC, full integration again? Your call, Jekyll or Hyde?

This was the only presentation during which the panel, Asha Sharma of Porch.com and a representative from Vocus, actually talked real integration. Asha mentioned a number of times how their targets are often not online for hours per day and are checking emails when they are on a break, getting coffee, while the representative from Vocus indicated that they cannot gather, confirm, or offer finalized or optimized data without linking the online information to traditional offline tools for verification, tools such as direct mail, Purls, microsites, and direct marketing. It was surprising to me that a few in the audience did not know what a Purl was or what and how a pre-populated micro site was to be used or what would be expected. Both panelists mentioned the proven and higher result when digital tools and legacy media are integrated. I mentioned to the group, as we exited this session, that the digital and traditional media combo seemed to paint a full portrait of the consumer, a 3D picture so to speak. Many nodded in agreement.

This is to me the true definition of IMC, establishing a balance of online tools with offline tools (digital and legacy), not as versus or against each other but as a plus, complementary media.

Asha related that her client Lowes looked to reduction in the development cost of acquisition program via the cost of retention programs which in many cases was a effort that used email, direct mail, micro sites and direct marketing to get the job done—smart. Retention, Asha stated, was simply a targeted combination of online and offline tools often driven by the market demographics, simply smart. Yes, for you purist, I will add the word channels.

This presentation also stated that the mix of IT and marketing is a link that must be explored. This link provides benefits that include cost reduction, more effective and efficient programs, and the ability to gather details in tracking that make the process palatable. Have you, the print provider, spoken of DMA lately? Your clients and prospects may just like that conversation.

Weather and Integration or?

I did find the Weather Company's (TWC) presentation to be less of an information-based presentation that sampled integration and more of a presentation that "Sold" the policies of the Weather Company and its many commercial outlets. Not that this a bad thing; it is just not what I expected, and, yes, integrated marketing is in part based on customer expectations. I did like Eva Papoutsakis Smith's point of incorporating an integrated or segmented plan that links Science, Safety, and Services with Storytelling, but this was never linked to media, integrated or not. I saw this as integrated corporate speak, their USP (unique selling proposition) not as an integrated marketing or media effort. TWC does use many channels to get their message to their customers and I guess would suggest an integrated marketing

approach to be used to get to their customers' customers. I would think that among the marketing tools suggested would be a series of print-based marketing initiatives. After all, even the top three—website/interactive/digital design contest—use direct mail to gain entries. I think TWC will as well.

But having said that, I would agree with Eva that weather can and should be used as a tool to direct, impact, influence, and drive consumers to related products. Maybe I should contact Eva and offer my consulting services to assist TWC to develop a detailed integrated program. I requested Eva's PowerPoint and reviewed it again in my office. I get the drift but I think it should have been a more integrated drift.

Well you must have had enough from me by now. Let me know what you think. Do you feel that IMC is the Jekyll and Hyde of marketing communications? Did you attend the IMW 2014 event? Did I get the "feel" right? What is it about IMC that seems to confuse and limit people's use?

I see Integrated Media and Integrated Marketing as two very different but linked concepts, connected at the hip. They are disciplines that work well independently, but work better when they are in one body, one mind, and one soul and offer a focused, concise metric that will cross media and channels.

A suggestion to all those event developers—the massive amount of material, information, and knowledge presented needs a quiet time to reflect upon what was just presented. Please offer a quiet room, no mobiles, tablets, computers, music (expect white noise), trees, plants, running water, to allow a person like me to mentally develop and if needed write notes to gather or expand an even deeper understanding of the presenters' purpose.

A tip from Thad— it was odd to find not a single printer exhibited at the event. Yes this may have not been the most effective use of a traditional print based exhibit, but I think being the ugly duck at an event does have its benefits, particularly if you go in understanding you are not going to win the beauty contest. Two people I met at the event, both print shop owners, agreed with my tip once I explained the logic. Both said "WOW, you are right!" Base the exhibit on numbers, the benefits and validation aspect of the print-based product, and I think you would have more than paid for the space you occupied.

I feel that the print industry needs to get off its high horse and realize that an understanding of print is no longer enough to gain new business. They need to understand their targeted vertical markets, and that was what this event and others like it (for the printer) was all about.

I am known for developing rating scales. I would rate this event an 8.5 out of a scale of 10.

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