

## **CROSSING THROUGH THE INFORMATION BARRIER**

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*Kotaro Sugiyama, Tim Andree, and The Dentsu Cross Switch Team.*

*The Dentsu Way*

*New York: McGraw-Hill 2010.*

*335 pages*

*\$28 (paper ISBN 978-0-07-174812-4)*

### **Abstract**

*In the present times, the advance technology has made media become accessible for almost everyone and eventually the excessive information makes people barricade themselves, including from marketing messages. As one of the world leading advertising agencies, Dentsu Inc. developed Cross Communication approach to create marketing strategy based on AISAS model. Dentsu's Cross Communication marketing approach is designed to reach in through customer barrier and enticing them out from the solitary. Using the scenario idea and contact points, Cross Communication strategy delivers the message to consumers more efficient than the conventional Integrated Marketing Communication.*

*Key Words: Marketing, Dentsu, The Dentsu Way, Cross Communication, Strategy*

### **Introduction**

Noticing how technology evolution has affect people, companies all over the world also transforming themselves, especially in how they market their products, by optimizing the marketing tools and channels they have. Businesses have become more competitive as the companies competing to differentiate themselves within the customer focus. As the companies promote their product to customers continuously, customers receive excessive information, especially in this era when

information could be gained easily. Subsequently, customers tend to isolate themselves from the information. This is called Information Barrier and has become a main challenge for companies because it is getting more difficult for them to communicate their message as customers filtering the information they gain, evading certain information and at some point, rejecting the information. There are two kinds of approaches to deliver the message to customers: the Breaking In approach which is about conventional marketing where the value message is injected by force to gain customer attention, for an instance, advertising. Dentsu decided to develop the second approach, the Drawing Out approach. Dentsu wants to make sure that the consumers come out from within their Information Barriers on their own will.

Dentsu is a Japan-based advertising, marketing communication, and public relations company famous for its Cross-Switch marketing strategies. *The Dentsu Way* tells us every aspect of the traditions and methodologies conducted by the company that made them what they are today; their corporate cultures, philosophy, and operation systems. *The Dentsu Way* is divided into three main parts:

Part 1: Dentsu Comes of Age describes Dentsu's history from the beginning in the early 1901 to the present time development.

Part 2: The Cross Communication Imperative describes the Cross Communication as a significant part of Integrated Communication Design. It basically explains about the new “AISAS” model and Cross Communication marketing campaign’s component.

Part 3: Putting Cross Switch into Play describes the strategic and tactical design of Cross Communication, including numerous examples and tools used to design, deliver, and measure the effectiveness of our Cross Switch Cross Communication campaigns. (Sugiyama & Andre, 2010:xxiv)

### **Part 1: Dentsu Comes of Age**

Dentsu Inc. was founded in 1906 as the result of merging process between two agencies, “Dempo Tsushin-Sha” and “Nippon Kou-ko-ku KK”, which were set up by Hoshiro Mitsunaga in 1901. The result of this merging process was “Nihon Dempo Tsuhin-Sha”. Due to the rather long title of this new company, the name was shorten into “Dentsu”, by taking “Dem” from “Dempo” and “Tsu”. This part mostly talked about the history of the long journey of Dentsu Inc. in becoming one of the largest advertising company brand and the fifth largest marketing and communications organizations in the world.

In 1945 Hoshiro Mitsunaga passed away. In 1946 Hideo Yoshida was announced as the president of Dentsu Inc. He was probably the most famous president of Dentsu Inc. In his leadership, Dentsu Inc. was able to bring this company to a new level. He created new departments including market research, audience samplings and ratings, publications of advertising statistics, and public relation, devoted to activities beyond advertising and creative activities. Yoshida believes that advertising was an “integration of science and arts”.

In 1951, Japan’s first commercial station was launched due to the efforts from Yoshida in recognizing the vital of private sector in advertising industry as a whole. Dentsu had become a big part in the history of Japanese broadcast media. In Yoshida’s leadership, Dentsu made a special group within the company to maximize the use of this medium. As a result, Dentsu was able to air the first television commercial ever shown in Japan.

In 1959 Denstu started its first international expansion. As a start Dentsu opened an office in New York and branches in London, Paris, Moscow, Taipei, and Beijing. The goal was to help potential companies in Japan to deploy their business in these countries. In 1985, Gohei Kogure was chosen as the new president of Dentsu. Under his leadership, Dentsu had established a new slogan of “Communication Excellence Dentsu” or can be translated as “Total Communication Services”. TCS was created to convey the fact that Dentsu combined all key elements of marketing communications, including strategic planning, branding, market research, traditional media advertising, media buying and panning, creative design, marketing analytics, sales promotion, public relations, database marketing. This slogan was used until 2009. In 2009, the long-lasting slogan was re-positioned as “Integrated Communication Design”, in the policy of “Good Innovation”.

Dentsu Inc. believes that Internet is now fully integrated with the Dentsu offering. Dentsu’s approach offers not only a better and easier experiences for clients but also it creates accountability.

From seeing the history of Dentsu Inc. and also its expertise, experience, and vast amount of data and research, it can be said that Dentsu Inc. is one of the most reliable and also the best marketing agency in the world. Dentsu Inc. can give the best integrated consumer solutions through its ICD. The Dentsu Way is capable to give solutions for clients to approach its customer.

### **Part 2: The Cross Communication Imperative**

The drastic change of environment cannot be separated from the change in the customers’ perspectives as well, or in this case, customers’ consumption behavior. Dentsu found the traditional AIDMA model (attention, interest, desire, memory and action), which is advocated by Rolland Hall in circa 1920 cannot accommodate the changes. When people notice the product, service, or advertisement, it is the *attention* phase and then will proceed to create interest, which is expected to provoke *desire*. Effective advertisement would linger in the customer’s *memory* which is hopefully would make the customer to take the *action*, buy the

product or service, eventually. But as explained previously, the customers have become more active in searching the information and the accessible connection to the digital world makes customers tend to share the information with others. So Dentsu proposed a new consumption behavior model, AISAS. In the AISAS model, the *desire* and *memory* components are compacted to the passive proportion. While in the active part, there are two additions, *search* before active, and *share* as the final phase. *Action* is when the product, service, or advertisement is noticed by customer and then take *interest* to *search* about it. Then in the next step, it is expected that customers would take *action* as buying the product or service. After the purchase, customers would share their perceptions and insights regarding the product or service by posting it through Internet or through word of mouth. This AISAS model is significant in order to draw customer interest, as it is the basis of the Cross Communication design because the main purpose of Cross Communication is to capture customers' interest by using scenario and encourage them to do the action.

Dentsu believes that the key to drawing consumers out from within their information barriers and to stimulate a series of behaviors is creating Scenarios based on AISAS model, which can encourage the consumers to take an interest and actively seek out information and are enjoying an active brand experience that eventually leads to a purchase. This model is called Cross Communication. The book mentions about the importance to seek out the contact points that are most effective in communicating with the targets, and design communications that link these contact points organically to deliver the Cross Communication plan.

The Cross Communication plan consists of Insight and Strategy; Core Idea; Scenario Idea; Structure Design; Holistic Creative; Negotiation and Implementation; and the last step is Evaluation of Results.

### **Part 3: Putting Cross Switch into Play**

Cross Communication is a method to deliver a message using multiple forms of media. This definition may overlap with the definition of Integrated Marketing Communication or Media

Mix, but there are some elements distinguishing Cross Communication and Media Mix. The conventional Media Mix is the distribution of marketing budget using variation of media to that will maximize the efficiency of communicating a message to as many consumers as possible at minimum cost. While Cross Communication is a method of communication combining multiple Contact Points effectively to provide customers with information regarding a company's product or service by creating a scenario to stimulate customers' behaviors. Media Mix set the targets segmented by demographic etc, while Cross Communication more focused on target insights and media insights. These insights matter because as pointed out before, nowadays customers are confining themselves within the information barrier, so capturing and utilizing the target and insights are important to attract them using the scenario.

The Cross Communication is slightly similar with McKinsey's Decision Journey. McKinsey developed a model that interprets the process customers experienced through a series of data study and research. After the purchase took place, customer would undergo the service experience and by then, customer would evaluate the service and if they were satisfied, the result would be brand advocacy and eventually creating a loyalty loop. If customers were not satisfied, they would re-evaluate the service. This would also trigger them to share this experience. The difference between Customer Decision Journey and Cross Communication is that the Cross Communication is attempting to reach the customer on a deeper level, as the Cross Communication Scenario attract customers' interest and make them voluntarily move along the directed scenario while the Customer Decision Journey is merely monitoring the process. Another difference is that Cross Communication has Structure Design and Holistic Creative as the steps in the planning.

Authors used real cases handled by Dentsu as examples but the definitions and explanations regarding the Cross Communication planning stages are still rather unclear. For an instance, the Structure Design and the Holistic Creative stage and their interrelation in the plan are rather confounding as the explanations are still lacking. It is mentioned that the Holistic

Creative stage output are the creative work, including message and artwork, with a view toward the Cross Communication scenario as a whole. Structure Design is the identification of Contact Points but the implementation is confounding. The use of Contact Points term is rather confusing because the reader might not grasp the concept whether it is the same or different with the more commonly known Touch Points. In other article published in IO New Management mentioned, that Touch Points are nothing other than various contact points at which brand appear in public and are experienced by potential customer such as sales employees, company websites, call centers, etc.

Dentsu's Cross Communication has taken the advance development of technology into consideration as they already developed the AIDMA model to AISAS model. But Dentsu might also want to consider the human nature itself to form group into the component of Cross Communication: Community.

Community, by definition of Oxford Dictionaries, is a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common; or, the condition of sharing or having certain attitudes and interests in common (*Oxford Dictionaries, 2012*). Howard Rheingold had an idea that to become a community, it is not necessary to have a direct physical interaction. It is a social aggregation that emerges from the Internet when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace. The social relationship is no longer bound by the time and space. The virtual social interaction has the potential to bring leverage to the human lives, such as intellectual leverage, social leverage, political leverage, and also commercial leverage. (*Howard Rheingold, 1993*)

Since a community has its own distinctive traits, characteristics, and values, when one becomes a member of a community, the community itself is the source of identity. The continuous interaction people have with the community will eventually form the way people perceive things. It affects their preferences, interests, and personalities. The knowledge of community is identity for the members gives

insight that this could be utilized as Contact Points for marketing activity.

Derived from *Marketing 3.0* by Phillip Kotler, Hermawan Kartajaya, and Iwan Setiawan (2010), marketing current condition has reached in the age of participation and collaborating marketing. The traditional marketing method such as Integrated Marketing Communication has become obsolete. Informing the customers regarding one's product is no longer effective as the customers has the ability to use the technology to search, compare, and the products. The judgment is greatly influenced by subjective preferences or when a person becomes a member of a community, the community factor influences their preferences. This could be used to draw people's attention from their barrier against new and foreign information. When people are confronted with something that is already familiar, in this case the community, it is easier to appeal them with the marketing content. Moreover as a virtual community member, it is very useful to utilize Internet based network or social media to manage this marketing approach. Becoming a member of a community, people need to interact and engage with each other and as 2/3 of economy is affected by personal recommendation (*McKinsey and Co., 2011*), using the community, many-to-many collaboration, as the marketing channel or incorporate it with the Cross Communication is reasonably appropriate.

## Conclusion

The accessible media eventually resulting in the excessive information, which makes people isolate themselves from the existing information. Dentsu's Cross Communication marketing approach is designed to delivers every message to consumer more efficiently than the conventional Integrated Marketing Communication by using the scenario idea and contact points. People or even a company who uses Dentsu's Cross Communication marketing approach can reach its customers through their barrier and pull them out of it.

Dentsu's Cross Communication approach is developed based on the obtained insights on media and customers. Therefore, the message would not only be transmitted on the breadth, but also the depth, as the Cross Communication

Scenario requires customers' voluntary involvement so it would leave lingering personal impression and eventually the share that particular experience and create word of mouth, breaking the Information Barrier of the customers. The Scenario is applied based on the Contact Points to deliver the message value effectively and efficiently. This approach could be complemented if community is developed as one of Cross Communication component as the word of mouth would create a beneficial reverberation to the whole members of the community.

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