Module Introduction

Advertising and promotional communication are an important part of brand marketing strategy. They are also a significant part of the cultural experience of millions of consumers. This module combines these two perspectives, the managerial and the cultural. There are two main reasons for this. One is that cultural studies of advertising, drawing on traditions such as semiotics, literary theory and discourse studies, can yield powerful insights into the ways that promotional communication frames ideas and informs behaviour. These insights cover not only the cultural influence of promotional communication as a conveyor of norms and values with a wide social significance, but also the way it ‘works’ from a brand management point of view. The other reason for taking this dual perspective is that many students come to the study of this area already engaged with advertising, not only as consumers but as citizens. They are aware of the many debates and controversies surrounding the subject. This module seeks to use this personal engagement with advertising as the point of departure for a deeper examination of the subject from both a managerial and a cultural point of view.

The overall aim of the module is to develop a thorough practical understanding of marketing communication management in a global cultural context, by drawing on recent research studies and first-hand accounts of strategy development from leading international advertising agencies.

A word about terms: the term ‘advertising and promotional communication’ is cumbersome but indicates the broad scope of the module. Particular promotional channels are sometimes defined quite narrowly in typical texts, while terms like ‘marketing communication’ tend to be over-used and loaded with presuppositions about the scope, aims and methods of the subject. For most people, ‘advertising’ is a general term for any promotional communication, but technical specialists differentiate between the various forms such as sales promotion, direct mail, paid-for advertising on press or broadcast media, sponsorship, corporate communication and so on. These different media should not be conflated.

As we shall see during the course of the module, promotional media are ‘read’ in different ways and media choice has important implications for communications strategy. But there is a strong case for taking a more general view when studying the subject. One reason is practical. Global brand marketing organizations now take an ‘integrated’ view of their communications planning. They do not assume that one promotional medium will achieve their aims. Neither do they assume that a given medium is necessarily better than another. They seek to integrate communications strategy through all media channels, combining approaches in order to communicate the desired brand image and values consistently and powerfully to the target audience. This drive for ‘integrated’ marketing communications is based on pragmatic considerations of the particular brand and its markets. So a broad approach reflects contemporary marketing communications practice.

A second reason for taking a broad approach is that the global media infrastructure has changed dramatically. It is increasingly difficult to place
creative brand strategies in clearly demarcated media categories since developing technology, and especially the internet, are opening up new, hybrid forms of promotional communication. Definitions can be misleading since promotional communication is, in terms of the use of media, more creative than ever before. Moreover, in many campaigns, traditional promotional categories overlap.

So, for example, brand placements appear in computer games which are themselves branded and marketed. So there are brands within brands. These placements are carefully designed and negotiated to be mutually beneficial to the placed brand and the computer game. Sponsored links to branded websites appear on social networking websites like Bebo and MySpace, again combining brands within brands for a mutually enhancing strategic effect. At the time of writing, the web-based search engine brand Google is preparing a takeover bid of more than $1.5 billion for social networking website YouTube. YouTube does not yet generate significant profits but has enormous user traffic with an estimated 100 million people accessing the site daily. Clearly there is huge commercial potential where such volumes of consumers gather. The internet is creating entirely new business models that are based on communication. The hybrid brand communications strategies and new business models made possible by new communications technology defy easy categorization.

So, this module seeks to offer a new perspective on this rapidly evolving field by drawing on not only recent first-hand research into how brand marketing communication strategies are developed and executed, but also on contemporary cultural research. By so doing the module balances managerial issues with social and cultural issues in this field. The term ‘advertising and promotional communication’ seems appropriately broad for capturing this dual perspective.

The module consists of ten chapters which coincide with the ten chapters of the essential text. Chapter 1 introduces the main themes and concepts of the module. Chapter 2 explains the major theoretical issues involved, and which are the basis for the rest of the module. Chapter 3 begins the detailed account of current practice with an exploration of the roles advertising and promotional communication can and do play in strategic brand management. Chapter 4 discusses strategy formulation and the organization of work in typical advertising and promotional agencies. Chapter 5 details the media issues involved in communications planning while Chapter 6 discusses evolving aspects of promotion, especially hybrid promotional forms such as those linked with brand and product placement in entertainment vehicles. Chapter 7 examines the issues of cross-cultural communication in international campaign planning and Chapter 8 looks into the complex and topics area of promotional ethics. Chapter 9 describes the main research techniques deployed in the advertising communication business, and especially that in advertising agencies. Chapter 10 rounds up the module and returns to theoretical issues to suggest a way of integrating theories to develop differing levels of explanation for particular advertising phenomena.

**Module Aims**

The main aims of this module are to:

- Offer a synthesis of theoretical and practical perspectives on advertising and promotional communication in an international context.

- Present a detailed account of contemporary marketing communications practice based on first hand accounts and recent research in top international advertising agencies.
Encourage students to draw on their personal experience of advertising and promotion to enhance the theoretical and strategic perspectives of the module.

Examine ethical, critical and social issues arising through contemporary practice in the field of advertising and promotional communication.

**Module Objectives**

At the end of this module you should be able to:

- Discuss ethical debates about particular advertisements in terms of differing ethical arguments and alternative national regulatory systems.
- Construct a basic promotional plan based on a strategic communication rationale and including explanations of positioning, targeting and segmentation.
- Interpret creative executions in particular media such as print advertisements in terms of their likely target audience and intended market positioning.
- Distinguish between media vehicles and media channels and construct a basic media plan for a hypothetical promotional campaign.
- Explain how the various advertising agency roles interact in a typical model of the creative advertising development process.
- Evaluate the uses, advantages and drawbacks of alternative research approaches in the communications field.
- Describe some of the marketing objectives that promotional communication can support such as new brand launch, re-positioning, or new market entry.
- Outline the contribution of differing theoretical approaches to advertising and promotional communication practice.
Module Contents

Chapter 1: Studying Advertising and Promotional Communication
1.1 Functionality, Symbolism and the Social Communication of Brands
1.2 Advertising Agency Communications Planning

Chapter 2: Theorizing Advertising and Promotional Communication
2.1 Theories of Persuasive Communication: The Hierarchy of Effects Tradition
2.2 Consumer Culture Theory
2.3 Concepts of Consumer Culture Theory applied to Advertising

Chapter 3: The Role of Advertising and Communication in Brand Strategy
3.1 Strategic Marketing and Brand Communication
3.2 Advertising as Social Communication

Chapter 4: The Business of Advertising and Promotion
4.1 Advertising Agencies in Transition
4.2 Advertising Agency Roles and Operations

Chapter 5: The Changing Media Infrastructure for Advertising and Promotion
5.1 The Changing Media Environment
5.2 Media Planning

Chapter 6: Mediated Entertainment and Multi-Channel Promotion
6.1 Mediated Entertainment and Marketing
6.2 Techniques of Entertainment Marketing

Chapter 7: The Permeable Borders of Advertising: Local and Global Issues
7.1 Globalization and Cross-cultural Communication
7.2 International Advertising Management

Chapter 8: Ethics and Regulation of Advertising and Promotional Communication
8.1 Why should Advertising be Ethical?
8.2 Ethical debates surrounding advertising
8.3 Clarifying ethical arguments with concepts from moral philosophy

Chapter 9: Research in Advertising
9.1 Uses of Research in Advertising
9.2 Advertising Research Techniques

Chapter 10: Review of Advertising and Promotional Communication
10.1 Social Research in Advertising and Promotional Communication
10.2 Theory and practice in advertising
Chapter 1: Studying Advertising and Promotional Communication

Introduction

Overview

Studying advertising and promotional communication can be exciting not only because of its role in marketing but also because it engages with our own experience. Chapter 1 sets the scene for the module, discussing some of the issues involved in studying this complex and rapidly evolving area. Advertising and promotional communication are powerful elements in contemporary brand marketing and an influential form of contemporary social communication. The chapter explains the centrality of current notions of the brand ‘image’ and ‘personality’ to promotional strategy. It also introduces some of the most important concepts around which the module is organized. It marks a distinction between functionality and symbolism of brands. The chapter explains that the module takes a strategic, integrated and research-based approach to communications management.

Aims

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- Establish the major themes which underpin the module
- Engage students with a sense of the immediacy of promotional communication as a feature of their daily experience as consumers, as citizens, or as managers
- Explain the important distinction between brand functionality and brand symbolism
- Indicate something of the broad scope of study in this complex and evolving area

Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

- Talk about the scope of advertising and promotional communication as a topic of study and research
- Explain the distinction between functionality and symbolism of brands
- Understand the importance of three major themes in marketing communications planning: strategy, integration and research
Contents

Introduction 1
  Overview 1
  Aims 1
  Learning Outcomes 1

Contents 2

Resources 3
  Essential readings 3
  Readings for further study 3
  Web links 3

1.1 Functionality, symbolism and the social communication of brands 4
  Learning Objectives 4
  Introduction: The experience of advertising 4
  Functionality, symbolism and the social communication of brands 4
    Activity 1.1.1 6
  Is anything new in advertising? 6
    Activity 1.1.2 7

1.2 Advertising Agency Communications Planning 8
  Learning Objective 8
    Activity 1.2.1 9
  Strategic Communication Planning 9
    Activity 1.2.2 11

Summary 13
  Self-assessment activity 13
  Online discussion topic 13

Feedback on activities 14
Resources

Essential readings


This chapter in the essential module text introduces the major themes of the module and explains the scope of social research and managerial practice that the module covers.

Readings for further study

**Section 1.1**


A book written by an academic semiotist, Marcel Danesi, called *Brands* (2006) published by Routledge offers a rich and insightful account of brand symbolism from a semiotic perspective.

**Section 1.2**


It will also be useful to peruse the following Journals:

- *Journal of Advertising Research*
- *Journal of Consumer Research*
- *Journal of Advertising*
- *Consumption, Markets and Culture*
- *Journal of Marketing Communications*
- *International Journal of Advertising*

Web links

- http://www.symbolism.org/about.html

This is the web presence of a consulting organization working in brand symbolism. It carries a number of interesting articles and other resources on symbolism in popular culture.

Examples of advertisement Agencies and professional associations:

- http://www.fallon.com/05/fallon.html
- http://www.aaasite.org/
1.1 Functionality, symbolism and the social communication of brands

Learning Objectives

- Talk about the scope of advertising and promotional communication as a topic of study and research
- Explain the distinction between functionality and symbolism of brands

Introduction: The experience of advertising

We have all asked questions about advertising at some time or other. Which promotional messages do you recall seeing in the last week? How did you respond to them? With indifference? Or with fascination? Were you offended, intrigued, bored? Did you talk about them with your friends? Many people complain that advertising communication is repetitive, vulgar, tedious or meaningless. What are these advertisements trying to achieve? Who, exactly, is responsible for them? Who decides which ads are appropriate to show and which are not? Do we react in the way that advertisers want us to, or are they simply wasting their money? Does the quantity and style of promotional communication create social problems, or does it cure social problems?

This module revolves around everyday questions like these about advertising and promotion as we, consumers and citizens, experience it. These very questions are also asked by the professionals who create advertising and promotion and our aim in this module is to understand advertising and promotion better from a managerial perspective as well as a consumer perspective. In particular, advertising and promotional communication has a richly symbolic dimension which brand planners have to try to manage. The functional utility of marketed brands and services is undeniably important but, arguably, advertising and promotional communication are most powerfully expressed when dealing with the symbolic meaning of brands. In this section we discuss the key distinction of functionality and symbolism in brand communication. This distinction is an important one for understanding why advertising and promotional communications are the way they are. In order to make this distinction we will begin to examine the notion of the brand and to outline a historical context for brand communication.

Functionality, symbolism and the social communication of brands

Brands

Brands and branding are central to this module’s treatment of advertising and promotion. Branding has become central to practice not only in consumer marketing but in business-to-business, non-profit and public sector, services marketing and beyond. A service, a product, a political party, a university, an author, a celebrity, a corporation, a country, can all be treated as brands in terms of the way they are promoted. The brand ‘personality’, brand ‘values and
brand ‘image’ are the point of departure for communications planning since all communications need to reflect those same values. Brands are partly material, consisting in particular combinations of design, service, colour and so forth, and partly intangible. The intangible part reflects the accumulated ideas and experiences of consumers which form their impression of that brand. In the ideal integrated communications plan the brand is portrayed consistently through all communication channels. The ultimate objective is to create a clear and distinctive market positioning linked to the brand values.

Brands, then, are not merely labels for products with particular bundles of features and performance. They also have an abstract dimension that brings particular sets of psychological and emotional associations to the consumer’s engagement with that brand.

**Brand functionality**

Functionality refers to the practical use benefits conferred by a particular brand. As economists say, branded products and services have utility. If it is a painkiller, does it alleviate headaches or muscle pains? If it is a wrinkle cream, does it make the user look (or feel) younger? If it is a car, is it reliable, comfortable, do the brakes work well? Clearly, functionality is important. Products that are of shoddy quality will not be popular. Nevertheless, functionality is only one aspect of the brand. In other words, functionality is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for a successful and popular consumer brand. It must also have a strong, distinctive and attractive brand image.

Brand management is a practical task which often includes matters such as raw material sourcing or (especially with services) staff training, manufacture and quality management. But the brand is, in a sense, more than the sum of its parts. Its intangible aspect is hugely important. It is this aspect of the brand, often called its ‘image’, that can be exploited, developed, popularized and promoted through promotional communication.

**Brand symbolism and social communication**

Symbolism refers to the intangible, abstract ideas and attributes of the brand, often referred to loosely as its brand ‘image’. Brands have to engage the consumer imagination and link consumption with abstract values.

Anthropologists have long known that the ownership and display of possessions has a powerful symbolism. Possessions can signify social status, relationships, age, gender, religious belief, group membership, ethnicity or nationality; possessions can also hold great emotional power for the owner. Possessions can, in other words, communicate values, emotions, roles, origin, relationships and other meanings connected with self and social identification. Brands can be seen as a rich vocabulary of symbolic social communication.

Before you proceed to the next section, try the following activity to consolidate your understanding. As with all such activities, please make sure that you have completed all the required reading for the topic first, and if you have any problems with the questions don’t
hesitate to go online and discuss these with your module tutor and/or with your fellow students.

**Activity 1.1.1**

Look at the table below listing the top 13 global brands by value:

1. Coca Cola
2. Microsoft
3. IBM
4. GE
5. Intel
6. Nokia
7. Disney
8. MacDonald’s
9. Toyota
10. Marlboro
11. Mercedes-Benz
12. Citi
13. Hewlett Packard


Reflect on your own ideas about these brands:

- List the adjectives that spring to mind when you think of each brand.
- Where did your ideas about each brand come from?
  - From your own experience of using the brand? Or from the communication you have engaged with about that brand, whether in the form of everyday conversation, press stories, TV and movie items, sponsorship or advertising?

Feedback: See page 14

**Is anything new in advertising?**

Before we move on in the chapter it might be useful to reflect briefly on the historical position of advertising. Advertising and promotional communication might be thought of as essentially modern phenomena, but the issues they raise are far from new. Advertising is often presented as if it became a sophisticated device of persuasion only in the 20th Century. But informative advertising has been found in ancient civilizations. For example, advertising signs can be seen today in the remains of Ephesus, the 2000 year-old Biblical city in modern Turkey. Other forms of persuasive promotion are associated with the modern era, but they are not new either. McFall notes complaints about advertising in London in the mid-1700s. People wearing advertising hoardings thronged London streets, promotional posters were posted on every available public space and other forms of promotion such as product placement were far from unknown. For example, patent medicine entrepreneur and philanthropist Thomas Holloway placed his
branded medicines and tonics in London stage plays of the time and even asked Charles Dickens to mention them in his novels. Born in 1800, Holloway became one of Britain’s richest men by spending the equivalent of up to $100,000 per year on his promotional budget, including billboards in China. Today a College of the University of London, Royal Holloway, bears his name to mark the building he bequeathed it². One lesson we can take from this historical perspective is that while the practices of advertising are not new, the technology and media infrastructure of advertising is, relatively speaking. Digital communications technology and broadcasting de-regulation in many countries have created an historically unprecedented communications environment for promotion.

Bearing in mind the above discussion, and before you proceed, please attempt the following activity

Activity 1.1.2

Look up some print ads on an advertising history resource websites from a decade of your choice. Now compare those ads to a selection from this week’s magazines. In what ways do you feel the respective ads reflect changes in the particular society they depict and/or changes in the techniques of advertising?

Feedback: See page 14
1.2 Advertising Agency Communications Planning

This section introduces the managerial perspective on advertising and communication. Top advertising agencies emphasize three elements in their communications planning: integration, strategy and research. Throughout this module, as well as drawing on contemporary cultural theory, we will refer to accounts of advertising and promotional practice from top international advertising agencies. From these accounts, you will discover that key elements of current practice include a strategic perspective on advertising communication and an integrated and research-based approach to communications planning.

Learning Objective

- Outline the managerial emphasis of the module in terms of three major themes: strategy, integration and research

The strategic perspective

A distinction is often drawn in management policy between strategy and tactics. The tactical perspective is usually described in terms of

- short-term objectives, small-scale resource commitment and a product or market level of operation.

Strategy is usually described in terms of

- medium-to-long term objectives, major resources and a corporate level of operation.

Strategic decisions are long term, command significant resources, have serious implications for the corporation and, therefore, involve careful planning.

Tactics

Promotion is often described, in standard marketing management texts, as one of the tactical tools available to marketing managers to manipulate demand. The popular marketing conceptualization of the Four P’s, Price, Promotion, Product and Physical distribution, also known as the Marketing Mix, suggests that all promotional decisions are tactical rather than strategic.

But this is not necessarily so. Advertising campaigns have changed the fortunes of large organizations and radically altered the competitive structure of entire markets.

Before you continue, try activity 1.2.1. This will be useful in encouraging you to research the internet on this subject and form your own views and perspectives. As always, remember to seek online assistance if you require it.
Activity 1.2.1
Use the internet to search for three examples of brand advertisements or brand websites.

☐ What is the functionality of each advertised brand? In other words, what practical purpose does it serve?

☐ Does each brand also have a symbolic meaning? For example, Mercedes-Benz is a brand of car with a good reputation for quality, but it is also a symbol for prestige and ‘making it’ in life which features in pop songs and movies. What are the symbolic meanings attached to the brands you have chosen?

☐ Discuss your interpretation of those meanings with your fellow students and friends. Do you agree?

☐ Is it possible that there are many equally valid interpretations possible of the symbolic meaning of the advertised brand?

Feedback: See page 14

Strategic Communication Planning

The strategic rationale for promotion

The strategic managerial perspective on advertising and promotion implies that, when a promotion agency receives a brief from a client, the agency should conceive of the brief in the context of the client’s strategic marketing objectives. So the initial focus of the agency is not on creativity, audience response, or even sales, but on supporting the client’s marketing needs with a communication solution. Strategic communication planning is carefully devised with detailed consumer and market research. Above all, strategic advertising and promotion has a carefully considered rationale or purpose that is consistent with the overall marketing and corporate strategy of that organization. This purpose is what gives the communications coherence even through different creative executions deployed through different media channels. One benefit of having a carefully-conceived purpose behind communication planning is that results are more accountable if the outcomes of campaigns can be judged against a set of objectives. Another is that the creative staff have a clear brief to work to.

For example, in one well-known UK campaign by agency DDB London for German car manufacturer Volkswagen, the consumer research indicated that the target market segment thought VWs were more expensive than similar cars in the same class. The agency decided that the strategy, the rationale for advertising, should be that VWs are less expensive than people might think. Every advertisement in the campaign follows the same basic theme—it tells consumers that VWs are not as expensive as they might think. The various creative executions convey this message in amusing and offbeat ways and the ads have won many awards during the ten years or more in which the campaign has been running.
Another important feature of communications planning is referred to as integration. This means the integration of the different media channels to enhance or leverage the overall effect.

**Integration**

Integration in marketing communication (often called by the buzz-term Integrated Marketing Communications or IMC) refers to the co-ordinated use of a number of communication channels in the same campaign. Increasingly, clients expect full service advertising agencies to be able to deliver expertise in all promotional media and also to plan campaigns that integrate creative executions and media planning for all channels simultaneously. So, for example, a campaign might utilize public relations, a web presence and in-store sales promotions, all carrying consistent brand values. The objective is not only to create a sense of coherence for the brand but also to reach members of the target segment who may not be easily reached through mainstream media.

**Through-the-line solutions**

Another industry term for integration is ‘through-the-line’ solutions. Advertising agencies still sometimes use a terminology that divides mass media promotions such as broadcast media, national daily press and cinema advertising (called ‘above the line’) from other promotional media such as sales promotions, direct selling, direct mail and so on (called ‘below the line’). Conventional wisdom held that above the line media were best for the strategic purpose of raising mass awareness while below the line promotions could be used in support to persuade consumers to trial the product or to create short term sales through money-off or two-for-one offers or short term sales promotions.

The logic of IMC and through-the-line communication is simple. If a message or theme is deployed consistently but through different communication channels this can have a reinforcing effect, making the brand message more powerful. If the brand images which consumers encounter in different channels carry different messages, then this might confuse the consumer and dilute the brand image. Furthermore, it makes sense to create campaigns that can translate to executions on different channels because the message will reach more consumers.

**The role of research**

Naturally enough, the academic study of advertising and promotion draws on research into many aspects of the field. Similarly, research is central to a great deal of advertising agency practice. Consumer and market research have played major roles in advertising practice since advertising agencies began to evolve into their modern form around the 1950s. In fact, most of today’s major international market research organizations grew out of their origins in advertising agencies. Today, research remains a major feature of advertising planning. Consumer and market research into competitive conditions, trends, attitudes and behaviour underpin most promotional campaigns. Research is also extensively used by agencies to test creative executions before campaign launch.
Later in the module we will examine some of these research techniques more closely. For now, it is sufficient just to say that the approach to advertising and promotion elucidated in the module assumes that research is fundamental to managerial practice in this field, as well as being fundamental to its academic study.

Before you go any further in this chapter, please try the following activity.

**Activity 1.2.2**

Throughout this course it will be useful for you to develop descriptive knowledge of current practice in advertising and promotion. You can begin to do this by looking up some websites of advertising agencies and professional associations listed in the resources section of this chapter. You can begin to build up a personal scrapbook of case vignettes of advertising and promotional practice.

It will also be very useful for you to gain access to some academic journal sources such as those listed in the further reading for this Section.

Feedback: See page 14

The role of research in advertising and promotion is discussed in more detail later in the module. For the present the key issue is this: research can ground brand communication strategy in facts about the market and its consumers. Research-based communication strategy is not merely the subjective creation of creative professionals or marketing planners. It involves the integration of the brand personality and values as conceived by the brand client with facts about the marketplace. The brand and the marketplace facts are crystallized and articulated in the creative campaign. This means that advertising and promotion campaigns in practice are conceived and executed through the combined efforts of several groups of people: the brand client representatives, and the agency account team and researchers.

**Marketing, signification and positioning**

A communication perspective on marketing practice need not stop with promotion. As we have seen, symbolic communication can be just as penetrating as communication that is made explicit through language. The implication of symbolic communication for marketing is that every aspect of the marketing mix signifies something- it communicates. A high price signifies prestige, exclusivity and, by implication, confers power on the owner. An intensive distribution strategy (distributing a brand through any possible outlet, such as chewing gum) signifies that the brand does not have a prestige or status positioning. Product design is also a powerful signifier. Marketing activity often appeals to the consumer's aesthetic sensibility. People like to buy things that are beautiful, elegant, stylish. Dyson vacuum cleaners and Mazda MX5 sports cars are two examples of products which have a strong aesthetic appeal. This appeal carries a symbolic resonance implying something positive about the consumer's sense of taste and discernment.
Brand consistency

The key issue for marketing is that the brand story told by all these communications should make sense, it should be consistent. Some owners of prestige brands are very annoyed when retailers sell their brand at a discounted price for exactly this reason— they worry that the lower price will undermine the brand positioning, reducing its authenticity. Marketers know that the positioning of a brand, the complex of tangible and intangible attributes of a brand, needs to be reinforced by every possible means so that consumers are entirely clear about it. Inconsistencies or discordant elements might damage the brand image. That is one reason why brand planners, rather than marketers, are increasingly representing clients with communication agencies. They have the overall responsibility as ‘brand custodians’ to make sure that what they see as the core values and image of the brand are preserved in all creative executions.
Summary

Our own consumer experience is the starting point for understanding advertising and promotion. In studying this topic students are encouraged to notice the promotions they encounter, to speculate on their promotional objectives and to gather collections of promotional communications for analysis and discussion. Functionality refers to the practical characteristics of a branded product or service.

Symbolism refers to the brand ‘image’, those abstract qualities that people learn to associate with a brand because of the communications about it that they encounter.

- Social communication refers to the way the brands we consume act as a cultural vocabulary signalling our sense of our social identity to others and reflecting our own fantasies and aspirations of status and glamour.
- Three key terms for understanding promotion planning are strategy, integration and research: strategy refers to the need for communications to have a clearly conceived purpose that is consistent with the overall marketing strategy; integration refers to the need for communications planners to consider the interaction of different media channels in designing campaigns; research refers to the need for communications strategy to be grounded in a thorough understanding of the relevant market and its consumers.

Self-assessment activity

1. Make a list of all the forms of promotion and advertising you have seen in the last month. Does the list surprise you? Can you think of any social spaces or media that have not yet been exploited by advertisers?

2. To what does the word ‘integration’ refer to in marketing communications? This module explains that integration has increased importance within the new media infrastructure. Can you explain some reasons for this?

3. This chapter has explained that advertising and promotion perform a complex social role as well as an essential commercial function. Are these roles mutually reinforcing or mutually exclusive?

4. Read the Tourism Authority of Thailand case on pages 21-23 of the essential text and attempt the case questions.

Online discussion topic

After reading this chapter, has your view of advertising’s social role changed? Make a list of arguments in favour of advertising and contrast it with a list of arguments against advertising. Convene a study group to discuss the implications. Can the opposing viewpoints be reconciled?
Feedback on activities

Activity 1.1.1
The brands listed should evince particular associations for you. For example, Mercedes Benz tends to be linked with prestige, status, high quality and perhaps glamour. But few of us actually own such a car, we have formed our ideas about it from the social world around us. I hope that this thought-experiment will illustrate two things: one, that our ideas about brands are powerfully informed by communications as well as by experience, and especially by promotional communications. Secondly, I hope the exercise will show how important the distinction is between functionality (what a brand does) and symbolism (what a brand means).

Activity 1.1.2
This is another reflective exercise which does not have a single correct response but is designed to encourage you to start thinking analytically about advertising. Advertisements from a particular culture or era can be powerful messages about the values and behaviour which were taken for granted in that time. This exercise reflects two common questions about advertising. One is, does advertising reflect culture or influence it? A second question is, have the techniques of persuasion used by advertisers become more sophisticated over time? Reflect on these questions as you compare the respective advertisements and perhaps you can return to your response after you have studied later parts of the course.

Activity 1.2.1
This is another exercise in self-reflection designed to develop your analytical skills. Firstly, it encourages you to practice distinguishing between functionality and symbolism in advertising. Secondly, it begins to hint at a major theme of the course, namely that the meaning of advertising can be far more complex and unstable than we might expect. Perhaps your friends will come up with a number of different interpretations of each advertisement. If they all offer the same interpretation, then it just goes to show that sometimes advertising meaning can be quite easy to agree upon!

Activity 1.2.2
One of the main aims of this course is to encourage you to think about advertising analytically rather than simply responding to it as a consumer. Building up a selection of advertisements should help you to begin to understand the wide range of communication and marketing objectives advertising and promotion can support. Studying academic journal articles on advertising should help you to understand the wide range of theoretical approaches that can be taken to analyse advertising.

Feedback on self-assessment activity
Regarding the second question, the meaning of integration in a marketing communications context refers to the combination and co-ordination of different communication channels in a single campaign. It is growing in importance because the rise of new media, driven by new technology, and changing media
consumption patterns. The third question asks you to reflect on a major theme of
the module, the adoption of perspectives from cultural and social studies to
understand advertising management. The module implies heavily that these two
perspectives are far from mutually exclusive, though of course, like most things in
advertising, this is a matter of opinion!

The *Tourism Authority of Thailand* case on pages 21-23 of the essential text:

**Question 1**

A perception matrix (defined in Hackley (2005) page 252) is a well-known device
for spatially representing brand perceptions. Two axes, for example in this case,
quality and cost, can be used and different countries’ position plotted on the
graph as in this example for UK beer brands:

![Perceptual Mapping](attachment:image.png)

The remainder of the exercise is speculative, designed to get you and your
colleagues to think like brand planners who are trying to market a country. The
Tourism Authority of Thailand’s advertising agency undertook exactly such an
exercise in the course of planning their promotional campaign.

**Question 2**

Once again, this exercise is designed as a strategic thinking exercise, there is no
correct answer.

**Question 3**

The idea of this exercise is to give you the opportunity of applying some strategic
communication planning principles speculatively to a case of your choice, perhaps
using your own country of origin. Every country has to market itself as a
destination for tourists, business conferences, business start-ups and so forth.
What are the key issues which you feel apply in the case of a particular country?