

Complete MBA Exam Notes

Integrated Marketing Communication, Media Planning and Promotion

Expanded explanatory notes compiled from all uploaded class PDFs. Each concept is defined first and then explained in plain exam-writing language with examples wherever relevant.

What this file gives you	A chapter-wise, exam-ready set of detailed notes where every listed concept has been explained, not just named.
Chapters covered	Introduction to IMC, Communication Process, Role of IMC in Marketing, Source-Message-Channel factors, Objective Setting and Budgeting, Creative Planning, Media Planning, Sales Promotion, PR/Publicity/Corporate Advertising.
Best way to use	Read section definitions first, then revise models, then learn examples for 10-mark and 15-mark answers.
Writing tip	In exam answers, use the order: definition → explanation → types/models → advantages/limitations → example → short conclusion.

1. Introduction to Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

Marketing and its evolution

Definition: Marketing is the process of creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, partners, and society.

Explanation: Older definitions of marketing focused mainly on moving goods from producer to consumer. Modern marketing is much wider. It is not just about selling a finished product. It begins from understanding customer needs, creating value, communicating that value clearly, and building long-term relationships. This is why modern marketing is often described as moving from “to market”, to “marketing to”, and finally to “marketing with” customers. In the latest stage, firms collaborate with consumers, take feedback seriously, and often co-create products, services, and brand experiences.

Value

Definition: Value is the customer’s perception of benefits received compared with the cost of acquiring and using the product.

Explanation: Value is not only price. A consumer compares all benefits with all sacrifices. Benefits can be functional, such as a phone’s camera quality; experiential, such as the ease and pleasure of using the phone; and psychological, such as status or confidence. Costs include money, time, effort, learning cost, maintenance, and even disposal cost. A product is preferred when consumers feel that benefits exceed sacrifices.

Marketing mix

Definition: The marketing mix is the set of controllable tools a company uses to influence demand: product, price, place, and promotion.

Explanation of each element:

Product means the offering itself, including features, quality, design, packaging, and branding.

Price means what the customer gives in exchange, including list price, discounts, and perceived value.

Place means distribution, availability, retail presence, and channel design.

Promotion means all communication used to inform, persuade, and remind consumers. IMC largely works inside this promotional element, but it must stay aligned with the other three Ps.

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

Definition: IMC is the strategic coordination of all promotional tools and marketing activities so that the brand sends one clear, consistent, and persuasive message.

Explanation: In practice, a customer does not see a brand in separate pieces. The customer sees one brand through ads, social media, packaging, salespeople, influencers, websites, publicity, retail display, and after-sales service. IMC ensures that all these contact points work together rather than contradict each other. It seeks clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact.

Why IMC has grown in importance

Explanation of each reason:

Strategic integration: IMC combines advertising, PR, digital, sales promotion, direct marketing, and personal selling instead of treating them as separate silos.

Efficiency: When tools work together, duplication is reduced and the same budget creates more impact.

Synergy: One activity strengthens the other. For example, a TV campaign can drive search, search can drive website visits, and social media can sustain conversation.

Changing media environment: Consumers now move across television, smartphone, apps, social media, and e-commerce rapidly, so communication must be coordinated.

Consumer resistance to traditional advertising: Since consumers skip, block, or ignore many ads, brands need multiple touchpoints and more relevant communication.

Micromarketing and personalization: Firms now target smaller audience segments and even individuals, which requires integrated databases and cross-channel planning.

Role of IMC in branding

Definition: Branding is the process of creating a distinct identity and value in the customer's mind, and IMC is one of its strongest drivers.

Explanation: IMC builds brand identity by repeating a coherent meaning across channels. It builds brand equity because consistency improves awareness, trust, perceived quality, and emotional connection. In the relationship era, brands are expected to be authentic, transparent, and responsive. IMC therefore supports not only sales but also long-term reputation, loyalty, and shareholder value.

Promotional mix and each element

Definition: The promotional mix is the set of communication tools used by a firm to reach target audiences.

Elements explained:

Advertising: Paid, non-personal communication by an identified sponsor. It is useful for building awareness and brand image at scale.

Direct marketing: Direct communication with a customer to generate response or transaction. It includes email, direct mail, telemarketing, and direct-response media.

Digital/Internet marketing: Interactive and measurable communication through websites, social media, search, mobile apps, and online video.

Sales promotion: Short-term incentives such as coupons, discounts, and contests that stimulate immediate sales.

Publicity/Public relations: Unpaid or relationship-based communication that builds credibility and image.

Personal selling: Person-to-person communication that allows tailored persuasion and immediate feedback.

Touch points

Definition: A touch point is any opportunity a customer has to see, hear, experience, or interact with a company or brand.

Explanation of categories:

Company-created touch points are planned by the firm, such as ads or official social posts.

Intrinsic touch points arise from the product or service itself, such as packaging quality or store experience.

Customer-initiated touch points occur when consumers search online, visit the website, or contact customer care.

Unexpected touch points include third-party reviews, accidental publicity, or viral mentions. These often have lower control but high impact.

Paid, owned, and earned media

Paid media means channels the company purchases, such as TV ads, search ads, print ads, and sponsored posts.

Owned media means channels the company controls directly, such as its website, mobile app, blog, packaging, and official social pages.

Earned media means exposure gained through others, such as reviews, shares, conversations, media coverage, and recommendations.

Explanation: Strong IMC planning tries to make these three support one another. Paid media can drive people to owned media, and good owned-media content can generate earned media.

IMC planning process

Main steps and explanation:

1. Review of marketing plan: understand market situation, objectives, and role of communication.
2. Internal analysis: study brand strengths, weaknesses, image, and previous campaign learning.
3. External analysis: study customers, competitors, segments, and the environment.
4. Communication process analysis: understand receiver, message, source, and channel issues.
5. Set communication objectives: define what the IMC program should achieve.
6. Determine budget: set and allocate funds across tools, markets, and time.
7. Develop and execute promotional mix strategies: decide media, message, timing, and coordination.
8. Monitor and evaluate: compare results with objectives and improve future plans.

2. Communication Process and Consumer Response Models

Communication

Definition: Communication is the passing and exchange of information so that a commonness of thought is established between sender and receiver.

Explanation: Communication is successful only when the meaning intended by the sender is interpreted in a similar way by the receiver. This is why communication is not simply sending a message; it is about creating shared understanding. Differences in language, culture, education, beliefs, and context can reduce that shared understanding.

Source / sender

Definition: The source or sender is the person or organization that has information or meaning to share.

Explanation: In marketing communication, the source may be the company itself, a celebrity, a doctor, a spokesperson, or an influencer. The source matters because people judge the message partly through who is delivering it.

Encoding

Definition: Encoding means converting ideas, information, or feelings into symbolic form.

Explanation: Symbols may include words, pictures, music, colour, gestures, logo design, or storytelling style. For example, a luxury brand may encode prestige through elegant visuals, muted colours, and minimal copy rather than through explicit claims.

Message

Definition: The message is the set of symbols and meanings the source intends to convey.

Explanation: A message is not only what is said but how it is structured and designed. Content refers to the main idea; structure refers to the order and arrangement; design refers to visuals, tone, and style. In many advertisements, the image itself communicates more strongly than the copy.

Channel

Definition: The channel is the medium through which the message moves from sender to receiver.

Explanation of types:

Personal channels involve direct contact between two or more persons, such as salespeople, friends, or influencers communicating one-to-one.

Non-personal channels include mass media like television, radio, print, outdoor, websites, and social platforms.

Why it matters: The same message can work differently depending on the channel, because each channel has its own context, credibility, and pace.

Receiver

Definition: The receiver is the person or group at whom the message is directed.

Explanation: Receivers are never blank slates. They bring prior attitudes, past experiences, language ability, social background, and category knowledge. The same ad may be understood very differently by different receivers.

Decoding

Definition: Decoding is the process by which the receiver interprets the message.

Explanation: Decoding depends heavily on the receiver's field of experience. If sender and receiver share enough common ground, decoding will be close to the intended meaning. If not, misunderstanding occurs.

Field of experience

Definition: Field of experience refers to the total background of experiences, perceptions, values, and learning that a person brings to a communication situation.

Explanation: A communication works best when the sender's and receiver's fields of experience overlap. For example, a highly urban ad full of English slang may not decode properly in a rural audience segment.

Noise

Definition: Noise is any unplanned distortion or interference in the communication process.

Explanation: Noise may be physical, such as poor audio; psychological, such as prejudice against a brand; semantic, such as unclear language; or competitive, such as clutter from too many ads. Multitasking is also a major form of modern noise because viewers often switch attention during ad breaks.

Response and feedback

Response means all reactions of the receiver after exposure to the message, such as attention, thought, liking, search, or purchase.

Feedback means the part of the receiver's response that reaches the sender.

Explanation: In personal selling, feedback is immediate. In mass advertising, feedback is indirect and delayed, seen through sales, website traffic, comments, or research.

Word of mouth, buzz marketing, and viral marketing

Word of mouth means informal communication among consumers about brands, products, or services.

Buzz marketing means deliberately encouraging positive conversations around a brand.

Viral marketing means messages spreading rapidly through consumers' own sharing behaviour.

Explanation: These are powerful because people usually trust other consumers more than firms. Their success depends on message shareability, social motivation, and smart seeding among the first set of sharers.

Audience aggregation levels

Explanation:

Individual audience means communication aimed at one person, usually through personal selling or personalized digital messages.

Group audience means communication directed at a family, decision-making unit, or small group.

Niche market means a very small but clearly defined segment with specialized needs.

Market segment means a broader set of people with common needs and similar response patterns.

Mass market means a very large audience where messages are less customized.

AIDA model

Definition: AIDA is a classic response model explaining how communication moves a buyer from attention to action.

Explanation of stages:

Attention: First, the message must be noticed.

Interest: Then it must sustain curiosity.

Desire: Next, it must create wanting or preference.

Action: Finally, it must stimulate purchase or some other behavior.

Use: This model is simple and useful for understanding how ads and sales presentations are designed.

Hierarchy of effects model

Definition: A response hierarchy showing that consumers typically move through awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase.

Explanation:

Awareness means the brand is known.

Knowledge means the consumer understands what it is and what it offers.

Liking means a positive feeling starts to develop.

Preference means the brand is favoured over alternatives.

Conviction means the consumer becomes mentally ready to buy.

Purchase is the final behavioral act.

Use: This helps advertisers decide what stage the audience is currently in and what the next communication task should be.

Cognitive, affective, and behavioral stages

Cognitive stage is the thinking stage—what the consumer knows or perceives.

Affective stage is the feeling stage—what the consumer likes, dislikes, prefers, or emotionally associates.

Behavioral stage is the doing stage—the consumer purchases, tries, recommends, or repeats.

Explanation: Many communication models are simply different ways of arranging these three broad stages.

Standard learning hierarchy

Explanation: This is the learn–feel–do sequence. It is most likely when product involvement is high and brands are clearly differentiated. Consumers first gather information, then develop attitudes, and then act. It fits expensive and important purchases such as cars, laptops, or insurance.

Low-involvement hierarchy

Explanation: In low-involvement categories with little brand difference, consumers may learn a little, try the brand, and then form attitudes after use. This is closer to learn–do–feel. It often applies to routine FMCG purchases.

FCB model

Definition: The Foote, Cone & Belding model classifies buying situations on two axes—high versus low involvement, and thinking versus feeling.

Explanation of quadrants:

Informative quadrant: High involvement + thinking. Consumers seek information and compare seriously.

Affective quadrant: High involvement + feeling. Emotional and self-expressive motives matter.

Habitual quadrant: Low involvement + thinking. Routine purchases with little emotional investment.

Satisfaction quadrant: Low involvement + feeling. Pleasure-oriented purchases where experience matters.

Use: The model helps match communication style to buying behaviour.

Social consumer decision journey

Definition: A modern decision framework in which consumers move through consider, evaluate, buy, experience, advocate, and bond.

Explanation: Unlike old linear models, this journey is circular and social. Consumers read reviews, watch videos, post experiences, recommend brands, and sometimes become loyal advocates. This means communication must continue after purchase, not stop at the point of sale.

Cognitive response approach

Definition: This approach studies the thoughts generated in a consumer's mind while processing a communication.

Explanation of thought types:

Product/message thoughts include support arguments and counterarguments.

Source-oriented thoughts include source bolsters or source derogations.

Ad-execution thoughts include reactions to music, humour, design, or storytelling.

Importance: The meaning of an ad is shaped not only by the ad itself but also by the consumer's own mental responses.

Counterarguments and support arguments

Counterarguments are thoughts that oppose the message claim. They reduce persuasion.

Support arguments are thoughts that agree with or reinforce the claim. They improve message acceptance.

Explanation: A well-designed ad tries to minimize counterarguments and stimulate support arguments.

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

Definition: ELM explains that persuasion can happen through two routes depending on the receiver's motivation and ability to process information.

Central route: Used when involvement is high and the consumer carefully examines arguments. Strong logic, proof, and relevance matter most.

Peripheral route: Used when involvement is low and the consumer depends more on cues like celebrity, music, visual attractiveness, or humour.

Implication: High-involvement decisions need strong arguments. Low-involvement decisions can rely more on executional cues, though the cues must still fit the brand.

3. Role of IMC in the Marketing Process

Strategic marketing plan

Definition: A strategic marketing plan is the formal blueprint that guides how organizational resources will be used to achieve marketing goals.

Explanation: It comes from the overall corporate strategy and shapes product, price, place, and promotion decisions. Communication cannot be planned in isolation; it must support the marketing plan's target segments, positioning, and growth priorities.

Opportunity analysis

Definition: Opportunity analysis means identifying areas where favorable demand exists, customer needs are unmet, and the firm can compete effectively.

Explanation: A market opportunity is attractive only when all three conditions are present. A big demand alone is not enough if the firm lacks capability or faces unbeatable competition.

Competitive analysis

Definition: Competitive analysis is the study of competing firms, their strengths, their claims, their market behaviour, and the sources of advantage in the category.

Explanation: The goal is to identify the company's own competitive advantage. This could come from better quality, lower cost, stronger service, better distribution, or stronger branding. IMC then communicates that advantage clearly.

Target market selection

Definition: Target market selection is the process of choosing the segment or segments the firm wants to serve.

Explanation: This follows opportunity and competitive analysis. A brand may target one segment or several. The target decision directly affects advertising tone, media choice, content, and benefit emphasis.

Market segmentation

Definition: Segmentation means dividing a broad market into smaller groups with similar needs and similar response to a marketing situation.

Segmentation bases explained:

Geographic segmentation divides by location, region, climate, density, or city size.

Demographic segmentation divides by age, sex, family size, income, occupation, education, etc.

Psychographic segmentation divides by lifestyle, personality, values, or life stage.

Behavioral segmentation divides by usage rate, loyalty, occasion, and response behaviour.

Benefit segmentation divides by the specific benefit sought from the product.

Importance: Segmentation helps firms stop talking to 'everyone' and start talking meaningfully to a chosen group.

80/20 rule

Definition: The 80/20 rule says that in many categories, around 20 percent of buyers contribute around 80 percent of sales volume.

Explanation: This principle is useful in media and customer strategy. It encourages firms to identify heavy users and high-value segments rather than spreading effort equally across all buyers.

Targeting strategies

Undifferentiated marketing means using one offer and one broad strategy for the entire market.

Differentiated marketing means designing separate marketing strategies for different segments.

Concentrated marketing means focusing strongly on one niche or one segment.

Explanation: The choice depends on resources, competition, product nature, and growth goals.

Positioning

Definition: Positioning means designing the brand and its communication so that it occupies a distinct and valued place in the consumer's mind.

Main approaches explained:

By attributes/benefits: focus on one or more important product features or benefits.

By price/quality: position as premium, affordable, or value-for-money.

By use/application: link the brand with a specific usage occasion or purpose.

By product user: associate with a particular type of user.

By competitor: compare against a known rival.

By cultural symbol: use powerful symbols, icons, or meanings.

Importance: Positioning guides the entire creative strategy and media expression.

Repositioning

Definition: Repositioning is the attempt to change the brand's place in the consumer's mind.

Explanation: Brands reposition when sales stagnate, competition changes, or new opportunities appear. It is difficult because consumer perceptions may already be deeply established.

Product symbolism and branding

Product symbolism means what the product or brand signifies to consumers beyond functional use.

Branding means building a distinct identity through name, symbol, design, package, associations, and communication.

Brand identity is the total expression of the brand.

Brand equity is the added value that brand meaning gives to the product.

Explanation: Communication strengthens symbolism and identity, which in turn build equity.

Packaging

Definition: Packaging is not only a protective container but also an important communication tool.

Explanation: In self-service environments, packaging acts like a silent salesman. It signals category, quality, usage, personality, and target audience. It also influences point-of-purchase decisions.

Price decisions

Explanation: Price is what the consumer gives up in exchange for the offering. It is influenced by cost, demand, competition, perceived value, quality, and communication. Advertising can justify premium pricing by building value perceptions, or support value pricing by stressing savings.

Distribution channels

Marketing channels are the organizations involved in making the product available for use or consumption.

Direct channels mean the company sells directly to the final customer.

Indirect channels include wholesalers, retailers, dealers, or agents.

Explanation: Channel choice affects communication because some brands depend heavily on trade push, while others rely on consumer pull.

Push strategy and pull strategy

Push strategy means communication is directed mainly at channel members to persuade them to stock, support, and promote the product.

Pull strategy means communication is directed mainly at final consumers to create demand so that they ask retailers for the product.

Explanation: Most brands use a mix of both, but the balance differs by category.

4. Source, Message and Channel Factors in Advertising

Persuasion matrix

Definition: The persuasion matrix is a framework that shows how controllable communication variables interact with the receiver's response process.

Explanation: It links source, message, channel, and receiver variables with stages like attention, comprehension, yielding, and action. Its purpose is to help marketers ask: who should say it, what should be said, how should it be said, and through which channel should it be delivered?

Source factors

Definition: Source factors refer to the characteristics of the person or organization delivering the message.

Explanation: People do not judge a message purely by its words. They also judge the credibility, attractiveness, and power of the source.

Direct source and indirect source

A direct source delivers the message or directly endorses the product.

An indirect source does not explicitly endorse but helps draw attention or enrich the ad's presentation.

Explanation: A celebrity speaking about a product is a direct source; a model used decoratively may be an indirect source.

Source credibility

Definition: Source credibility is the extent to which the audience sees the source as expert and trustworthy.

Expertise means the source appears knowledgeable.

Trustworthiness means the source appears honest and believable.

Explanation: Credible sources can improve message acceptance, especially when the product category requires knowledge, such as healthcare or technology.

Sleeper effect

Definition: The sleeper effect is the phenomenon in which a message's persuasiveness can increase over time even if its source initially had low credibility.

Explanation: As time passes, people may remember the message but forget the discounting cue attached to the source.

Source attractiveness

Definition: Source attractiveness includes similarity, familiarity, and likability.

Similarity means the source seems like the audience.

Familiarity means the audience knows the source.

Likability means the audience finds the source pleasant or appealing.

Explanation: Attractive sources help because audiences often identify with them and transfer positive feelings to the brand.

Celebrity endorsement

Benefits: Celebrities create stopping power, increase attention, and can transfer desirable meanings to the brand.

Limitations: They may overshadow the brand, become overexposed, mismatch with the product, or create risk if their image is damaged.

Explanation: Celebrity choice should therefore consider fit with audience, product, values, and long-term ROI.

Meaning transfer model

Definition: A model which states that celebrities carry culturally acquired meanings—such as status, style, youth, discipline, or authenticity—and these meanings transfer to the brand and then to the consumer.

Explanation: The celebrity is valuable not merely because they are famous, but because of what they stand for in culture.

Source power

Definition: Source power exists when the source is perceived to have the ability to reward or punish the receiver.

Explanation: This is stronger in personal communication than in advertising. In advertising, it may appear when the source is an authority figure, institution, or admired group that consumers want to comply with.

Message structure: order of presentation

Primacy effect means information presented first is remembered or weighted more strongly.

Recency effect means information presented last may be more persuasive.

Explanation: Which one works better depends on audience involvement, message length, and medium. In many cases, strong arguments should not be buried in the middle.

Conclusion drawing

Definition: Conclusion drawing refers to whether the message explicitly states the final conclusion or leaves the audience to infer it.

Explanation: Explicit conclusions can improve clarity, especially for less involved or less educated audiences. Implicit conclusions can engage more thoughtful audiences, but they also create the risk of misinterpretation.

Message sidedness

One-sided message presents only positive points.

Two-sided message presents positives along with limitations or criticisms.

Explanation: One-sided messages work better when the audience is already favorable or less motivated to counterargue. Two-sided messages often work better with educated, skeptical, or initially opposed audiences because they seem more balanced and credible.

Refutational appeal

Definition: A refutational appeal presents the opposing side and then argues against it.

Explanation: It is useful when the audience is likely to hear the counter-position anyway. By confronting the issue directly, the brand can reduce later counterarguing.

Verbal versus visual messages

Explanation: Words explain and specify, while visuals create quick meaning, mood, and memory. In many ads, visual communication is especially powerful because it is processed quickly and can communicate qualities like purity, luxury, strength, or excitement without lengthy explanation.

Comparative advertising

Definition: Comparative advertising explicitly or implicitly compares the brand with a competitor.

Explanation: It is often used to position a new or smaller brand against a leader, highlight product differences, or sharpen the consumer's evaluation criteria. However, if done aggressively, it can reduce credibility or provoke backlash.

Fear appeals

Definition: Fear appeals use threat or danger to arouse concern and motivate protective action.

Explanation: They can highlight physical danger, social rejection, or negative consequences. Moderate fear usually works best when the ad also offers an effective response. Too little fear is ignored, while too much fear may create denial or avoidance.

Humor appeals

Definition: Humor appeals use amusement to attract attention and create liking.

Benefits: They grab attention, create positive mood, and may reduce resistance.

Limitations: They can distract from the brand message, may wear out quickly, and may not suit serious categories.

Explanation: Humor generally works better for low-involvement products and when the humour naturally fits the brand.

Channel factors

Definition: Channel factors are the effects that the medium itself has on communication processing.

Explanation: Different media create different cognitive conditions. Print and digital articles can be self-paced, while radio and TV are externally paced. The surrounding context also matters; a travel ad in a travel magazine often feels more relevant than the same ad in an unrelated environment.

Clutter

Definition: Clutter is the amount of advertising and other non-program material competing for attention in a medium.

Explanation: High clutter makes it harder for a message to be noticed, remembered, and processed. This is a major problem in television, digital feeds, and event sponsorship environments.

5. Objective Setting and Budgeting for Promotional Programs

Importance of objectives

Definition: Objectives are specific, measurable statements of what a communication program is expected to achieve within a defined time.

Explanation: Objectives coordinate internal teams, guide decisions, and provide benchmarks for later evaluation. Without them, campaigns become activity-driven instead of result-driven.

Marketing objectives versus communication objectives

Marketing objectives describe what the total marketing program should achieve, such as market share, sales growth, or profitability.

Communication objectives describe what the IMC program should achieve, such as awareness, knowledge, image change, trial, or response.

Explanation: Marketing objectives are business outcomes. Communication objectives are the communication tasks that help produce those outcomes.

Sales-oriented objectives

Definition: Objectives focused directly on increasing sales, revenue, market share, or ROI.

Advantages: They are concrete and financially meaningful.

Limitations explained:

Sales are influenced by many variables besides advertising, such as price, distribution, competition, economy, and product quality.

Advertising often has a carryover effect, meaning spending today may influence sales later rather than immediately.

Because of these issues, sales objectives alone give limited guidance for planning creative strategy.

Where sales objectives are appropriate

Explanation: Sales objectives fit best in direct-response advertising, retail advertising, promotional offers, and settings where other marketing variables remain relatively stable. In such cases, it is easier to connect communication directly with behavioral response.

Communication objectives

Definition: Objectives aimed at moving the audience through communication stages such as awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and action.

Explanation: These are often more realistic and diagnostically useful than pure sales objectives because they allow planners to see which stage is weak and where communication should intervene.

Communications effects pyramid

Explanation: This pyramid shows that not all consumers are at the same stage. Usually, a large proportion are at awareness, fewer have knowledge, fewer still show liking or preference, and only a small share reach trial and regular use. The communication task is therefore to move people upward step by step rather than expect everyone to buy immediately.

DAGMAR

Definition: DAGMAR stands for Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results.

Core idea: Advertising objectives should be communication tasks rather than vague hopes or raw sales targets.

Stages explained:

Awareness: make the audience know the brand exists.

Comprehension: make them understand the offer or claim.

Conviction: build belief or preference.

Action: trigger the desired behavior.

Characteristics of a good DAGMAR objective: clear task, defined target audience, benchmark of current position, desired degree of change, and a time frame.

Criticism of DAGMAR

Explanation:

Consumers do not always move in a fixed sequence.

It can be expensive and difficult to implement.

Some managers still insist that only sales matter.

Too much structure may restrict creative freedom.

Even so, the model remains useful because it forces precision in objective setting.

Inside-out versus outside-in planning

Inside-out planning begins with the firm's own perspective and then pushes messages outward.

Outside-in planning begins with the customer, their needs, and their journey, and then builds the communication plan backward.

Explanation: Modern IMC prefers outside-in planning because it is more audience-centered and responsive.

Zero-based communications planning

Definition: A planning method that begins with the tasks that need to be done rather than with last year's budget or standard formula.

Explanation: The planner asks what communication functions, media, and investments are truly required for this specific situation. This encourages more logical allocation.

Social consumer decision journey objectives

Explanation: In digital settings, brands must monitor conversations, respond to comments, amplify positive behavior, and lead shifts in awareness and behavior. Objectives now extend beyond pre-purchase to service, advocacy, and community building.

Budgeting

Definition: Budgeting is the process of deciding how much money to spend on promotion and how to allocate it across tools, markets, and time periods.

Explanation: Promotional budget should be viewed as an investment, not merely an expense. Cutting budget without analysis can harm future sales and brand strength, especially during recessions.

Contribution margin and marginal analysis

Contribution margin is the difference between revenue generated by a brand and its variable costs.

Marginal analysis says spending should increase until the incremental return from additional promotion equals the incremental cost.

Explanation: In theory this is logical, but in practice it is difficult because sales are influenced by more than promotion alone.

Sales response models

Concave-downward response curve means additional spending keeps increasing sales, but at a decreasing rate.

S-shaped response curve means very low spending has little effect, then spending reaches a threshold where impact rises sharply, and finally reaches saturation.

Explanation: These models show why too little spending may be wasted and too much spending may have low incremental return.

Factors influencing budget size

Product factors: Differentiation, hidden qualities, emotional motives, and purchase frequency affect how useful advertising will be.

Market factors: Introductory and growth stages often need more spending than maturity or decline stages.

Competition: Heavy competitive activity may require defensive or offensive spending.

Customer factors: User concentration and information needs influence budget logic.

Cost factors: Higher margins often justify greater communication investment.

Top-down budgeting approaches

Definition: Approaches in which top management determines the total budget first and then departments work within that ceiling.

Methods explained:

Affordable method: spend what the company thinks it can afford. Simple, but not strategic.

Arbitrary allocation: management assigns what it feels is enough. Easy, but subjective.

Percentage-of-sales method: budget is set as a fixed percentage of sales or unit cost.

Competitive parity method: budget is based on what competitors spend.

ROI budgeting: budget is justified by expected return.

General limitation: Top-down methods often reflect financial caution more than communication need.

Percentage-of-sales method

Advantages: financially safe, simple, stable, and easy to apply.

Disadvantages: assumes sales cause advertising rather than advertising helping cause sales; can underfund troubled brands; unsuitable for new products with no sales history; reduces spending exactly when sales are falling and support may be most needed.

Competitive parity method

Definition: Setting the budget by matching competitors' spending levels or percentages.

Explanation: The method assumes competitors know the correct level, which may not be true. It also ignores differences in goals, resources, and strategy.

Bottom-up or build-up approaches

Definition: Approaches in which objectives are set first, tasks are identified next, and costs are estimated afterward.

Explanation: These methods are more strategic because budget follows the communication problem instead of preceding it.

Objective-and-task method

Definition: Budget is developed by stating objectives, listing the tasks required to achieve them, and estimating the cost of those tasks.

Advantages: logical, transparent, and objective-driven.

Disadvantages: difficult to know exactly which tasks and how much spending are sufficient.

Why important: This is one of the most recommended budgeting methods for exam answers.

Payout planning

Definition: A long-term budgeting approach in which the firm projects future revenues and profits from a product and then works backward to decide the appropriate promotional investment.

Explanation: It is especially useful for new products, because the first year may show loss while later years produce profit.

Budget allocation

Explanation of factors:

Allocation across IMC elements depends on what tool is best suited to the job.

Market size and market potential influence how much support each region deserves.

Market share goals matter—investment brands often need higher share of voice than share of market.

Economies of scale mean larger advertisers may achieve better returns at lower relative spend.

Organizational factors such as politics, structure, and negotiation also influence actual budgets.

6. Creative Planning and Development

Advertising creativity

Definition: Advertising creativity is the ability to generate fresh, unique, and appropriate ideas that solve communication problems.

Explanation: Creativity in advertising is not just artistic beauty. A creative ad must also be relevant to the consumer and the brand. In other words, a beautiful ad that people remember but cannot connect to the brand is not fully successful.

Manager versus creative-person perspective

Managers usually define creativity by whether it helps sell the product and supports business results.

Creative professionals often emphasize originality, artistic expression, and impact.

Explanation: Strong campaigns usually balance both views. They are imaginative but still strategy-led.

Determinants of creativity: divergence and relevance

Divergence means the ad is novel, unusual, or surprising.

Relevance means the ad is meaningful, useful, or personally connected to the audience and the brand.

Explanation: Real creativity requires both. Divergence creates attention; relevance gives the attention value.

Elements of divergence

Originality: the ad presents something fresh or unexpected.

Flexibility: the idea can be seen from multiple angles or uses.

Elaboration: the execution is detailed, developed, and enriched rather than plain.

Synthesis: seemingly unrelated ideas are combined in an interesting way.

Artistic value: the ad has visual, verbal, or stylistic beauty.

Explanation: Research in the slide deck suggests some combinations work better than others, especially originality with elaboration.

Relevance types

Ad-to-consumer relevance means the way the ad is executed feels meaningful to the audience.

Brand-to-consumer relevance means the actual brand promise matters to the audience's life or needs.

Explanation: An ad may be highly original yet still weak if consumers do not see why the message matters to them.

Creative challenge

Explanation: The planner must transform a brand message into an execution that is engaging, memorable, and suitable for the market situation. Every product, target audience, and campaign objective requires a different creative solution.

Creative risk

Explanation: Breakthrough advertising often requires creative risk because safe ideas usually blend into clutter. However, risk should be calculated. It should stretch expression without losing brand relevance or consumer understanding.

Hard-sell versus emotional or image-led advertising

Hard-sell advertising focuses on rational argument, concrete benefit, and direct persuasion.

Soft-sell or image-led advertising focuses on emotion, associations, tone, and relationship building.

Explanation: The right choice depends on category, involvement, positioning, and communication objective.

Creative personnel

Explanation: Creative teams often come from less structured backgrounds and tend to think in abstract, less conventional ways. But creativity is not limited to the copywriter or art director. Everyone in IMC—planner, account person, media specialist, and client—should contribute useful problem-solving ideas.

Young's model of the creative process

Immersion: collect raw information and immerse in the brand problem.

Digestion: think through the material analytically.

Incubation: step back and allow subconscious processing.

Illumination: the key idea emerges.

Verification: refine, test, and make the idea practically useful.

Explanation: This model shows that creativity is not magic; it is a process combining research, thinking, rest, and revision.

Wallas model of the creative process

Preparation: research and information gathering.

Incubation: ideas develop below conscious attention.

Illumination: insight appears.

Verification: test and refine the solution.

Explanation: Like Young's model, it emphasizes that strong ideas grow from disciplined preparation.

Account planning

Definition: Account planning is the research-oriented function that brings the consumer voice into the creative process.

Explanation: Account planners study the product, market, competition, and audience and translate those findings into actionable creative insight. They help ensure that the ad is not only original but strategically correct.

Research inputs to creativity

Background research means understanding market trends, competitor communication, and the client's business context.

Product/service-specific research means learning the actual features, usage situations, complaints, and strengths of the product.

Problem detection means asking consumers what they dislike or find difficult, which can reveal both product improvements and communication opportunities.

Branding research helps understand what the brand currently means and what it should mean.

Brand pyramid

Definition: The brand pyramid is a framework that builds a brand from concrete facts at the base to emotional and strategic meaning at the top.

Levels explained:

Features: technical and tangible characteristics of the product.

Functional benefits: what the product does for the consumer.

Emotional benefits: how the brand makes the consumer feel.

Brand personality: the human-like traits, tone, and values of the brand.

Brand idea or essence: the core promise or purpose that stands at the top.

Explanation: The higher layers must be supported by the lower layers. Emotional meaning becomes stronger when functional performance is credible.

Creative brief

Definition: A creative brief is the central document that tells the creative team what problem the communication must solve and how success will be judged.

Key elements explained:

Background/context: what is happening in the market and brand.

Objective: what the communication must achieve.

Target audience: who exactly must be moved.

Insight: the human truth or tension that should drive the idea.

Key message / SMP: the single-minded proposition the ad should communicate.

Consumer benefit: what the audience gains.

Reason to believe: proof that makes the promise believable.

Tone and manner: the brand's communication personality.

Mandatories/deliverables: what must appear and what assets are needed.

Measures of success: how outcomes will be assessed.

Importance: It acts as the bridge between strategy and execution.

From creative brief to big idea

Explanation: A brief becomes powerful when it identifies not just a product fact but a human insight. The big idea then turns that insight into a simple, memorable campaign platform that can travel across media. The examples in the slides—Ariel, Bournvita, Cadbury, and UltraTech—show how deep insight creates durable campaigns.

Major selling idea

Definition: The major selling idea is the strongest single thing a company can say about its brand.

Explanation: Great campaigns usually organize themselves around one central promise or idea rather than many scattered messages.

Approaches to the major selling idea

Unique Selling Proposition (USP): promise a specific benefit, make it unique, and make it strong enough to move people.

Brand image: build a memorable identity or aura around the brand.

Inherent drama: find the dramatic truth in the product benefit and bring it to life emotionally.

Positioning: place the brand clearly in the mind using distinctive attributes or associations.

Explanation: Different brands use different routes depending on category and strategy.

Advertising campaigns and campaign theme

Definition: An advertising campaign is a set of coordinated communication activities built around one central theme over a period of time.

Explanation: The campaign theme gives continuity across media. It is often expressed through a slogan or tagline. A strong slogan is simple, memorable, emotionally resonant, and strategically aligned.

Qualitative and quantitative consumer research

Quantitative research explains how much, how many, and how strongly. Examples include usage and attitude studies, concept tests, product tests, and pricing studies.

Qualitative research explains why consumers think or behave in a certain way. Examples include focus groups, depth interviews, mystery shopping, exploratory discussions, and ethnographic observation.

Explanation: Quantitative research measures patterns; qualitative research uncovers motives and meanings.

Brand resonance model (Keller)

Definition: Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity model explains how strong brands are built step by step.

Levels explained:

Salience: who are you? This is awareness and category presence.

Performance and imagery: what are you? These represent functional and symbolic meaning.

Judgments and feelings: what about you? These show how consumers evaluate and emotionally react to the brand.

Resonance: what about the relationship? This is the deepest level—loyalty, attachment, community, and active engagement.

Explanation: The model shows that loyalty is the result of building identity, meaning, and response first.

Kapferer's brand identity prism

Definition: A six-sided model for understanding brand identity from both the sender's and receiver's perspective.

Elements explained:

Physique: tangible brand features such as logo, design, colour, packaging, or slogan.

Personality: the character and tone of voice of the brand.

Culture: the values and principles that guide the brand.

Relationship: the nature of the bond the brand offers to consumers.

Reflection: the typical consumer image the brand projects outwardly.

Self-image: how consumers see themselves when they associate with the brand.

Explanation: The model is useful because it combines outward expression with inward identity and helps create deeper brand consistency.

7. Media Planning

Media planning

Definition: Media planning is the process of selecting media vehicles, scheduling communication, and allocating budgets so that the message reaches the right audience in the right place, at the right time, and with the right frequency.

Explanation: Media planning is strategic, not mechanical. It begins with communication objectives and target audience understanding, and then converts them into channel, timing, and weight decisions.

Elements of media strategic planning

Who: defines the target audience.

Where/when: decides geography, occasion, and time period.

What: defines intensity and strategic priorities.

Why: links media to the communication objective.

How: decides weights, budget, and benchmarks.

Explanation: Good media planning aligns all these choices rather than choosing media only by cost.

NCCS

Definition: NCCS, or New Consumer Classification System, is a household classification method based on purchasing power rather than reported income.

Explanation: It uses the education of the chief wage earner and the number of selected consumer durables owned by the household. It is important because income can be underreported, while education and durable ownership better reflect actual living standard and media potential.

Reach

Definition: Reach is the number or percentage of unique people exposed to a medium or campaign at least once within a specified time.

Explanation: Reach tells us how widely the communication spreads. A high-reach plan is useful for launches, national awareness, and category reminders.

Frequency

Definition: Frequency is the average number of times reached people are exposed to the message.

Explanation: Frequency helps build recall and persuasion. One exposure may create awareness, but repeated exposures often strengthen memory and response. Effective frequency is not fixed; it depends on the objective, creative quality, category noise, and brand maturity.

Frequency distribution

Definition: Frequency distribution shows what proportion of the audience saw the ad zero times, one time, two times, and so on.

Explanation: This is important because the same average frequency may hide very different realities. Some people may be heavily exposed while others are not reached at all.

TRP / TVR

Definition: Television Rating Point is the percentage of the total target audience that watches a program or time band.

Explanation: TRP takes into account not only whether a person watched but also how much of the duration they watched. Therefore partial viewing counts proportionally.

GRP

Definition: Gross Rating Points are the sum of rating points delivered by a media schedule.

Formula meaning: $GRP = Reach \times Frequency$.

Explanation: GRP measures total weight of delivery. It can be added across spots only when the audience base remains the same.

CPRP

Definition: Cost Per Rating Point is the cost required to buy one rating point.

Explanation: It is used to compare cost efficiency across programs, channels, or schedules. Lower CPRP usually indicates more efficient media buying, though planners must also consider context and audience quality.

Share of expenditure and share of voice

Share of expenditure means the brand's media spend as a proportion of total category spend.

Share of voice means the brand's GRPs as a proportion of total category GRPs.

Explanation: These measures show how visible a brand is versus competitors. A brand with higher share of voice often has stronger visibility and potential growth support, especially if its share of voice exceeds its current share of market.

Media explosion in India

Explanation: The slides highlight the rise of multiple media forms—television, digital, print, radio, cinema, OTT, and smartphones. For planners, this means audience attention is fragmented, but also that campaigns can be designed in more tailored and layered ways. Television still offers mass reach, while smartphones and digital often provide strong second-screen and conversion opportunities.

Role of different media in the mix

Television and digital video: lead media for mass reach and storytelling; good for awareness and emotional communication.

Newspapers: useful for regional targeting, local credibility, and launch support.

Outdoor/OOH: reminder medium that builds visibility and salience in high-traffic zones.

Radio: engagement medium, especially useful for local markets and repeated recall.

Search: helps consumer discovery and captures active intent.

Display: supplements awareness and supports retargeting.

Content/social/influencer: builds advocacy, education, and brand conversation.

Explanation: No medium is universally best; each plays a different role in the communication journey.

8. Sales Promotion

Sales promotion

Definition: Sales promotion is the use of short-term incentives that provide extra value or inducement to the sales force, channel members, or final consumers to stimulate immediate sale or response.

Explanation: Sales promotion differs from advertising because its primary purpose is not long-term image building alone but immediate action. It speeds up the purchase decision.

Why sales promotion has grown

Explanation of each reason:

Growing retailer power: retailers demand more support from manufacturers.

Declining brand loyalty: consumers switch more easily, so promotions become important.

Higher promotional sensitivity: buyers increasingly respond to discounts and deals.

Brand proliferation: more brands create more clutter and more need for tactical support.

Short-term management focus and accountability: firms seek visible, measurable results quickly.

Growth of digital marketing: digital tools make coupons, limited offers, and targeted promotions easier to execute and track.

Concern about excessive promotion

Explanation: Overuse of sales promotion can devalue the brand, train consumers to buy only on deal, weaken long-term brand preference, and shift resources away from brand-building advertising. This is called the sales promotion trap or spiral.

Consumer franchise-building versus non-franchise-building promotions

Consumer franchise-building promotions support brand identity, brand preference, and long-term full-price purchase. They strengthen the brand franchise.

Non-franchise-building promotions mainly create a short-term sales spike without strengthening brand meaning. They may simply borrow customers temporarily from rivals.

Explanation: Managers must distinguish between promotions that build the brand and those that only inflate short-term numbers.

Consumer-oriented sales promotion objectives

Explanation of objectives:

Obtain trial and repurchase: encourage first use and then repeat purchase.

Increase consumption: motivate existing users to buy and use more.

Defend current customers: prevent switching to rival brands.

Target specific segments: tailor offers to specific groups.

Support IMC and brand equity: integrate promotions with broader brand communication when possible.

Sampling

Definition: Giving consumers a quantity of the product free of charge to induce trial.

When it works best: low unit value products, divisible products, and products with short repurchase cycles.

Advantages: allows risk-free trial, produces high trial rates, and lets consumers experience the brand directly.

Limitations: expensive, not ideal if benefits are not clearly superior, and payback comes only if users become repeat buyers.

Methods: door-to-door, mail, in-store, on-package, event sampling, digital or social-led sampling.

Coupons

Definition: A coupon gives a specified saving on purchase.

Advantages: appeals to price-sensitive consumers, reduces trial risk, supports repeat purchase, and may encourage trade-up.

Limitations: redemption is hard to predict, many users are existing buyers anyway, rates may be low, and misredemption may occur.

Distribution forms: newspaper inserts, direct mail, digital coupons, websites, apps, and mobile offers.

Explanation: Coupons are one of the oldest yet still powerful promotion tools because they deliver immediate economic value.

Premiums

Definition: A premium is an item or service offered free or at low cost as an incentive to buy the main product.

Free premium means the item is included or mailed without substantial extra cost.

Self-liquidating premium means the consumer pays some or most of the premium's cost plus handling.

Explanation: Premiums add extra value and can be especially effective when the free item has emotional or collectible appeal.

Contests and sweepstakes

Contest: winners are chosen on the basis of skill, creativity, or judged performance.

Sweepstakes: winners are chosen by pure chance.

Advantages: excitement, participation, and attention.

Problems: may attract people interested only in the prize, may not build the brand, and involve legal issues.

Explanation: These tools are best when the prize, mechanics, and brand fit naturally together.

Refunds and rebates

Definition: Offers where the manufacturer returns part of the purchase price after the consumer completes a redemption process.

Advantages: consumers respond strongly to large rebates, they can encourage switching or repeat buying, and some buyers perceive the lower price even if they never redeem.

Limitations: delayed savings, paperwork effort, suspicion that the product is weak, and risk that consumers postpone purchase unless rebates exist.

Explanation: Rebates often look attractive in high-ticket categories because the stated saving is large.

Bonus packs

Definition: Bonus packs offer extra quantity of product at the regular price.

Advantages: direct extra value, strong point-of-purchase impact, useful against competitors, and can encourage stock-up.

Limitations: may require extra shelf space and often appeal mostly to current users rather than new users.

Explanation: Bonus packs work well when consumers can clearly see and appreciate the extra quantity.

Price-off deals

Definition: Temporary reduction in the listed price, often shown directly on the pack.

Advantages: discount reaches all buyers, value is immediately visible, and larger quantity purchase may increase.

Limitations: may cause pricing and inventory problems, can attract mostly regular users, and can train consumers to expect lower prices.

Explanation: Price-offs are highly visible and therefore powerful, but frequent use can hurt perceived value.

Loyalty programs

Definition: Programs that reward repeat purchase with points, benefits, discounts, or gifts.

Advantages: encourage repeat behavior, support loyalty, and build customer databases.

Limitations: consumers may lose interest if reward accumulation is slow; many require app usage and active management.

Explanation: Loyalty programs are especially strong in services, travel, retail, and categories with repeated transactions.

Event marketing and sponsorship

Event marketing means linking the brand to an event or creating a themed event experience around the brand.

Event sponsorship means financially supporting an event in exchange for exposure, association, and participation rights.

Explanation: These tools allow brands to build lifestyle associations, create experiences, and engage audiences more deeply than ordinary advertising.

Trade-oriented sales promotion objectives

Explanation:

Obtain distribution for new products.

Maintain support for established brands.

Encourage display and merchandising effort.

Build retail inventories.

These objectives matter because consumer demand alone is not enough if retailers do not stock, display, or recommend the product.

Trade promotion tools

Contests and incentives reward reseller salespeople for effort.

Push money gives direct cash incentives to retail sales staff, though it may create conflict with management.

Trade allowances are deals encouraging stocking, promotion, or display.

Buying allowance gives a price reduction for orders placed in a fixed period.

Off-invoice allowance means a deduction directly on invoice value.

Promotional allowance rewards the retailer for doing agreed promotional activity.

Slotting allowance is the fee paid for shelf space or listing of a new product.

Failure fee covers retailer cost if the product must later be removed.

Displays and POP materials support in-store choice.

Sales training equips channel members to explain product benefits.

Trade shows create a forum for product display, lead generation, and relationship building.

Cooperative advertising shares ad cost between manufacturer and retailer or other partners.

Coordination with advertising and IMC

Explanation: Sales promotion works best when coordinated with advertising, media timing, and communication theme. Advertising can create awareness and meaning, while promotion adds urgency and action. Together they are stronger than either alone.

Sales promotion abuse and considerations

Explanation: Before running a promotion, the marketer must ask whether it will strengthen or weaken the brand in the long run, whether competitors are likely to retaliate, and whether other marketing problems—not just promotion—may be causing poor sales.

9. Public Relations, Publicity and Corporate Advertising

Public relations (PR)

Definition: Public relations is the management function that evaluates public attitudes, aligns organizational policies with the public interest, and executes programs to earn understanding and acceptance.

Explanation: PR is broader than media relations. It includes managing relationships with all important publics—employees, investors, communities, governments, media, and customers.

Traditional and new role of PR

Traditional PR focused on maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between the organization and its publics.

The new role integrates PR with marketing and IMC so that it also supports business and brand goals.

Explanation: PR today is expected not only to protect image but also to support launches, shape conversation, and add credibility to marketing programs.

Marketing public relations (MPR)

Definition: MPR refers to PR activities specifically designed to support marketing objectives.

Functions explained:

Build marketplace excitement before advertising begins.

Improve ROI by gaining exposure more credibly and at lower apparent cost.

Create news when there is little product news.

Introduce products with limited advertising budgets.

Add customer service value and deepen brand bonds.

Influence opinion leaders and defend products at risk.

Explanation: MPR works especially well when the brand needs credibility or newsworthiness.

Advantages and disadvantages of MPR

Advantages: cost-effective, targeted, credible, helpful in cluttered markets, and strong with opinion leaders.

Disadvantages: low control over how media use the story, no guaranteed time or space, difficulty in using exact slogans and formats, and weaker standard measures of effectiveness.

Process of PR

Research: measure attitudes, identify issues, and gather inputs.

Planning: define the PR problem, design the program, and set measurable objectives.

Action and communication: execute through appropriate tools.

Evaluation: measure what was achieved and adjust.

Explanation: PR should be managed as a disciplined process, not as occasional press release activity.

Target audiences in PR

Internal audiences include employees, stockholders, suppliers, and others directly connected with the organization.

External audiences include media, educators, business groups, governments, civic bodies, and financial communities.

Explanation: PR effectiveness depends on correctly identifying which publics matter for the issue at hand.

PR tools

Press release: a factual statement sent to media.

Press conference: direct interaction with journalists to communicate important information.

Exclusives: one media outlet is given special access.

Interviews: a spokesperson answers questions directly.

Community involvement: support for social and local causes to build goodwill.

Internet and digital PR: websites, blogs, social networks, and online news management.

Explanation: Different tools fit different objectives and issue contexts.

Advantages and disadvantages of PR generally

Advantages: credibility, relatively lower cost, ability to avoid clutter, support for image and lead generation, and ability to reach specific groups.

Disadvantages: incomplete control, possible weak linkage between sender and receiver, and sometimes poor coordination with marketing.

Measuring PR effectiveness

Methods explained:

Media content analysis studies what kind of coverage occurred and how prominently.

Survey research measures changes in awareness, attitude, image, or understanding.

Marketing-mix modeling tries to connect PR outcomes with broader business results.

Importance: Evaluation validates investment and helps improve future programs.

Publicity

Definition: Publicity is the generation of news or information about a person, product, service, or organization that appears in media but is not directly paid for and is not fully controlled by the organization.

Explanation: Publicity may be positive or negative. It is often more powerful than advertising because audiences perceive it as media-endorsed news rather than a purchased message.

Power of publicity

Why powerful: high credibility, strong news value, ability to generate word of mouth, and perception of independent endorsement.

Risks: the company cannot fully control timing, accuracy, or tone.

Explanation: Publicity can create massive success, but adverse publicity can damage a brand quickly.

Video news release

Definition: A publicity piece produced by publicists in a format that media outlets may use as a news story.

Explanation: It allows some influence over the content released, though not complete control over whether or how it is used.

Corporate advertising

Definition: Corporate advertising is advertising designed to promote the company as a whole rather than a specific product.

Objectives explained:

Enhance corporate image.

Communicate views on social, business, or environmental issues.

Boost employee morale.

Reduce uncertainty among investors or in newly changing industries.

Create identity for a diversified parent company.

Explanation: Corporate advertising supports reputation and legitimacy rather than immediate product sale.

Types of corporate advertising

Image advertising: builds the overall image of the organization.

Event sponsorship: associates the firm with events or causes to build equity and affinity.

Advocacy advertising: communicates the organization's position on controversial issues of public importance.

Cause-related advertising: links the brand or firm with nonprofit organizations or social causes.

Explanation: These types differ in purpose but all aim to shape how the company itself is perceived.

Advantages and disadvantages of corporate advertising

Advantages: good for positioning the firm, strong in reputation building, and useful for selected target groups such as investors or employees.

Disadvantages: effectiveness can be difficult to prove, campaigns can be expensive, and issue-based communication may raise ethical or political questions.

Measuring corporate advertising

Methods include attitude surveys, focus groups, and studies linking communication with financial indicators such as stock price movement or investor confidence.

Explanation: Since effects are often long-term and reputational, measurement is more complex than simple sales tracking.

Final Revision Guidance

For definitions, write the exact concept in one clear sentence first. This immediately tells the examiner that you know the term.

For theory answers, do not jump directly into examples. First explain the idea in general language, then add 2–5 sub-points, then conclude with a brand example.

For models such as DAGMAR, ELM, FCB, Brand Pyramid, or the Hierarchy of Effects, first name the stages in order, then explain what each stage means in consumer terms, and finally mention how the model helps marketers plan communication.

For media or promotion answers, connect tools with objectives. Examiners usually reward answers that show not just what a tool is, but when and why it is used.

For long answers, the safest exam structure is: definition → explanation → types/model → advantages/limitations → example → short conclusion.