



Building an Effective Integrated Communications Function



COMMUNICATIONS

Introduction

Effective communications programs for technology companies in 2024 look much different than they did even a few years ago. There's an ever-growing number of innovative companies vying for the attention of audiences who are more widely distributed than ever before. **This crowded environment means that solely relying on traditional ways of reaching key stakeholders is no longer effective. With newsrooms shrinking in both size and numbers, it makes even more difficult for companies to get their message out into the world.**

Challenger, Gray & Christmas found that the media industry lost more than [20,000 jobs](#) in 2023, more than in 2022 when big media companies like Disney underwent layoffs that impacted thousands of media workers.

To adapt, brands need to leverage new formats and channels to break through the noise and reach the people that matter to their business. This requires an integrated approach to communications that leverages paid, earned and owned media, all working together to elevate brand visibility and consistently promote key messages.

In an environment where there are so many voices vying for limited attention, this cohesive, comprehensive approach becomes essential to avoid being left behind. **Here, we'll detail the key considerations for implementing an integrated strategy that empowers you to meet your communications and business goals.**

Alignment on Messaging – The Foundation of Integrated Communications

Strong, consistent messaging is foundational to a successful integrated communications program.

Organizations need to create messaging that both clearly articulates and links together a company’s vision, solutions and impact in a compelling way. This step can sometimes get overlooked in the excitement of standing up a new marketing campaign or unveiling a new product, but it is an essential, strategic starting point to ensuring the overarching story is consistent and clear regardless of channel or format. **A brand’s “north star” should always shine through**, even as particular business units, geographies or product families roll out initiatives along the journey.

A key step here is to ensure internal alignment before that messaging ever reaches external audiences. The alternative, where messaging varies depending on the platform or segment of the marketing team that’s in charge, can jeopardize cohesion and create confusion in the marketplace. Messaging creation or refinement involves a multi-step process that requires a thorough evaluation of how a brand’s current messages stack up in the market, a series of exercises to determine how the company should talk about itself, and the actual development of new messaging.

Alignment on Messaging – The Foundation of Integrated Communications, Cont.

Stages of Messaging Development:

- 1. Discovery:** An audit is performed to evaluate how a company's messaging stacks up with its competitors. Internal and external stakeholders provide input on what messages from the company's current messaging are most effective.
- 2. Messaging Workshop:** A representative group of company leaders come together for a series of exercises to distill the most important messages for audiences to know.
- 3. Message Development:** Using the input from the workshop, messaging is developed and refined with input from relevant stakeholders.

This entire process needs to take place with the intended audiences in mind, meaning it's critical that there's agreement on who the messaging is being created for, in terms of target markets and specific job titles. While these audiences will often focus on sales targets, consideration must also be given to messaging that caters to other key constituents, like investors, partners and employees. **It's also crucial that the process involve stakeholders from throughout the organization's leadership**, since this messaging will be deployed across departments in an integrated manner.

While time-consuming, establishing solid, consistent messaging will help avoid headaches and maximize the impact of integrated campaigns in the long run.

What Does Integrated Look Like?

An integrated approach creates opportunities for brands to explore new ways to reach key audiences across paid, earned and owned channels, so **it's important that teams discern which levers to pull in which situations**. Teams will need to establish clear goals and align on the audiences for a particular campaign to select the best channels to use to maximize ROI.

Employing an integrated approach effectively will look different for different organizations and campaigns. News moments, for example, might be well-suited for earned channels, while a big sales push or employer brand campaigns might be better suited to owned channels. Other campaigns will leverage all — paid, earned and owned.

Teams who aren't sure how to start with integrated communications might look to product launches as a first opportunity. These moments often lend themselves to integrated campaigns since they already involve stakeholders from across the organization and represent a significant milestone for the company that may not always drive significant earned media attention.

To make campaigns like this work, communications leaders will need to consider factors that may not have been as prevalent or multi-faceted in more siloed arrangements, like budget resourcing and, our next topic, team structure.



Case Study: V2 for Rocket[®] software

Rocket Software, a global technology leader in modernization software, wanted to increase demand for their data intelligence platform. To do so, V2 ideated a survey report, launched within two weeks of the product announcement, that contextualized the value of this new product.

The findings from the survey, which polled IT leaders on problems that keep them up at night, created an opportunity to position Rocket Software's platform as the solution to their problems – an opportunity that V2 promoted via an integrated campaign comprised of activations across earned, owned and paid channels.

Key results include:

- 27+ pieces of media coverage
- Two podcast segments
- Four media briefings
- 92% engagement score on the blog post highlighting survey results
- 13.2K impressions and a 5.69 engagement rate on social posts from corporate accounts and employee amplification efforts



07/18/2023 • EPISODE 139 • 30 MIN
The Power of Data Lineage
Digital: Disrupted



An episode of Rocket Software's podcast

CIO



A paid media placement to promote the survey

Structuring a Team to Make Integrated Work

Once messaging alignment is achieved, there are changes to be made in how teams operate and work together. For example, some functions that support an integrated strategy might fall under the external communications team, while others may fall under partner marketing, corporate communications, demand generation or the brand team. With an integrated approach, these **teams must collaborate and align on messaging and communications priorities** to effectively plan and execute programs and trumpet messages consistently to reach key audiences.

The exact structure that dictates when and how these teams work together will differ based on the organization, but whether all functions sit with a single communications leader, or there are leaders of teams across organizational subgroups, there needs to be someone accountable to ensure integrated campaigns are executed consistently.

This may require more groups involved in different communications discussions to make integrated campaigns maximally impactful, such as:

- Establishing clearly defined goals for each function
- Planning earlier and more iteratively
- Identifying leads for particular campaigns based on tactics and goals. A news-centered campaign may lean more on the communications team, while someone in demand generation might be better suited to lead a campaign that focuses on an event activation.
- Having an agency partner that can work across all parties to create cohesion.

Establishing **open lines of communications** and systems for aligning on communications priorities will help foster the collaboration that's needed to make integrated programs work.

Case Study: V2 for **CLOUDERA**

Cloudera, the only true hybrid platform for data, analytics, and AI, partnered with V2 Communications to launch a multi-faceted campaign to help keep Cloudera top-of-mind for key audiences during a pivotal time: the back-to-back conferences of two notable players in the space.

V2 took a three-pronged approach to ensuring Cloudera remained at the forefront of conversations on enterprise data and AI trends: A creative physical presence that seized upon news moments surrounding the events and made the most of its own announcement.

Key results include:

- 25+ pieces of earned press coverage across business and technology press over the two-week conference period
- 300+ emails captured from a custom landing page through the giveaway
- 700+ unique visitors to the custom landing page with Cloudera's key messages
- 1,500+ items served at the Fuel Station
- Nearly 35k social media impressions



Cloudera's "fuel truck" outside the Moscone Center in San Francisco

Advocating for Integrated Programming

Shifting to an integrated approach involves changes in how communications and marketing teams work together and deploy resources, and it's important that advocates for integrated programs know how to demonstrate the business benefits and make the case for change. Integrated campaigns involve a fundamental shift in how brands think about campaigns and how resources are allocated to support them. An integrated approach means moving away from spending money to solely increase demand generation or enhance corporate communications and moving toward a model where all these efforts support each other. **The end goal is to create a “surround sound” effect** across channels by making sure the same angles used in earned channels are amplified with tactics like paid, social, or native ads.

When it comes to selling the benefits of integrated campaigns to executive teams that approve budgets, it's important to lean on data, and specifically ROI. The Institute for Public Relations found that **companies that integrate public relations and marketing achieve a higher ROI**, with a 35 percent increase in revenue compared to companies that keep those functions separate. Fortunately, the benefits can be relatively easy to measure, since many integrated tactics come baked in with metrics – like views, click throughs or qualified leads – that help illustrate who the campaign is reaching and what actions they are taking as a result. Another metric that teams can use to advocate for integrated programs is the rate at which the approach is taking hold with a brand's competitors. If communications teams can show executives that the company will be left behind without evolving how they think about communications, they'll be more likely to get buy-in.

Organizations can maximize their ROI by being strategic about when and how they deploy integrated campaigns. To do that, they need to understand their audience and what type of content they engage with, and schedule investments around key moments, like a new product or new messaging.

It's important to note that integrated campaigns make it possible to create a big impact with a relatively small investment. A paid campaign can start for as little as a few thousand dollars, and investments can be adjusted over time based on whether KPIs are being met.

Case Study: V2 for

UiPath, a leading enterprise automation and AI software company, partnered with V2 Communications to launch a multi-pronged paid campaign to showcase the company's AI vision, differentiation and value.

V2 took a layered approach to cementing UiPath as a global enterprise automation and AI market leader: Two global native ad flights that promoted message-rich content to buyer and investor audiences, one contributed article published and amplified by Business Insider, and a 10 contributed article series with Diginomica that published over a 12-month period.

Key results include:

- 270M+ total impressions across the two global native campaigns to audiences across 9 regions
- 2.7K+ page views for the Business Insider article, averaging a 0.49% CTR (8X higher than Insider's benchmark of 0.06%)
- 2.8K total views from more than 2.3K unique visitors through the first four articles in the Diginomica series.

diginomica

UiPath Partner Zone

The imperative of AI governance in the age of generative AI



By **Mark Geene** July 22, 2024



Audio mode



Dyslexia mode

SUMMARY: The consequences of unregulated AI are far-reaching. Mark Geene from UiPath examines the ways to mitigate risks and ensure employees are all on the same page.

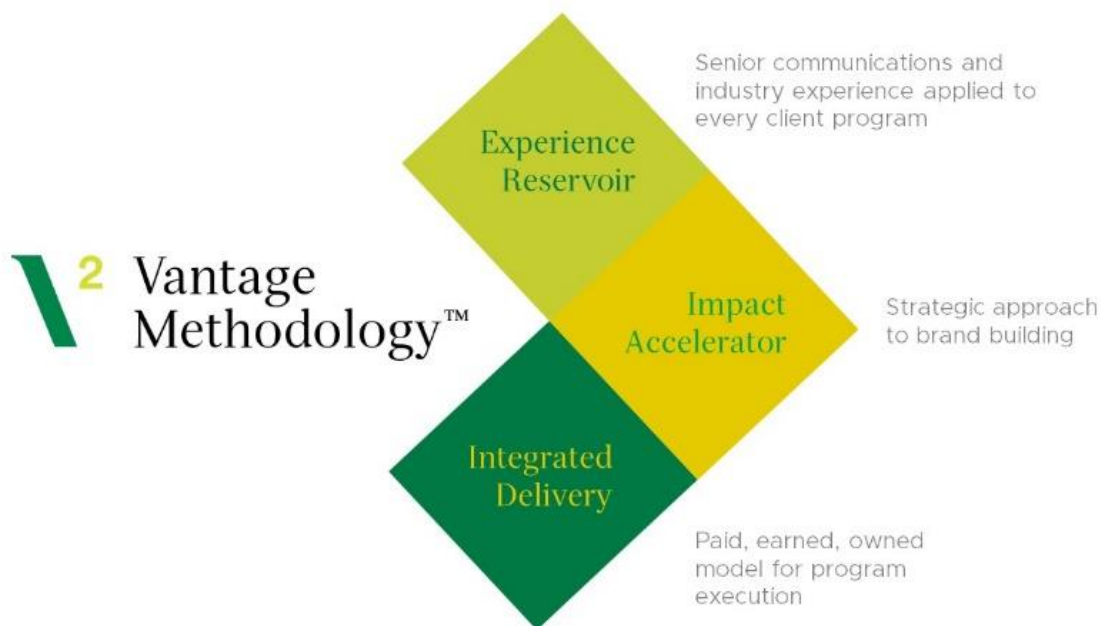


The UiPath Platform combines generative and specialized AI with the agility and speed of enterprise automation, machine learning, and natural language processing. Only UiPath brings AI to life through automation with AI at Work.

Content in this Partner Zone area has been provided by UiPath. diginomica provides editorial assistance in helping partners shape their content where that assistance is required to meet the interests and expectations of our readers. We do not author on partners' behalf.

Conclusion

Integrated communications, when done right, helps maximize brand visibility and message reach. Even beyond increased message penetration, integrated approaches bring other benefits, like making it easier for communications teams to show the effectiveness of their program. For example, a company that publishes a social post which promotes a blog that links out to a download page for a white paper can track how the traffic flows from one medium to the next and determine which visitors turn into qualified leads. This type of robust reporting infrastructure, which leads to substantial ROI, is only possible with an integrated strategy that takes hold across an organization's entire communications and marketing function. Brands who don't take this approach, and continue to lean exclusively on traditional approaches, will fall behind competitors who use integrated communications to more effectively reach audiences and measure impact.



How V2 Can Help

At V2, we've created our three-pronged Vantage Methodology™ to support an integrated approach. We have the experience, strategic approach and integrated model to maximize the impact of your integrated campaigns.

Get in touch with us: <https://www.v2comms.com/contact/>



2

V2 Communications is an integrated communications firm that works with B2B, climate, and healthcare technology companies, from startups to publicly traded companies. V2's proven process ensures clients benefit from thorough program planning, increased speed, flexibility, and efficiency of program execution, and ongoing strategic counsel to maximize market shifts and refine programs to deliver consistent high levels of business success.

www.v2comms.com