

A study of the construction of an in-class practice system for integrated marketing communication

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Abstract: A core course in the "Market Analysis and Marketing Strategy Formulation" module, Integrated Marketing Communication, aims to cultivate talent with strong application skills, adaptability to social changes, and creativity. Therefore, there is a need to construct a holistic in-class practice system for this course and improve on it—enhancing the integration of theoretical and practical teaching. By analyzing specifically implemented syllabi, as well as feedback from course interactions between students and instructors, it served as the basis for the entire study. Identify the deficiencies, conduct an in-depth investigation, and provide relevant recommendations for countermeasures. To optimize the in-class practice system of integrated marketing communication courses and lay the foundation for students to become the new generation of technical application talents.

Keywords: Integrated marketing、In-class practice、Educational system

1. Research background

Curriculum teaching is a combination of classroom teaching and in-class practice. For marketing majors, course in-class practice is an essential part of the teaching of the whole curriculum system. Meanwhile, Schultz's integrated marketing communication theory has had a more significant impact on the marketing field¹. This theory refers to a variety of communication channels and means of communication to the target customers to fully convey and make them accept the recognition of the enterprise's brand image, product characteristics, service advantages, and so on, and based on this, to guide and motivate consumers, and thus achieve customer value of a marketing approach². Therefore, students need to be better mastered and applied in practice, so the design of the in-class practice system of the integrated marketing communication course can not only strengthen students' understanding of theoretical knowledge but also improve their application of theoretical knowledge. Therefore, it is vital to systematically build an in-class practical teaching system for integrated marketing communication courses to lay a solid foundation for cultivating high-quality, application-compound marketing talents in the future³⁴⁵².

2. Teaching and Learning in Integrated Marketing Courses

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is the process of bringing together all promotional activities related to a business. Specifically, it advocated that all corporate actions, such as advertising, production, service, public relations, product development, etc., should be reorganized in a unified and integrated manner, both in terms of the strategy or approach to business operations and in actual practice, so that the company can maintain a high degree of collaboration in each of these segments, and work together to implement combinatorial marketing, to achieve the desired marketing and communication objectives for the product and the company⁶⁷.

The Integrated Marketing Communications course focuses on buyer behavior, media campaigns, promotions, public relations and other aspects. And need to understand the basis of integrated marketing communications, the development and the process of integrated marketing communications, use appropriate methods to analyze buyer behavior, and apply the analysis results in the planning process of integrated marketing communications campaigns. Understand that in the integrated marketing communications process, media campaigns (e.g.,

traditional advertising tools, digital and alternative advertising tools) can be applied to integrated marketing communications campaigns according to market segmentation and targeting strategies to increase the effectiveness of the communications and evaluate the impact of traditional advertising tools on integrated marketing communications. Specifically, understand the promotional tools of integrated marketing communications, apply them comprehensively to the integrated marketing communications process, and analyze the effectiveness of the tools. Finally, to understand some of the relevant ethical and regulatory issues facing integrated marketing communications, to better apply relevant ethical and regulatory knowledge proficiently in the integrated marketing communications process, and to analyze the ethical and regulatory challenges facing integrated marketing communications.

3. Problems with in-class practice of integrated marketing communication

3.1 Poor design of teaching models and lack of innovation in teaching concepts.

For marketing courses, practical teaching is more important than traditional theoretical teaching. Coupled with the influence of rapidly developing information and technology, integrated marketing communication has seen significant changes in the means of communication, communication media, and other aspects of the communication channel. Moreover, the influence of marketing communication on the market is gradually expanding, and a wide variety of sales tools and approaches are evolving with the changes in the marketplace and are being utilized in a wide range of products and industries. However, for a long time, teachers have been teaching in a purely theoretical way, supplemented by the teaching mode of example analysis, situational simulation, and other methods. In the traditional teaching mode, even the cases and situation simulations used in the course are all materials prepared by the teacher in advance and designed scenarios, which makes it difficult for students to integrate into the system quickly. Moreover, many teachers lack practical experience and innovative ideas in marketing. They are more likely to teach their students "indirect experience." The persuasive power, influence, and effectiveness of the classroom for students are significantly reduced, and students do not have the "direct experience" to improve their overall ability and ability to solve complex marketing problems.

3.2 Low level of standardization of in-class practical teaching and outdated teaching content.

Due to the limitations of individual teachers' abilities and the irrational allocation of course time, the practical teaching system lacks consistency in content arrangement and implementation. Moreover, integrated marketing communication theory has entered China for a relatively short period. It has yet to form a theoretical system with Chinese characteristics. The core content of the most authoritative and cutting-edge integrated marketing communication theory results from abroad is rarely combined with domestic scholars' writings, or due to translation and other reasons, many views are challenging to understand, and Integrated marketing communication theory is difficult for students to grasp. The foreign teaching materials do not blend well with the actual national conditions of China, making the teaching content outdated.

3.3 Insufficient emphasis on in-class practice and a single teaching methodology.

The practical course system emphasizes application, while traditional teaching is theoretical. "Teachers are full of irrigation; students listen randomly" is the current classroom theory. Nevertheless, traditional concepts and theoretical explanation methods are still used in the teaching methods of integrated marketing communication courses. In contrast, multiple teaching methods, such as case teaching flipped classrooms and project-based education, are seldom used, which leads to insufficient motivation for students in classroom teaching. Nevertheless, the theory of integrated marketing communication has developed uniquely in our country. Still, the actual integrated marketing synergistic development of only a small number of enterprises and foreign cases in our country's applicability may be low. The teaching of relevant examples without intuition to support the theory makes it difficult to implement some teaching methods.

4. Analysis of countermeasures to enhance the in-class practice of integrated marketing communication

4.1 Innovate teaching concepts and improve the design of teaching models.

Teachers need to delve deeper into their own professional and pedagogical fields of study to conduct investigations and innovate their teaching concepts. Specifically, further improving the practical teaching model of the IMC course, revising it, and including it in the new syllabus and examination syllabus can continue to build on the successful experience gained before and accelerate the progress of the practical teaching part of the course. It is also essential to actively experiment to accelerate the building of systems of practice within the entire IMC classroom. Teachers in charge of IMC courses should also have in-depth insight into the development of the new era, how the new media and means to promote the development and application of integrated marketing theory, and take the initiative to change the past thinking of the IMC course teaching, not only in the classroom teaching but also necessary to guide the students to explore their potential and expertise, so that they can be clear about the direction of their development in the future⁸. Continuously improve the teaching creativity of the teaching team, construct the integrated marketing communication professional practice system in the class to the practical, and strive to develop to a deeper level⁹¹⁰.

4.2 Optimize teaching content and standardize in-class practical teaching.

Continuously optimize the teaching content of the course, combining the international frontier and research results on integrated marketing communication with China's actual national conditions. Combining their professional characteristics and appropriate teaching materials will enable teachers and students to understand obscure knowledge better. Teachers also need to learn from the experience of practical teaching repeatedly. They need to improve their ability, standardize the practical teaching system in the classroom, and adopt relevant incentives to mobilize the enthusiasm of students fully. To enable students to participate actively, to take part in in-class activities in a practical way, to ask questions, to learn with questions constantly, and to improve their thinking and problem-solving skills continuously. In the process of thinking, there are more fundamentals because thinking is the result of queries. With more essential knowledge, their ability to analyze and solve problems will be enhanced¹¹.

4.3 Focus on practical skills and explore more teaching methods

Integrated marketing communication especially needs students to be brave enough to practice based on an in-depth understanding of the theory. Therefore, the teaching of this course needs to pay more attention to the cultivation and training of practical ability. Heuristic teaching ideas and methods can be applied to the teaching practice of IMC, not limited to the teacher's explanation of the teaching method. You can allow students to form a course learning group, through the way as a small teacher in the group to solve problems or reach consensus. Teachers need to guide students to be more active in their learning¹². It appropriately complements case-based and project-based teaching methods with each other to enhance the timeliness of classroom instruction¹³¹⁴¹⁵.

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