

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

School of Business and Economics

**MARKETING COMMUNICATION IN FINNISH
INDUSTRIAL COMPANIES**

**Marketing
Master's Thesis**

August 2010

**Author: Mikko Vuorio
Instructor: Heikki Karjaluo**

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

Author Mikko Vuorio	
Thesis Title Marketing communication in Finnish industrial companies	
Major Subject Marketing	Object of study Master's Thesis
Month and Year August 2010	Number of pages 116
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Marketing communication has a significant role for profitable businesses in industrial markets, and its role is only expected to rise in the future. Especially, integrated marketing communication (IMC) and customer-oriented approach are universally regarded fundamental developments in the field of marketing. Secondly, Finnish companies' marketing competences are commonly considered insufficient in general. The purpose of this study was to describe how Finnish industrial companies execute their marketing communication. In addition, the study examines the marketing communication's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and targets for development; how different marketing communication instruments are utilised; and how marketing communication and its instruments are integrated.</p> <p>The study was executed with action-oriented research method and used research strategy was case study. Hence, empirical part of this study focused to examine marketing communication in six Finnish industrial companies. Empirical data of the study was gathered within six individual workshops organised for each case company during the research process.</p> <p>According to the study's results, Finnish industrial companies brands and images are strong, and they are highly appreciated actors in their own field of business. The most commonly utilised marketing communication instruments are personal selling, trade shows, public relations, e-communication, and direct marketing. Whereas advertising, sales promotion, sponsoring, after sales, references, and word of mouth communication are not equally commonly utilised. Secondly, Finnish industrial companies' marketing communication is not integrated, they have deficiencies with their internal communication and co-operation, marketing strategies are unclear, marketing resources are rather small, and status of marketing is weak. In addition to these findings, the study offers a research model of development process toward integrated marketing communication as a contribution for academic research.</p>	
<p>Keywords</p> <p>Marketing communication; Industrial marketing; Customer relationship; Action-oriented research</p>	
<p>Place of storage: University of Jyväskylä / School of Business and Economics</p>	

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	7
1.1	Justification of research	9
1.2	Objectives of study and research questions	11
1.3	Outline of the study	12
2	MARKETING COMMUNICATION IN INDUSTRIAL MARKETS.....	14
2.1	Marketing communication instruments	15
2.1.1	Advertising	16
2.1.2	Sales promotion.....	17
2.1.3	Direct marketing	18
2.1.4	Personal selling	19
2.1.5	Sponsoring	20
2.1.6	Public relations.....	21
2.1.7	Trade shows.....	22
2.1.8	E-communication.....	23
2.2	Definition and development of integrated marketing communication	26
2.3	Drivers for integrated marketing communication	31
2.4	Implementation of integrated marketing communication.....	33
2.5	Integrated marketing communication in practice	34
2.6	Special characteristic of industrial marketing communication	36
2.7	Marketing communication's role in industrial buying process	38
2.8	Marketing communication's role for customer relationships in industrial markets	44
3	METHODOLOGY	49
3.1	Qualitative research approach.....	51
3.2	Case study strategy	54
3.3	Action-oriented research method	55
3.3.1	Data gathering methods.....	58
3.3.2	Data analysis method	63
4	RESULTS.....	67
4.1	Case companies of the study	67
4.2	SWOT-analysis of case companies' marketing communication.....	68
4.2.1	Strengths.....	69
4.2.2	Weaknesses	71
4.2.3	Opportunities	74
4.2.4	Threats	76
4.2.5	Target for development	77
4.3	Marketing communication in case companies.....	80
4.3.1	Marketing strategies and plans.....	82
4.3.2	Status of marketing.....	83
4.4	Marketing communication instruments in case companies.....	85

4.5	Integration of marketing communication in case companies.....	89
4.5.1	Internal integration.....	90
4.5.2	External integration.....	91
4.5.3	Causes of disintegration.....	91
4.5.4	Integrated marketing communication.....	92
5	CONCLUSIONS.....	94
5.1	Answers to research questions.....	94
5.2	Model for development process toward integrated marketing communication.....	103
5.3	Managerial implications.....	106
5.4	Evaluation of study's quality.....	107
5.5	Further research.....	111
	REFERENCES.....	112

1 INTRODUCTION

“Lousy marketing brings Finnish companies down” is a headline of YLE’s (Finland's national public service broadcasting company) news at the beginning of December in 2009. According to news article, acquisition of new customers is the main difficulty for Finnish companies. In addition, Finnish companies have typically good products, but they lack skills to sell them. Article also considers that companies are high-level professionals in their own field, but weak management of marketing and selling is characteristic for Finnish companies in general. (YLE 2009.)

Similar conclusions could be found also from academic literature. For example, Jaakkola’s (2006) study notices that Finnish companies operating in international markets are usually considered strong and professional actors with high quality technological know-how. On the other hand a common conception of Finnish companies’ competences in marketing is not as high. There could be seen a general call for intensified marketing communication among Finnish companies. Jaakkola (2006) compared in his study marketing actions and effects on business performance between Finnish and foreign companies. Interestingly, according to Jaakkola (2006), Finnish companies seems to be more marketing oriented than others, whereas effectiveness of Finnish companies’ marketing is fairly weak. In addition, Finnish companies use to invest more resources on marketing than their competitors, but neither this is seen in effectiveness of Finnish companies’ marketing (Jaakkola 2006). Also Finnish companies’ capability to exploit customer information (outside-in) is insufficient and they consider information flow from outside the company rather burden than opportunity or benefit (Jaakkola 2006). Based on these

findings it is easy to assume that Finnish companies face difficulties to understand their customers. Furthermore, probably bidirectional interaction and communication with customers is not working as smoothly as possible, and thus companies are not able to serve their customers individually.

Another study that considers Finnish companies' marketing highlights management's role for effective marketing communication (StratMark 2008). According to this study, the major matter that slows down marketing know-how in Finnish companies is the attitude toward marketing (StratMark 2008). The origin for these unfavourable attitudes is commonly company's management. First of all, management is not supporting actions of marketing, and secondly they are lacking marketing know-how. One example about managements' distorted attitudes is how they consider the meaning of customers and customer-orientation: part of managers sees customers as an unavoidable burden with whom they have to deal with. (StratMark 2008.) Thus, it seems that customers and their needs are not considered important within Finnish companies. A parallel observation is also mentioned in Kauppalehti (Öhrnberg 2010), where the lack of customer-orientation is stated the main weakness of Finnish companies. In addition, StratMark -research group mentions another problem related to marketing in Finnish companies. This is separation between marketing and other functions of company (StratMark 2008). For example, almost half of companies keep marketing and sale apart, and additionally there are quite often complications between marketing and research and development (StratMark 2008).

However, the importance of marketing management and marketing communication has been emphasised significantly along with corporate communication since early 1990s. There are many factors, which have set the scene for greater importance of communication, but probably the most significant reason is increased number of interest groups that companies need to take into account as well as increased demands for communication from both society and markets. At the same time, business environment and media field have become more fragmented, competition has tightened, demand for efficiency has increased significantly, and organisations have been transformed into more complex and multinational actors. In addition, the amount of communication has multiplied, communication technologies have developed dramatically, and meaning of brands have highlighted. One result of these changes is requirement for better integration and management of communication. Secondly, importance of customer relationships and customer-oriented way of action has been highlighted within companies' operation. Thus, corporate communication and marketing have become a strategic matter for companies' management. (Cornelissen 2004, 9-11, 32-53.)

Hence, companies' business environment has changed radically during past decades, which has affected companies' communication practices. In addition, it has pushed companies to modify their operations and readjust to requirements of dynamic business environment. (Jones, Brown, Zoltners, & Weitz 2005.) Because of these rapid changes in the business environment and dynamic demands, companies have had to find something constant and steady in order to survive and keep up with the competition. Without some solid foundation, companies have to react to every little change in their operational environment, in which case also mistakes increase and operation becomes inconsistent. Fixed incomes and scenarios – at least a certain extent – allow companies to operate sustainably, create continuity, and give an opportunity to plan operations in a long-term. One excellent solution for this dynamism is to try to establish steady and long-lasting customer relationships. Thus, Rauyruen and Miller (2007) emphasise the importance of understanding customers and quality of customer relationships. They also see individual customer relationships and loyal customer base as a pivotal factor for profitable business and success in markets. Also Jones et al. (2005) mentioned strong and profitable customer relationships as a solution for challenges of today's business environment.

1.1 Justification of research

According to Jones et al. (2005), changes in business environment have affected substantially ways of doing business during last decades, but especially influence has been directed toward sales and marketing. Competition has set ascending demand for effectiveness of marketing and sales' actions (Jones et al. 2005). Although all marketing communication actions are not easy to measure and effects are difficult to prove (Morgan, Clark, & Gooner 2002), the significance of customer relationships is commonly recognised (Rauyruen & Miller 2007; Jones et al. 2005). Higher customer requirements and competition drives marketers to serve their customers better, establish long-lasting relationships with customers, and maintain these relationships (Rauyruen & Miller 2007). Thus, understanding of customers has become essential matter for marketers (Rauyruen & Miller 2007; Jones et al. 2005). Therefore, marketers also act as inquirers, who are observing changes of markets, in order to enable companies to respond to these changes (Garber & Dotson 2002). The number of communication channels and ways to communicate with consumers has increased, but also manner of communication has become more meaningful (Jones et al. 2005). As a consequence of this, it is more important than before for

marketer to find a suitable communication mix, which is clear and consistent enough for customer (Garber & Dotson 2002). When customers face a coherent marketing communication message in all situations, it is probably much easier to establish long lasting and profitable relationship with them (Garber & Dotson 2002; Holm 2006; Schultz & Kitchen 2000; Stammerjohan, Wood, Chang, & Thorson 2005; Gould 2004; Hall & Wickman 2008). Thus, marketing communication could be seen as a critical part of company's operations in profitable business, and this is why it is important to study marketing communication within academic research.

Secondly, a significant matter in business-to-business marketing is to understand how potential buyer behaves (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Van den Bergh 2007, 537-549). Thus, organisational buying process and buyer-seller relationships are one of the most researched topics in the field of b-to-b marketing. Another broadly studied fields are personal selling and sales management (Sheth & Sharma 2006). However, according to Sheth and Sharma (2006), communication has got a lot minor attention within b-to-b marketing research. Thus, researchers should have relatively good understanding of how buying organisation operates, what kinds of aspects are relevant on buyer's side, and how sales should function. Nonetheless, successful implementation of this knowledge requires more appreciation of marketing communication in order to communicate properly with buying organisation. Not only in sales but also during the whole relationship between buyer and seller.

Thirdly, Finnish companies' marketing communication is commonly considered defective (Jaakkola 2006; StratMark 2008). However, Finnish industrial companies operating in international business-to-business markets are not extensively studied earlier. Previous studies have mainly concentrated on small companies, or Finnish companies in general, but not merely on industrial companies. Furthermore, although integrated marketing communication is one of the most studied subjects in the field of marketing during last decade, it is relatively little studied subject within Finnish companies.

Additionally, marketing practitioners are universally asking more research focused on b-to-b markets. According to Reed, Story, and Saker (2004), practitioners regard that marketing research is not dedicated to consider effective ways of action in b-to-b markets to the extent it does in consumer markets. Practitioners of industrial marketing view also that few researches have done about topics they consider functional or relevant (Reed et al. 2004). Reed et al. (2004) mention also that marketing practitioners criticised that the whole b-to-b market is usually handled as a single entity without allowing for

various field of it. However, marketing practices could be rather different depending on industry or sector of business (Reed et al. 2004).

Consequently, it could be stated that Finnish industrial companies' marketing communication is a worth of studying subject, which is not earlier examined comprehensively within academic research. Especially, marketing communication instruments and integration of marketing communication have got only little attention within previous studies.

1.2 Objectives of study and research questions

This study focuses on Finnish industrial companies operating in international b-to-b markets and examines their marketing communication. The main purpose of this study is to describe how the companies execute their marketing communication; what are the marketing communication's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and target for development; what kind of role different marketing communication instruments have; and how marketing communication is integrated.

In addition to traditional SWOT-analysis, the study includes also a fifth category into the analysis - targets of development. The purpose of this category is to bring other categories' information together and prioritise them. Furthermore, marketing communication instruments are examined separately from other subjects within the analysis. On the grounds of the analysis, the study tries also to form practical implications for managers.

Thus, this study has one main research question, which is expressed as follows:

- *How Finnish industrial companies execute their marketing communication, and how they have put it into practice?*

Furthermore, the main research question has three sub-questions, which are more specific. These sub-questions are:

- *What are marketing communication's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and targets for development?*
- *How different marketing communication instruments are utilised in marketing communication?*
- *How marketing communication and its instruments are integrated according to the stages of IMC (Shultz and Kitchen 2000, cited by Kitchen, Brignell, Li & Jones 2004a)?*

The final results of this study are divided into five parts. The first section discusses result from the perspective of academic theory and answers to research questions. The second section introduces a research model, and the third section concentrates on characteristics of case companies' marketing communication and presents managerial implications. The fourth section evaluates the study, and the final section gives proposals for future research.

1.3 Outline of the study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 describes studied topic and justifies it, expresses study's objectives and research questions, and illustrates the outline of the study. Chapter 2 concentrates to review the concepts of marketing communication, business-to-business marketing, and integrated marketing communication (IMC). Chapter 3 covers the methodology used in this study, research methods, research approach, and data gathering process. Chapter 4 announces the results of conducted empirical research, and describes the key characteristics of case companies' marketing communication. Finally, Chapter 5 aggregates empirical findings and examined theory; responds to research questions; introduces research model; presents conclusions and managerial implications; evaluates study's limitations; and at the end contemplates possible themes for further research. The outline of this study is illustrated in FIGURE 1.

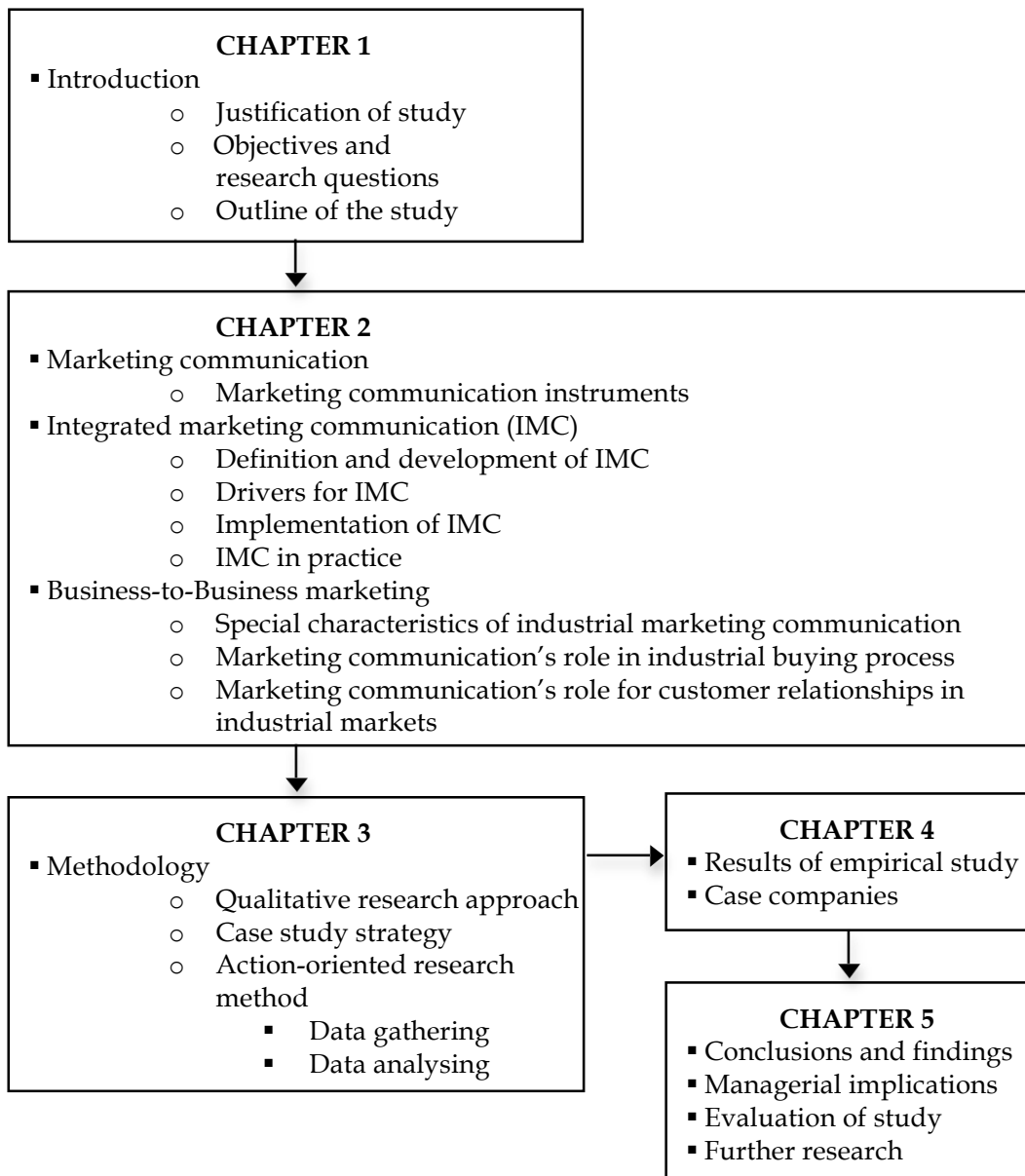


FIGURE 1 Outline of the study

2 MARKETING COMMUNICATION IN INDUSTRIAL MARKETS

Marketing communication is one of the competitive tools of marketing, which constitute the marketing mix. Marketing mix could be divided into four parts after widely known model of 4Ps (price, product, place, and promotion). Traditionally marketing communication has seen as a synonym for promotion, but nowadays, when marketing is based more and more on brands and relationships, marketing communication is seen as a wider phenomenon than traditional promotion. (Duncan & Moriarty 1998; Pickton & Broderick 2004, 4-5.)

Marketing communication refers to actions that are intended to create interaction between company (marketer) and its interest groups, and to influence positively toward those matters that organisation (marketer) want to promote for its interest groups (Vuokko 2003, 17). Interest groups should not be limited only to customers or consumers, but also to other parties related to organisation – such as employees, suppliers, shareholders, public authorities, or general public (Duncan & Moriarty 1998; Pickton & Broderick 2004, 4-5). By using different kind of communication methods and instruments, marketers try to evoke demand, raise interest, or revise attitudes toward products, services, opinions, or other issues chosen by marketer. Outcomes could be striven to achieve either directly or indirectly.

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is said to be the leading development under communication during the last decade of 20th century and

the beginning of 21st century (Kitchen & Schultz 1999; Eagle, Kitchen, & Bulmer 2007). IMC has become also one of the most discussed topics of marketing and several researchers have given their contribution to define and develop this phenomenon. This comprehensive way of thinking, how companies should execute their marketing communication, has been widely accepted, but practical implementations of IMC have been also criticised (Eagle & Kitchen 2000; Cornelissen & Lock 2000; Cornelissen 2001).

2.1 Marketing communication instruments

Marketing communication is typically divided into separate communication instruments that are used for different purposes depending on how marketers want to communicate with its target groups – or more likely, how the target audience wants to be communicated. Each instrument has its own strengths and limitations, and so marketers usually use some sort of mix of instruments to generate as effective influence as possible. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 3-7.)

The use of marketing communication instruments varies also depending on market and situation, and thus marketers need to adjust their instruments for requirements of current situation. For example, in industrial markets some instruments are emphasized differently compared to consumer markets. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 533.)

Literature provides slightly different views on how the various means of communication should be categorised, and which instruments form the marketing communication. The most common and straightforward approach is to divide marketing communication instruments into the following categories: public relations, advertising, sales promotion, and personal selling. (Pickton & Broderick 2004, 16-17.) Added to this, it could be discussed in which category for example direct marketing, exhibitions, or sponsoring fits. The newest instrument for marketing communication is e-communication, which is also impossible to situate exclusively into certain category. In addition, there are also instruments like after sales and word of mouth (WOM), although they are not commonly understood to be marketing communication instruments. Furthermore, WOM communication is not directly under the marketer's control.

However, this study divides marketing communication instruments into ten different categories, which are: advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, personal selling, sponsoring, public relations, trade shows, e-communication, after sale, and word of mouth communication (WOM). Nevertheless, this categorization of marketing communication instruments is

not an exact matter as categories overlap each other, and a single mean of marketing communication could be situated into various categories (Pickton & Broderick 2004, 16-18). From another perspective, the overlap of different marketing communication categories and synchronous between several instruments is the starting point toward integration of marketing communication (Pickton & Broderick 2004, 16-17, 22-23; De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 8-9). Subsequently, the most important marketing communication instruments are discussed more narrowly.

2.1.1 Advertising

Advertising is the most visible instrument of marketing communication, and it utilises different kind of mass communication methods – such as television, radio, newspapers, and billboards. Advertising is usually paid by marketer, and it could be easily linked to organisation behind communicated message. Advertising is not usually targeted to individuals but widespread group of persons or companies. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 5, 192.)

Advertising has been considered to be a good way to inform target groups about product, service, company, or any other marketer related matter. Besides informational aspect, advertising can aim for creating or strengthening desired conceptions. Medium used in advertising are divided to audiovisual and print channels. In addition to these, it is possible to distinguish point-of-purchase advertising and direct advertising, which are discussed later. Lately also the internet has become a particular media for advertising and it will be discussed within e-communication. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 192-193.)

In business-to-business markets, advertising has commonly had a quite low importance. It has been used mostly in specific trade journals and targeted to special audience. Industrial advertising has been typically considered very rational and factual, which aims to rouse confidence and informs about technical details and services. Compared to consumer ads industrial ads are often rated boring and ineffective. However, industrial buying decisions are also made by humans, so it could be argued that advertising could have a role in industrial markets as well. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 547-549.)

Jensen and Jepsen (2007) prefer that despite the fact that industrial products are complex and purchase processes are complicated by nature, there is also a role for advertising in industrial marketing communication. Also Long, Tellefsen, and Lichtenthal (2007) presented a group of studies, in which traditional advertising was evaluated an effective instrument to create awareness and to support sale in b-to-b markets. According to Jensen and Jepsen (2007), advertising has greater influence with low attention products, when technical details are not so significant. They also argue that large portion

of industrial products are low-involvement products by nature, which means that buyers do not devote many resources to buying process. Products are possibly economically trivial for buyer, they are not essential for buyer's business, or the risk of purchase is low. Even then, product could be complex and actual purchase process complicated, but still involvement and attention of purchase are low, and so decision-making is less rational and bases less on virtual facts. In this kind of situations, emotions and feelings get greater importance, in which case advertising is an effective and respectable instrument. Therefore, industrial marketers should stress more on brand advertising, image creation, and less on technical facts, especially when it concerns low attention and involvement products. (Jensen & Jepsen 2007.)

2.1.2 Sales promotion

Through sales promotion marketer aspires to advance product's sales, improve its market share, or increase loyalty of customers or distributors. Increased sales could be gained from existing customers, who buy more or who buy extra products or services, or alternatively from new customers, who are persuaded to buy with sales promotion. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 354-377.)

In practise, sales promotions are usually executed together with other marketing communication instruments and in short-period campaigns – such as loyalty programs, price reductions, discounts, contests, free samples etc. The goal of these campaigns is to get customers to try products and familiarise oneself with them, which hopefully creates more demand in future – also after the sales promotion campaign. Campaign can also move toward increased loyalty among customers or members in distribution channel, in which case competitor's offerings becomes less attractive in the eyes of buyers. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 354-377.)

However, sales promotion campaign should be used carefully and with high consideration. There is a risk that product or company will get a cheap image, if marketer has too often sales promotion campaigns – especially discounts or price reduction campaigns. Customers may also get used to campaign as a normal situation and they will no more buy without them. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 354-377.)

In business-to-business markets, sales promotions are mostly used in retail markets, when manufacturers promote their products for retailers, support retailers' sale, and encourage them for better performance. Otherwise, sales promotion is not commonly used in industrial markets, if compared to consumer markets. In industrial markets, a certain contradiction is the period of time, when campaigns commonly last only limited period, but customer relationships are developed in long-term. By sales promotion could be easily

evoked a peak for demand or loyalty in short term, but it often drop after campaign. Because of this, sales promotions are not the best possible way to build continuing and long-term customer relationships. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 354-377, 546.)

2.1.3 Direct marketing

The basic idea of direct marketing is to communicate individually with customer or potential customer. Any kind of marketing communication methods could be used for this. Thus, direct marketing differs from traditionally mass marketing in size of target audience and personality. Characteristic for direct marketing is that it usually offers receiver a possibility to communicate back, in which case communication could become bidirectional. Hence, direct marketing is an instrument based on personality and two-way communication, which are essential factors for relationship development. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 383-408, 516-517.)

In addition, databases have a significant role with direct marketing. They make it possible to collect, store, and analyse information, which is a requirement for successful direct marketing. Thus, customer data could be transformed to customer knowledge and understanding, and so individual and personal communication is possible. A clear advantage of direct marketing is measurability, which gives marketer a possibility to estimate effectiveness of marketing actions and improve it on the grounds of collected information. Direct marketing is often seen as a synonym for direct sale and many companies utilise it as a part of personal selling, when they send different kind of targeted messages for their customers. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 383-408, 516-517.)

However, the goal of direct marketing is to serve customers more individually, deepen customer relationships, offer better solution for individual customer, and increase customer's loyalty through better understanding. This way marketer aspires to enhance the amount or frequency of single customer's purchases rather than amount of customers. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 383-408, 516-517.)

In business-to-business markets, direct marketing is commonly used instrument as a part of relationship building activities. It has also considered an effective way to communicate with industrial customers. Especially combining with e-communication direct marketing could offer many profitable opportunities (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 383-408, 516-517, 543-549).

2.1.4 Personal selling

Personal selling is an interpersonal method to communicate personally and interactively between marketer and customer. Through this, marketer strives to inform and demonstrate its products for customers, persuade, convince, and give reasons to buy. In addition, the aim is also to listen customers' needs and wishes, and gain better understanding about customer and customers' business. Nowadays personal selling focuses increasingly on solving customer's problems and to find the best possible solution for customer. Hence, maintaining and building of long-lasting customer relationships are the main goals for personal selling besides actual selling. So, personal selling contains also different kind of after sale activities - such as guidance, supporting, and assistance. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 464-480.)

Over the times, personal selling activities have moved from transaction-oriented goals to more customer and relationship-oriented purposes. Thus, personal selling is a fundamental part of integrated marketing communication and it is often personal selling that redeems promises of other activities. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 464-480.)

Personal selling's strength is its direct impact on customer and immediate feedback. It takes place in effective interaction situations, where both marketer and customer are present, and so marketer has an opportunity to modify its communication depending on customer and situation. Secondly, marketer can have straight and honest feedback from customer, which is otherwise delayed, distorted, or missed within many other communication situations. Finally, it is easier to discuss complex issues in person, and so possibility of misunderstandings and faults reduces. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 464-480.)

Disadvantages of personal selling are for one its relatively high costs per customer contact and lack of comprehensive control over salespersons. Salesperson is usually the only contact for customer, and so she or he represents the whole company. Communication is always highly depending on salesperson and her or his decisions and actions, in which case company cannot have the same control over its customers than it has with other marketing communication instruments. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 464-480.)

However, personal selling has achieved a great importance, especially within industrial marketing, and it is commonly considered one of the most used and effective instruments in industrial marketing communication (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 464-480, 543-549). It is also the most effective instrument, when marketer tries to influence buyer's purchase decisions (Deeter-Schmelza & Kennedy 2002).

2.1.5 Sponsoring

Sponsoring is a marketing communication instrument through which marketer aspires to benefit from image, reputation, attention, publicity, visibility, audience, or status of sponsorship's target (sponsee). Sponsoring is usually executed with a sponsorship contract between sponsor and sponsee. According to contract, sponsor typically commits to support sponsee, usually monetarily, and mutually sponsee for one opens up a possibility for sponsor to utilise sponsee within sponsor's marketing communication. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 321-346.)

From marketing communication's point of view, the goal of sponsoring is to increase awareness of marketer's company or products and improve brand image among audience, who are related to sponsee. To be meaningful the target of sponsoring should be somehow related marketer's image, products, or field of business. However, there is not always clear line between public relation and sponsoring. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 321-346.)

Sponsoring is almost entirely perceived as a sport-related matter, but there are also many other possibilities. Other possible targets for sponsoring are among others music, concerts, art, or other forms of culture, science, television programmes, societal or private institutions, and causes of charity. Suitable target for sponsoring depends on marketer's objectives, brand, intended target group, and product. Different targets of sponsoring offer various target groups and marketer needs to choose the most suitable option for the needs of company. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 321-346.)

Sponsoring could be also directed at a specific event, which is the most common way of sponsoring. Another manner is to sponsor some broadcasted show or programme. Cause-related sponsoring is targeted toward some good and valued cause. This is easily mixed up with charity, but unlike charity, cause-related sponsoring is connected to marketer's marketing communication. The last form of sponsoring is called ambush sponsoring, where sponsor and sponsee do not have real sponsorship contract, but marketer tries to appear as a sponsor without sponsee's approval. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 321-346.)

Although sponsorship's goals are quite similar with goals of advertising, there are some distinctive differences. First of all, in sponsoring marketer has much less influence over content and situations, where and how the message is expressed if compared to advertising. In advertising, the message is also much clearer and more direct. On the other hand, sponsoring could be more cost-effective instrument and its results could be much powerful than the results of advertising. In addition, from audience's point of view, messages communicated through sponsoring are easier to receive and accept than advertising's message. This is because advertising is marketer origin and

receivers should evaluate it from this foundation. In sponsoring marketing communication messages comes from sponsee, who is recognised and trusted by receivers. Benefits of sponsoring will not be reached in short-term but it takes time. Sponsoring is not a straightforward instrument, like for example advertising, which affects right away target group's behaviour, but it takes time before sponsee's positive factors will be connected to sponsor. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 321-346.)

Sponsoring, as many other marketing communication instruments, is not as effective as possible if used alone. Supporting activities and linkage to other instruments strengthen influence of intended messages. Thus, marketer needs to notice that the budget accounted for sponsorship is not enough but there is also a need for other supporting activities. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 321-327, 345-346.)

2.1.6 Public relations

There are some disagreements related to public relations and its role within corporate communications and marketing communication. Sometimes public relations are considered as a separate function from marketing communication and occasionally it is included in marketing communication. Either way, public relations have its own role in marketing communication mix, but it has also a wider meaning in communication with secondary interest groups. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 291-313.)

Generally, public relations' goal is to evoke goodwill toward company in the whole community and environment, where company is operating. It aspires to create and maintain a good relationship, responsiveness, and mutual understanding with different parties. By public relation activities marketer influences public opinion toward company, creates company's personality, and improve company's reputation. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 291-313.)

Audience of public relations could be divided internal target groups like employees and shareholders, and external target groups like general public, public administration, and other interest groups. In addition to these, there are also traditional marketing related audience like prospects, customers, suppliers, competitors, and members of distribution channel. In context of this study, we focus mainly on the marketing related aspect, but it is good to notice that there are also other aspects. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 291-313.)

With marketing related public relations, marketers strive to generate profitable results by creating good reputation and positive attitude among commercial interest groups. The clear purpose is to support sale, strengthen brand, and support other marketing communication activities. Useful means could be for example different events, meetings, conferences, free samples for

evaluation, newsletters, product placements, or sponsoring. However, it is not always completely clear which activities are sponsoring, sales promotion, and which belongs to public relations. Characteristic for public relations activities is the need to co-operate with media representatives or other external influencers. An effective and largely used method is lobbying, which is aimed to affect big issues for company. It includes informing, negotiating, and influencing toward persons or parties, who make decisions affecting company. Sometimes marketer lacks control over communicated messages and it is necessary to prepare also for negative publicity. Secondly, public relations' costs are relatively low, because there is no need to pay for media, where messages are published. A principle for co-operation with media is that marketer itself needs to be active, offer publication prepared material, and assist media representative in all possible ways. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 291-313.)

According to Garber and Dotson (2002), the importance of public relations emphasise especially at the beginning of customer relationship, when potential customer becomes aware of product and supplier, and starts to consider them as an alternative. In addition, public relations have a significant role within business-to-business marketing among others, when marketer is communicating with buyer's decision-making unit (DMU) (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 537-549). DMU is typically a group of individuals, who are responsible for a certain procurement process. Commonly, they have different roles and responsibilities in organisation, and this is why they also consider the procurement from different perspectives. The use of DMU is a characteristics feature for industrial and business-to-business buyers. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 291-313, 546.)

2.1.7 Trade shows

Trade shows and exhibitions give marketer an opportunity to get personal, face-to-face contact and interaction with existing and potential customers (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 440-456). From this perspective trade shows are kind a special form for personal selling. Customers and prospects on the spot are usually willing to receive information, familiarise oneself with marketer's offering, and establish relationships (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 440-456). In addition, trade shows offer an opportunity to get to know competitors, their products, suppliers, and other partners (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 440-456).

Trade shows are a versatile marketing communication instrument having many possibilities. This traditional instrument allows a great opportunity to combine several marketing communication instruments together at the same time and place. Trade shows include by nature among others elements from direct marketing, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, and point

of purchase communication. Likewise trade shows' goals could be very multifunctional. Marketer can aspire to sell products within trade shows or glean sales leads; introduce, test, and demonstrate new products; develop relationships with customers, competitors and partners, or establish new ones; motivate own personnel; get acquainted with markets, competitors' offerings, and field of business; improve company or products' brand awareness and image; carry out marketing research or customer survey; promote goodwill and manage public relations; or utilise sponsorship partners. Recently, it has also arisen electronic trade shows that take place in the internet and involve totally new aspect and opportunities for trade shows' exploitation. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 440-456.)

A decisive factor for successful trade show appearance is first of all the selection of event (Hansen 2004). To be effective in trade shows there need to be right and suitable companies represented. Without correct target group, also accurately constructed appearance will not gain desired influence. In addition to event selection, planning of appearance, combinations of used marketing communication instruments, and preparation are the major elements to be considered in order to utilise trade shows' opportunities effectively. All these matters need to be adjusted properly, if marketer wants to reach desired target group and appointed goals. Additionally, measurement and follow-up practices afterwards is an important part of successful trade show appearance. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 440-456.) Through measurement practices marketer is able to consider trade show's performance and outcomes from various perspective. For example, Hansen (2004) stated that marketers should estimate trade shows from five different viewpoints: sales-related, information-gathering, relationship-building, image-building, and motivation activities.

In business-to-business markets trade shows and exhibitions are very commonly used marketing communication instrument. Deeter-Schmelza and Kennedy (2002) appreciate trade shows the second most effective instrument after personal selling, when marketer tries to influence buyer's purchase decisions. However, it is not a low-cost and light instrument, but it could be an effective and profitable means of marketing communication, providing event is selected carefully, appearance is planned well enough, and marketer succeed to stand out from competitors' offering. For this marketer need to utilise several marketing communication instruments within trade shows and integrate them properly. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 440-456, 543, 546.)

2.1.8 E-communication

At the same time, when e-communication has offered a new marketing communication instrument, besides traditional ones, it has also created a new

way to execute traditional instruments. Almost all activities, that traditional instruments offer, are also able to execute through electronic communication channels. Hence, advertising, direct marketing, public relations, sales promotion, and personal selling as well as trade shows, to some extent, could be conducted also within e-communication. In addition to traditional instruments, by the assistance of e-communication marketer have an opportunity to communicate without limits of time and place. It offers a cost-effective, personal, interactive, and measurable method of communication, where all actions are able to store and analyse afterwards. Communicated messages are easily individualised and targeted on the grounds of receiver. E-communication enables all events of customer relationship during the whole life cycle right from the awakening of awareness to actual purchase, after-sale actions, and follow-ups. Thus, e-communication is very multifunctional, but also challenging instrument. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 489-524.)

The most used sector of e-communication is the internet, which is also quite often perceived as a synonym for e-communication. However, there are also other sectors – such as mobile marketing, internal networks, or interactive television. In addition, marketing communication in the internet could be divided into fields that are more specific. The heart of internet communication is company, product or brand websites, which could be seen as marketer's home in the internet. Besides websites marketer can utilise among others various ways of web advertising, search engine optimisation, viral marketing, social medium, networks, online events, blogs, wikis, podcasts, feeds, etc. All of these channels could be utilised both to offer and to gather information. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 489-524.)

E-communication is so wide and complex issue that it is impossible for marketer to handle completely. This is why marketers need to choose those methods of e-communication, which suits the best to their own purposes. Quite often, this requires trying and committing an error, in order to find the best practises. Because of these challenges, successful exploitation of e-communication asks innovativeness and open-mindedness from marketers. If they manage to exploit e-communication's opportunities and incorporate it into their marketing communication, there are very significant benefits to reach. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 489-524.)

According to Day and Bens' (2005) study, the majority of business-to-business marketers consider internet an opportunity and only a small minority see it a threat. Marketers view that internet's benefits come from cost reductions in customer service, stronger customer relationships, personalised and encouraged communication, and interaction between different customer contact points. Internet's threats for one are related to price wars, channel conflicts, and

competitive business models. However, they are not commonly seen remarkable. Despite mutual understanding about benefits, Day and Bens (2005) state that not nearly all marketers utilise internet's opportunities. In fact, they noticed that companies, who already manage their customer relationship well, exploit also internet's opportunities better. This is a consequence of existing ways of action, culture, and attitudes toward customer relationships. The internet, or e-communication as a whole, is not a separate element, which solves existing problems of communication or makes operations automatically workable. E-communication should be integrated into other activities as well as other marketing communication instruments. In addition, Day and Bens' (2005) study proved that companies with smaller market share regard more positively toward internet and its opportunities. Naturally, smaller companies are more flexible and new ways of action could be integrated faster in comparison with bigger ones.

Despite the whole potential and all opportunities that e-communication offers, it is not able to replace other marketing communication instruments with e-communication (Hunter et al. 2004). Marketers need to bear in mind, also in the future, that e-communication is not a solution for problems, and the whole marketing communication cannot be transformed to electronic channels. Among others, Deeter-Schmelza and Kennedy (2002) have stated that internet is not as effective way to influence buyer's purchase decisions as traditional marketing communication instruments. For example, there are no signs that e-communication could replace face-to-face communication. Thus, personal selling is still the most effective instrument of marketing communication in industrial markets and trade shows are the second (Deeter-Schmelza & Kennedy 2002). Therefore, marketers should not abandon traditional marketing communication instruments, but they need to strive to develop their e-communication practices further.

Another noteworthy matter is that new innovations and unknown transformations evoke always some sort of resistance among people, who are affected. This is also the case with e-communication practices, and it need to be noticed, when company is planning to take actions in this field. However, employees and personnel are more willing to utilise different kind of technologies and new solutions in their work, if these are easy to use and offer some benefits for users. Herein, company's management and managers have an important role to justify the usage and enunciate the benefits for employees as well as train employees up. (Long et al. 2007.)

2.2 Definition and development of integrated marketing communication

Academic literature has delivered many different explanations for the questions 'what IMC is', 'what is its relation to other functions,' and 'how IMC should be utilised'. Some researchers have also considered that IMC is a passing phenomenon and it is going to disappear along short period of time. (Kitchen et al. 2004a.)

Despite extensive research and general acceptance related to advantages of IMC, unambiguous theory is not found and frames of IMC are still blurry (Kitchen et al. 2004a). For example, there are several names and terms for this new approach of marketing communication among academics and practitioners. Kliatchko (2005) mentions among others terms 'new advertising', 'orchestration', '360 branding', 'total branding', 'whole egg', 'seamless communication', 'relationship marketing', 'one-to-one marketing', 'integrated marketing', and 'integrated communications'. This richness of terms to describe the same phenomenon is descriptive for IMC's research and practice. In addition, there are still a largest number of researches concentrated on definition, theoretical frame, aspect, and extent of IMC (Kliatchko 2008). However, in spite of incomplete theory, IMC has faced only little resistance among researchers and there is a common understanding about huge opportunities and possible benefits related to IMC (Kliatchko 2008). Furthermore, development and continuing research to find a received definition and frames for this phenomenon is widely supported among academic researchers. (Kliatchko 2008.)

The beginnings of integrated marketing communication took place in the turn of 1990s, when pioneer researchers Caywood, Schultz, and Wang stated first time an idea about integration of separate communication functions (Kitchen et al. 2004a).

The very first definition of IMC was formulated in 1989 and it emphasised the importance of comprehensive communication planning. According to the first definition, the goal was to combine several marketing communication instruments together to a clear and consistent unity, and so maximise the communication impact. After its announcement, the first definition was widely used and it has been a foundation for further development of IMC definition. (Kliatchko 2005.)

Thus, at the early stage of development process, integrated marketing communication was seen merely as a linkage or coordination of separate marketing communication instruments for more continuous communication concept (Kitchen et al. 2004a). Before that, individual instruments of marketing

communication were treated separately without relations with each other (Kitchen et al. 2004a). Each instrument was operated independently and they had their own goals – such as advertising pushed information to markets and tried to attract consumers to purchase; and sales promotion for one led up to improve sales. In spite of shared objectives in company level, these functions did not communicate with each other, unified their operations or co-operated. In this situation, the idea to integrate different marketing communication functions in order to get better collaboration and reduce fragmentation could be seen as a massive improvement. At this state, the integration was considered mostly as a combination of different messages sent from the company to outside the company. Thus, communication was referred to inside-out communication (Kitchen et al. 2004a).

The next stage of IMC development process was willingness to understand consumers and customers' needs, expectations, and wishes. Marketers started to pay attention to signals and messages, which came from consumers and customers in the markets. This could be said another significant point in development process of IMC, because it was the first step toward customer-oriented operations (Kitchen et al. 2004a).

Following important stage in development process was the emergence of IMC to a strategic component instead of tactical. Schultz and Shultz presented this new viewpoint in late 1990s. According to them, IMC should be considered as a strategic business process, which has much more extensive meaning for companies' operation than mere communication function. The concept of IMC should be seen as a process besides it has been considered a single marketing communication concept. (Kliatchko 2008.) In addition, Swain (2004) stated in his article, that *"...control of IMC is or should be a top management function"*, which, according to him, represents common understanding of several journal authors. The idea of IMC as a strategic process means that it is not just about communication but also about management, branding, and public relations (Kitchen, Schultz, Kim, Han, & Li 2004b). Therefore, companies should consider comprehensively all their brand strategies, contact points with consumers, communication channels and forms, and all kind of customers, consumers, and prospects, when they are planning and implementing their marketing communication strategies (Kitchen et al. 2004b; Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan, & McDonald 2005).

Later on, measurability and internal marketing have become important elements of IMC. Managers have a growing pressure to observe investments directed to marketing communication and compare these investments with gained outcomes. Other aspects, which companies and marketers have to take into account within IMC programs, are internal actors inside the company.

Marketing communication should be targeted also to company's employees, managers, and other shareholders in order to motivate and inform them. Internal marketing communication has an essential role in creating right kind of culture among peoples inside the company. IMC programs have to be effective and programs outcomes should be also continuously verifiable. This is why marketers increasingly consider internal marketing and measurability with their marketing communication. When measurements have come to agenda, there is obviously also desire to improve communication and make operation more effective. Hence, possibility to measure outcomes and feedback system belongs inextricably to IMC process, as well as internal communication. (Kliatchko 2008.)

Accordingly, IMC's definition evolved in the course of time. Pretty soon after the emergence of IMC, customer-orientation became a part of IMC's definition, IMC was mentioned a strategic matter, and importance of internal marketing was noticed (Schultz 2004). After this measurability and demand for outcomes was highlighted within IMC's definition (Schultz 2004). However, the first evolved step of definition stressed long-lasting customer relationship, but cut out some other matters – such as measurability, internal marketing, and IMC's strategic role (American Marketing Association 2008). In spite of this, the following definition on IMC was substantially more extensive, and it consisted of four main pillars, which were *customer-centricity*, *data-driven approach*, *integration*, and *effective branding* (Journal of Integrated Marketing Communication 2008). In addition, this extensive definition included the idea of long-term relationships, importance of comprehensiveness of communication, and ambition to understand customers (Journal of Integrated Marketing Communication 2008). One of the latest definitions of IMC in academic literature still bases on these four pillars, but nowadays it additionally stresses outward-minded way of thinking instead of traditional inward-minded attitude, and highlights IMC's role as a business process (Kliatchko 2008).

Hence, IMC is nowadays seen a business process, which is based on demand-chain method (outward-minded) instead of traditional supply-chain (inward-minded) method. The purpose of demand-chain mindset in the context of IMC business processes is to enable organisation's wide understanding about customers including customer's needs, wants, desires, and behaviour. To achieve this, companies need to integrate their different actions with some kind of data-driven and information technology based system. Secondly, seeing the IMC as a business process, which passes the whole organisation, set also a requirement that IMC has to be considered a strategic issue in order that customer's total experience could be managed. (Kliatchko 2008.)

Naturally, definition's development process of IMC was followed by orientation of research, and in late 1990s, researchers started to examine IMC from more practical perspective. Researchers were interested in how IMC approach could be implemented in organisations and what kinds of difficulties there are related to implementation. Practical point of view entails under examination also relationships with shareholders, relationship marketing, public relation, measurability, and internal marketing. Later on, researchers have been interested in utilisation of new information technologies and databases with IMC, measurement of IMC's outcomes, media planning, and possibilities to integrate and synchronize various media activities together. (Kliatchko 2008.)

Although researchers have not succeeded to find a common and exact definition for IMC so far, there are no evidences that IMC would be a temporary phenomenon or going to disappear. Cornelissen and Lock (2000) questioned the whole concept of IMC in their article and justified their view with the lack of exact academic theory and measurability of IMC's performance. They also explained the favour of IMC among marketers with the marketing managers' tendency to adopt all new and fashionable methods into practice without consideration. However, many researchers have disproved Cornelissen and Lock's (2000) view. Among others, Schultz and Kitchen (2000) evidenced that even if IMC requires a more comprehensive definition for its support, it is not a proof against progression of IMC toward scientific theory. In addition, Schultz and Kitchen (2000) pointed out that the concept of IMC has moved forward constantly and researchers round the world have participated in groundwork of that developing theory.

Furthermore, there are many different points of view toward IMC among academic researchers and marketing managers. Various researchers consider this phenomenon from different perspectives and besides practitioners have their own approaches. From this base, it is challenging to formulate a comprehensible and consistent theory for IMC. Like Gould (2004) expressed this problematic: "...they [researcher] are faced with a virtual Tower of Babel in describing it [theory of IMC] and the practices associated it." Each point of view represents its own side of IMC and researchers have to get even more acquainted with the topic to merge these pieces to one entity. On the other hand the same problematic is generally related the whole concept of marketing. According to Gould (2004), "...we have not dug deep enough into the phenomenon, as it exists." Thus, IMC should be studied with a bottom-up and inductive approach in order to find out a wider understanding about IMC. (Gould 2004.) The comprehensive and exhaustive theory explaining every aspects of phenomenon is unattainable and it would not be the aim of research (Gould

2004). It is more important to form a diversified understanding about IMC in practice and try to describe it. Thus, measurement of IMC has become one of the most notable research areas (Kliatchko 2008). Researchers have tried to find solutions how to measure results of IMC programmes with financial indicators (Kliatchko 2008). Reliable measurements method would improve accountability and give managers more information about effectiveness of their marketing decisions. In addition, importance of measurability has seen the light partly because of growing pressure for marketing effectiveness and a demand to produce business results through marketing activities.

Another topics that academic literature has discussed during last few years are internal marketing and corporate communication in relation to IMC. There are also several studies concentrated on branding, brands, brand equity, brand-identity, and brand outcomes as a part of IMC process. According to Kliatchko (2008), IMC research has focused on three main research areas after beginning of 21st century: (1) *IMC and internal marketing issues and corporate communications*; (2) *IMC and branding, brand equity, identity and outcomes*; and (3) *IMC and media planning, media measurement, and integration/synergy of multiple media*.

Based on previous literature of IMC, this study understands the concept of IMC as follows: The fundamental idea behind IMC is the establishment of long-lasting and profitable customer relationships, which requires customer-oriented way of actions and organisation wide customer understanding. Secondly, IMC needs to be strategic part of a company's business processes, in order that whole organisation could be involved. This organisation wide involvement and deep customer understanding asks for integration inside the company and between different functions, as well as internal marketing. In addition, data driven information technology is needed to manage customer relationships successfully, and to develop measurement practices to evaluate effectiveness of marketing practices. In addition, company should act with a homogenous way in all situations, and give a coherent view about itself to customers and other target groups. This seamless and uniform view is attempted to reach through co-operation and strategic planning, which should function for a shared goal. All actions company takes during planning and implementation processes as well as with its actual operations have to be done with customers' point of view in mind: how customers perceive or see the company, its actions, and communication. In order that could be possible, marketer should strive to create a two-way dialog between company and its target groups. In that manner, communication is not one-way pushing, inside-out communication from company to receiver but true bilateral dialogue between two senders and two receivers of messages.

2.3 Drivers for integrated marketing communication

Garber and Dotson (2002) mentioned the tendency for strong customer relationships a cause of highlighted importance of integrated marketing communication. As another reason for this, they mentioned ongoing changes in business environment – such as fragmentation of markets, intensifying competition, requirement for higher efficiency, and grown meaning of new communication technologies. Because of these existing circumstances, Garber and Dotson (2002) consider that the coordination of marketing communication in its all forms has become even more important for companies than before. All different forms and situations, where marketing communication messages are expressed, have to formulate one consistent message, which is communicated with one voice regardless of situation or place (Garber & Dotson 2002). Therefore, Garber and Dotson (2002) emphasise that different messages should complement and strengthen each other and pass on the core message of company. Contradictory messages, which override each other, fragment the core message, or confuse or disturb recipient, should be avoided with all possible manners. In addition to Garber and Dotson (2002), also several other researchers (among other Holm 2006; Schultz & Kitchen 2000; Stammerjohan et al. 2005; Gould 2004; Hall & Wickman 2008) regard that integrated marketing communication is capable to offer a solution for many challenges that companies have in the markets at the moment. Naturally, it is not an all-embracing solution for all problems, but anyway marketing communication and quality of it could be seen as a significant factor for a successful operation in business nowadays.

In addition, Kitchen et al. (2004a) have compiled drivers for the development of integrated marketing communication in their study. According to them, one of the most remarkable reasons for IMC has been the demand to make marketing more effective (Kitchen et al. 2004a). This has become increasingly relevant, because of growing number of new communication channels and fragmentation of markets. Thus, marketers need to choose and segment their target groups more specifically and direct communication more individually than before. (Kitchen et al. 2004a.)

Another significant driver for IMC, according to Kitchen et al. (2004a), has been an extensive advancement of technology and emergence of customer information systems, which are more efficient than earlier. Through the technical advancements, marketers have got a possibility to gather more specific information about their customers and prospects, storage and analyse gathered information, and finally exploit generated knowledge within their marketing communication. On the other hand, technical advancement has also

changed customers' way to behave. The most significant change has seen in the internet that has become a totally new source of information for customers. Additionally, people use internet as a communication channel, which was not there over decade ago. Nowadays, internet is also used to assist within transactions progresses, and it operates as a delivery channel. (Kitchen et al. 2004a.)

At same the time with technical advancement world has transformed smaller, globalisation has come to agenda, and internationalisation belongs to almost every company's mission. Companies operate in many different countries and separate continents, they have agencies in multiple locations, and they operate within many networks in concert with other actors. (Kitchen et al. 2004a.) Consequence of this, communication with stakeholders has reached more important role than earlier, but also communication inside the company has become one of the key issues for viable organisation.

Globalisation and wider market areas have generated a need for global brands that are known internationally. On the other hand, customers would like to see more local marketing campaign (Kitchen et al. 2004a). This is also a fundamental issue with integrated marketing communication: acting receiver-oriented and communicating as individually as possible with consumers.

According to Schultz (cited by Kliatchko 2005), the main driver for change in the field of marketing has been the development of information technology, which has forced to move from mass marketing and product-centric though to customer-centric, database-driven, interactive, and measurable approach in marketing communication. Kliatchko (2005) also mentions three main areas that were affected by this significant change: marketplace, media and communications, and consumers. Based on this, Kliatchko (2005) considers that emergence of IMC is rather a consequence of natural evolution in marketing communication than a revolutionary new though of marketing. Thus, development of IMC would be seen as a logical continuum for society's changes.

Drivers of integrated marketing communication and forces interacting in the background could be briefly outlined as follows: IMC has arisen along with technical advancement. New technologies and technical solutions have made new communication channels and forms possible, which, for one's part, have worked in favour of markets' fragmentation and division. On the other hand, new communication technologies have made it possible to reach almost every person on the planed regardless of time or location. For companies there are much more potential customers to get in touch – especially in consumer markets, but customers are also much more independent and individual, who moreover would like to be treated as individuals. Technical advancement has as

well brought new tools for marketers to gather, store, analyse, and exploit massive amount of information about customers and consumers. Fragmentation and individuality have driven marketers to focus more specific defined target groups. Marketers are also willing to serve chosen target groups with more comprehensive manner and establish long-lasting relationships with them. To gain high customers loyalty and maintain existing customer relationships is the major challenge for today's marketers.

2.4 Implementation of integrated marketing communication

Schultz and Kitchen (Kitchen et al. 2004a) have divided implementation process of integrated marketing communication into four stages in their model (FIGURE 2). The model is based on the idea how companies execute their marketing communication. At the first stage, company tries to unify its communication directed from inside the company to outside the company. Thus, the aim is to convey a coherent and similar message and picture about the company for all receivers of communication, in all interaction situations. (Kitchen et al. 2004a.)

At the second stage, company turns around the direction of its communication and implements outside-in information flow to its marketing communication function. Essential goal in this stage is to give attention to customers' wishes: what they want to hear or see, where, when, and in which media. In practice, this is executed by gathering information about customers, analysing gathered information, and finally analysed information will be utilised to support company's marketing decisions. This stage is a revolutionary move toward customer-oriented communication. (Kitchen et al. 2004a.)

Characteristic for the third stage is exploitation of information technology within marketing communication. It does not mean that technology is used only for communication's purposes but also for objectives of customer relationship management and database marketing. The result of successful implementation of this stage is strengthened understanding of customers, in which case simple customer information has succeeded to turn into deep understanding of customers. (Kitchen et al. 2004a.)

In the fourth stage, company examines results of its marketing communication and aspires to measure marketing investments in comparison with profits that are gained by marketing. At this stage, company's marketing communication is integrated not only with externally but also internally between different actors and functions – such as sales, research and development, and finance. Marketing is seen as a strategic matter for company,

and the whole business operation is a coherent entity, which is focusing on company's customers. (Kitchen et al. 2004a.)

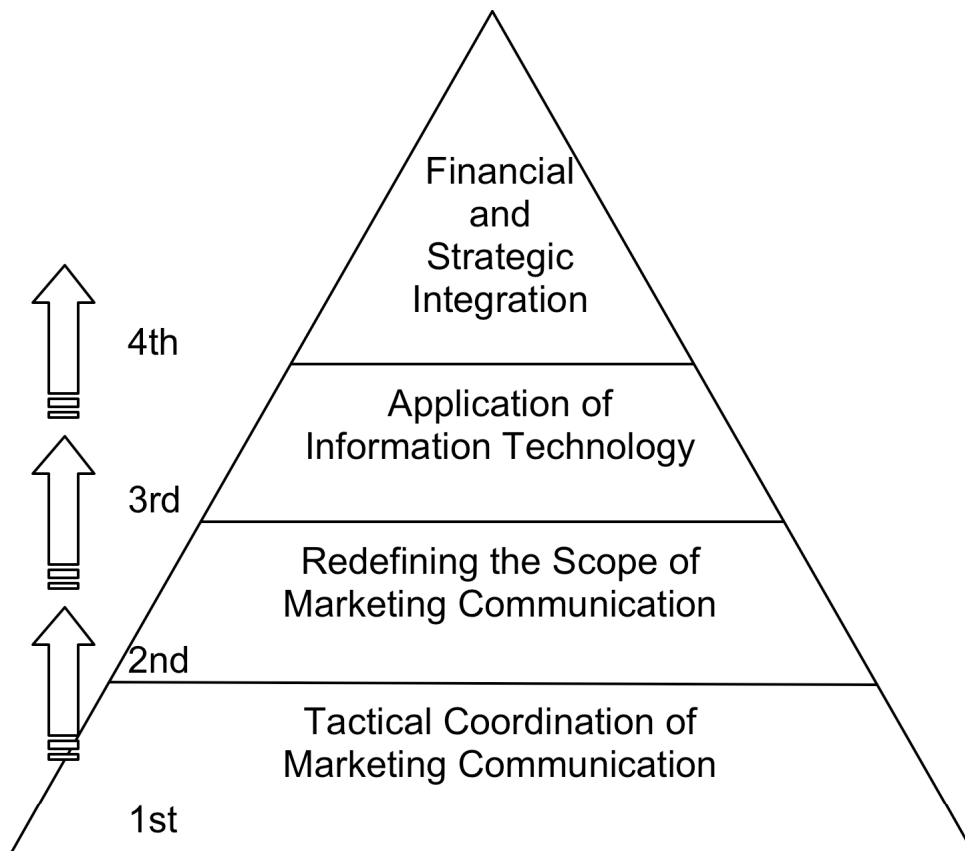


FIGURE 2 Schultz and Kitchen's model of stages in IMC development (Kitchen et al. 2004a)

2.5 Integrated marketing communication in practice

IMC is a new phenomenon that is replacing former ways of thinking and practices to execute marketing and marketing communication. Among others, mass marketing and mass communication are fading away little by little, IMC's holistic way of thinking is going to take over, and status of customers will be emphasised (Kliatchko 2005). Because of changing business environment and dynamic markets, also requirements for business and marketing are under modification. Thus, companies cannot ignore IMC but they have to transform along with the others. In order to complete this transformation, Kliatchko (2008) introduced both strategic and managerial level issues, which need to be considered in companies.

According to Kliatchko (2008), organisation's top management should take a holistic view on company's business, define what for company exists,

what is its business, and what is not. Another strategic level's issue is to define organisation's mission, goals, and objectives. In addition, it is on top management's responsibility to create and enable customer-oriented operations, drive brand-building strategies, and create a culture of marketing and customer-orientation. For this, all units, functions, and systems inside the organisation should be integrated together in intention to deliver and fulfil customer's needs. As Kliatchko (2008) quotes Schultz and Kitchen's expression in his study: within organisation everyone should realize "*...a culture of marketing - marketing is everybody's job...*" According to this, customers, prospects, and stakeholders should be in the centre of business operations. In spite of all, the most important matter is that top management see marketing communication as a strategic tool of management and as a long-term investment. (Kliatchko 2008.)

Middle-level managers at operational level are for one responsible for tactical decisions. There is influencing the same transformation of prevailing structures in this level that influences also in strategic level, but challenges are somewhat different. However, success in operational level is highly depended on actions taken in strategic level. When customer-centric way of actions has been made possible by top management, managers on operational level have a virtual opportunity to put it into the practise. Thus, middle-level managers should follow strategic decisions and concentrate on specific planning, management, implementation, development, and measurement of IMC processes. Each manager should organise her or his own unit around the customers; make a clear understanding about customer's need, desires, and behaviour in every marketplace, where they operate; and create, execute, analyse, and develop IMC-programmes. Crucial matter for success is how operational level's manager succeeds to create and maintain long-term profitable relationships with customers. In addition, managers in operational level coordinate the co-operation and integration of different actors inside the organisation and with various suppliers - such as advertising, communication, and media agencies. (Kliatchko 2008.)

There are also great challenges related to IMC in practice. One of the biggest challenges is still to measure the profitability of different marketing communication activities, because IMC lacks distinct frames and definition. Another challenge is the way that companies execute IMC in practise. Too often integration is not comprehensive but includes only partly company's activities and thus the core idea of IMC is dismissed. Typically, marketers focus on inside-out communication and try to unify their promotional mix, but ignore wider aspects of integration. Conversely, IMC should implement much deeper into companies' practices, if the whole potential of integration is desired to

utilise. Among others, Kitchen et al. (2004b) and Weilbacher (2001) noticed that IMC is not exploited all the way, although marketers like to speak about integrated marketing communication and they are executing IMC projects. According to Kitchen et al. (2004b), integration typically comes true at tactical level, but do not attain strategic level. This means that companies succeed to unify their operations from their own point of view, but they do not pay attention to external stakeholders or customers (Kitchen et al. 2004b).

2.6 Special characteristic of industrial marketing communication

The term business-to-business marketing (b-to-b marketing) means all kind of activities that aims to market products or services for any kind of organisations. These organisations could be public, private, non-profit, commercial, government, or distributor. Customer organisations in b-to-b markets can among others resell, reprocess, or use products in their own business in consumer or b-to-b markets. Thus, b-to-b marketing is a wider concept than industrial marketing, which covers marketing activities toward companies manufacturing – usually complex – products or services for consumer or industrial markets. In contrast, b-to-b marketing includes also marketing for distributors and companies reselling products in consumer or b-to-b markets. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 533.) This study focuses primary on industrial marketing as a part of business-to-business marketing.

Traditionally academic literature has differentiated marketing practices between consumer and business markets (Coviello & Brodie 2001). However, according to Coviello and Brodie (2001), there are some differences between these two markets, but more similarities than differences could be found. The main differences relate to markets, customers, and products (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 533-534).

Business markets have much fewer actors in both sides than in consumer markets, which make relationships between buyer and seller remarkably closer in business markets in comparison with consumer markets (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 533-534). Thus, customers are usually known better in business markets, and so they could be treated more individually. In addition, business customers also demand more personal treatment and deals. As a result, customer relationships and relationship management could be seen vital for companies operating in business markets (Reed et al. 2004). Hence, marketing and business processes between industrial buyers and sellers are much more customer focused, individual, and interactive. Typically, marketers also aim to

establish and maintain long lasting relationships with their customers (Reed et al. 2004).

Secondly, business customers differ from consumers. When consumers are generally very heterogeneous group of individuals, who behave differently, business customers use to be more homogeneous group round the world. Consumers' behaviour depends on many factors – such as demographic factors, emotions, desires, attitudes, and habits. In contrast, business customers' behaviour bases more on industry, type of end-markets, level of technology adapted, and especially characteristics of decision-making unit (DMU). Thus, companies among same industry operate usually quite similarly, even if they locate in different countries or continents. However, in order to succeed business marketer needs to understand the role of DMU. Furthermore, buying processes are typically quite complex in business markets, and especially with governmental organisations, whose operation is strictly defined by laws and statutes. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 74-76, 532-537; Reed et al. 2004.)

Thirdly, products differ between consumer and business markets, and especially industrial goods differ from consumer goods. Industrial products are generally customer-specific or unique solutions, which are more or less tailored for a certain customer. In addition, industrial brands are different in comparison with consumer brands. In many cases, industrial products do not even have own brand names but they are situated under company's brand. This is called a corporate branding. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 46-47, 532-537.)

Meaningful matter in industrial markets is also comprehensiveness of solutions that marketer is capable to offer to its customers. Typically, industrial buyers pay relatively large amount of attention to entirety of solution, which could include besides core product also matter of installations, customer service and support, maintenance, training, warranty terms, and distribution. Because of uniqueness and complexity of industrial products, marketer has to be well acquainted with all product features including technical aspects. Selling process needs usually lot of time and intensive co-operation between selling and buying organisations. Therefore, relationship between companies has an essential role during buying process and marketer has to know its customers very well. Because of this, the shorter distribution chains the better and easier it is for selling organisation. Typically, industrial markets do not have as much intermediate actors between seller and buyer than in consumer markets. It is also usual that companies use their own sales force. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 2, 536-537.)

2.7 Marketing communication's role in industrial buying process

This study considers industrial buying process a complex decision making process (Huntera, Kasouf, Celuch, & Curry 2004). Because of complex buying process, industrial buyers need to make the effort for their procurements (Huntera et al. 2004), which could be seen for example in resources directed to buying processes.

Another characteristics feature for industrial buyers is the usage of certain decision-making units (DMU), which is responsible for procurement process. Typically, DMU consists of number of individuals, who have different roles and responsibilities in organisation, and so also different motives to do buying decisions. Therefore, marketer has to match its marketing communication with buyer's DMU and consider closely to whom its marketing communication is targeted. It is important to find key person, or key persons, who have the major influence on final purchase decision. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 537-549.)

The way that buyer's DMU is searching information is a vitally important process to understand for marketer in order that marketer is able to adapt its marketing communication for that. Based on this understanding marketer can create the most suitable marketing communication mix, and choose the best methods and instruments. If marketer cannot understand, how buyer's DMU is operating, and though marketer's marketing communication would be basically of high quality, marketer's communication actions are ineffective. Therefore, it is important - especially for industrial marketer - to understand how buyers search information.

One significant factor that influence on industrial buyer's information search process is the risk buyer perceives related to purchase. According to Brossard (1998) and Huntera et al. (2004), information sources that buyer uses varies depending on risk importance and risk probability. Risk importance means how significant procurement is for buyer (Huntera et al. 2004). The more it affects buyer's own business the crucial the risk importance. Risk probability for one illustrates how difficult it is to buyer to define product's requirements or supplier's capabilities (Huntera et al. 2004). The higher the risk probability is the more difficult it is to define requirements for procurement and supplier's suitability. Thus, complex procurement includes more uncertainties, in which case more resources are required, more reliable information sources asked, and more information needed in comparison with simpler procurement.

In addition, buying situation (new buy, modified re-buy, or straight re-buy) affects amount of searched information and used information sources. New and unknown buying situation contains many unknown elements and consequently requires more information from several sources than already

familiar situation or simple repetition of earlier purchase. (Brossard 1998; Huntera et al. 2004.)

Furthermore, Smith and Bush (2002), and Bienstock and Royne (2007) stated that also accessibility of information influences buyer's perceived risk. According to them, accessibility could be divided into two factors: availability and complexity of information. The higher risk is the more difficult it is for buyer to obtain information (availability), and secondly understand obtained information (complexity). (Smith & Bush 2002; Bienstock & Royne 2007.)

Eventually, industrial buyers perceive buying process a high-risk situation, if purchased product is complex, buyer does not have prior experience about similar purchases, or information related to procurement is hard to reach or it is difficult to understand. Hence, Agnihotri, Rapp, and Trainor (2009) consider marketing communication as a critical service for buyer during the buying process. This service is produced and offered by marketer, who transfers needed information to buyer within the process. Information should be transferred at a suitable time, understandably, in compact format, and it needs to cover the whole information search process (Agnihotri et al. 2009). According to Agnihotri et al. (2009), the key element is marketer's understanding about buyer, which could be reached only through mutual confidence. Thus, communication must not end at the point of buyer's purchase decision but marketer needs to aspire to establish a viable relationship with buyer (Agnihotri et al. 2009). Agnihotri et al. (2009) stated also that marketer's communication actions and support for buyer becomes even more significant with complex buying processes. In addition, the amount of used information sources increases with the risk of procurement, and thus industrial buyers usually search information from various sources during buying process (Deeter-Schmelza & Kennedy 2002; Brossard 1998).

Therefore, marketing communication has a role in every stages of information search process, but communication methods should be adapted separately to each situation. One of the most critical situations is when potential buyer is searching information by itself, and so it is responsive and willing to be informed. Thus, it is essential for marketer to be able to respond to customer's needs for information by marketing communication. For this reason, marketer needs to be aware how customers are searching information and pay attention to used information sources. (Brossard 1998; Deeter-Schmelz & Kennedy 2002.)

Moriarty and Spekman's (1984 cited by Deeter-Schmelza & Kennedy 2002; Brossard 1998; De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 539) early study classifies buyer's information sources based on two dimensions: personal-impersonal and commercial-non-commercial. Additionally, they divided information sources

into four separate groups, on the grounds of these dimensions (Moriarty & Spekman 1984 cited by Deeter-Schmelza & Kennedy 2002).

1. *Personal-commercial –sources contain situations, where marketer’s agent communicates personally with buyer – such as personal selling or trade shows.*
2. *Personal-non-commercial –sources operate independently from marketer – such as internal colleagues, external consultant, or third-party representatives.*
3. *Impersonal-commercial –sources are offered by marketer, but communicated without personal interaction – such as advertising.*
4. *Impersonal-non-commercial –sources are not personal and not marketer origin – such as news articles or information offered by trade associations. (Moriarty and Spekman 1984 cited by Deeter-Schmelza & Kennedy 2002.)*

Furthermore, Brossard (1998) recognised, in addition to these groups, three different phases of information search process, which are need recognition, search for alternatives, and selection of vendor – congruent with Moriarty and Spekman’s (1984) study. According to Brossard (1998), the first phase of information search process (need recognition) seems to be an orientation step for the primary information search. Internal information sources have the main role during this phase. The primary information search begins more likely at the second phase (search for alternatives), when external information sources get involved and continues toward the third phase (selection of vendor), which also include the final decision of process: selection or rejection.

Unlike studies before, Brossard (1998) did not found clear relation between different phases of information search process and used information sources. However, he identified 15 separated information sources, which are used within information search process. These sources are also congruent with findings that Moriarty and Spekman (1984) made earlier. Found information sources are listed below. Information source’s classification from marketer’s point of view is presented in brackets.

1. *Site visit (Personal selling / Sales promotion)*
2. *In-house network (References / PR)*
3. *Investor presented by Promotional Agency (PA) (Personal selling)*
4. *Outside consultant (References / PR)*
5. *Investor not presented by PA (References / PR)*
6. *Outside company's contacts (References / Word of mouth)*
7. *Subsidiary abroad (References / PR)*
8. *PA's representative (Personal selling)*
9. *Booklet published by PA (Advertising)*

10. *PA's advertising (Advertising)*
11. *Associations' publications (PR)*
12. *Study published by consultant (PR)*
13. *Regions' rating (PR)*
14. *Seminars organized by PA (Trade shows)*
15. *Articles in specialized reviews (PR)*

Added to this, Brossard (1998) created five different factors, from which each one constitutes a certain kind of group of information sources. Each of these factors has a specific purpose within buyer's information search process and they are used differently for different purposes. Founded factors are listed below:

1. *Commercial information sources controlled by marketer (F1)*
 - a. *Personal (F1a)*
 - b. *Impersonal (F1b)*
2. *Non-commercial impersonal sources (F2)*
3. *Non-commercial personal references (F3)*
4. *Internal sources (F4)*
5. *External consultant (F5) (Brossard 1998)*

The first factor (F1) could be divided into two parts: personal (F1a) and impersonal (F1b) information sources, which are both marketer origin. Buyers utilise F1 commonly to gather general and specific information during information search process. F1 includes among others advertising, seminars, site visits, and personal selling activities. The second factor (F2) is used mainly to complete information received from elsewhere. F2 consists of news and journal articles, reviews, studies, and publications authored some non-commercial party. Through the third factor (F3) buyers try to get neutral information and feedback from companies, who have earlier experiences about supplier or product. The aim of fourth factor (F4) is to exploit organisation's own knowledge during decision-making process. The fifth factor (F5) contains only one source – external consultants. External consultants represent impartial and independent source that is able to offer vital knowledge and estimation for support of decision-making. (Brossard 1998.)

According to Brossard (1998), buyers generally prefer personal information sources (F1a, F3, F4, and F5) to impersonal and internal sources (F4) instead of external. For example, site visits are rated very high from buyer's point of view, because of their concreteness and possibility to develop personal relationship with supplier. Another highly valued personal source of information is in-house networks. Third informant that buyers consider a

significant source, according to Brossard's (1998) study, are third-party actors – such as external consultants, competitors, or other experienced organisations not related to actual marketer. (Brossard 1998.)

When information sources are compared within dimensions of personal-impersonal and commercial-non-commercial, buyers see both commercial and non-commercial sources valuable as well as personal sources, but impersonal sources are not regarded useful (Brossard 1998). Similarly, Bienstock and Royne (2007) stated that industrial buyers prefer personal information sources. Furthermore, they presented that industrial buyers use more impersonal than personal sources, when there is only a low-risk related to procurement (Bienstock & Royne 2007). In addition, Huntera et al. (2004) stated that importance of references and third-party opinions emphasise with a growing complexity of procurement.

As a summary, it can be stated that with a complex purchase process the most important factor for industrial buyers are internal sources (F4). After this come external consultants (F5), marketer driven personal information sources (F1a), and references (F3). All of these three sources have a similar importance for industrial buyers. Shared element for all these three factors is personality. The least important factors are non-commercial and commercial impersonal information sources (F2 and F1b). (Brossard 1998.)

In addition to Moriarty and Spekman (1984), and Brossard (1998), also Deeter-Schmelza and Kennedy (2002) have studied, which information sources are most significant in b-to-b markets. Compared to previous studies they took also cognisance of internet as an information source. However, the internet – or more widely e-communication – cannot be placed in any of the above factors or groups alone. On the other hand, e-communication suits into all presented categories and it could be utilised as a supporting instrument for other marketing communication actions. As a result, Deeter-Schmelza and Kennedy (2002) found out, congruent with others, that personal experience and third-party information sources are the most useful information sources for industrial buyers. Other significant information sources, according to Deeter-Schmelza and Kennedy (2002), are colleagues, word-of-mouth communication, direct-mail brochures, trade shows, and articles in journals as well as internet. Secondly, less useful information sources are sales calls, advertising, direct-mail promotional items, and newsletters (Deeter-Schmelza & Kennedy 2002). Results are quite similar with Brossard's (1998) result, but the internet is added into group of effective information sources. Disagreement between these two studies found in effectiveness of journal articles and personal sales calls. Brossard (1998) considered journal articles ineffective, whereas Deeter-Schmelza and Kennedy (2002) rated them effective. Secondly, Deeter-Schmelza

and Kennedy (2002) found personal sales calls ineffectiveness, but Brossard (1998) considered them moderately effective.

Huntera et al. (2004) noted that e-communication is a good and effective source of information for customers at the beginning of buying process, but it is not enough alone. In order to convince buyers, supplier needs anyway personal and face-to-face contact with them. Personal selling and personal communication have a crucial role during the whole customer relationship, when it concerns complex and high-risk procurements. Need for personal communication does not end to the point, when parties enter into co-operation, but it lasts much further. In these cases, both buyer and supplier's personnel need to communicate and work well together. On the contrary, personal communication has a minor status with less complex procurements. Thus, communication could be more automated and co-operation does not ask as much personal negotiations, when it is about simpler procurements. Hence, e-communication could be utilised further within simple procurement processes. (Huntera et al. 2004.)

In addition, Agnihotri et al. (2009) count on assistance of technologies within marketing communication. They stated that bidirectional face-to-face communication is already a natural part of personal selling, but use of technologies will strengthen its role from before. Because of this, they highlighted salespersons' product knowledge and ability to utilise technology as a requirement for successful communication in procurement processes. This means that salesperson's skills to utilise different kinds of technological systems as well as capability to offer exactly right information for buyer to support buyer's decision-making process is increasingly important matter for salespersons nowadays. Thus, communication becomes more effective and it will lead to customer's satisfaction toward salesperson, product, and selling company, which set the scene for development of customer relationship. In summary, it could be noted that Angihotri et al. (2009) considered personal selling the most effective marketing communication instrument as well, but they mentioned also that its role has changed a little. According to Angihotri et al. (2009), personal selling is presently focusing more on relationship building, support, and consultancy instead of direct purpose for transaction. They also considered developing and maintaining of customer relationships an essential path for effective marketing communication and profitable business in industrial markets. (Angihotri et al. 2009.)

As a conclusion about industrial buyer's buying process, marketer needs to understand buyer's situation in buying process to be able to communicate appropriately (Huntera et al. 2004). First of all, marketer should be aware of procurement's importance for buyer and complexity of it from buyer's point of

view. Secondly, it is important to be informed about buying situation: is acquired product, supplier, or buying process familiar for buyer from before, or is there some new aspects involved? Thirdly, marketer needs to create a suitable communication mix for different phase of buying process based on customer's characteristic. Understanding of these circumstances becomes easier along the experience and development of customer relationship.

2.8 Marketing communication's role for customer relationships in industrial markets

Andersen (2001) divides development process of customer relationship into three phases, each of which needs a certain kind of communication approach. These three phases are pre-relation phase, negotiation phase, and relationship development phase (Andersen 2001). According to Andersen's (2001) model (FIGURE 3), the adaptation between supplier and buyer increases, when relationship develops and moves from phase to following. At the same time, communication's objectives change from awareness through persuasions to commitment. Also the type of communication changes in terms of its direction: At the pre-relationship-phase communication is mostly unidirectional from marketer to customer. In the negotiation-phase communication turns into bidirectional, which remains and strengthens, when is moved to relationship development -phase (Andersen 2001). Naturally, objectives and types of communication change during the development of customer relationship, and so also communication instruments should be changed. Hence, it is important to marketer to find right marketing communication instruments for each phase of customer relationship.

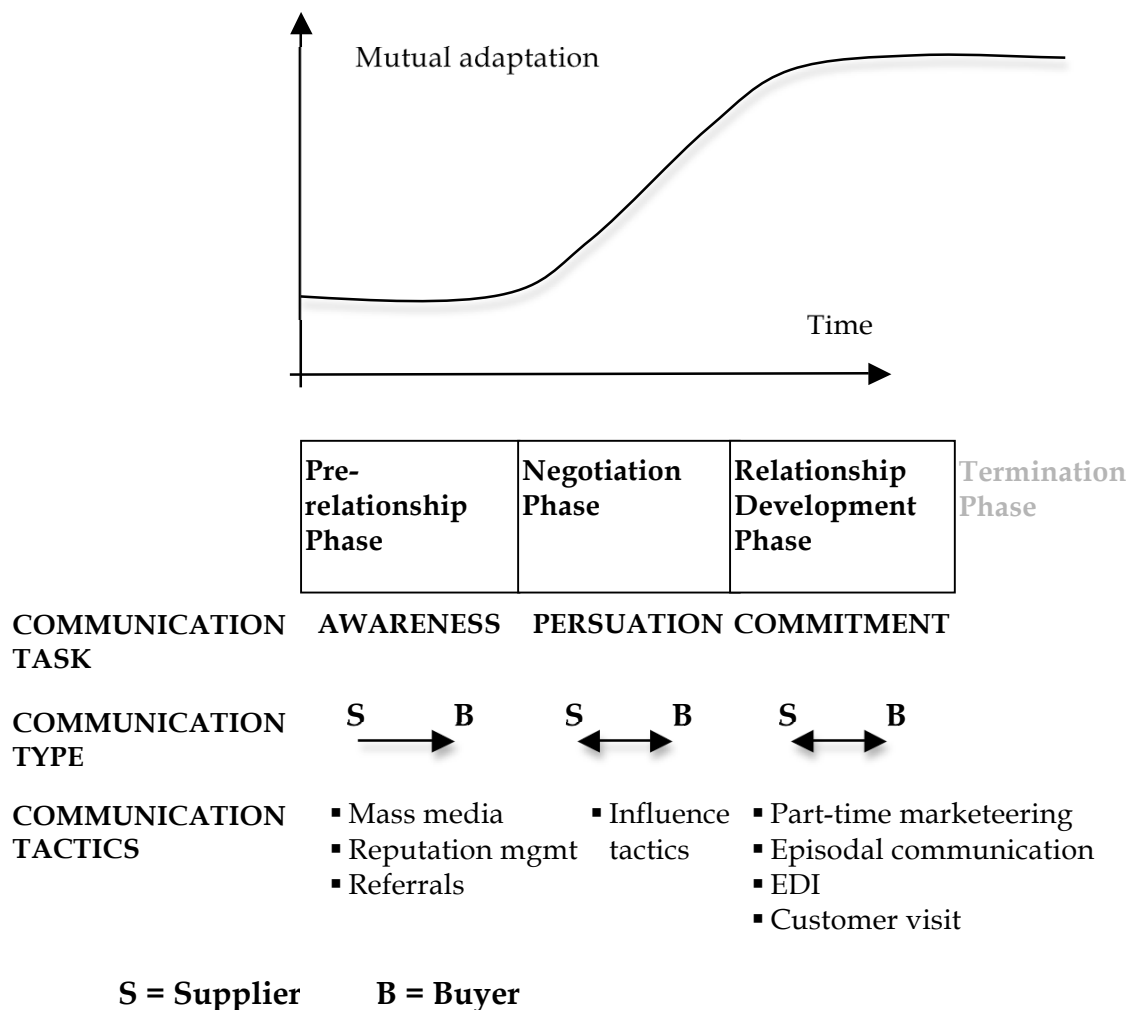


FIGURE 3 Phases of customer relationship development (Andersen 2001)

Marketer's objective in pre-relationship-phase is typically to develop awareness, and therefore communicated information should be extensive and general by its nature. The content of communication is not the only thing that matters, but also source of information. Because of this, trustworthy second-hand sources are considered effective. In addition, other sources of information - such as advertising, brand communication, or public relations - have also their own role, when potential customer becomes aware of supplier and forms an opinion about it. (Andersen 2001.)

To gain a deeper adaptation and next phase of customer relationship, marketer needs to exploit both one-way and two-way instruments of communication. This does not necessarily mean virtual dialogue between marketer and potential customer but communication partner could be also a third-party representative. However, customer has to have an opportunity to communicate backward and ask questions. When supplier succeed to become an attractive partner in the mind of customer, it is more likely that supplier get an opportunity to start a direct dialogue. At that point, when bidirectional

dialogue opens up between marketer and potential customer, it could be said that relationship has moved to the negotiation-phase. (Andersen 2001.)

In the negotiation-phase bidirectional communication happens between two organisations, where several peoples are involved, and they are trying to match different interest. The objective of negotiation-phase is to enter into a contract and to the relationship development -phase. Personal selling has a major role in this stage, when seller is trying to persuade buyer for offer. To succeed marketer has to be able to respond customer's needs, convince buyer about supplier as a suitable partner, and find a solution to adjust supplier and buyer's business processes together. In addition, it is notable for marketer to keep all communication consistent as mentioned in the context of IMC. (Andersen 2001.)

Marketer's ambition in relationship development -phase is to develop, deepen, and maintain its relationship with a customer. On the other hand, it is also customer's interest to find a reliable partner and establish a solid relationship, at least to some extent. In this context marketer needs to take into account customer's relationship orientation, and how much customer is willing to invest in relationship (Palmatier, Scheer, Evans, & Arnold 2008). Hence, the basic idea of communication is to change information between parties according to agreed rules and ways of actions. Effective relationship needs continuity and different communication skills. During the relationship, many forms of communication are used in varied situations and several members of supplier's personnel are in contact with customer's personnel. Therefore, marketing communication is not only marketers or sellers' task but almost every member of personnel needs to execute marketing communication activities to some extent. (Andersen 2001.)

In addition, Andersen (2001) mentions that e-communication is a powerful marketing communication instrument in relationship development -phase, and it is a capable to increase integration and interactivity between parties. An example is database marketing, which enables supplier's representatives to have correct, updated, and worthwhile information, when they communicate with customer. In addition to e-communication, Andersen (2001) considers personal selling and especially customer visits for another efficient instruments. Pending customer visits marketer has an excellent opportunity to acquaint oneself with customer's business on the spot, learn to understand customer's real needs, and establish deeper interpersonal relationships with customer's personnel (Andersen 2001).

Along experience and development of relationship, parties will gain more and more benefits from relationship, when interdependence rises, and distance between parties reduces (Andersen 2001). Likewise, Bienstock and Royne (2007)

noted the risk customer perceives toward procurements decreases during the development of relationship and growth of experience. However, relationship development is not automatic or self-evident matter. It asks organisation's capability to adapt and learn, but first of all, it requires social skills from personnel. This is because of personal relationships and interpersonal chemistry between representatives has a major influence for organisational relationships (Andersen 2001).

Another perspective to industrial marketing communication and customer relationship is Garber and Dotson's (2002) study, where they constructed a correspondence matrix (FIGURE 4) to illustrate how different marketing communication's instruments relate to different stages of customer relationship. Garber and Dotson's model (2002) divides customer relationship into five stages on the grounds of product's adoption process. These stages are: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption (Garber & Dotson 2002).

According to Garber and Dotson (2002), in awareness-stage several forms of advertising and mass communication are emphasised – such as billboards, radio, television, newspaper, and journal advertising. Another instrument of marketing communication that comes up in the awareness-stage is public relations. Advertising and mass communication has also a role in interest-stage besides e-communication and trade shows. In proportion, e-communication and trade shows are used in evaluation-stage along with direct marketing. Telemarketing, as a part of personal selling, is usable instrument in trial-stage addition to public relations, which is also commonly used within trial-stage. The final stage, adoption, is focused almost wholly on personal selling.

However, Garber and Dotson's (2002) model does not include all marketing communication instruments. For example, sales promotion and sponsoring are missing because they are not commonly used in trucking industry in USA, which was the field of industry Garber and Dotson (2002) were studying. In addition, study lacks instruments such as after sale and word of mouth communication. The following list represents the most commonly used marketing communication instruments in industrial markets, according to Garber and Dotson (2002). Instruments' classification within this study is given in brackets. Same instruments are also situated into Garber and Dotson's (2002) correspondence matrix (FIGURE 4).

1. *Billboard advertising (Advertising)*
2. *Telemarketing (Direct marketing)*
3. *Direct mail (Direct marketing)*
4. *Yellow Pages advertising (Advertising)*
5. *Personal sales visits (Personal selling)*
6. *Advertising in trade journals inside the trucking industry (Advertising)*

7. *Distributing goodwill gifts to clients (Public relations)*
8. *Radio advertising (Advertising)*
9. *Participation in trade shows (Trade shows)*
10. *Reaching suppliers by e-mail (Direct marketing / E-communication)*
11. *Advertising in newspapers (Advertising)*
12. *Television advertising (Advertising)*
13. *Advertising on the internet (Advertising / E-communication)*
14. *Advertising in trade journals outside the trucking industry (Advertising)*
15. *Participation in charity events (Public relations)*
16. *Vehicle graphics (Advertising)*

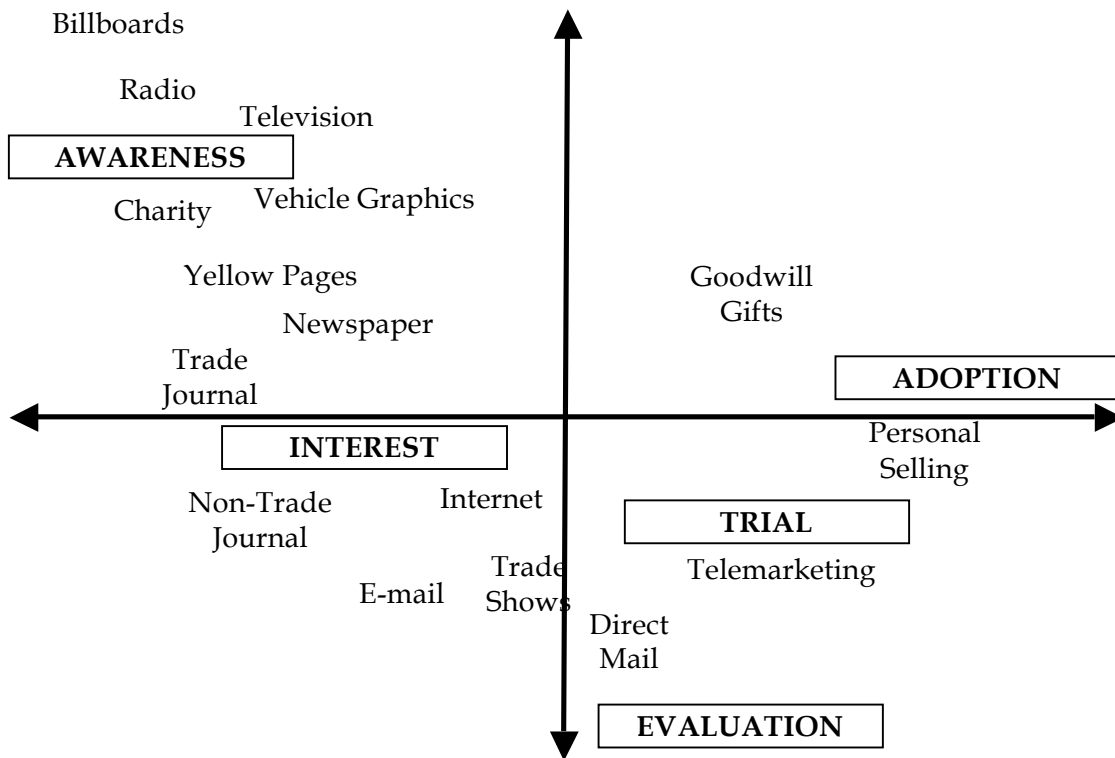


FIGURE 4 Marketing communication's instruments in different stages of customer relationship (Garber & Dotson 2002)

3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology employed in this study and gives reasons for chosen research approach and methods. Herein are gone through qualitative research approach, action-oriented research, case study research, data-gathering methods, and methods for analysing data.

Terminology in the theory of academic research is not that unambiguous. There are many different views about conceptualisations of research methodology, relations between different methodological concepts, and requirements for quality research. Among others, Tesch (1991 cited by Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2008, 159) mentioned the confusion between concepts, and Alasuutari (1994, 10-11) for one discussed about different views on qualitative research's requirements. For example, a part of researchers considers that *research approach* is an upper concept for the whole methodology and chosen research methods, whereas others consider *research approach* and *research strategy* as synonyms. In addition, relationship between concepts *case study* and *action-oriented research* is unclear in the academic literature. Therefore, it is important to clarify these concepts, as they are understood in the context of this study. Illustration about this understanding is presented in following figure (FIGURE 5).

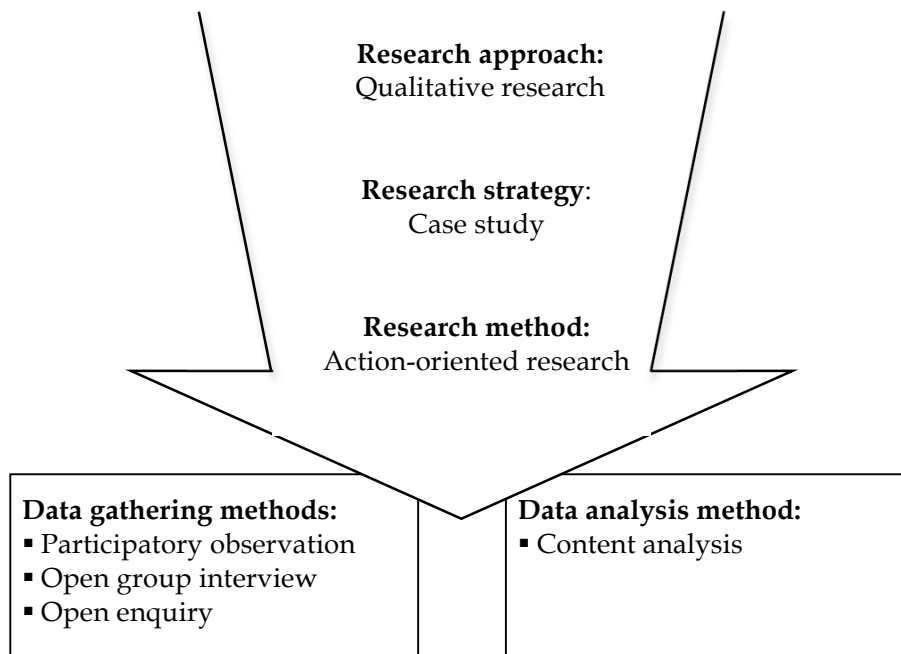


FIGURE 5 Methodology of the study

Hirsjärvi et al. (2009, 183-184) mention that in general *methodology* is a field of research, which considers methods of research as well as principles and starting points behind these methods. *Method* for one is a procedure of means and practices to pursue and seek knowledge or the aim to solve practical problems. In addition, this procedure is guided by certain rules. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 183-184.) By *research strategy* as a term is meant the wholeness of research's methodical decisions, whereas *research method* is a narrower concept (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 132). This definition is followed within this study.

Consequently, as the previous figure (FIGURE 5) illustrates, this study sees *methodology* as a combining concept for all the decisions and choices, which are made to answer the questions: from which point of view research subject is examined, how research subject is examined, with which method examination is executed, and how data is gathered and analysed. Furthermore, *research approach* is considered a sub-concept for *methodology*, and it includes *research strategy* and *research method*. *Research method* is for one divided into *data gathering method* and *data analysis method*.

However, research method and research problem are tightly linked together, and used method should be chosen on the grounds of research problem - not conversely. Chosen method is affected by what kind of information is sought, from where it is sought, and from whom. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 184.) Intended knowledge of this study is descriptive, explorative, and pragmatic. A natural source for this kind of information is actual players and practitioners in the field itself, and thus research method and methodology need to be chosen according to these factors.

Fundamental division in the field of science is expressed by Hirsjärvi et al. (2009, 129), when they draw the line between applied and basic research. As a distinct from basic research, applied research among others tries to solve problems, set the scene for extensive effects, develop services and programs, takes place on the field, focuses on practice and real-life, and is directed to practitioner (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 129). Basic research for one is experimental, takes place typically in laboratories, aims to create or test theories, is tightly defined by rules, and is directed mainly for academics (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 129). On this basis, this study settles itself into the limits of applied research.

In summary, the *research approach* of this applied study is *qualitative research* and used *research strategy* is *case study*. *Research method* of the study is *action-oriented research* and *data gathering* method consist of *participatory observation*, *group interview*, and *enquiry*. *Data analysis* method is *content analysis*. Next, all these methodological concepts and choices are considered in detail.

3.1 Qualitative research approach

Academic literature and handbooks of academic research separates often qualitative and quantitative researches from each other. However, these two should not be seen as a contrary for each other but rather different approaches of research. These approaches neither exclude each other but both aspects could be exploited within same study. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008, 130; Bryman & Bell 2003, 25; Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 14; Alasuutari 1994, 23.) After all, the characteristic ambition for all sciences, including both qualitative and quantitative research, is to find a truth through the logical reasoning, objectiveness, and the foundation on evidences (Metsämuuronen 2001, 14).

However, there are some clear differences between quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Bryman and Bell (2003, 25) define that quantitative researches emphasis on quantification in both data gathering and analysing, it often aims to test theories and follows norms of natural science, it is positivistic, and sees social reality as an external and objective phenomenon. In contrast, Bryman and Bell (2003, 280) describe qualitative research an approach, which is typically more interested in words and meanings than numbers and quantities. The progress of qualitative research is commonly inductive meaning that reasoning starts from individual cases and moves toward generalisation (Bryman & Bell 2003, 280). Thus, pre-existing theory is not the guideline for research, subject is considered without presumptions, and emphasis is more on theory creation. As Bryman and Bell (2003, 282) restated it: *"In qualitative research, theory is supposed to be an outcome of an investigation rather*

than something that precedes it." In addition, qualitative research is characteristically interpretive and constructive, which means that aspiration is to understand social phenomena through real actors and their interpretations, and that social phenomena are subjective and consequence of the interactions between individuals (Bryman & Bell 2003, 280). On this account, Bryman and Bell (2003, 280) note that also researcher needs to interact with research target in order to receive knowledge from social phenomenon. Respectively, Hirsjärvi et al. (2009, 157) mention strong relationship between researcher and empirical data as a characteristic for qualitative research. This is a consequence of emphasised role of observation and interaction with the research subject in data gathering process, and so objectivity is not reachable in a traditional sense. Other typical features for qualitative research, according to Hirsjärvi et al. (2009, 160), are the purpose to describe real-life phenomena, inductive data analysis method, appropriately - not randomly - selected target group, research is shaped during the research process, and the idea that studied incident is unique. In general, qualitative research aims rather to find and reveal new facts than verify existing propositions, and the basis of research lies in the description of reality, which is a subjective matter (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 157).

All features mentioned above support the choice of qualitative research approach for this study. The subject of this study, marketing communication, is a real-life phenomenon, which is a wide and complex entirety. It is not able to fit into the tight borders and cannot be divided easily. On this account, the subject needs to be examined comprehensively. This is a typical starting point for qualitative research (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 157). This study is also descriptive by its nature and strives to formulate a comprehensive view about a complex real-life phenomenon. Furthermore, the target of this study is ever-changing phenomenon, which is affected and estimated by humans, and thus it is also a subjective matter without absolute truth. The aim is to describe this phenomenon, to find out common practices and to offer practical proposals for action. Because of these objectives and the nature of research target, study's results and findings are also more or less subjective. In addition to scientific purposes, the study strives to give marketing managers some practical proposals for improvement. Thus, this study is constructive, descriptive, explorative, and pragmatic by its nature. Under these circumstances, the chosen research approach is a qualitative research. In addition, qualitative research's traditional way of presenting questions supports the selection of research approach. Typically qualitative research seeks answers to questions like 'how' and 'what'.

Generally, qualitative research, as well as this study, tries to make new facts known rather than verify existing theories (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 157). Because of this purpose, it is justified and required that researcher interacts with the target of research during the study. This is especially important, when it comes to the action-oriented research. Through interaction researcher has an opportunity to observe real world's players in a virtual environment and gather data from real situations. In addition, it is important to observe the subject from the perspective of research target and to take practitioners' view into the account. Thus, researcher has a better possibility to constitute a deeper understanding about studied subject as a whole (Miles & Huberman 1994, 6).

Typically, qualitative research includes at the early stages so many unforeseeable factors affecting research process that researcher has to reformulate the research during the process. This is often a consequence of development, wherein researcher gets more acquainted with the subject and familiarise her- or himself with empirical data. Possibly, empirical data does not answer to original research questions; research questions turns out irrelevant, self-evident, or trivial; or data offers some surprising findings, which are more interesting than original objectives. Thus, qualitative research finds its forms, final research questions, and research methods during the process. Research process is typically expressed as a sequential and logical process, but qualitative research process is more often integrated process, in which the different phases are merged together. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 121, 160.) This development process is also valid within this study, and research questions and background theory were rewritten on the grounds of empirical data and risen understanding about studied subject. Research questions of this study have become more specific during the research process, but despite that, the final format of research questions is still fairly free. In addition, the format of research questions is open, which gives respectively a greater freedom for the format of research results. This looseness of research questions characterise qualitative research in general (Bryman & Bell 2003, 37). However, the lack of tight definition of research questions and research question's formation during the research process is also a potential risk for research, which needs to take into account (Bryman & Bell 2003, 37). The risk lies in a possibility that researcher lose the focus of research and intended information, in which case the research could include a large amount of data, but the clear conception, what should be observed, is missing (Bryman & Bell 2003, 37).

3.2 Case study strategy

Research strategies are commonly divided into three groups: *experimental study*, *survey study*, and *case study* (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 130-131). Furthermore, all these three research strategies could be divided into *exploratory*, *descriptive*, and *explanatory* studies (Yin 1986, 15-17). The difference between these different-minded researches lies in the nature of research question and desired information. Different question types yield different kind of information and this is why they require also different kind of research strategy. The basic types of research question are 'who', 'what', 'where', 'how' and 'why' (Yin 1986, 15-17).

Characteristic feature for case study is the purpose to understand real-life social phenomena comprehensively (Yin 1986, 13). Hirsjärvi et al. (2009, 130-131) define case study's characteristics more precisely. According to them, case study commonly seeks detailed and intensive knowledge about a single case or limited group of interrelated cases; it focuses on individuals, groups, or communities; its target of interest is in processes; cases are examined in relation to their environment; empirical data is gathered by several methods; and study's objective is typically to describe a phenomenon (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 130-131). Furthermore, according to Yin (1986, 14, 20), case study strategy has certain advantages, when the research aspires to answer questions 'how' or 'why', when researcher cannot have control over research target, and when it is about some contemporary real-life phenomenon. Most of these characterisations describe this study and its purpose very well, and thus chosen research strategy is case study. An optional research strategy for this study could have been a survey study, in which case the study could have been able to answer question 'why' and explain causal connection behind different decisions of marketing communication. However, in the context of this study deeper knowledge and practical matter are considered more important and interesting than causality.

Hirsjärvi et al. (2009, 134-135) also note that case study is a broadly used research strategy for descriptive and explorative researches. Furthermore, Gummesson (1988) sees case studies as a good way of learning and acquaint with companies' ways of action and processes. According to his view, case studies' significant benefit is the opportunity to reach a comprehensive view on studied processes (Gummesson 1988). Congruent with these characteristics, this study strives to construct a holistic view on its target of research. Secondly, Bryman and Bell (2003, 53-55) reminds that case study needs to focus in the particular case and to strive to offer a detailed and intensive analysis about that

case. Thus, the case in question needs to be defined clearly (Bryman & Bell 2003, 53-55).

In addition, it needs to be noted that case study is not merely a qualitative researches strategy, even though it is commonly associated with it. Case study could be exploited with both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. When the research approach is qualitative, case study tends to adopt an inductive view toward relationship between theory and research. Quantitative case study for one takes in more often a deductive argumentation. (Bryman & Bell 2003, 53-55.)

Gummesson (1988) divides case studies into two types on the grounds of generalisation of the study. The aim could be to derive a wider understanding from the studied phenomenon by observing limited number of cases and to make a generalisation on this basis. This is called a multiple case study. Another type of case studies is a single case study that examines one narrowly defined phenomenon or aims to find a solution for a specific problem. The results of single case study are not able to generalise and they are only valid in the context of research' target. (Gummesson 1988.) This study strives to be descriptive and to work out results, which are able to generalise at least to some extend. Therefore, a multiple case study is chosen. Because of impracticability to examine all of Finnish industrial companies, this study is conducted by observing six of them. Certainly, it would be unrealistic to assume that this is enough to form an all-inclusive view about marketing communication in Finnish industrial companies, but probably it is enough to provide a descriptive insight into the theme. According to Dubois and Gadde (2002), the amount of cases is not the determining factor for the quality or reliability of qualitative research, because results are not grounded on statistical but analytical inferences. As a matter of fact, too large number of cases could be a weakness for a qualitative case study, which is trying to describe and understand some complex phenomenon (Dubois & Gadde 2002). Also Dyer and Wilkins (Bryman & Bell 2003, 60) point out that multiple case study strategy could lead up to the situation, where researcher does not pay enough attention to the specific context and concentrates too much on differences between individual cases. This study strives to avoid this misstep by focusing on commonalities within case companies and ignores deviations.

3.3 Action-oriented research method

Research method could be divided into two parts, according to Alasuutari (1994, 72). Firstly, method includes practices and operations enabling the

generation of findings. Secondly, method defines the rules how findings are processed and construed. However, noteworthy fact is that findings do not equate with research results. Alasuutari (1994, 68) sees findings rather as clues, which lead the research to the final results. Thus, the process from findings to research results could be seen as a path, which is defined by research method. This is not an axiomatic or automatic process but it need to be designed and described clear enough. Hence, research method's role is to ensure that gathered data is relevant from research problem's point of view, findings and results are able to distinguish, and exploited path from data to conclusions is logical (Alasuutari 1994, 68-72). Next, the research method of this study is defined, described, and justified including methods for data gathering and analysis.

The research method of this study is action-oriented research. Action-oriented research is generally data-driven research method instead of theory-driven, which means that practical matters have a central role within the study (Costello 2003, 16-17). According to Stringer (1999, 17), "*...action research is a collaborative approach to inquiry or investigation that provides people with the means to take systematic action to solve specific problem*". Thus, action-oriented research does not follow faithfully some existing theory but it gives an opportunity for research data and unexpected findings. This way, action-oriented research has an ability to be more flexible, to offer more practical solutions, and to solve practical problems. However, action-oriented research pursues toward two diverse objectives, as its title expresses: action and research. That is to say, action-oriented research considers both practice and theory, which are not mutually exclusive. (Costello 2003, 16-17.) This study is a qualitative case study using action-oriented research method. This means that in addition to scientific objectives, this study aims to be practical and to offer practical proposals for action, which argues for action-oriented research method. Because of the limits of this study, which did not provide a real opportunity to participate in case companies' day-to-day operations, this study does not fulfil all requirements of traditional action research and this is why research method is called action-oriented research.

In addition to give a contribution for science, action-oriented research aims to solve practical problems and gives practitioners real proposals for action. In order to make this possible researcher has to adopt two roles: scientific researcher and actor in studied organisation. For example, Gummesson (1988) compares researcher to consultant, when study is conducted with action-oriented manner. Thus, researcher participates actively in processes, which are under research. She or he can also influence target of research and its actions during the research process, unlike in traditional

research, which strives not to interact with researched subject. Hence, traditional research examines research target as it is and reports the results, whereas action-oriented research considers research subject from more pragmatic perspective and aims to find the best possible solution for a real-life problem. Interaction between the subject and researcher operates also vice versa, and target of research should have a possibility to affect the course of research. This is because of the requirements for practical implication. (Gummesson 1988; Eskola & Suoranta 1998.)

The aim of action-oriented research is typically to develop a holistic understanding about phenomenon under research. Compared to conventional research, action-oriented research does not go as deep and specific details as traditional research but it concentrates more on entirety of phenomenon and aspires to keep it understandable enough for all participants. As Argyris (cited in Gummesson 1988) stated about action-oriented research: *“Action science intends to produce knowledge that is optimally incomplete.”* (Gummesson 1988)

The basic model of action-oriented research is based on Kurt Lewin’s (1946) work, and afterwards it, or versions of it, is commonly cited in several publications (Costello 2003, 7). Stringer’s (1999, 18) model of action-oriented research includes three stages: look, think, and act (FIGURE 6). At the first stage (look), the purpose is to gather relevant information and to describe existing situation. The second stage (think) includes the analysis and explanation of situation. In the third stage (act) a plan for actions is created, actions are implemented and finally effects of implementation are evaluated. However, the progress of this model is not linear but rather cyclical, in which case several look-think-act -cycles following each other. (Stringer 1999, 18-19.)

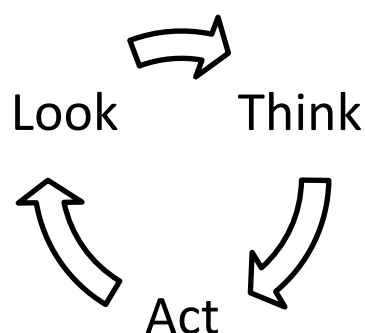


FIGURE 6 The basic model of action-oriented research (Stringer 1999, 18)

Costello (2003, 7) for one presents another version about this model including four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. In the first stage of his version the target of research is decided and implemented activities are planned, the second stage puts these activities into practice, the third stage

observes outcomes of implementation, and the fourth stage reflects what has happened and plans further action if necessary (Costello 2003, 7). There are also several other versions about this very same model, but the basic idea behind all of them is the same. Thus, Stringer's (1999) model is adopted within this study, because of its simplicity. However, this study does not include model's implementation and evaluation steps. In these steps, results of the study should be tested in practice and outcomes observed, which is too extensive function for a study like this.

3.3.1 Data gathering methods

The most common data gathering methods for qualitative research are interview, enquiry, observation, and information from different documents (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 71). This study exploits three of these: interview, enquiry, and observation. Empirical data of this study is gathered by a group of workshops. Within workshops, different methods of data gathering are combined, such as participatory observation, open group interview, and open enquiry. Workshops were organised separately for each case company, and so six individual workshops were executed overall. The purpose of these workshops was first of all to get company's employees to consider their marketing communication and its ways of action, and at the same time gather data for the study.

Practically workshops included a short presentation and introduction for the subject on behalf of research team, a group assignment for workshop participants, and a conversation stage. Workshops took place in auditoriums or conference rooms and lasted a single working day. Participants of workshops were case companies' employees responsible primary for marketing, communication, and selling. For the purpose of group assignment, participants were divided into small groups, but participants had an opportunity to choose their groups by themselves. Each group consisted of two to four persons. The number of groups varied between three and six depending on workshop and number of participants. The actual task for group assignment was to analyse marketing communication in participants' own company through the traditional SWOT-analysis. To be precise, groups were asked to consider strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and target for developments regarding the marketing communication and marketing communication's instruments in their own company. Groups had one to two hours to get the task completed depending on how time-consuming participants experienced the task. After the group assignment, every group presented their results and opinions. Presentations were followed by a conversation stage regarding groups' observations, and at the end of workshops couple of the main issues

was discussed more narrowly. Conversation was free of limitations, participants had a possibility to express their opinions openly, ask questions from each other or members of research team. The role of researchers was to keep the conversation within the topic and to lead the discussion. Generally speaking, the discussion during workshop days were aimed to be free of formality in order that participants would have been a real opportunity to participate, debate, exchange opinions, and consider the subject openly. From researcher's point of view, participants also exploited this opportunity quite well, and basically, conversation remained active through the whole day.

Data gathering process of this study consist of three different methods, which are used in parallel. The first utilised method was open enquiry, which was conducted as a group assignment. As a result of group assignments, each group produced a document covering their SWOT-analysis. In total, 30 documents were generated within six separated workshop days. Later on, all documents from an individual workshop were summed up into a summary report. The second data gathering method was an open group interview, which was put into practice within the conversation stage of workshops. The third data gathering method was participatory observation, which took place during the whole workshop day. In practice, one or two members of research team were observing engaged conversation and wrote it down. Afterwards observer(s) wrote out a memo regarding the main issues covered during the individual workshop. As a matter of fact, the observation method includes the group interview stage, but also the general observation during the whole workshop day. In summary, each workshop caused finally two documents: one covering the summary of group assignments and another observations during the workshop day. All together, the final amount of data gathered in the context of this study consists of 12 documents. These documents are used as an empirical data for this study.

Aarnos (2001) and Grönfors (2001) see the combination of observation and interview as a fertile method for data gathering in the context of qualitative research (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 81). Participatory observation is the predominant data gathering method of this study and it covers the whole data gathering process. Consequently, open enquiry could be seen as a preliminary phase for open group interview phase, which for one supported observation. The purpose of enquiry was to bring out participants' experiences and opinions about examined subject in order to consider them more specifically during the interview phase. Hence, open enquiry and open group interview served as a catalyst for observation. Shared characteristic for all data gathering methods exploited within this study is rather unstructured form. This means that operation of research target was limited as little as possible by researcher.

During the group interview only the topic of discussions was given, but otherwise participants had a freedom to consider the subject from the viewpoint of their own choice. Respectively, conducted enquiry was open and the form of questions was loose. Only the subject of enquiry (marketing communication) and the approach for the subject (SWOT-analysis) were predefined. These kinds of data gathering methods were chosen, because the purpose was to describe and explore the subject of study inductively and to be pragmatic. Phenomenon was wanted to review freely and without restrictions or preconceptions. In addition, participants' experience and knowhow were aimed to exploit maximally and the actual situation for data gathering was aimed to be uninhibited.

According to Hirsjärvi et al. (2009, 208), observation is a good research method, when the purpose is to find out what humans are doing and how they operate publically. The greatest advantage of observation, according to Hirsjärvi et al. (2009, 208), is its ability to offer direct and unreserved information about behaviour and operation of individuals, groups, and organisations. Observation gives a good opportunity to examine real world's phenomena in a natural context and it avoids the problem of artificiality, which affects many other data gathering methods (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 208). In addition, Hirsjärvi et al. (2009, 208-209) state that observation gives an opportunity to gather interesting and versatile data about research target and it is well suited to qualitative research. Interview, for one's part, gives researcher an opportunity to learn about social life through the perspective, experience, and language of those who living it (Boeije 2010, 62). The greatest advantage of interview as a data gathering method is its flexibility. During the interview interviewer has an opportunity to express additional and definitional questions, clarify matters for interviewees, correct misunderstanding, and interact. With this manner researcher could gather much more and deeper information, and from more specific matters. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 73-74.) Typically open-minded interview is unstructured, which means that questions are open, only the subject of interview is predefined and the progress of interview depends on interviewees answers (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 76). Metsämurto (2001, 42), and Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 87) describe that unstructured and open interview is very near to normal conversation. This method allows also researcher's intuitive and subjective interventions during the interview. However, researcher's role in open interview is to keep conversation into the subject, but let interviewees to speak freely. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 76.) According to Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 94), by term group interview is meant that there are several interviewees in attendance, when interview takes place. There could be also several interviewers in place. Typically, the aim of group interview is to

create an informal ambiance and a conversation like situation (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 94-98). These features are also valid within this study.

Academic literature knows many different types of observation, but roughly, they could be described by means of two dimensions. The first dimension defines how specifically observation process is regulated: On the one edge, observation is regulated very strictly and it is highly systematic and outlined (systematic observation). At the opposite edge of this dimension, observation is totally free and adapted to research target's operations (free observation). The second dimension of observation defines observer's role in the observation situation: Researcher could be an equal member of observed group (participatory observation), or she or he could be totally external observer, who is almost invisible to the group (subliminal observation). Typically, participatory observation is a more common method for qualitative research, whereas systematic observation is usually used within quantitative-oriented research. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 209-210.)

Observation method used within this study is the closest to participatory observation, wherein the presence of observer is made clear to the object of observation right from the beginning, and observer takes part in conversation (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 212). Otherwise, used observation method could be situated between systematic observation and free observation. The observation situations - workshops - were not a real-life situation, where participants from case companies could operate as in day-to-day business. The observation situations were organised beforehand, participants had been given the topics to consider, and event was lead by researcher. Naturally, participants were also oriented for workshops at least mentally. However, the actual situation was not tightly regulated or outlined, participants had a real opportunity to discuss and affect progress of day, and observation itself did not followed any specific model but it based on observers subjective consideration. This is a typical configuration for observation within action-oriented researches (Metsämurto 2001, 44).

The critic for participatory observation is directed to interaction between researcher and research target, in which case researcher could disturb or contort examined situation (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 208). From the perspective of action-oriented research, this critic is irrelevant, because the interaction is exactly the desired outcome. However, researcher has to take care that she or he is not too active, does not manipulate target of research, and leaves room enough for natural operations of research target. Hirsjärvi et al. (2008, 208-209) mention also a possible problem that researcher does not necessary have time to make notes during the observation process, in which case researcher has to rely on her or his memory, and thus some significant information could be lost. To

avoid this problem, the observation of this study was organised with a way that one or two members of research team made notes at a time and otherwise they were not involved in the workshop. Another weakness of this kind of data gathering method is a possible stress from the group's side, which could affect workshop participants (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 96-97). Participant for example does not venture to disagree, to say something negative in terms of group, or there is a dominating person in the group who controls the conversation and determines the direction of conversation (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 98). Because of this possible risk, also group assignments were used for data gathering. Obviously, this arrangement does not eliminate the problem entirely.

In summary, the empirical data of this study consist of material, which is generated during six workshops and covers six Finnish industrial companies. According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, 86), the amount of case companies or informants is not an essential matter for qualitative research, because it does not endeavour to make statistical generalisations but to describe, understand, or interpret studied phenomenon. Thus, they (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 86) see the quality of informants for a more significant matter for qualitative research. Informants, from whom the information is gathered, should have experience from the field of studied subject and they need to have knowledge about it (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 86-87). Added to these requirements, Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 66) mention that informants should be also interested in studied subject. On the grounds of these requirements, informants and data gathering sources are not able to select randomly in the context of qualitative research (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 86-87). This study's workshop participants could be considered experienced informants, who have high knowledge about marketing communication in Finnish industrial companies.

It is worth of noting that the execution of single workshop was slightly different in comparison to others. The company, who this workshop was intended, was at that time in the middle of large reorganisation process of company's business units and organisation structure. Because of this, the subject of reorganisation was included in the workshop's agenda. In order to find time for that the participants were asked to complete the SWOT-analysis individually beforehand. In addition to this exception, also the group assignment was executed slightly differently, if compared with the other workshops. The topic of group assignment included – in addition to marketing communication – also subjects of organisation's structure, company's business strategy, and competitive tools of business units. Naturally, these extra subjects were also discussed within the conversation stage. Otherwise, this single workshop was conducted with a same manner than other workshops. If this particular workshop is assessed afterwards, the theme of reorganisation

supported well the discussion on marketing communication, and offered lot of valuable information regarding the role of marketing and expectations toward marketing communication.

3.3.2 Data analysis method

The basic data analysing method for all qualitative researches is a content analysis. Bryman and Bell (2003, 193) describes content analysis as an approach, which analyses documents and text, and tries to quantify their content with a systematic and reproducible manner, and follows some predetermined categories or certain scheme. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, 91) for one note that content analysis could be seen as a loose theoretical framework for several analysing methods, which relates a way or another to all analysing methods of qualitative research, or as a single analysing method. The later view is adopted within this study.

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, 95-100) represent Eskola's (2002; 2007) division of qualitative analysis, which separates data based, theory bound, and theory-based analyses. Data based analysis strives to create a theoretical entity on the grounds of empirical data and to avoid all previous theories, concepts, or knowledge concerning studied subject. Argumentation of data based analysis is purely inductive. On the contrary, theory based analysis follows an existing theory or model, and the data is formulated according these previous frames. The purpose is commonly to test earlier theories, or transfer previous concept to a new context. Argumentation of theory-based analysis is deductive by its nature. Theory bound analysis is a combination of these two. Its analysing process is assisted by theory, but theory does not lead the analysis. The main focus is in data and what it tells. The purpose is not to test or confirm previous theory or hypothesis but rather to find new viewpoints and describe studied subject. However, previous knowledge has its own role within analysing process, and data based findings are also reflected in the light of earlier knowledge. Thus, theory bound analysis combines both data based and theory based analysing methods, and the argumentation of theory bound analysis is called abductive reasoning, when the role of data and theory methods alternates. In practice, this could be done by analysing data at first with data based method, and at the end, earlier theory is brought in to direct the analysis. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 95-100.) Theory bound analysing method is also used within this study. At first, materials from workshops, group assignments, and observation are analysed with data based method, and after this, formed themes are compared and combined with an earlier literature written on the subject.

Miles and Huberman (1994, 10) describe data based content analysis for an interactive and continuous process with three steps, which are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, 108) call these same steps with names *data reduction*, *data clustering*, and *abstracting* (forming theoretical concepts). *Data reduction* contains basically the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the empirical data. The purpose is to simplify data and search for only relevant information for the research. Data reduction takes place on purpose, but also unconsciously, and even before the actual data gathering. Selection of research subject, framework, research questions, cases, data gathering methods, and all other choices defines and reduces data. On one hand, these are consequences of considered decisions, but on the other hand, it is about researcher's unintentional decision. In fact, data reduction continues until the study is finished. Similarly, within this study researcher has interact with case companies and other researchers, reviewed earlier literature on subject, participated in workshops, and familiarised with data. All these factors have had an influence on what should be studied, how it should be studied, what kind of data is needed, how it could be gathered, what is essential information, and what is not et cetera. Thus, data reduction has happened both deliberately and unconsciously all the time. The purpose of second step in analysing process, *data clustering*, is to search for similarities or differences in the data and regroup congruent matters in the same category. This study is concentrated on similarities. During the data clustering process, data becomes tighter from before, because single matters are combined into wider concepts. Briefly, the aim is to simplify data and reformulate it more understandable form. In the final step of analysing process, *abstracting*, the essential information from research's point of view is sorted out and according this theoretical concepts is formulated. The idea of abstracting is to conceptualise research's findings and draw conclusions on the grounds of these concepts. For one's part clustering already aims to this same ambition, but abstracting goes even further. In context of theory bound analysis the previous theory or knowledge comes along within this step. In summary, qualitative analysing process could be seen as a continuum, which is proceeding all the time from smaller parts of information to broader concepts and toward simpler form of information. First, separate data elements are reduced to simplified expressions, which are moreover grouped into wider themes. After this, themes are merged together into wider theoretical concepts, which will be furthermore unified in order to formulate a conceptual view about studied phenomenon. Finally, it is able to describe studied phenomenon in the lights of earlier theories and draw

conclusions on the grounds of this view. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 108-113; Miles & Huberman 1994, 10-12.)

Next, the qualitative data analysis process, which is conducted within this study, is described.

After each workshop, generated material was read through carefully and two separate memos were written up. One considering results from group assignments and another from observation notes. When all workshops were carried out the whole material, 12 documents, was reread couple of times in order to form overall view on data. After this, the whole data was exported to qualitative data analysing program (QSR NVivo 8). The first step of analysis was to code data according to the following main categories: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and targets of development. After this, all mentioned marketing communication instruments were coded under the main categories. In NVivo-program, coding is based on nodes, which represent individual elements of information or single points in data. The second step was to search for similar nodes in each category and group them. Next, the amount of groups was reduced by combining them for uniform themes. After the theme creation, data was once again looked through with an intention to get acquainted with several themes and to integrate similar themes together. In addition, themes under different categories were tried to standardise if possible. The challenge for integration of themes was to be general enough and avoid overlaps, but at the same time accurate enough without missing any essential information.

At this point of analysing process, data was quantified and the number of nodes (references) was counted for each theme. In addition to nodes (references), also the number of documents (of all 12 documents), where individual node was mentioned, was counted as well. References and documents for different marketing communication instruments were counted separately. On the grounds of quantifying qualitative data was able to describe in quantitative terms, which for one made it easier to outline the main characteristics of studied phenomenon. However, it need to be noticed that calculation are based on researcher's own interpretations of data, and is therefore subjective. For example, the language of data was partly in Finnish and partly in English, which could have affected some interpretations.

Some researcher see that quantification do not belong to analysing process of qualitative research, but Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, 121) mentioned among others Patton (1990), Burns and Grove (1997), and Polit and Hungler (1997), who have presented an opposite view. Conversely, they consider that quantification brings on a new perspective for qualitative analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 121). However, Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, 121) noted that in

most cases of qualitative studies, the amount of data is too small for generalisation, and it is obviously the case within this study. The amount of data in this study is not enough to make statistical generalisations about wider group of Finnish industrial companies.

4 RESULTS

This chapter goes through the results of conducted study. Before that, case companies are described shortly in a general level. At first, results are examined according to SWOT-analysis, which is the foundation for more advanced findings, as well as for deeper analysis and conclusions expressed in the following chapter.

4.1 Case companies of the study

In order to find out characteristics of Finnish industrial companies' marketing communication, this study concentrates on six case companies. The selection of these case companies was aspired to get as representative sample of Finnish industrial companies as possible. However, limiting factor during the selection process was companies' availability and aspiration to participate in study. After all, selected companies could be evaluated fairly representative.

All of case companies operate in international and industrial markets, they are from Finland, and each one of them represents high technology within their own fields of business. Represented fields range with a fairly large scale and include among others companies from metal, paper, electronic, mining, and energy-industries. Case companies turnover varies between 30 million and 5,5 billion euro, when the average turnover is about 1,5 billion euro and the median of turnovers is about 755 million euro. The smallest case company

employs 150 persons and the biggest one has 10 555 employees. The average amount of employees in the case companies is about 3800 persons and the median amount of employees is about 1900 persons.

Case companies' products are mostly strategic or at least very important for their customers. Thus, customer's risk importance (Brossard 1998; Huntera 2004) is typically relatively high. More variation is found regarding risk probability (Brossard 1998; Huntera 2004). However, most of the products case companies offer could be classified into high-risk category on the grounds of both risk importance and risk probability. Thus, buying processes related to case companies' products are typically a complex decision-making process.

Furthermore, all products offered by case companies could be classified as entering, foundation, or facilitating goods, according to De Pelsmacker's et al. (2007, 534) definition about products and services offered in b-to-b markets. De Pelsmacker et al. (2007, 534) divide products and services in the b-to-b markets into four different categories: entering, foundation, facilitating, and reseller goods. Entering goods mean goods that will be part of some wider product or raw material for the final product. Foundation goods are supporting goods or equipments for manufacturing process, which could not be performed without these resources. Goods are not a part of the final product, but they are essential resource for the manufacturing process. Facilitating goods could be tangible products or intangible services, which make manufacturing process possible or easier for manufacturing company. Reseller goods are already complete products that producer sells to the distributors or retail dealers.

4.2 SWOT-analysis of case companies' marketing communication

The starting point for further analysis of this study is SWOT-analysis, and this is why results are first grouped according to strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and target of development. After that, more comprehensive themes have been created on the grounds of results from SWOT-analysis. Marketing communication instruments have been discussed separately, expect within threats.

Within the SWOT-analysis, the importance of each theme and instrument is expressed with two indicators: documents and references. Number of references tells how many times a particular theme or instrument has been mentioned within the whole empirical data in total. Number of documents for one tells how many documents of all 12 documents include a particular theme or instrument. In other words, references say how popular a single theme or

instrument is in general, but it does not say is the theme or instrument characteristic for one case company or all of them. This is why document indicator has been used to indicate the frequency of theme or instrument among case companies.

4.2.1 Strengths

Two themes rose over others, when it concerns marketing communication's strengths (FIGURE 7). The most mentioned themes were '*visual matters*' with 16 references, and '*brand and image*' with 15 references. Both of these were also included in the most of 12 documents ('*visual matters*' in seven and '*brand and image*' in eight).

The next largest amount of references got themes '*customer relationships and communication*', '*customer magazines*', and '*familiarity, visibility and credibility*', all with 11 mentions. '*Customer relationships and communication*' was included in six documents and two other in four documents.

Third group of themes, which all were mentioned seven times strength, consist of '*marketing materials*' (in 4 documents), '*marketing personnel*' (in 5 documents), and '*strategies and planning*' (in 2 documents).

Furthermore, '*references*' was mentioned six times a strength and it was included in four documents. '*Product marketing*' activities was mentioned five times as well as division between local and centralised responsibilities for marketing communication ('*localisation vs. centralisation*'). Themes '*integration*', '*structure of organisation*', and '*flexibility*' were all mentioned four times.

Theme '*understanding customers*' was mentioned only three times. In addition, themes '*effectiveness*', '*partners and networking*', '*innovativeness*', and '*content of communication*' were mentioned very rarely, all twice. The least appeared theme under this category was '*resources*' that was mentioned only once a strength.

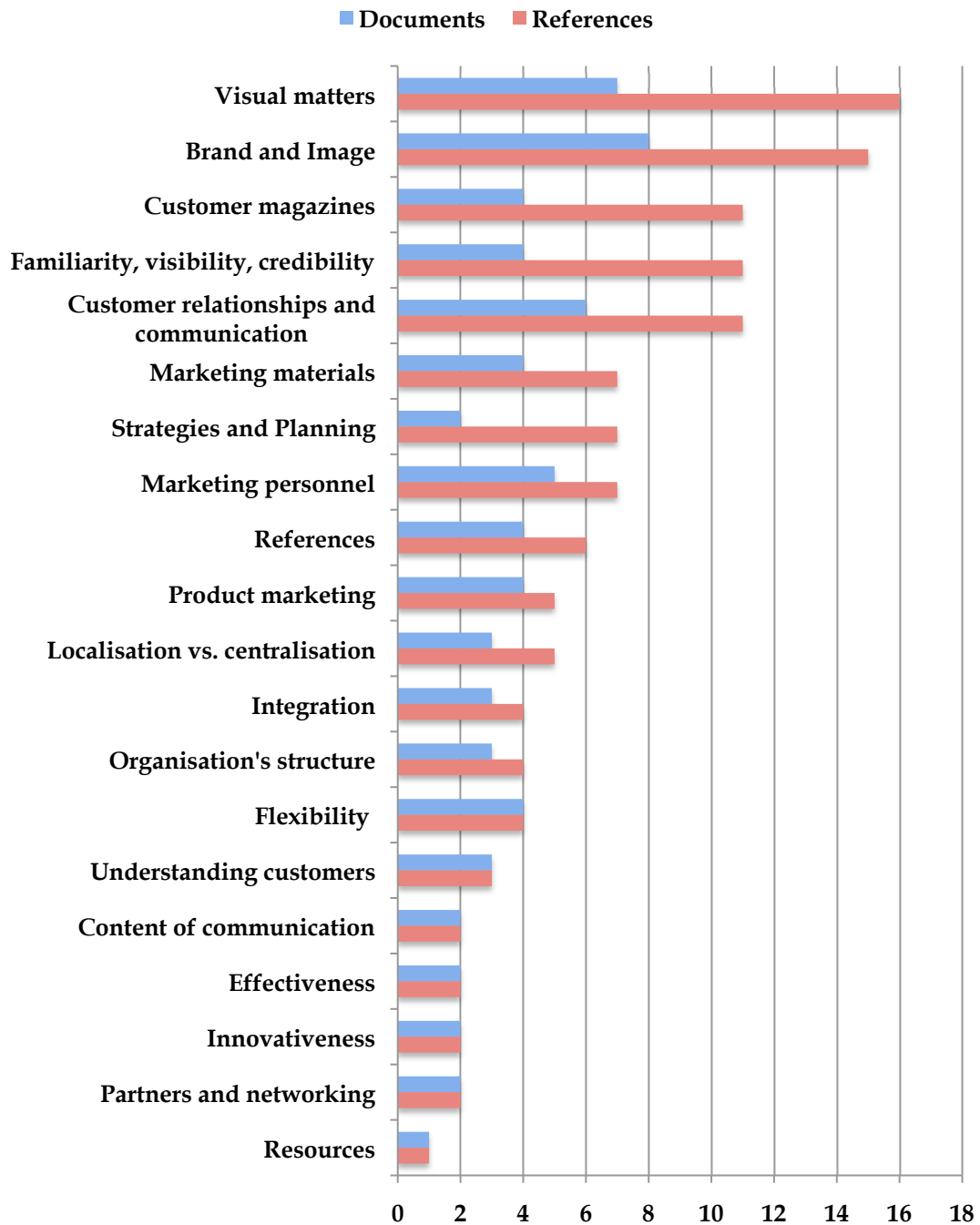


FIGURE 7 Strengths - Themes

According to research data, *'public relations'* was considered most often strength, when discussed about marketing communication instruments (FIGURE 8). It was mentioned 12 times in seven documents. The second largest amount of references got *'exhibitions'* with eight mentions in six documents, and the third was *'e-communication'* with six references in four documents. *'Sales promotion'* got five references and it was mentioned in four documents. *'Personal selling'* got four references as well as *'advertising'*. In addition, *'after sale'* activities were mentioned twice and *'direct marketing'* once.

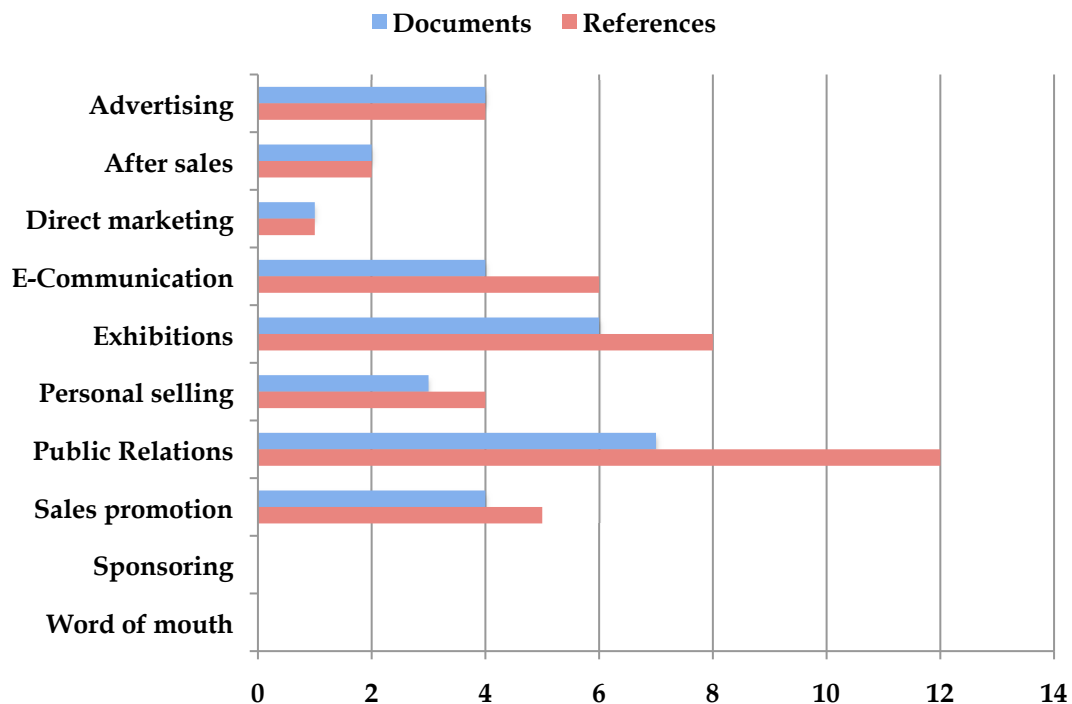


FIGURE 8 Strengths - Instruments

4.2.2 Weaknesses

Examination of marketing communication's weaknesses (FIGURE 9) points out that two themes are clearly distinguished from others: *'integration'* and *'internal communication'*. First one got 31 and later 27 references, and both were mentioned in nine documents.

The next themes after these two most mentioned weaknesses were *'strategies and planning'* with 16 references in eight document, *'resources'* with 14 references in seven document, and *'product marketing'* and *'content of communication'* both with 12 references in seven documents.

According to workshop participants, remarkable weaknesses were also themes *'customer relationships and communication'*, *'acquisition of new customers'*, and *'CRM-system, customer information and customer orientation'*, which all were mentioned 10 times and in five to seven documents.

The next weakness is connected to conservativeness of case companies' marketing communication, and so *'innovativeness'* (lack of it) was mentioned nine times a weakness. Theme covering *'familiarity, visibility and credibility'* was mentioned eight times a weakness, but this was mainly related to certain markets, such as Russia. Utilisation of *'references'* was mentioned eight times as well. Theme *'measurement'* got seven references in five documents as well as theme *'localisation vs. centralisation'*, which considers how marketing

communication should be managed within case companies. In addition, companies' *'product and service offering'* was mentioned six times a weakness or unsuitable for present customers. Also *'structure of organisation'* was mentioned six times a weakness.

Furthermore, *'marketing materials'* were found five times a weakness, *'brand and image'* got four references likewise *'Russia'*, which meant Russia as a market area, and *'effectiveness'* and *'visual matters'* were mentioned three times. The least mentioned weaknesses were *'marketing personnel'* and *'green values'*, which both was mentioned only twice.

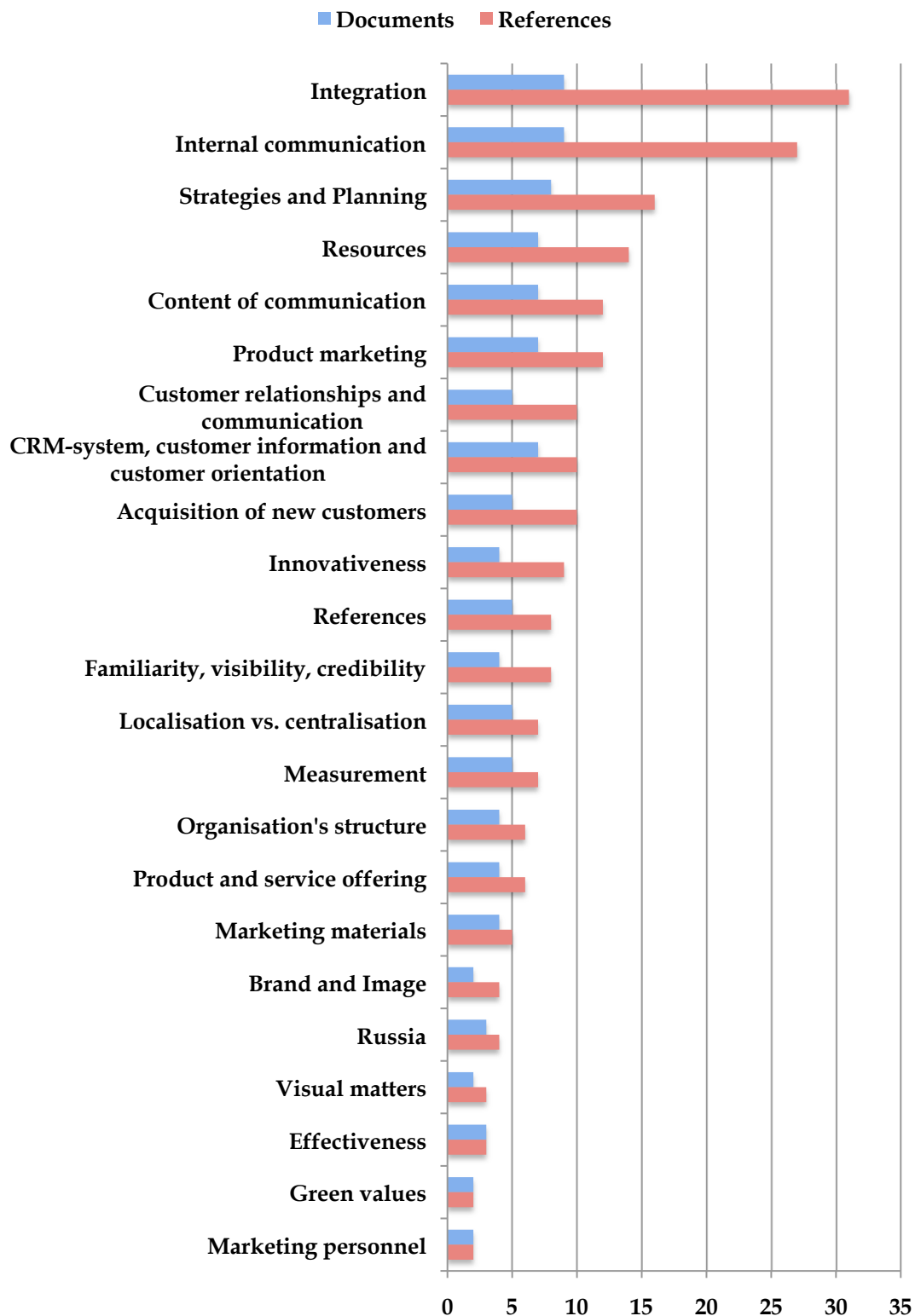


FIGURE 9 Weaknesses - Themes

From marketing communication instruments' perspective, 'e-communication' was clearly the most often mentioned weakness (FIGURE 10). It got 10 references and was included in five documents. The next instrument was 'word of mouth' with five references in four documents. 'Direct marketing' got four

references in three documents, and it was followed by *'advertising'*, *'sales promotion'*, *'sponsoring'* and *'public relations'*, all with three references. The least mentioned instruments were *'exhibitions'* and *'personal selling'*, both with two references.

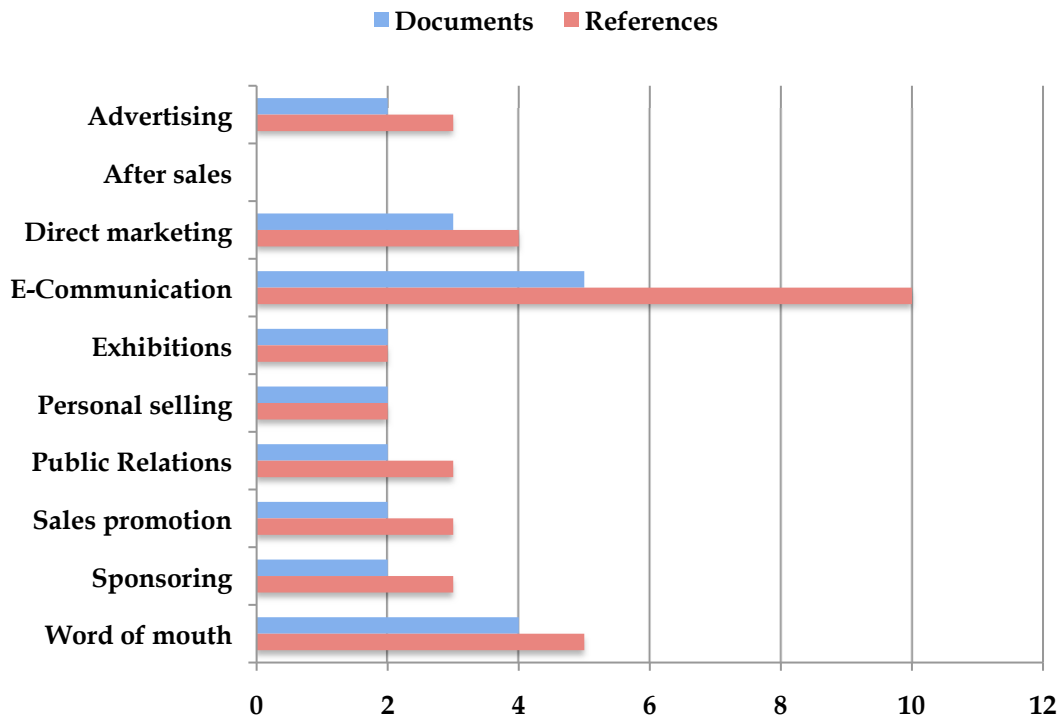


FIGURE 10 Weaknesses - Instruments

4.2.3 Opportunities

According to research data, case companies' representatives see *'customer relationships and communication'* as a biggest opportunity for marketing communication in the near future (FIGURE 11). It got altogether 16 references and was mentioned in seven documents. The second most mentioned opportunity was *'innovativeness'* with seven mentions in four documents, and third one was *'references'*. References got six mentions in four documents and was followed by *'green values'* and *'benchmarking'*, both with five references. In addition, *'partners, and networking'*, *'internal communication'*, *'brand and image'*, and *'localisation vs. centralisation'* were all mentioned four times.

In addition, *'content of communication'* was mentioned three times, and *'measurement'* and *'product and service offering'* twice. According to research data, the smallest opportunities were included in themes *'structure of organisation'*, *'customer feedback'*, *'recruiting'*, and *'internationalisation'*. These all were mentioned only once.

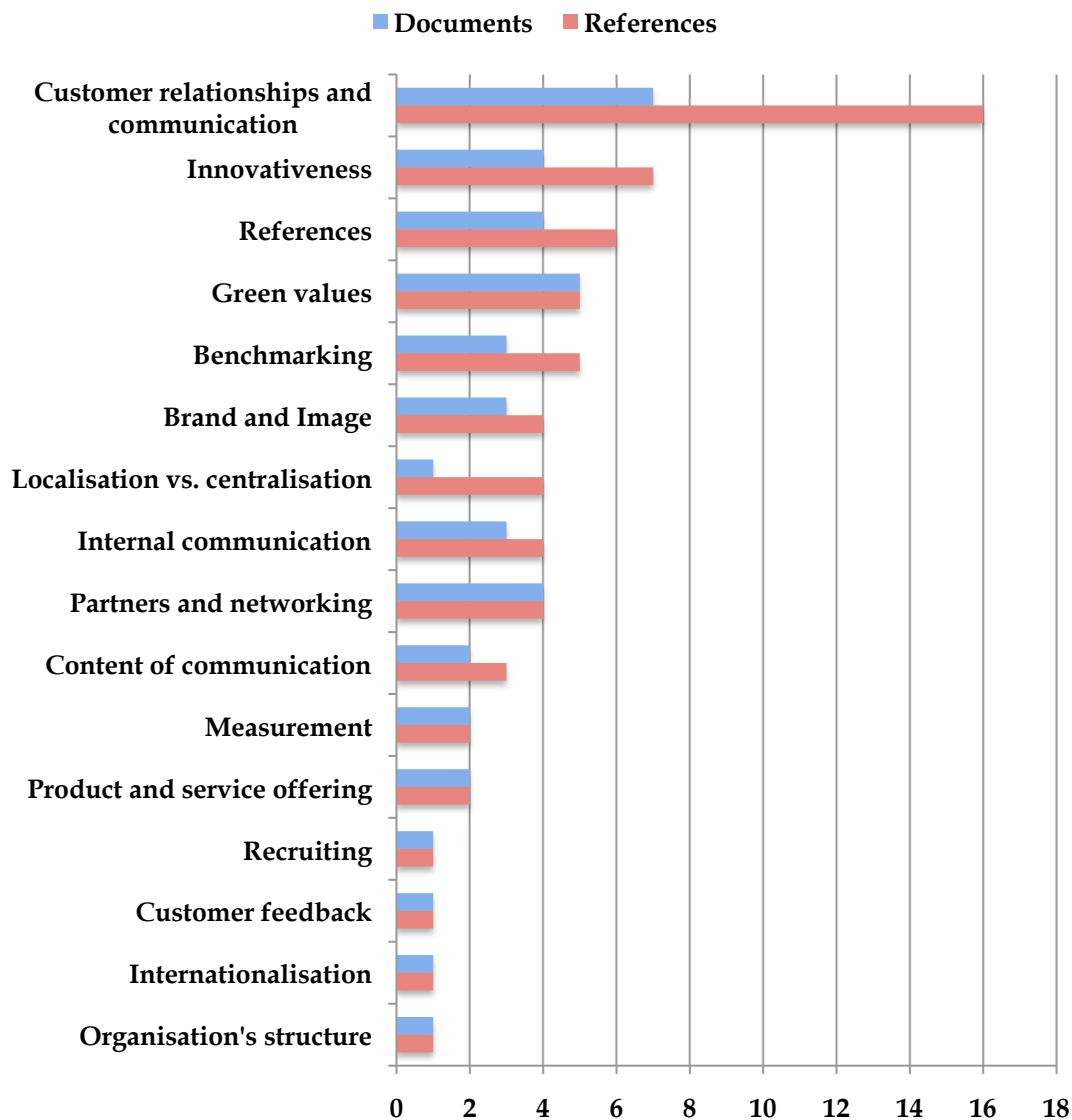


FIGURE 11 Opportunities - Themes

When opportunities of marketing communication instruments were considered, the largest potential was included in '*e-communication*', which got 12 references and was mentioned in six documents (FIGURE 12). '*Exhibitions*' with eight references was the next often mentioned opportunity, and the third was '*public relations*', which got seven references. Furthermore '*advertising*' was mentioned five times, '*direct marketing*' three times, and '*sponsoring*' twice.

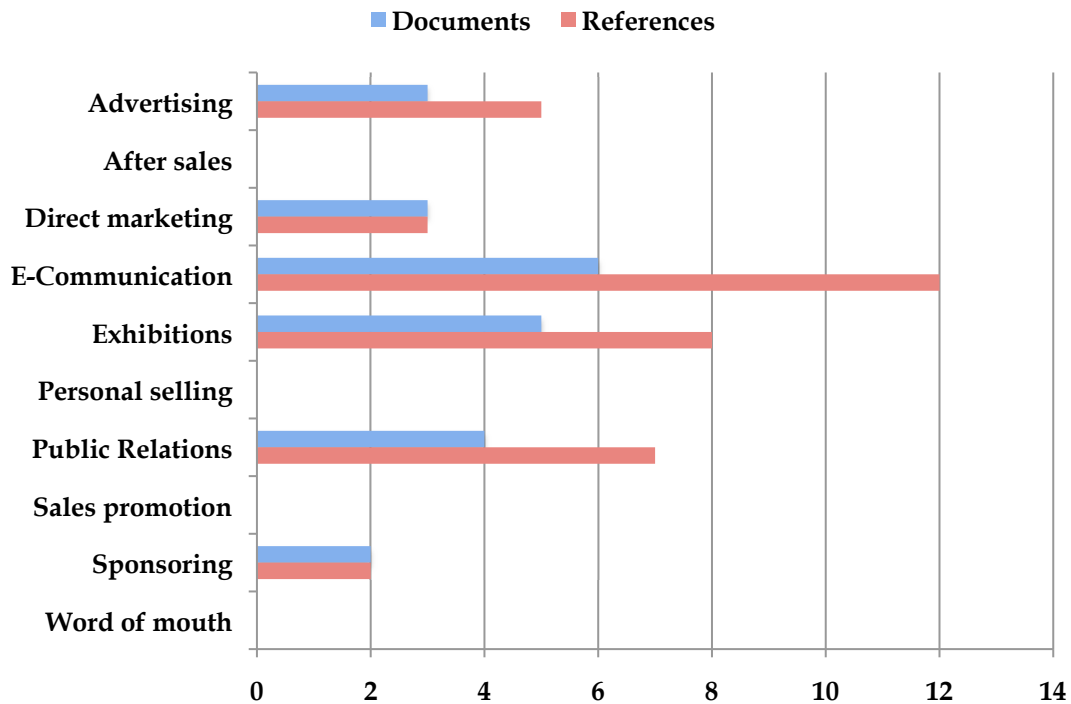


FIGURE 12 Opportunities - Instruments

4.2.4 Threats

According to research data, two biggest threats for case companies in context of marketing communication were *'customer relationships and communication'*, which was mentioned 12 times in five documents, and *'integration'* with 11 mentions in five documents (FIGURE 13). The third biggest threat was *'competition'* that got 10 references, which was followed by *'acquisition of new customers'*, *'green values'*, and *'content of communication'* all with six references.

Furthermore, all following five themes were mentioned five times a threat, providing that companies will fail with them: *'new technologies'*, *'innovativeness'*, *'flexibility'*, *'familiarity, visibility, and credibility'*, and *'recruiting'*.

Other mentioned threats were *'piracy and coping'*, *'strategies and planning'*, *'product and service offering'*, and *'brand and image'*, which all got three references. The tiniest threats, according to research data, were customers' denial to use *'references'* and unworkable division between local and centralised responsibilities (*'localisation vs. centralisation'*), both of which got two mentions, and fails in *'partners and networking'*, which got only one mention.

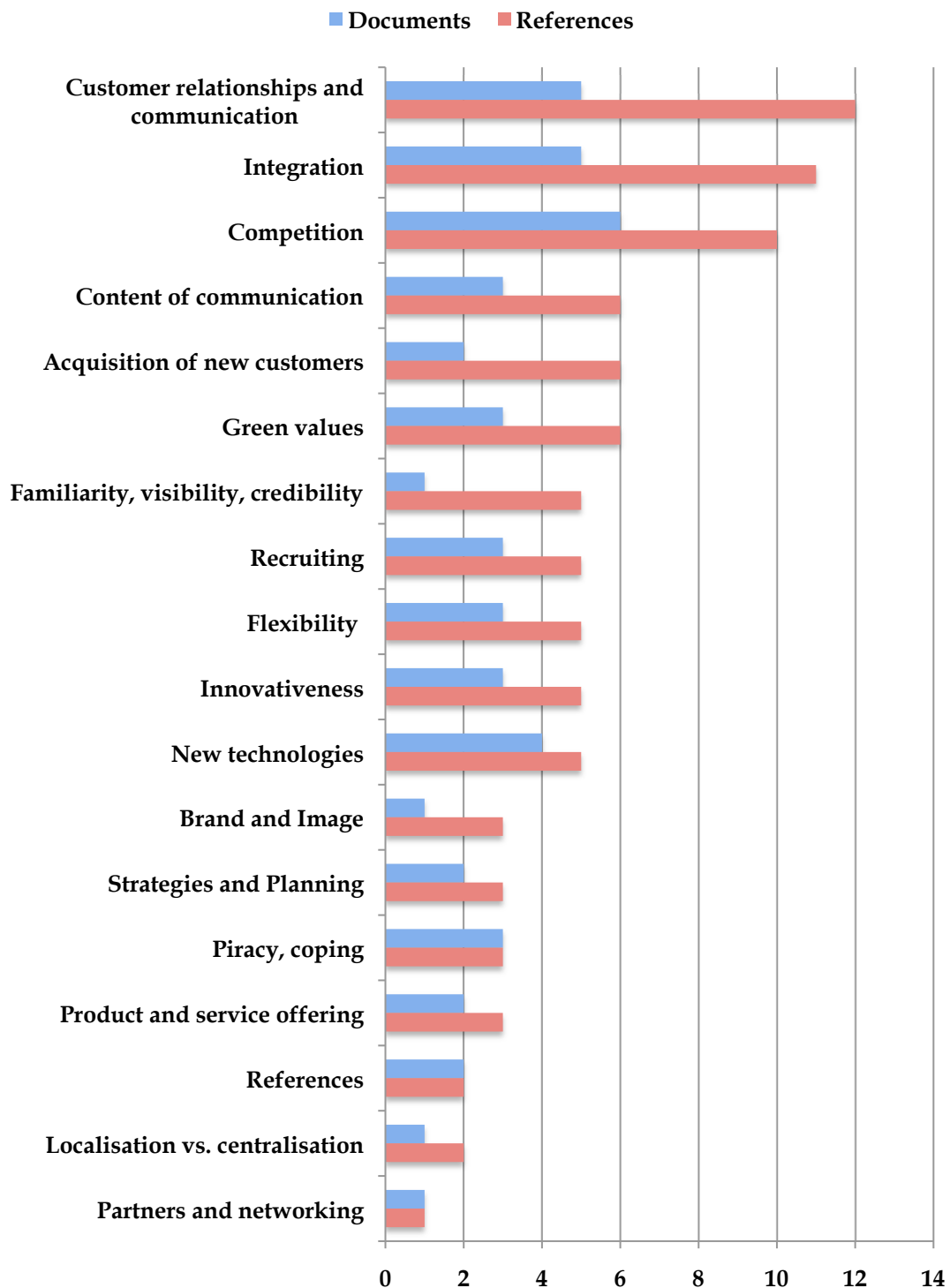


FIGURE 13 Threats - Themes

4.2.5 Target for development

Internal communication and integration were commonly seen the most important target for development (FIGURE 14). Both '*internal communication*' and '*integration*' were mentioned 27 times, first one in 11 documents and later in seven documents. The third theme for development, according to research data,

was '*CRM-system, customer information and customer orientation*', which got 20 references and was mentioned in 10 documents.

The next important targets for development were '*measurement*' with 19 references in nine documents, '*customer relationship and communication*' with 16 mentions in seven documents, and '*strategies and planning*', which was mentioned 14 times.

Furthermore, theme '*partners and networking*' was seen a possible development area, and it got 13 mentions. Themes '*localisation vs. centralisation*', '*brand and image*', and '*familiarity, visibility, and credibility*', were all proposed 12 times for target of development. '*References*' was mentioned 11 times, and '*product marketing*' and '*content of communication*' were both mentioned 10 times. '*Acquisition of new customers*' got nine, '*green values*' eight, and '*innovativeness*' seven references. Improvements to gather more useful '*customer feedback*' and to encourage customers to provide more feedback was mentioned five times. Utilisation of '*new technologies*' got four references. More '*resources*' for marketing were asked three times and more employees for marketing ('*marketing personnel*') twice. The least mentioned targets for development were '*Russia*' and '*marketing materials*' both mentioned only once.

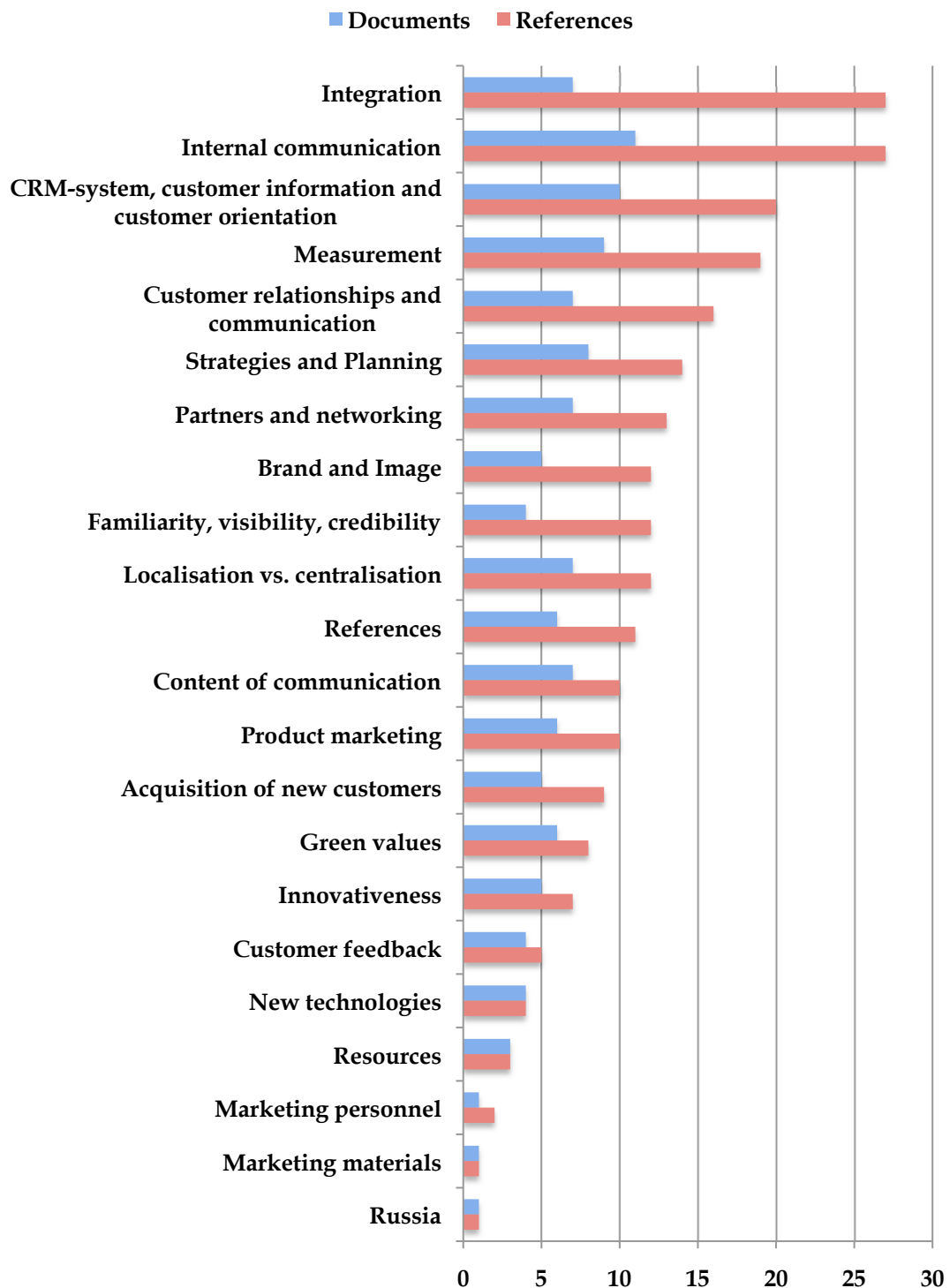


FIGURE 14 Target for development - Themes

The most mentioned marketing communication instrument, when targets for development were considered, was *'e-communication'*, which got 19 references in all and was mentioned in nine documents (FIGURE 15). *'Public relations'* was the second with 13 references in six documents and *'exhibitions'* the third, when it was mentioned 10 times in five documents. The fourth most often mentioned

instrument was *'direct marketing'* with eight references along with *'personal selling'* and *'sponsoring'* both with six references. *'Advertising'* got five mentions, *'sales promotion'* got four, and the least mentioned instrument was *'word of mouth'*, with only one reference.

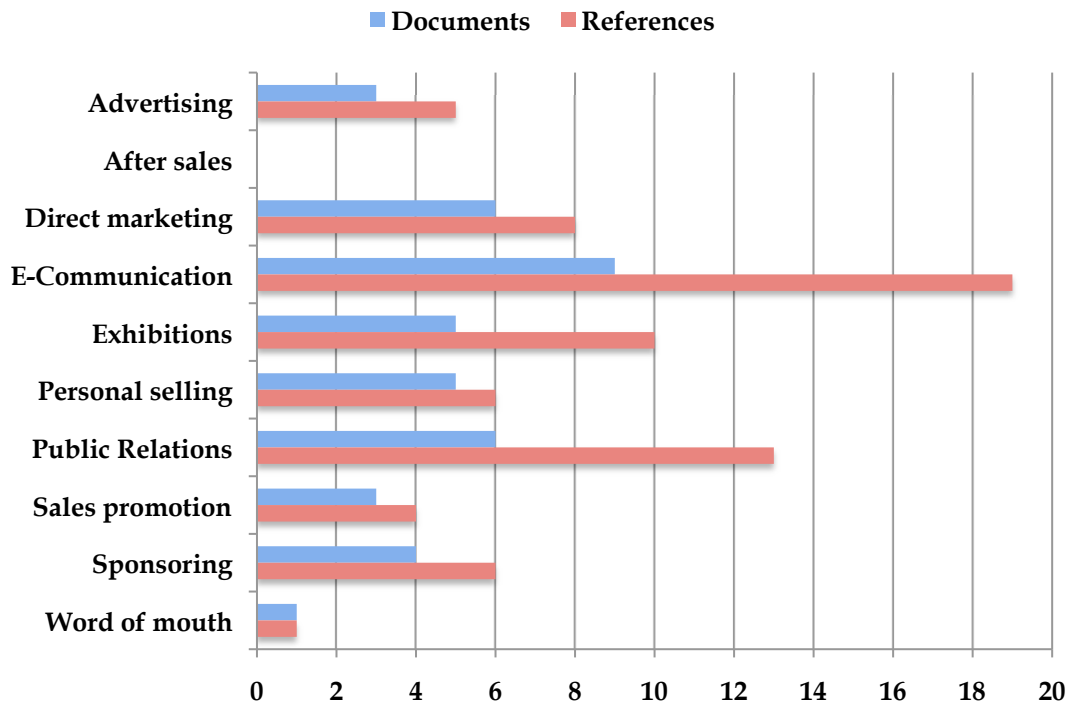


FIGURE 15 Target for development - Instruments

4.3 Marketing communication in case companies

Case companies' brands could be estimated strong and their images favourable in general. Companies are rather well known and appreciated among their customers and other players in the field of companies' business. In addition, the reputation of companies and their products is good. Companies are commonly considered a reliable and trustworthy professional with high know-how. From this perspective case companies have succeeded within their practical business operations and marketing communication. Marketing communications' point of view, especially visual aspects of brands have succeeded and they have been managed well. Generally speaking, it seems that visual matters have a remarkable role for companies' marketing communication and it has also been invested in. Secondly, companies have executed their public relations successfully, and consequently brands' familiarity and visibility have increased from before. Thus, worthwhile actions of public relations have strengthened

brands, improved images, and kept companies in the sight of their interest groups.

Companies also see that strong brand, positive image, and favourable reputation are increasingly important matters in the future, and this is why they are willing to invest in brand development. Kliatchko (2008) considered brand building as one of the most essential actions that companies' top management has to deal with in order to succeed in a modern-day business environment and contrive to develop their IMC practices further. Similarly, case companies consider that weakening of their brand would be a critical threat, which will be able to weaken companies' ability to succeed in tightening competition. This is also the main reason, why companies are willing to develop their brands further. Especially, inconsistent marketing communication practices and weak integration are seen a potential threat for brands and images in the long-term.

In addition to brands and images, case companies' marketing materials are commonly estimated high quality by its design and outlook. However, the content of marketing materials is in certain cases considered unclear. Added to this, materials are non-uniform and they are not integrated a coherent wholeness. Thus, individual marketing materials are generally of good quality, but the combination of varied materials is too heterogeneous. This is especially related to product marketing materials, which are often difficult to understand, complicated, and too technical. Materials are commonly emphasised on specifications and technical details, which are hard to understand without profound knowledge on subject. Product marketing materials do not either give a comprehensive view on offered products or solutions, in which case the general idea of complex products remains unclear.

A good example from case companies' marketing materials are some animations and electronic presentations, which they have used experimentally. These experiments have been highly rated, because of their ability to illustrate and simplify the idea of complex products. However, these kinds of solutions are still quite rarely exploited.

Another means of marketing communication, which has executed remarkably successfully in case companies, is customer magazines. Through the customer magazines companies are able to keep in touch with all their customers regardless of the frequency of transactions or geographical location. Magazines are also valued among the customers, who are getting useful information through them and keep in touch with the supplier company. In addition, regionally published magazines are a functional way to make marketing communication more personalised and cater for customers individually in different markets. However, customer magazines have an important role only for certain companies, but not for all. Thus, magazines

could be estimated an effective means for those companies, who are utilising them in their marketing communication. This matter is congruent with a De Pelsmacker et al. (2007; 383-408), who mentioned that direct marketing is an effective way to communicate with industrial customers.

In general, this study's results prove that case companies' employees do not consider the content of their marketing communication of good quality, and they ask improvements for it. Marketing communication's content is commonly evaluated unclear and goal of it seems to be missing. In the long term, unclear content of communication will cause significant damages for companies' business, even if the actual products would be fine. The amount of misunderstandings will increase dramatically, when customers do not get clear messages. In addition, customers' expectations are unrealistic or they do not know what to expect, in which case the final result is a disappointment with a high probability, or at least the result is something else than customer's expectation. However, these deficiencies are not considered a reason of case companies' marketing personnel, which is generally regarded professional, skilled, and competent. In addition, marketing personnel's work contribution is highly appreciated.

4.3.1 Marketing strategies and plans

There are some uncertainties regarding case companies' marketing strategies and plans. Not even all of the employees, who are dealing with marketing, communication, sales, or management, are familiar with their companies' marketing strategies and plans. In addition, several employees consider that existing strategies and plans are not implemented properly and followed in practice.

One common contradiction of marketing strategy relates to focus of marketing, another to scope of responsibilities, and third to content and implementation. Firstly, it seems that case companies have not found a clear line between product and brand marketing. Companies commonly emphasise brand marketing instead of product marketing, but product marketing has its own supporters, who would like to stress more on it. Part of companies have already quit product marketing completely, but other part of companies exploits both brand and product marketing. However, the strategy between brand and product marketing is not clear and it seems to confuse.

On the other hand, a noteworthy matter is that current way of action has generated companies' strong brands and good images. However, at the same time, the familiarity of individual products and solutions has suffered and it is not as good as it could be among companies' customers. According to study's results, customers do not necessarily have a clear conception of all the

companies' products. Thus, companies should clarify their marketing strategies for whole personnel in order to make the focus of marketing communication clear and to define how companies' brands relate to individual products.

The second strategic issue that need to be solved is the conflict between local and centralised marketing. In general, central offices have commonly leading role in case companies' marketing and some minor responsibilities are executed locally. In practice, this is a workable solution as the overall responsibility is in one place, but regional characteristics could be still taken into account. However, at the moment, central offices are occasionally unaware of local offices' actions, and secondly central decision makers do not always take into account local characteristics and requirements. Thus, the primary problem in this case appears to be the agreed policies, compliance with them, and communication between local and central offices.

The third matter that relates to companies' marketing strategies is much wider and more comprehensive. On the grounds of study's results, case companies' personnel consider their marketing objectives, strategies, and plans unclear and insufficient in general, which makes ordinary activities and realisation of strategies difficult. In addition, differentiation from competitors has been experienced difficult. This is because of the lack of clear strategies, in which case marketing communication does not have possibilities of being targeted and personalised enough. Too often purpose is to attract and reach too many target groups, and finally no one will be achieved properly. Furthermore, lack of measurement practices to measure marketing performance makes strategies disconnected from actual operations.

4.3.2 Status of marketing

The status of marketing relates to the role that marketing has in case companies and how it is regarded and appreciated. According to study's results, the status of marketing is not very strong in case companies. Marketing is often considered a supportive tool for other functions, it rarely has a significant role for companies, and it does not have influence over companies' strategic decision-making processes. This leads to a lack of appreciation and a situation, where marketing is not taken into account, when business strategies and plans are created. Also Reed et al. (2004) mentioned that weak status of marketing is characteristic for business-to-business organisations. Typically, industrial companies do not generally take their marketing management with a same importance than companies operating in consumer markets (Reed et al. 2004). In general, industrial companies are not seen marketing as significant field of business than others functions (Reed et al. 2004), which seem to apply also among case companies of this study.

However, Kliatchko (2008) argues that marketing should be a part of companies' strategic planning process. A good illustration about the fault is finding that industrial companies have a tendency not to have employees in senior positions responsible for marketing (Reed et al. 2004). In contrast, companies operating in consumer markets have high-level managers responsible for marketing, in which case also marketing is involved in strategic decision-making processes (Reed et al. 2004). Thus, one significant cause for a weak status of marketing is lack of company's management support and appreciation. The same matter was noticed also within the research of StratMark research group's (2008).

A reason for lower status of marketing could be partly related to measurement practices of marketing performance. As mentioned in the context of marketing strategy, measurement practices for marketing performance are rather deficient in case companies. This could be seen to cause a negative impact on status of marketing, because benefits and advantages of marketing cannot be proven. Likewise Kliatchko (2008) mentioned the importance of measurement practices for the development of marketing and IMC.

The most glaring example of the underestimation is the proposal to abolish the whole marketing function, because of its inefficiency. This proposal was made by a member of top management in one of the case companies despite the fact that marketing performance had not been figured out. Probably, this is not the general view on marketing in case companies, but it is a descriptive example of the status of marketing and how the lack of explicit measurement practices contributes to status. Therefore, companies should invest in development of measurement practices for marketing. When the real outcomes of marketing are able to measure, it is much more justified to estimate the importance of marketing. Secondly, if marketing were an ineffective function as a whole, so would it be more sensible to try to develop it more efficient instead of rejecting the whole function? Development of measurement systems for marketing performance is not a straightforward task, but worthy of consideration, because of clarified role and meaning of marketing.

Evidently, status of marketing is also related to the amount of marketing resources. In general, marketing resources seems to be rather small in case companies, if compared to extent of responsibilities and assignments. This finding is against the finding made by Jaakkola (2006) within his study. According to Jaakkola (2006), Finnish companies are commonly spending more on marketing resources than their foreign competitors. On the contrary, results of this study prove that case companies' marketing personnel is not able to manage all their tasks because of limited time and resources. Thus, employees typically execute the most urgent tasks, but they are not able to complete

supporting and developing tasks, and so they remain undone. For example long-term planning, innovation, development, measurement, follow-up activities, acquisition of new customers, and development of customer relationships receive only little attention. Thus, these matters are executed in a hurry, although these types of matters should be considered carefully and executed with the time. Congruent with this, Reed et al. (2004) mentioned too few marketing resources as a biggest challenge for long-term planning in marketing in business-to-business organisations.

Consequently, a characteristic feature of case companies' marketing communication is conservativeness and traditional working methods. Marketing communication actions are commonly strived to do safely and as they have done before. First of all, companies try to avoid any kind of risk in their marketing communication and keep out of irritating anyone. Innovations, new ideas, and freshness are missing as well as experimental actions and desire to experiments. This is not a consequence of marketing personnel's reluctance to develop or reform marketing, and actually, they seem to be ready for new ideas and experiments. The bottleneck appears to be rather in resources or companies' management. Typically, marketing personnel do not have time to innovate and develop marketing strategies or practices. In addition to this, personnel often lack management's support and approval for new ideas and experiments. According to companies' marketing personnel, this is because of management's will to operate safely and avoid risks. However, innovativeness includes always a certain kind of risk to fail, but it need to be taken, if company wants to stand out from the competitors, or even keep on track with them. At the moment, the risk is to become uninteresting, imperceptible, boring, old-fashioned, inflexible, backward, or inactive. Like Long et al. (2007) stated this issue in connection with e-communication: *"the greatest danger is to do nothing."*

More innovative marketing communication and fresher solutions are also considered to be a good opportunity for companies. Truly original and creative marketing communication is seen as a clear advantage in comparison with competitors. One potential field for innovativeness in marketing communication is social media and its solutions for marketing communication. Another possible field for innovations could be green values and green marketing.

4.4 Marketing communication instruments in case companies

According to results of this study, the most used marketing communication instruments in case companies seem to be public relations, exhibitions, e-

communication, personal selling, and direct marketing. Other instruments like sponsoring, advertising, sales promotion, and after sale are not commonly used. In addition, the use of different instruments varies between companies, and typically, only few instruments are truly used actively. Others instruments have at the most a secondary role.

Public relations are commonly used and important instrument of marketing communication for case companies. Companies aim to manage their relations with media, general public, and public administration regularly and communicate actively with them, when it is needed. Communication is not always meant to promote company's own interest directly but it could be done as a contribution for someone other's interests as well. On the grounds of the outcomes, companies have succeeded in their public relations. This is seen as a general appreciation as well as companies' wide visibility and attention in different medium. Successful utilisation of public relations is probably one reason for companies' strong brands and good reputation. Public relations are also commonly evaluated a marketing communication's strength inside the companies and such it is to be maintained also in the future. However, companies are concerned about negative publicity, which is related to word of mouth communication.

Trade shows or exhibitions are another commonly used marketing communication instrument among case companies. However, companies do not consider this an effective instrument. At the moment companies use to participate in carefully chosen trade shows and exhibitions, but this is more likely an activity that has to be than a real means for marketing communication. Companies do not consider that trade shows could have direct positive effects on their business. On the contrary, they see negative effects, if they do not participate in trade show. For example, according to representatives of case companies, certain trade shows are compulsory events, which cannot be passed. These events have a reputation that there are all significant players on the spot from the particular field of business. If a company does not participate in these events, it is a signal that the company is not a noteworthy actor. This is often the main reason for participation, and thus companies cannot take all advantages of trade shows. Secondly, companies consider that they utilise trade shows' opportunities properly, when they use to take part in these compulsory events.

E-communication is one of the most increased instrument within the case companies' marketing communication in recent years. Companies have recognised the importance and opportunities of e-communication, and its role is expected to rise further in the future. However, e-communication's role is not very high at the moment in case companies and its utilisation is rather

incomplete. Although companies consider e-communication an effective instrument with lot of opportunities, they have not found real practices to exploit it in a full scale. Currently, e-communication activities consist primarily of traditional marketing communication actions, which are relocated to electronic environment. For example, mobile solutions, social media, or search engine marketing are almost unexploited means of e-communication for case companies. Thus, the real advantages of e-communication are not yet realised – such as interactivity, two-way communication, flexibility, personal customer service, individual communication, measurement methods, or data collection and analysing.

Personal selling is traditionally one of the most important and effective marketing communication instruments in business-to-business markets (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 464-480, 543-549; Deeter-Schmelza & Kennedy 2002), and this is also the case with case companies. The importance of face-to-face communication is even more emphasised among case companies because of the type of products and solutions, which are commonly very complex and require a complicated purchase process. Secondly, case companies' salespersons are commonly considered competent and personal selling activities effective. However, companies' personal selling needs still some improvements in order to meet the requirements of current markets and customers. Salespersons need to communicate congruently with the rest of organisation and other marketing communication activities, which is a challenge for internal communication and integration. According to results of this study, case companies have some deficiencies within their customer relationships and customers' needs are not always understood. Thus, the problem relates also to personal selling and salespersons capability to act between their own company and customer company. Therefore, case companies should focus even more than before on salespersons' opportunities to serve their customers more individually and congruent with company's other activities.

Direct marketing is not generally regarded a significant marketing communication instrument in case companies at the moment, and it is rather considered a weakness than strength. However, case companies seem to be interested to develop their direct marketing actions and they believe it to be a profitable instrument, which should be emphasised more within customer communication. On the other hand, direct marketing already has a significant role for certain case companies, and they have executed it successfully. A good example of successful direct marketing is customer magazines and newsletters. Direct marketing is also used together with personal selling and for customer relationship management.

Another little used marketing communication instrument is sales promotion. In practice, the only means of sales promotions that case companies utilise regularly are certain loyalty programs or discounts for major customers. After all, these means are rather depending on individual contracts and negotiations with a customer than traditional sales promotion activities. However, companies' previous experiences about site visits, demonstration factories, and illustration of production lines have been successful. Despite the significant benefits of demonstration factories or production lines, also costs are rather high. More budget way to execute this kind of demonstrations would be the visit to office of existing customers, but these situations include many elements that marketer is not able to control. Product, production line, or factory, which is already in operation, could be outdated and so it does not necessarily represent latest innovations of development. Thus, potential customer gets a distorted conception about current offering. In addition, permission for visit and timetables could become a problem, when demonstration takes place in a site that is already in operation.

An interesting finding is that sponsoring is almost totally unexploited marketing communication instrument among case companies at the moment. Companies neither seems to be very keen to try out or develop sponsoring as a part of their marketing communication. Some companies have tried sponsoring preciously, but these trials were more likely actions of goodwill or charity than real sponsoring. However, sponsoring could be a valuable instrument for case companies in a long-term, when it is connected properly with other marketing communication activities. It typically has a great positive influence on company's reputation, image, visibility, and recognisability.

At the moment, advertising is quite limitedly used instrument in case companies' marketing communication, and probably its role will be minor also in the future. However, advertising's development further and its strengthening would be worth of consideration. Case companies' products are typically quite complex and purchase processes are complicated, so the greatest benefits of advertising is probably able to gain from brand advertising. Secondly, advertising could be used to inform different interest groups about relevant matters and direct them to other information sources and communication channels – such as company's web pages. That is to say, advertising could be used to create favourable images and to support other marketing communication activities, but it cannot be primary marketing communication instrument for case companies.

An effective, but unutilised means of marketing communication in case companies, is customer references. Companies have many favourable stories to tell about successful projects with their customers, but these opportunities are

not fully exploited within marketing communication. The issue is recognised also in case companies, but until now, they have not taken any actions to improve the utilisation of references. In addition, companies were commonly worried about negative word of mouth (WOM) communication, which practically works with a same logic than references. The difference is that WOM is a matter to which marketer cannot influence directly. Case companies were also noticed that negative WOM is spreading much faster and wider than positive WOM.

In addition to marketing communication instruments discussed above, the aim was also to examine case companies' after sale activities. However, there was too little information about this matter within the empirical data of study. Thus, it is not possible to estimate how case companies are executing their after-sale or what kind of role it has, but probably it is not significant.

4.5 Integration of marketing communication in case companies

The clearest finding of this study is that marketing communication in the case companies is not properly integrated. Deficient internal communication and lack of integration are commonly seen the biggest weaknesses and the most important target for development within case companies.

First of all, case companies' representatives consider that at the moment different functions and units are operating separately without coordination, functions are unknown for each others, and functions have their own plans and ways of action. According to research data, this fragmentation is at least partially a consequence of culture and predominant attitudes. In general, attitudes seemed to be quite self-centric inside the companies. Thus, workshop participants were asking for the more favourable attitudes and commitment among all employees. Secondly, they also saw that management needs to give its support for co-operation and empowers the effective interaction. In addition to management's support and changed attitudes and culture, companies lack functional policies and practices for internal communication. The communication inside the company was seen a one of the main problems at the moment.

Furthermore, according to workshop participants, also problems of marketing communication are a consequence of internally fragmented organisation. Participants were regarded that after company is internal integrated, it has an opportunity to create truly integrated marketing communication practises. At the moment, they consider their marketing communication partly integrated, but they saw also lot of room for

improvement. Part of participants regarded brand communication successfully integrated, but other elements of marketing communication were not considered consistent – such as product communication, different customer contact situations, and actions in local marketing. Another part of case companies considered that also their brand communication is disintegrated. Among other things, for these reason the matters of internal communication and integration were considered an essential target for development.

The concept of integration is herein divided into internal and external integration. The internal integration covers interaction inside the company including internal communication and co-operation between different functions and departments. In turn, the external integration contains interaction with customers and external marketing communication. At the moment, case companies appear to be disintegrated both internally and externally, which seems to be an interrelated process at least to some extent. A real conclusion about causal relationships cannot be made on the grounds of this study, but it seems that external disintegration is at least partially a consequence of internal disintegration.

4.5.1 Internal integration

The fundamental problem for case companies seems to be the lack of clear methods and practices to co-operate and communicate inside the company. Different functions and units inside the company operate separately and they are from time to time unaware of each other. The communication between different functions flounders and flow of information is not continuous. Based on the results of this study, it is a common situation that one part of company does not know what is going on in another part of company, what they are doing, what is expected from us, what kind of support or assistant is needed, and how our actions are affecting others.

In addition, case companies' culture for internal communication and co-operation appears to be unfavourable. Overall, attitudes are fairly egocentric, parties seem to be unwilling to co-operate with others, and it looks like they rather compete with each other than co-operate. Thus, the company is a group of actors, each of which is trying to move to their own direction. The most common conflict situates traditionally between marketing and sales, although this problem is perceived long ago both in academic literature and in practice. Also Reed et al. (2004) found the problem of collaboration and integration typical for business-to-business organisations. In contrast, organisations operating in consumer markets do not typically have these problems – at least in the same extent (Reed et al. 2004).

4.5.2 External integration

It is easy to understand that internal conditions affect directly company's external communication. Thus, disintegrated marketing communication could be seen as a consequence of lacking internal integration and co-operation. This is particularly apparent in the context of customer communication, when customer interacts with several actors of company – such as sales, production, customer service, management etc. If these actors operates separately without co-operation and are unaware about each other, the overview customer gets is necessarily rather fragmented. In addition to fragmented view, the actual operation with customer cannot be a straightforward process under this kind of conditions. There need to be interruptions in flow of information, misunderstandings, delays, and other kind of failures along the way. Thus, case companies insufficient internal integration is also a cause for disintegrated marketing communication, and especially disconnected customer communication.

These problems become evident within the results of study. Case companies are not internally integrated, which affect their external communication and is probably the main causes for misunderstandings and problems that case companies have in their customer relationships. Different actors inside the companies are not communicating sufficiently enough between, in which case the overall understanding of customer cannot be extensive. Thus, different actors inside the company have a different view about customer, but no one has a holistic understanding of customer.

4.5.3 Causes of disintegration

The roots of this disintegration could be contemplated from various perspectives. On one hand individual parties are not co-operating and communicating effective enough, but on the other hand they are neither interested to get informed, seek information, nor understand one another. Furthermore, co-operation with other functions is typically seen a burden that is away from own activities. One reason for this could be too small resources, in which case different functions and departments are not capable to invest enough in collaboration. Partly this is related to instructions, plans and strategies, which define followed policies and practices in organisation. Either strategy is insufficient or it is not properly implemented into practice. In addition, the culture of operations has its own role, and it creates the atmosphere and manners of company.

However, a common factor for all these causes is the lack of prerequisites for effective co-operation and communication. This for one is mainly depended

on company's management, who creates these prerequisites, gives its support for actions, and empowers employees to operate as desired. Firstly, management makes strategies, instructions and plans, then it enables the implementation of chosen methods, and finally it requires and controls that made decisions are followed. Hence, it is management's responsibility to create favourable conditions and culture for functional internal co-operation, communication, interaction, and monitor the implementation. Therefore, it is ultimately about a much broader issue than merely marketing or marketing communication.

4.5.4 Integrated marketing communication

A general deficiency of case companies' marketing communication is integration of different marketing communication instruments, and thus marketing communication's content is sometimes contradictory and difficult to understand. In addition, companies are not sending a same message or speaking with one voice, as they should do (Garber & Dotson 2002). In particular, companies have failed to integrate their secondary marketing communication instruments with primary instruments. This is to say, case companies have admittedly strived to integrate their primary instruments in order to communicate a consistent message, but usually secondary instruments are not congruent with this. Because of this, case companies' representatives were commonly worried about company's image, and how it will be affected. The risk is that the image becomes unclear and fragmented, if companies do not succeed to integrate their marketing communication. One workshop participant illustrated this issue fairly well, when he did not know what his company wants to communicate with its brand slogan. According to him, the slogan is misleading, it does not describe them as a company or what they are doing, and it is inconsistent with other marketing communication. However, the brand slogan has a central role in company's marketing communication.

Despite disintegrated marketing communication in general, it seems that case companies have succeeded with their brand and image communication. Evidently, this part of marketing communication is also integrated successfully, and different aspects of brands are supporting each other. Consequently, companies' brands are commonly appreciated and their images are rather good. Thus, case companies have successfully integrated several instrument of marketing communication, and created a consistent brand and image for the company, but they have not brought it further. Overall, view and general message of marketing communication is not always uniform, which may confuse customers. According to Kitchen et al. (2004b), this is a very common

obstacle for the development of IMC. Companies get stuck on inside-out communication and cannot take it further (Kitchen et al. 2004b).

Nevertheless, consequences of disintegration are not yet evident, and it seems that fragmentation of communication has not damaged companies' brands substantially as yet. After all, damages will be caused in the course of time unless companies correct their communication means.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to draw conclusions about marketing communication in Finnish industrial companies on the grounds of conducted study. First, research questions expressed at the beginning of study are answered, and then developed research model of integrated marketing communication is introduced. Finally, this chapter gives some practical implications for companies' managers, evaluate the conducted study, and suggests ideas for further research.

5.1 Answers to research questions

This study strived to describe marketing communication in Finnish industrial companies. The main research question of study was:

"How Finnish industrial companies execute their marketing communication, and how they have put it into practice?"

In addition, study had three sub-questions, which were:

- (1) *"What are marketing communication's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and targets for development";*
- (2) *"How different marketing communication instruments are utilised in marketing communication"; and*
- (3) *"How marketing communication and its instruments are integrated according to the stages of IMC (Shultz and Kitchen 2000, cited by Kitchen et al. 2004a)".*

How Finnish industrial companies execute their marketing communication, and how they have put it into practice?

Marketing communication of Finnish industrial companies is roughly speaking in order, and companies' primary actions are commonly executed properly. On the other hand, companies' other than primary actions are not executed with a same carefulness. Thus, individual parts of marketing communication are commonly in order, but the broader view is not consistent, explicit, or effective.

Finnish industrial companies clearly invest in their brand communication, image creation, and visual aspects of their marketing communication. Companies' brands are commonly evaluated strong, and they are well known and appreciated actors in their own field of business. In addition, companies marketing personnel seems to be competent.

Mix of used marketing communication instruments is commonly rather small in Finnish industrial companies and some useful instruments are totally bypassed. Customer magazines are a single means of marketing communication that is exploited very successfully, but also magazines are utilised only in some of the companies.

Marketing strategies and plans are not explicit and clear enough at the moment in Finnish industrial companies. They evidently need to be clarified and implement more effectively. Through this way, marketing communication could be clarified in general and it is able to find the balance between central and local marketing responsibilities as well as between brand and product marketing. Furthermore, companies need to target and personalise their marketing communication more to be succeeded in the future, and this requires that companies will define their most important customers and invest specially in them. In addition, objectives of marketing communication should be stated more clearly and accomplishments need to be measured, marketing plans need to be more detailed, and marketing communication instrument should be chosen according the objectives and customers. Through these improvements, companies are also able to clarify their internal roles, ways of action, and communication. These matters are also key factors for successful development of IMC (Kliatchko 2008). According to Kliatchko (2008), it is top management's task to build a comprehensive view on company's business, define explicit frames of business, and create clear strategies and objectives. After this, management need to create requirements for implementation of strategies (Kliatchko 2008). On the other hand, also marketing status in general and resources directed for marketing are rather small, which makes any kind of planning, innovation, and development processes difficult to execute.

Furthermore, according to findings of conducted study, companies seem to have also some deficiencies in their customer relationships and customer communication. However, this study did not focused on customer relationship, and this is why it is not able to appraise herein.

What are marketing communication's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and targets for development?

There seems to be both certain strengths and clear weaknesses related to marketing communication in Finnish industrial companies. In general, the greatest strengths relates to companies' brands and images, brand communication, familiarity and visibility as well as matters of appearance. Secondly, the clearest weaknesses of marketing communication are the integration and internal communication. Furthermore, companies have deficiencies with their marketing strategies and plans, customer relationships, and development of marketing. Finally, the status of marketing seems to be rather weak and undervalued in general.

Companies' biggest opportunities relates to development of companies' customer relationships, customer communication, and customer relationship management. All of these matters could be concluded with customer-oriented approach and way of doing business. Other significant opportunities for Finnish industrial companies could be solutions of green marketing and e-communication.

The most serious threat for Finnish industrial companies is fail in their customer relationships simultaneously with tightening competition in the markets. Another significant threat relates to companies integration and internal communication, if these matters will not be fixed. Absolutely, the most important target for development for Finnish industrial companies is the very same integration and internal communication. The second issue to develop could be stated as adoption of customer-oriented approach and way of doing business. Other important targets for development are more clarified strategies, plans, and objectives for marketing, and practices to measure marketing performance.

How different marketing communication instruments are utilised in marketing communication?

According to results of this study, Finnish companies are utilising only small scale of possible marketing communication instruments. The most commonly used marketing communication instruments are personal selling, public relations, exhibitions, direct marketing, and e-communication. However, the use of instruments varies rather much depending on company, but typically,

only couple of these instruments are truly utilised. Thus, companies use to invest only on few instruments, which they consider primary, and so other instruments have only a secondary role. These secondary instruments are used occasionally, but they are not really invested in. Finally, instruments like sponsoring, advertising, sales promotion, and after sale have commonly only minor role for Finnish industrial companies, or they are not used at all. In addition, opportunities of references and word of mouth communication are not utilised in full scale.

Public relations are one of the most successfully utilised marketing communication instruments among Finnish industrial companies and a significant element for companies' strong brands and favourable images. This is consistent with earlier literature about b-to-b marketing communication (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 291-313, 546). However, Finnish industrial companies' public relation actions seem to be focused on media relations. In addition to this, it is also important to establish favourable relationships with other interest groups in companies' operational environment – such as suppliers, employees, subcontractors, public authorities, general public, educational institutions etc. This concept of networking and partnership was also mentioned a possible target for development within study's results. In order to succeed in this, companies could utilise several methods. Probably the most traditional ways to manage public relations is to give a contribution for the surrounding society, participate in public debate, and follow the values of environment. Companies could also organise different kind of events – such as factory visits, open houses, seminars, or conferences, or joint project with different actors. Although these actions would not gain direct advantages for companies' business, in the long-term they will. All these actions would strengthen company's status in a surrounding society, increase company's possibilities to influence issues that are important for company, improve company's general reputation and image, and it could also create unforeseen opportunities with new partners. Thus, it is not easy for marketers to affect directly company's image and reputation, or word of mouth about company, but different actions of public relations opens up a good opportunity for that (Brossard 1998). On this account, it is important that Finnish industrial companies keep on managing their relationship with different players in company's operational environment. The aim should be to create as favourable conception about the company as possible in the eyes of different actors of environment. The key matter is to create good and reliable relationships with different interest groups, and maintain and retain these relationships. Before long, this will affect also company's image and reputation among its customers. However, it is not conceivable that company could create favourable relations with their interest groups baselessly without downright

actions. Therefore, the most important matter is that company's actual business, activities, ways of action, products, and offerings are in order.

Trade shows have a remarkable role in Finnish industrial companies' marketing communication, which is a common situation in industrial markets in general (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 440-456, 543, 546; Deeter-Schmelza & Kennedy 2002). Despite that, companies could exploit this instrument much more widely, and for several purposes. At the moment, companies do not have clear strategies and distinct objectives for their trade show participations, they do not plan their appearance carefully enough, and measurement and follow-up practices are missing. However, among others Bienstock and Royne (2007), Brossard (1998), and Deeter-Schmelza and Kennedy (2002) noted that personal information sources are highlighted within industrial buyer's information search process, and thus trade shows and exhibitions could be an effective marketing communication instrument, if executed properly. Trade shows are probably not the best places for selling, but they have some other advantages. Exhibitions are for example a great situation to develop closer relationships with existing customers, establish new relationships with potential customers, generate new contacts with other actors, form wider view on markets and competitors, or improve company's reputation and image. Hence, trade shows' outcomes should be evaluated rather in the long run than in short term.

Personal selling for one is the most used and the most effective instrument within Finnish industrial companies' marketing communication, which is in the line with earlier literature (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 464-480, 543-549; Deeter-Schmelza & Kennedy 2002; Huntera et al. 2004; Brossard 1998). However, personal selling is also the most individual instrument, which is commonly least integrated with other marketing communication instruments. Also De Pelsmacker et al. (2007, 464-480) noticed this same disadvantage of personal selling. In addition, Finnish industrial companies' salespersons have not fully adopted new requirements of personal selling - such as customer-orientation, relationship building, customer support, and consultancy instead of direct purpose for transaction (Angihotri et al. 2009). In these days, salespersons typically end up seeking solutions for customer's needs, in which case salesperson's problem-solving capabilities, customer-orientation, and interpersonal relationships are emphasised (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 464-480). Thus, the traditional product selling is turned into solution selling, and it is common to talk about a consultative sale nowadays. Salesperson has also a great influence on customer's willingness to create and develop a relationship with supplier (Palmatier et al. 2008). According to Palmatier et al. (2008), customer's relationship orientation is partly depended on exchange-specific factors on which salesperson has a great influence. Thus, salesperson's

capabilities to create confidence and understand customers become increasingly important matter in order to establish favourable customer relationships.

E-communication belongs into group of those marketing communication instruments that are commonly utilised among Finnish industrial companies. In the line with Day and Bens' (2005) study, companies commonly thrust that e-communication offers huge opportunity for their marketing communication in the future. Finnish companies are also widely interested to invest more in e-communication and develop their practices within it. However, successful utilisation and development of e-communication asks lot of open-mindedness, innovativeness, and courage from marketer (De Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 489-524), and this something that seems to lack from Finnish industrial companies at the moment. On the other hand, e-communication is not capable to replace other marketing communication instrument, but it could be an effective instrument to support others (Huntera et al. 2004). One of the most powerful implications of e-communication is its capability to share information without limits of time or geographical distance (Huntera et al. 2004). According to Deeter-Schmelza and Kennedy (2002), industrial buyers appreciate internet high, when they gather competing and complementary information for a support of their decision-making. This means that product specifications and supplier details are the main information that industrial buyers are searching for on the internet. According to Brossard (1998), this is the first stage of information search process, in which impersonal information sources are emphasised. Later on during the purchase process, the importance of personal information sources rise over impersonal information sources (Brossard 1998). On this account, Finnish industrial companies should ensure that there is all the necessary information on their web pages, and potential buyers and customers have an easy access to that information. As Smith and Bush (2002), and Bienstock and Royne (2007) stated within their studies, accessibility of information affects the amount of risk that buyers perceive within purchase process. Another worth of considering objective for Finnish industrial companies could be to develop e-communication practices more individual and personal from customers' point of view. In addition to these, e-communication could be exploited to improve companies' customer relationship management and internal communication.

In general, it could be said that e-communication is at the moment the most popular instrument of communication, and it is easy to presume that this trend will go from strength to strength in the near future. However, e-communication it is not a solution for existing problems or weaknesses of marketing communication. In order to utilise its opportunities, company's other requirements for communication – such as strategy, ways of action, culture, and

attitude – need to be competent. E-communication is not a strategy, but it need to be a natural and solid part of it. First of all, attitudes at management level need to support and enable proper communication in order that favourable mindset would transfer to whole organisation. Only after that, e-communication actions are able to attach successfully to other forms of communication.

Advertising for one is not so widely utilised instrument among Finnish industrial companies, but it is neither totally ignored. When advertising is used within companies' marketing communication, it commonly concentrates on product details and technical facts, which is not an effective way to use advertising in industrial markets, according to Jensen and Jepsen (2007). Instead of this, advertising should be focused more on brands and images, and to create favourable attitudes in the minds of customers (Jensen & Jepsen 2007). On the other hand, advertising is typically an impersonal information source, whose role is not significant for industrial buyers dealing with complex products and complicated purchase processes (Brossard 1998). However, Brossard (1998) accentuates that this is not a reason for industrial marketers to abandon advertising. On the contrary, they should use advertising to strengthen company's image and reputation, and to get potential customer aware of company and its products (Brossard 1998). According to Rauyruen and Miller (2007), b-to-b companies should strive to create a good image and to be likable in the eyes of their customers in order to encourage customer loyalty. This point of view speaks on behalf of the importance of brands and brand management, in which case brand and company advertising becomes important also for Finnish industrial companies.

Direct marketing is neither considered an effective marketing communication instrument in Finnish industrial companies. However, companies could exploit it much more widely. Especially, utilisation of databases, individual customer information, measurement, and follow-up practices could be improved to make direct marketing more worthwhile. Firstly, companies should strive to make their direct marketing actions more personal, because it makes communication more effective (Brossard 1998). Secondly, Deeter-Schmelza and Kennedy (2002) stated that direct-mail brochures are an effective way to execute direct marketing, whereas direct-mail promotion materials are not. This is congruent with the finding that Finnish industrial companies' customer magazines and newsletters are an excellent means of marketing communication, but other direct marketing actions are not considered useful.

According to earlier literature, sales promotion is not usually considered an effective instrument of marketing communication in industrial markets (De

Pelsmacker et al. 2007, 354-377, 546). However, Finnish industrial companies have some successful experiences from usage of sales promotion – such as site visits or demonstration factories. This is in line with Brossard's (1998) finding that site visits are an effective means of marketing communication for industrial marketers. Advantages of this kind of marketing communication are buyer's opportunity to get concretely acquainted with supplier's offering and to establish personal relationship with seller's personnel (Brossard 1998). Nevertheless, sales promotion is not commonly utilised within Finnish industrial companies' marketing communication, although companies have found its advantages. Thus, more investments in this kind of sales promotion activities should be considered in the future.

Customer references are commonly only little utilised marketing communication instrument in Finnish industrial companies, although companies would have favourable reference stories to tell. However, references would be especial useful in industrial markets, where products are complex, purchase processes are complicated, and trustworthy relationship between customer and supplier are even more important. The use of references does not ask large investment, it is effective and reliable way to prove company's know-how to potential customers. Furthermore, customers usually appreciate references and rely on them, because it is not merely marketers' origin information. According to Brossard (1998), industrial customers rely on third parties and non-commercial information sources, if they are personal. Impersonal and non-commercial information sources are not considered important (Brossard 1998). Correspondingly, Deeter-Schmelza and Kennedy (2002), and Huntera et al. (2004) found references a useful information source for industrial buyers. In addition to references, Deeter-Schmelza and Kennedy (2002) mentioned word of mouth (WOM) communication an important information source for industrial buyers. On the other hand, Finnish industrial companies are rather worried about negative WOM and its influences. Thus, the only way to prevent the spreading of negative WOM is to intensify positive WOM. Therefore, Finnish industrial companies need to manage all their customer contacts and customer relationships as well as possible. Every failure, neglect, or inconsistency will intensify the potential of negative WOM, which is not able to take back. In contrast, supplier's reliability and consistence as well as customer's good experiences, qualify customer service, understanding of customer, and competent ways of action set the scene for the spreading of positive WOM. Moreover, reference stories and WOM are affecting general reputation and image of company, and thus they affect also decisions of external evaluator – such as outside consultants. According to Brossard's (1998), outside consultants is an information source, which has a significant

importance for industrial buyers, especially, when it comes to a complex purchase process.

If compared marketing communication instruments that Finnish industrial companies use to utilise within their marketing communication with Brossard's (1998) model of five factors, it seems that used instruments are mostly personal. According to Brossard (1998), personal information sources are more effective than impersonal information sources, from which perspective companies have succeeded to select right kind of instruments. Another effective type of information sources for industrial buyers are internal sources and third party actor – such as outside consultant, competitor, or partner (Brossard 1998). From this perspective, used instruments do not fulfil buyer's need for information. Some possible methods to get this matter improved could be better use of references, more diverse utilisation of trade shows, proactive networking with different players in the field of companies' business, and generally more customer-oriented way of doing business.

Another way to estimate Finnish industrial companies' usage of marketing communication instruments is to examine it in the light of Andersen (2001), and Garber and Dotson's (2002) models of customer relationships. Comparison with these two models points out that Finnish industrial companies' marketing communication instruments are generally focused on later stages or phases of customer relationships, whereas earlier stages or phases have neglected. Public relations seem to be the only marketing communication instrument from earlier phases of customer relationships. However, even if companies' marketing communication instruments are commonly emphasised into later phases of customer relationships, they lack of truly bidirectional communication with their customers and customer-oriented approach, which are essential elements for later phases of customer relationship in Andersen's (2001) model.

How marketing communication and its instruments are integrated according to the stages of IMC (Shultz and Kitchen 2000, cited by Kitchen et al. 2004a)?

If Finnish industrial companies were situated into Kitchen's (2004) model about stages of IMC, most companies would be between the first and second stages. Companies have typically tried to unify their marketing communication actions, which is characteristic for the first stage. However, companies have usually integrated only their primary marketing communication instruments, which strive to communicate a uniform message, or in other words speak with one voice, whereas secondary instruments are not integrated with other marketing communication. Furthermore, different actors inside the companies

communicate from time to time inconsistently, if they are compared with each other.

The requirement to second stage of Kitchen's (2004) model is customer-orientation. Positively, case companies have noticed the importance of customer-oriented way of action, but the other side is that they are not operating that way at the moment. Sometimes companies have also difficulties to understand needs of their customers, which is at least partly a consequence of insufficient communication with customers. Secondly, it is result of lacking methods, attitudes, and traditions. That is, companies are not willing to understand their customers and they strive to operate from their own bases. Actually, this finding is quite similar to the finding mentioned in StratMark research (StratMark 2008) and Kauppalehti (Öhrnberg 2010), which stated that Finnish companies perceive customers as a burden.

Case companies do not either exploit information technology within their marketing to the extent that they could. For example, CRM-systems are not commonly implemented properly into companies operations, which also makes customer understanding more difficult. The implementation of information technology to support marketing communication is the third stage of IMC development (Kitchen 2004).

At the final stage of Kitchen's (2004) IMC development process, companies have taken marketing as a strategic part of their business and integrated different functions a coherent entity. Clearly, case companies still have things to do with these matters until they will reach the fourth stage of IMC. Interestingly, StratMark research group made similar findings as well. They mentioned co-operation between different functions and actors inside the company as a common problem for Finnish companies (StratMark 2008).

5.2 Model for development process toward integrated marketing communication

Based on this study and its findings it is possible to make some general proposals for Finnish industrial companies' marketing communication. These proposals are divided into nine steps, which constitute a detailed development process toward integrated marketing communication. The process is more specific by its steps than Shultz and Kitchen's (2000) model of stages in IMC development process, which more likely tried to illustrate, in which stage companies are on the road to integrated marketing communication. However, the aim of the model created herein is to act as a rough guideline for Finnish industrial companies toward integrated marketing communication. The model

form a logical and sequential development process starting from the most essential matters. However, in a real world steps are not able to take narrowly in sequence but the process would be more likely a group of simultaneous target for development. The whole development process is a long-term continuum without literal end. The flow of development process is illustrated in FIGURE 16.

At the beginning of development process, the most important task, and probably the hardest one as well, is to improve marketing status within Finnish industrial companies' personnel. This is a fundamental matter for the whole development of marketing, because, if marketing status remains unfavourable, it is not likely to get other fields of marketing improved either. Thus, change should start from companies' top management that embeds desired attitudes into organisation, creates needed requirements, and enables the change. Before this, it is not able to get other members of personnel to change their ways of action and thinking, which for one is the path for improved status of marketing.

Next, companies have to ensure that marketing has enough resources available in order that all responsibilities of marketing are able to take. This includes among others actions for strategy creation, long-term planning, development, innovation, monitoring etc. Thus, companies are finally capable to take marketing as a part of their strategic management and decision-making process. The following step would be the downright strategic planning and design. This should be done with a realistic manner and with a way that strategies and more detailed plans could be implemented into practice. Strategies and plans should be also comprehensive and clear enough, so that it is clear for whole organisation what are the objectives, policies, ways of action, and responsibilities in the company in question.

After created designs are implemented into the practice with managements' support, it is time to ensure that strategies and plans are truly followed, and all different parts of company are working for a common goal. To this end, Finnish industrial companies need to take care of internal co-operation and internal communication. Different actors, departments, and functions should collaborate naturally. To be succeeded with this internal communication has a significant role, and this is why companies should create clear policies and practices for communication. Different players need to know what is happening elsewhere in their organisation, they have to also understand the role of other players, and what for something is done. However, the most important factor for successful communication and co-operation is favourable culture. This is a huge mental change in employees' way of thinking and it will not happen in short period of time. The culture develops little by little and level of integration grows at the same time.

When companies have succeeded to strengthen, rationalise, and integrate their action inside the company, they can truly focus on their customers. Firstly, companies have to adopt customer-oriented approach in their business, and breathe it into whole organisation. In other words, every employee of company needs to act as marketer, which includes the understanding of customer, its business, and needs. Also learning to know the customers take time, but it will advance substantially, if company and its employees have adopted a customer-centric approach. At the same time, companies should develop their functions for customer relationship management, which also makes the adoption of customer-orientated approach easier for whole organisation.

Finally, when companies have got their internal ways of action, operational models, policies, and practices in favourable order, they can move on to integrate their external communication, such as marketing communication and customer communication. The foundation of this step is the understanding of customers as individuals, which was gained earlier, and now the idea is just to exploit this knowledge within company's communication. Thus, communication mix, marketing communication instruments, customer service, and ways of actions are created on the grounds of customer's characteristics. Naturally, the aim is still to operate with a customer-centric manner, serve customers as good as possible, and maintain customer relationships, but at the same time, it is also able to strengthen companies' investments on sales. Increased sale is partly able to gain from existing customers, but also opportunities to acquire new customers will be better at this point, when the quality of existing customers relationships have increased.

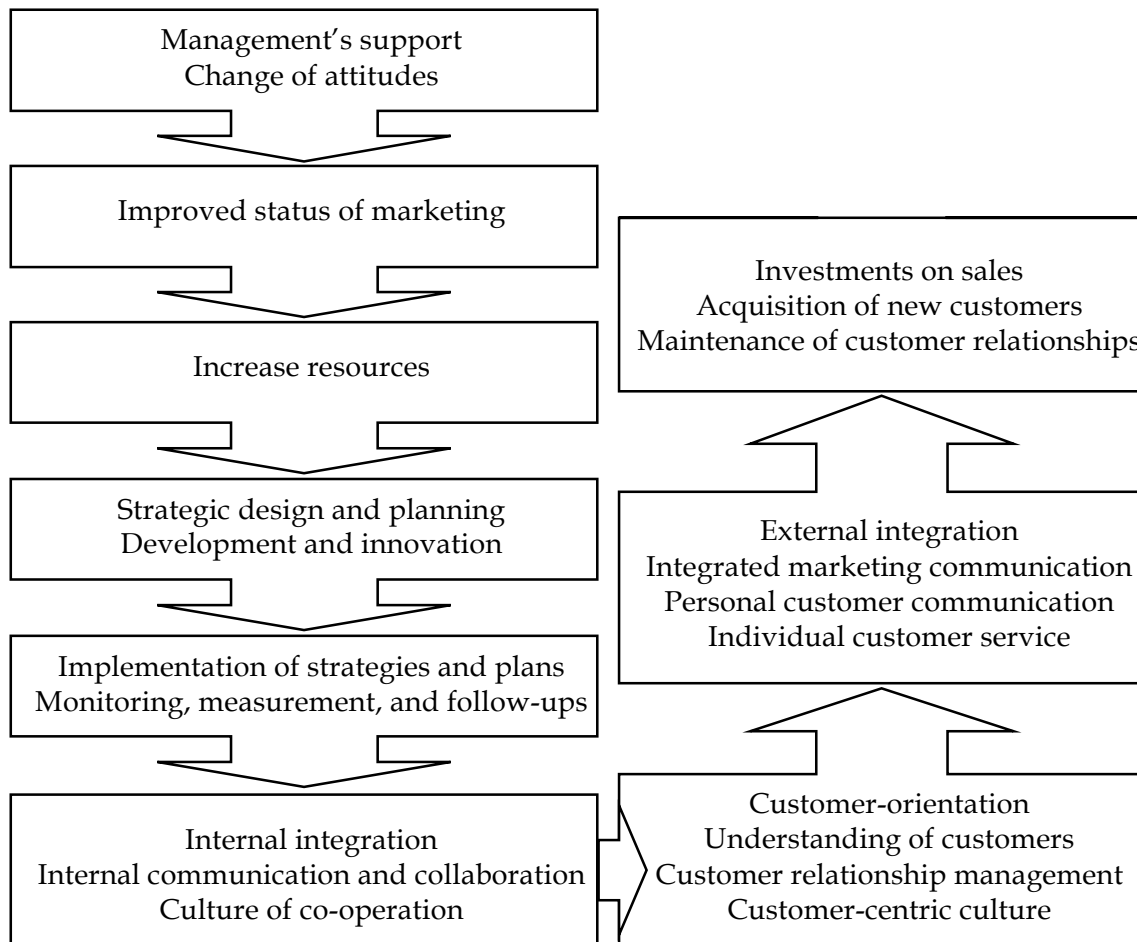


FIGURE 16 Development process toward integrated marketing communication

5.3 Managerial implications

On the grounds of this study's findings, it is able to suggest some implications for Finnish industrial companies. The main finding of the study is that marketing communication in Finnish industrial companies is not properly integrated, internal communication is not working sufficiently, and marketing's status is rather weak in general. In practice, this affects companies' marketing communications, which is not always clear and consistent. In other words, companies are not speaking with one voice.

This study suggests that improvements for better marketing communication start with companies' management, who should give its support for marketing. This idea is consistent with a conception presented by Kliatchko (2008). Management's support should include both attitudinal change and concrete increase in marketing resources. Attitudinal change is the most important challenge for companies' management, when they try to create an 'everyone is marketer' -attitude into their company. First of all this requires

that managers set an example. This is in line with StratMark-research group, who stated that major matter that slows down Finnish companies marketing is unfavourable attitudes toward marketing, and these attitudes are mainly origin from companies' management (StratMark 2008). In addition, Swain (2004) noticed that IMC is in a top managements function. After this, managers need to succeed to create a positive culture for co-operation and communication inside the company. Internal communication and marketing of marketing are essential requirements for integrated marketing communication (Kliatchko 2008). This requires that different actors inside the company are aware of each other, understand the meaning of others, and are willing to work for a common goal. In addition, marketing strategies, plans, and objectives need to be expressed clearly, they need to be known and understood, and personnel need to be committed to them. However, after all, in order that this development of marketing could be possible, companies have to invest more in their marketing and take it a serious part of their business strategy.

5.4 Evaluation of study's quality

The subject of this study, marketing communication in Finnish industrial companies, is quite wide and complex. In order to study this subject comprehensively and widely, qualitative research approach was selected with case study research strategy. In addition, real actors in the field of studied phenomenon are naturally the best information source for this kind of study. Secondly, the aim of this study was also to be pragmatic and to offer real proposals for development to case companies, and this is why action-oriented research method was selected.

Evaluation of research quality differs slightly between quantitative and qualitative researches (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009 226-227; Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 209). Quantitative studies are usually much more straightforward processes than qualitative studies, research methods are more tightly defined, and quantitative researches have certain universal standards and general methods to measure its quality (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 226; Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 209). Thus, it is much easier to evaluate and report the quality of quantitative researches than qualitative research.

In addition, qualitative research lacks also ready-made, standardised, and universal analysis methods, in which case researcher has to evaluate the quality of research all the time during the research process. Thus, evaluation process takes commonly place along the study and it is also reviewed throughout

through whole research report, whereas quantitative studies' evaluation is more discrete section (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 209).

According to Yin (1986, 35-36), the quality of research could be evaluated through four tests, which are *construct validity*, *internal validity*, *external validity*, and *reliability*. Yin (1986, 36) argues that this is much more complex way to evaluate the quality of study than traditional review of *validity* and *reliability*.

Construct validity means that how well study's operational measures fit into studied concepts (Yin 1986, 36). According to Yin (1986, 37-38), construct validity could be strengthened among others by using multiple sources of data and establishing chain of conclusions. Both of these means are used within this study. Internal validity for one relates to establishment of causal relationships (Yin 1986, 36), which it is not relevant for this study, as it is not trying to discover statistical or causal measures. External validity considers the scale of group to which study's findings could be generalised, which is typically seen a problem with case studies (Yin 1986, 36-39). This study's research strategy is a multiple case study, which offers a bit better foundation for generalisation than single case study, but either multiple case studies cannot reach statistical generalisation (Yin 1986, 38-39). However, the main objective within qualitative studies is to explain researched phenomenon locally, so that made conclusions fit into empirical data in question (Alasuutari 1994, 215). Actually, Alasuutari (1994, 222) states that the whole term of generalisation is irrelevant for qualitative researches, because it relates to quantitative surveys. Instead of generalisation, he states that a relevant matter would be what study could tell about matters outside study's own data (Alasuutari 1994, 222). Thus, case studies do not base on statistical but analytical generalisation, which means that they try to generalise a particular set of results to some broader theory (Yin 1986, 39). This is also the aim of this study, and it tries to increase the understanding on marketing communication in Finnish industrial companies, but it does not attempt to describe marketing communication in all Finnish industrial companies. The final step to measure the quality of research is reliability, which demonstrates if study is reproducible and it could be repeated with same results. The main means to increase case studies' reliability is to document research process as exactly as possible. Documentation for one could be divided into two parts case study protocol and case study database. Case study database of this study includes among others all raw materials from each workshop (enquiry, interview, and observation data; group assignments and presentations; workshop memos and timetables; case companies' presentations; etc.) as well as categorised, classified, and analysed empirical data. In addition, it is important for study's reliability that researcher reports carefully how the study was executed. This is tried to do within this study report.

However, there are some noteworthy matters related to the study's quality, which should take into account in connection with this study. First of all, data gathering and analysis method are deeply based on researcher's subjective interpretations. Empirical data of the study is comprised of researcher's observations, what he has considered relevant, and how he has understood the situation. Similarly, analysis process the study is highly depended on researcher's conclusions, interpretations, and reasoning. On the other hand, the influence of subjectivity is tried to reduce with multiple data gathering methods (observation, enquiry, and interview) as well as several and varying observers during the separate data gathering situations. This way influence of single researcher has become smaller from data's point of view. Subjectivity's influence within analysis process for one is aimed to lessen by use of qualitative data analysing software (QSR N'Vivo 8) and narrowly reported analysis process. Naturally, these actions do not eliminate the whole problem of subjectivity, but possible they have limited its role smaller and made subjective opinions clearer for reader of the study. Secondly, subjectivity is also a fundamental element of qualitative research and action-oriented research, which cannot be avoided, and this is why its influences need to make clear.

Another limitation of study's data gathering process is the source of information. This study bases completely on case companies' employees as an information source. On the other hand they are experts in the field of studied subject and they know it best, but at the same time it need to be noted that their opinions could be somehow distorted. This relates especially to evaluation of customer relationship, which is above all customer related matter, and thus customers' opinions should be noted as well, in order to get unbiased view on this matter. The role of researcher and his capability to filter employees' distorted opinions is emphasised in order to minimise the influence of this limitation. This is why the path of reasoning is strived to describe as carefully as possible.

There are also possible limitations related to data gathering situation of this study. Because data gathering took place during workshops, where group of companies' employees were present, it is possible that participants have shaped their opinions, either conscious or unconsciously, to some direction because of other persons in place. Because of this, the influence of group pressure was tried to reduce by creating an open and informal situation. Secondly, enquiry was also used in data gathering, when participants were divided into smaller groups. However, there still is the possibility of biased data because of group pressure.

Other limitation of the study relates to study design, such as research plan, research problems, research questions, and progress of research. It is

characteristic for qualitative research approach and action-oriented research method that these matter change and becomes clearer during the progress of research process, but it includes also a possible risk for the study. Researcher has to have the main direction of research clear in his mind, even if minor details would be blurred. Otherwise, researcher could lose his focus, or concentrate irrelevant issues. The research design of this study has changed during the process, but the main idea – describing marketing communication in Finnish industrial companies – has remained unchanged. However, modifications within the research process have probably affected relevance of empirical data. This means that some essential information has possibly remains undetected, because of adjustments in research design after the execution of workshops, which were the main situations to gather data for this study. For example, more detailed information about the use of different marketing communication instruments could be gained.

If study's contribution is evaluated from the viewpoint of action-oriented research's objectives, it could be said that more interaction between researcher and case companies would be needed. Now, the main communication took place during the workshops, in which case the greatest benefits of action-oriented research were not reached. Active interaction during the research process would be likely to offer new perspectives and additional information about case companies. At the same time, it would have linked companies tighter with the study and generated useful information for companies' use already in the course of process.

Results of this study are not generalisable in a large scale to cover all Finnish industrial companies but they rather describe marketing communication exactly in the case companies. Results could give some guidelines to consider Finnish companies' marketing communication in general, but straightforward conclusion cannot be made on the ground of this study. Thus, biggest contribution of this study is deepened understanding about Finnish industrial companies' marketing communication, its opportunities, prerequisites, difficulties, and strengths. This study also created a research model of development process toward integrated marketing communication, which bases on earlier literature and findings of this study. In addition, study partly confirmed earlier conception about Finnish companies' marketing, but on the other hand it also brought a slightly new perspective on that phenomenon.

5.5 Further research

As one result from this study is a research model of development process toward integrated marketing communication. This model includes nine steps to improve marketing practices in a long-term, but it is still rather rough, and it is needed more research on this model before it could be implemented into practice.

Another significant target for future's research could be the role of companies' top management in relation to marketing status. According to this study, top management's influence seemed to be remarkable, but this was not able to confirm within this study. In addition, issues of internal integration should be considered more precisely. Especially, roots of problems related to internal integration, communication, and co-operation found within this study, and how these problems could be avoided, would be an interesting subject to study.

Findings of this study seemed to prove also that Finnish industrial companies have clear deficiencies within their customer relationships, customer communication, and customer relationship management. In addition, companies seem to have problems to understand their customers' needs, expectations, and field of businesses. These issues are extremely important to examine more literature within the near future.

REFERENCES

- Agnihotri, R., Rapp, A., and Trainor, K. 2009. Understanding the role of information communication in the buyer-seller exchange process: antecedents and outcomes. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing* 24 (7), 474-486.
- Alasuutari, P. 1994. *Laadullinen tutkimus*. Jyväskylä: Vastapaino.
- American Marketing Association. 2008. Dictionary. http://www.marketingpower.com/_layouts/Dictionary.aspx?dLetter=I 11.11.2008.
- Andersen, P. 2001. Relationship development and marketing communication: an integrative model. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing* 16 (3), 167-182.
- Bienstock, C., and Royne, M. 2007. The differential value of information in industrial purchasing decisions - Applying an economics of information framework. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management* 37 (5), 389-408.
- Boeije, H. 2010. *Analysis in qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Brossard, H. 1998. Information sources used by an organization during a complex decision process - An Exploratory Study. *Industrial Marketing Management* 27, 41-50.
- Bryman, A., and Bell, E. 2003. *Business research methods*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Cornelissen, J., and Lock, A., 2000. Theoretical concept or management fashion? Examining the significance of IMC. *Journal of Advertising Research* 40 (5), 7-15.
- Cornelissen, J. 2001. Integrated marketing communication and the language of marketing development. *International Journal of Advertising* 20, 483-498.
- Cornelissen, J. 2004. *Corporate communication - Theory and practice*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Costello, P. 2003. *Action research*. London: Continuum.
- Coviello, N., and Brodie, R. 2001. Contemporary marketing practices of consumer and business-to-business firms - how different are they. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing* 16, 382-400.
- Day, G., and Bens, K. 2005. Capitalizing on the internet opportunity. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing* 20 (4/5), 160-168.
- De Pelsmacker, P., Geuens, M., and Van den Bergh, J. 2007. *Marketing Communications. A European Perspective* 3rd ed. Prentice Hall: Financial Times.
- Deeter-Schmelza, D., and Kennedy, K. 2002. An exploratory study of the Internet as an industrial communication tool. Examining buyers' perceptions. *Industrial Marketing Management* 31, 145-154.
- Dubois, A., and Gadde, L. 2002. Systematic combining: an abductive approach to case research. *Journal of Business Research* 55, 553- 560.
- Duncan, T., and Moriarty, S. 1998. A Communication-based Marketing Model for Managing Relationships. *Journal of Marketing* 62, 1-13.
- Eagle, L., Kitchen, P., and Bulmer, S. 2007. Insights into interpreting integrated marketing communications - A two-nation qualitative comparison. *European Journal of Marketing* 41 (7/8), 956-970.
- Eagle, L., and Kitchen, P. 2000. IMC, brand communications, and corporate cultures. Client/Advertising agency co-ordination and cohesion. *European Journal of Marketing* 34 (5/6), 667-686.
- Eskola, J., and Suoranta, J. 1998. *Johdatus laadulliseen tutkimukseen*. Jyväskylä: Vastapaino.
- Garber L., and Dotson, M. 2002. A method for the selection of appropriate business-to-business integrated marketing communications mixes. *Journal of Marketing Communications* 8 (1), 1-17.
- Gould, S. 2004. IMC as theory and as a poststructural set of practices and discourses: A continuously evolving paradigm shift. *Journal of Advertising Research* 44 (1), 66-70.
- Gummesson, E. 1988. *Qualitative methods in management research*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

- Hall, L., and Wickman, M. 2008. Organising IMC roles and functions in the business-to-business network environment. *Journal of Marketing Communications* 14 (3), 193-206.
- Hansen, K. 2004. Measuring performance at trade shows Scale development and validation. *Journal of Business Research* 57, 1-13.
- Hirsjärvi, S., Remes, P., and Sajavaara, P. 2009. Tutki ja kirjoita. Keuruu: Otavan Kirjapaino Oy.
- Holm, O. 2006. Integrated marketing communication: from tactics to strategy. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 11 (1), 23-33.
- Huntera, L., Kasouf, C., Celuchc, K., and Curryd, K. 2004. A classification of business-to-business buying decisions: Risk importance and probability as a framework for e-business benefits. *Industrial Marketing Management* 33, 145- 154.
- Jaakkola, M. 2006. Strategic Marketing and its effect on business performance: moderating effect of country-specific factors. Helsinki University of Technology. Department of Industrial Engineering and Management. Institute of Strategy and International Business. Master's thesis.
- Jensen, M., and Jepsen, A. 2007. Low attention advertising processing in B2B markets. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing* 22 (5), 342-348.
- Jones, E., Brown, S., Zoltners, A., and Weitz, B. 2005. The changing environment of selling and sales management. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management* 25 (2), 105-111.
- Journal of Integrated Marketing Communication. 2008. IMC definition. <http://jimc.medill.northwestern.edu/JIMCWebsite/site.htm> 11.11.2008.
- Kitchen, P., Brignell, J., Li, T., and Jones, G. 2004a. The Emergence of IMC: A Theoretical Perspective. *Journal of Advertising Research* 44 (1), 12.
- Kitchen, P., Schultz, D., Kim, I., Han, D., and Li, T. 2004b. Will agencies ever "get"(or understand) IMC? *European Journal of Marketing* 38 (11/12), 1417-1436.
- Kitchen, P., and Schultz, D. 1999. A Multi-Country Comparison of the Drive for IMC. *Journal of Advertising Research* 39 (1), 21-38.
- Kliatchko, J. 2005. Towards a new definition of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC). *International Journal of Advertising* 24 (1), 7-34.
- Kliatchko, J. 2008. Revisiting the IMC construct - A revised definition and four pillars. *International Journal of Advertising* 27 (1), 133-160.
- Long, M., Tellefsen, T., and Lichtenthal, J. 2007. Internet integration into the industrial selling process: A step-by-step approach. *Industrial Marketing Management* 36, 676-689.

- Madhavaram, S., Badrinarayanan, V., and McDonald, R. 2005. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Brand Identity as Critical Components of Brand Equity Strategy. *Journal of Advertising* 34 (4), 69-80.
- Metsämuuronen, J. 2001. *Laadullisen tutkimuksen perusteet*. Helsinki: International Methelp.
- Miles, M., and Huberman A. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis* (2nd ed.). The Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Morgan, N., Clark, B., and Gooner, R. 2002. Marketing productivity, marketing audits, and systems for marketing performance assessment – Integrating multiple perspectives. *Journal of Business Research* 55, 363– 375.
- Palmatier, R., Scheer, L., Evans, K., and Arnold, T. 2008. Achieving relationship marketing effectiveness in business-to-business exchanges. *Journal of Academic Marketing Science* 36, 174-190.
- Pickton, D., and Broderick, A. 2004. *Integrated Marketing Communications* 2 ed. Prentice Hall: Financial Times.
- Rauyrueen, P., and Miller, K. 2007. Relationship quality as a predictor of B2B customer loyalty. *Journal of Business Research* 60, 21-31.
- Reed, G., Story, V., and Saker, J. 2004. Business-to-business marketing. What is important to the practitioner? *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* 22 (5), 501-510.
- Schultz, D., and Kitchen, P. 2000. A response to "theoretical concept or management fashion?" *Journal of Advertising Research* 40 (5), 17-21.
- Schultz, D. 2004. IMC receives more appropriate definition. *Marketing News* 38 (15), 8-9.
- Sheth, J., and Sharma, A. 2006. The surpluses and shortages in business-to-business marketing theory and research. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing* 21 (7), 422-427.
- Smith, R., and Bush, A. 2002. Using the incomplete information framework to develop service provider communication guidelines. *Journal of Service Marketing* 16 (6), 535-552.
- Stammerjohan, C., Wood, C., Chang, Y., and Thorson, E. 2005. An empirical investigation of the interaction between publicity, advertising, and previous brand attitude and knowledge. *The Journal of Advertising* 34 (4), 55-67.
- StratMark. 2008. *Markkinoinnin tila 2008 – Kyselytutkimuksen tuloksia*. Report of StratMark –research group. www.stratmark.fi/mt08/MT08-raportti_final.pdf 20.12.2009.
- Stringer, E. 1999. *Action research* Second edition. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

- Swain, W. 2004. Perceptions of IMC after a decade of development: Who's at the wheel, and how can we measure success? *Journal of Advertising Research* 44 (1), 46-65.
- Tuomi, J., and Sarajärvi, A. 2009. *Laadullinen tutkimus ja sisältöanalyysi*. Jyväskylä: Gummerus Kirjapaino Oy.
- Weilbacher, W. 2001. Point of view: Does advertising cause a "hierarchy of effects"? *Journal of Advertising Research* 41 (6), 19-26.
- Vuokko, P. 2003. *Markkinointiviestintä*. Helsinki: WSOY.
- Yin, R.K. 1986. *Case study research Design and methods*. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications.
- YLE. 2009. Surkea markkinointi kaataa suomalaisyrityksiä. http://yle.fi/uutiset/talous_ja_politiikka/2009/12/surkea_markkinointi_kaataa_suomalaisyrityksia_1243496.html 12.1.2010.
- Öhrnberg, P. 2010. Myynti on joukkuelaji. *Kauppalehti* 3.2.2010. <http://www.kauppalehti.fi/5/i/talous/uutiset/plehti/juttu.jsp?direct=true&oid=2010/02/03/3632447> 14.3.2010.