BUS4016S Tutorial III: Strategic Consistency Triangle.

The strategic consistency triangle refers to the three key factors involved in the marketing of a product, which must all be constant within the way in which they deliver the marketer’s message. These three key factors are: “say”, “do” and “confirm” (Moriarty, n.d.). Each of these factors are linked to the different kinds of messages which can be sent and received from marketers to consumers and will be discussed in detail below. The “say” factor of the strategic consistency triangle refers to the planned messages which are sent out by marketers via advertising and public relations channels of communication (Moriarty, n.d.). In other words “say” refers to what the marketer wants the customers to know or think, as well as the way in which marketers deliver this message. The “do” factor of the strategic consistency triangle refers to the extent to which the “say” factor is met by a product or service in terms of its delivery and whether it has met the client’s needs as promised by the marketers (Moriarty, n.d.). The do messages are sent out via service messages and may further be unplanned messages, depending on the way in which the information is interpreted by the customer. “Confirm” is the final factor of the strategic consistency triangle and this refers to how the marketers messages (say) as well as the extent to which the product meets the customers’ expectations (do) is perceived by the customer (Moriarty, n.d.). In other words “confirm” refers to what customers are saying about a product. If the say and do messages are not consistent there will often be miscommunication between the two parties which would lead to poor conformation of the brand and negative perceptions of it; as well as unplanned messages arising (Moriarty, n.d). The say messages project the brand’s image to the public where as the confirm messages determine the brand’s reputation. If the strategic consistency triangle is not used effectively within the integrated communications of a company, its reputation is likely to be tarnished and essential will take away value of the brand’s image (Moriarty, n.d.).

Owing to the nature of integrated marketing communication (hereinafter referred to as IMC) having a strong focus on: synergy, integration and the need for a consistent voice to be projected by a brand on all platforms; the importance of the strategic consistency triangle for IMC is vital. This is the case as if the three factors of say, do and confirm are not aligned within a brand’s product, a huge disconnect would be
caused not merely between a brand and its customers but further a disconnect would occur between the different marketing channels; causing confusion and a lack of brand identity. This would result in IMC not being able to fulfil its role and would essentially undercut all value which IMC adds to a brand’s marketing channels. Without the role of the strategic consistency triangle, the role of IMC would be futile and would not be able to carry out its messages effectively. Hence if the IMC and strategic consistency triangle of a brand are not interdependent, all brand campaigns using IMC would be sure to fail. Thus, a brand’s IMC and strategic consistency triangle must be aligned in terms of objectives, they must be interdependent, as well as interlinked.

A South African brand that has failed to correctly implement the strategic consistency triangle, in other words it has failed to confirm its say and do messages, would be the radio station 5fm and its Upgrade555 campaign from April to June 2014. This campaign was launched as Gareth Cliff left 5fm at the end of March 2014, the station manager, Aisha Mohamed, resigned and a host of changes were to be made to 5fm’s show line ups. The campaign centred around the idea of walking the listeners through such drastic changes and introduced the new show hosts through slowly releasing their names and suggesting that “good things come to those that wait”. It aimed to focus on listener retention as well as to place its main focus on listener acquisition.

There are a variety of examples from this single campaign which display a lack of confirming the brand’s messages. Firstly the announcement of Gareth Cliff leaving 5fm (planned message) was released on the 31st of March 2014. The message was received by listeners as being an April Fool’s joke (unplanned message), due to the 1st of April being the following day. Hence the timing of the announcement was poorly executed by the station and the confirmation of the message by listeners was that it was not true and it was not taken seriously by 5fm listeners (poor confirmation). Secondly DJ Fresh’s morning show took to handing out one hundred rand notes to radio listeners, at traffic lights during early morning traffic, within different cities. The aim was to reward people who would change their radio station from a different station to listen to 5fm (planned message). However, the gesture was seen as desperate by those listening to the show, it was perceived as 5fm feeling threatened and highlighted their worry over a loss of listenership (unplanned
messages). Moreover, it was as if 5fm felt it needed to buy listeners and many people simply switched stations for the money and could simply switch it back again once they had driven off (poor confirmation of say message).

The campaign was supported by parties at various clubs throughout the country to celebrate the new upgrade555 which had occurred at the station. However, the confirm messages of a new and fresh feel to the station were lost when the parties where exactly as any other 5fm party would have been prior to the change. Hence the image of the brand was perceived as having changed by listeners (although it was merely the show line up which had changed) and its reputation was tarnished through tactics such as handing out money being seen as desperate. This created a confirmation of the brand having lost listeners and performing badly, without people having any real knowledge about these facts.

5fm attempted to regain listeners trust through the above mentioned 5fm parties and they incorporated a “how to deal with change” segment into their morning shows. The way in which 5fm could have avoided losing trust entirely or attempt to regain it was to reaffirm their position within the radio market in a strong and clear way and not to have to go and “buy” listeners. They could have made changes across the spectrum of the brand and not merely through show lineups but incorporated subtle just noticeable differences to their logo, livened up their website and taken the change as a whole rather than selected parts which suited the brand to change. Moreover, listener retention should have been the focus, and not acquisition, as loyal listeners felt left out and betrayed in many of the Upgrade555 happenings.
References:

Moriarty, S.E. n.d. The Strategic Consistency Triangle. [Online]. Accessed 12 August 2014, from: https://vula.uct.ac.za/access/content/attachment/e472aace-58f5-44fa-a4e4-ee004bc833b0/Assignments/5662b7f9-bf95-4bd2-90fb-916c9cb389c9/Strategic%20consistency%20triangle.pdf

Appendices:

The appendices below display various features of the Upgrade555 campaign, launched by 5fm in 2014.

anil shradhanand · 5 months ago
Not impressed with your new line-up

Reply

Gatvol · 5 months ago
At the age of 46 I have been listening to 5fm since before most of these presenters were even born. Perhaps though now is the time to move to a more mature station

Reply

SOOO disappointed, the changes on the station have always been hard but this is insane!!! and not in a good way. Mornings are now split into those who are early-to-workers and those that are the "late comers". Nick is fab but too short and while I love poppy I cant handle two hours of her, her content is great for weekends but not for week days, come guys!!!!!! You are loosing your soul to the power of 5

Figure 1.1 some of the responses from loyal 5fm listeners to the changes the radio station saw. These responses were posted on the 5fm website.

Terrill · 5 months ago
I'm hoping this is an April fools joke

Reply

Michael Frost · 5 months ago
Anyone else think this is an April Fools joke?

nvee · 5 months ago
CLIFF & FRESH are the only reason we listen to 5FM ! i really do think that CLIFF’s end of show is a prank !? well I hope it is !!!

Figure 1.3 Listeners react to news of Gareth Cliff leaving as if it is an April Fool’s joke. These responses were posted on the 5fm website.

Figure 1.2 5fm and dealing with change. Image taken from the 5fm website.