

Hyperintegration: B-To-B Marketing Integration in Today's World

The proliferation of new media has significantly altered the realities of business-to-business marketing, redefining one of its core values in the process.

There was a time when integration simply meant that the ad and the direct mail piece arrived at the same time. More advanced marketers soon took the level of integration up a few notches, with common look and feel, themes and overall marketing message.

Now a new level of integration can be attained, using a wide range of richer, more interactive media, creating tighter links between tactics, and achieving better results and return on investment. We call that process hyperintegration.

Drivers of Hyperintegration

Hyperintegration is driven not only by new media proliferation, but also by some of the unique advantages of digital communications, including:

- **HYPertext LINKING**—the ability to move from one tactic or medium to another with just the click of a mouse.
- **METRICS CAPABILITY**—the recordkeeping capability that allows you to track users as they maneuver through your marketing materials on their way toward satisfying their needs.

These capabilities, when combined, offer you the opportunity to create marketing programs that work better, provide a better experience for the prospect or customer, and give management the accountability they are seeking.

Hyperintegration: What Does It Look Like?

In the same way that a traditional program integrates a variety of marcom tactics to advance the selling process, hyperintegration turbocharges those elements, strengthening the links between tactics and speeding the users' transitions between the stages of the buying cycle.

If you are introducing a new product, for instance, ads and direct mail pieces may still be in the mix, as in traditional integration. But they may be supplemented by online ads and search—both organic and paid—to help readers who don't have the URL to find the information. These tactics would drive interested prospects to a web site with full product information, a Flash presentation and ordering detail. You might include an RSS feed or a newsletter program, allowing a user to sign up for updates.

More importantly, hyperintegration is structured around a planned customer experience. A prospect sees an ad, and then what? They go to the web home page or landing page, and then what? They click deeper to more specific content, and then what? At every stage of the process, you identify the user's wants and needs, and offer alternatives specifically designed to reach them, prompting them to action and advancing toward the sale.

The key is organizing hyperintegration tactics around the stages of the buying process, establishing appropriate goals and expectations, and knowing which metrics, out of the mountain of data available, can tell you what's working and what's not. Actionable intelligence allows you to adjust your programs accordingly, building on the cycle of positive feedback.

Why Hyperintegration Works Better

Hyperintegration increases the effectiveness of B-to-B marketing communications for three important reasons:

- **Integration.** By outlining all possible user scenarios, hyperintegrated programs go beyond graphic and thematic integration. Tactics are linked together in a logical sequence designed to successfully anticipate what the user wants to do next and enable them to do it quickly and easily.
- **Planned customer experience.** A good program addresses each step in the customer experience, allowing users to move at their own speed through the buying process.
- **Continuous improvement.** Capitalizing on the metrics capabilities of the new electronic media, a hyperintegration program establishes target goals related to business objectives. You can drive the entire program to higher levels of performance by a process of continuous improvement.

Beyond Accountability

Those same metrics can provide the measurement capabilities marketers have been seeking for a long time, as well as the marketing ROI information that will translate into greater credibility in the executive suite.

In fact, a hyperintegration program that is working properly can be a well-oiled productivity machine, generating leads (or any other appropriate goal) at a rate that is measurable and predictable. Over time, as you gain experience with a market and a technology, you can estimate the amount of expenditure required to reach your marketing, sales, and business objectives, and thereby transform marketing costs from expenses to the virtual equivalent of a production input.

The goal, then, is to move marketing beyond accountability to being a more active participant in the process of achieving business goals, delivering critical information on prospects and customers that advances the sales process.

SEVEN KEYS TO HYPERINTEGRATION

1. Know your target audience.
2. Establish your goals.
3. Think through the buying process, determining how users will act at different stages.
4. Plan out a program, anticipating the “and then what” for each type of buyer at each stage of the process.
5. Create each tactic with a defined mission, message, and audience.
6. Make sure all parts of the program are in place before starting. For example, the landing page is posted, the response forms are in place and the metrics are working.
7. Measure your success and make adjustments as necessary.

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