

PHILIP MORRIS INTERNATIONAL



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1.0 Introduction

According to Kotler et al (2003), marketing is a mechanism by which, by exchanging products and values, individuals and groups get what they want. Marketing management is a key role in a business, and the role of the marketing manager is related to the success of a company. In a world full of competition and professional marketing manager is not easy to maintain or to grow a company.

The purpose of this report is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of PMI marketing and to find development opportunities.

Philip Morris International (PMI) is a multinational world's largest cigarette and tobacco-producing company. PMI is an independently owned company and its products travel around the world in about more than 180 countries.

The International sales of PMI are consistently increasing. The most famous and more purchased product is Marlboro. Also, they produce cigars and cigarettes and some smokeless goods like extinguishes, chewing tobacco, IQOS, etc.

2. 0 Communication

According to [Thompkins \(1987\)](#), Communication is the most important tool within an organisation. Effective communication can increase the business rate in a single night. The customer has many choices to select and purchase and just effective communication with the customer can assure a good, stable and loyal relation between company and customers.

(Narula, 2006) mentions that communication can take many forms and it all depends on the number of participants in communication, the objectives of these parties, the channels and strategies used.

According to Dubrin (2011), communication is the most important resource for tracking organizational policy.

Today companies have many resources to increase their customer satisfaction through communication. The resources of communication for companies are social media, electronic media, print media, public surveys, placing hoardings in multiple cities to promote their brands, etc, every query company post on all of these resources to answer and attract its customers, it is efficient utilization of Technology in business. The biggest challenge of effective communication is faced by the company, is the face to face communication with the customer, especially for PMI. So, it is important to train all of the company's employees about how to deal with the customer on call and by direct interaction, the loophole in customer handling

service can put the industry at a huge risk of losing credibility of a customer over the brand/company. Unfortunately, due to law restrictions, PMI doesn't have so many ways of communicating with their customers, but their message is heard by anyone interested.

2.1 Communication Model

A communication model can be associated with a visual image of the elements involved in the communication process.

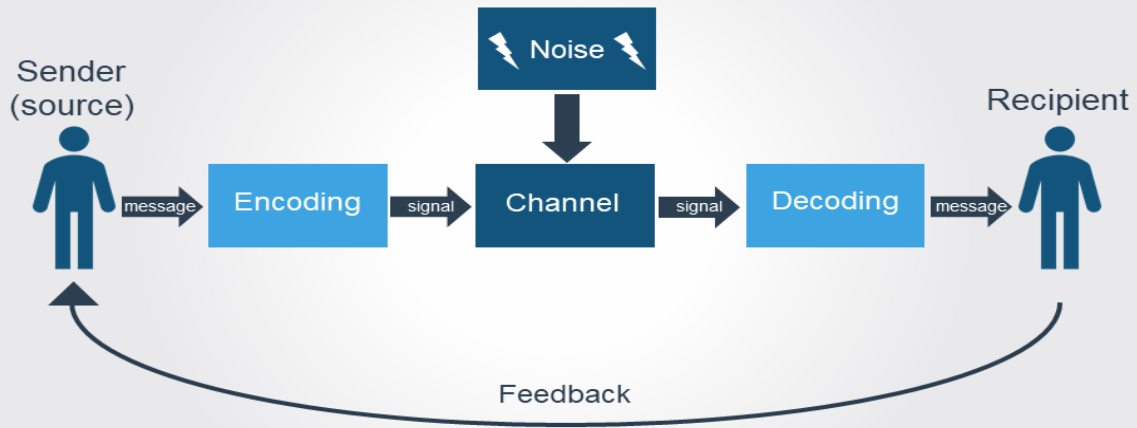
Maslow (1970) mentions that communication skills are indispensable to meet personal needs. That is why, there are at list 5 models of communications, proposed by Aristotle, Berlo, Shannon and Weaver, Schramm, Helical.

Thanks to theorists and experts on communication models, generations can understand what an effective communication model means. Nowadays, when communication is of major importance, "Global Village" (Marshall McLuhan), companies, including PMI, must focus as much as possible on the model of communication they have with customers. Given the fact that the digital world has taken on a special scale, the communication model has also changed, reducing face-to-face communication and increasing communication-based more on writing or the channels offered by the digital world, because the internet has become the most efficient and profitable method of communication.

The communication model significantly helps to delimit the types of communication and how manipulative variables change efficiency. Communication patterns help simplify communication.

Duhem (1954) asserts that a communication model is meant to reflect real-life information, even if it is sometimes quite difficult for model communication to achieve its intended purpose.

Figure 1 – Communication Model by Shannon and Weaver



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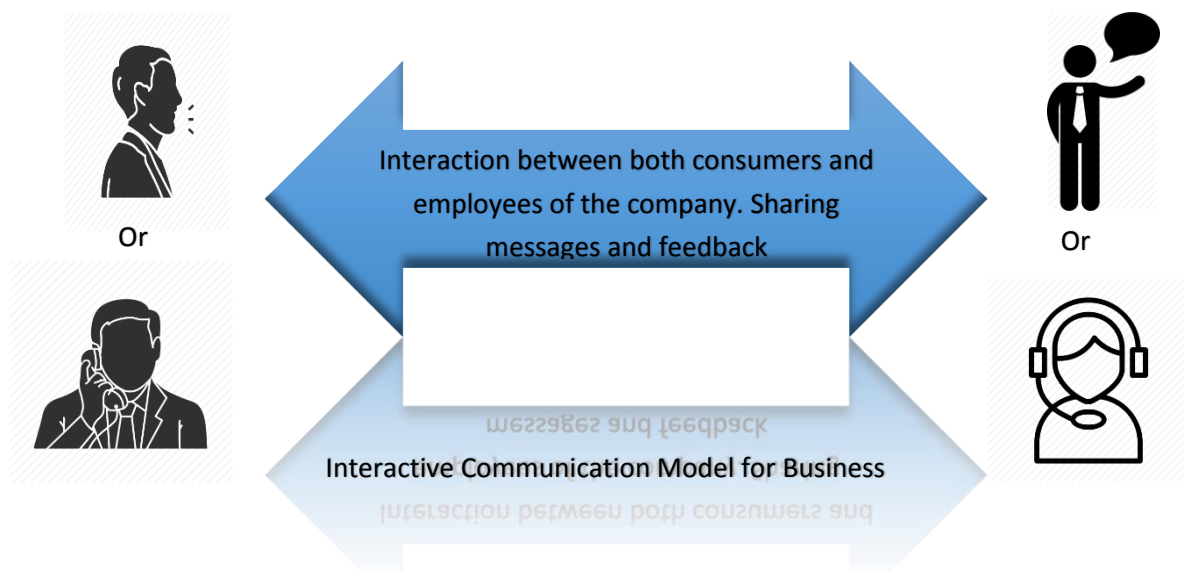
Source: Internet

Shannon & Weaver (1949) in their model, illustrated very well the communication elements, including the most important ones.

The source produces the message, the encoder transmits it through the channel, while the decoder deciphers and interprets it, the destination is the recipient.

The disadvantage of this communication model may be that until the message reaches the final destination, it may change, as the interpretation may be different for each person. For example, a marketing strategy proposed by PMI could be interpreted as simple selling techniques. In this way, even a simple message can have different interpretations until it reaches the final destination, the consumer.

Figure 2.

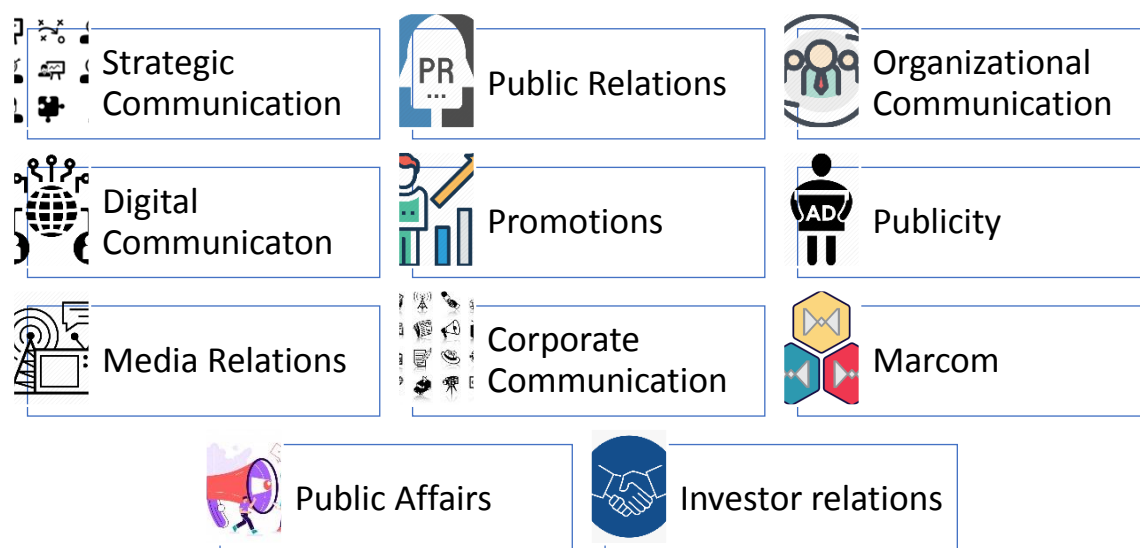


2.0 Integrated Marketing Communication

The term integrated marketing communication (IMC) dates back to the 1990s. The need for this term arose because it was understood that for effective marketing communication it is necessary to coordinate different channels and communication tools. So that the message is transmitted correctly and coherently.

According to Ph.D. Kitchen (2012), Integrated Marketing communication is a transparent and coherent start for an organization to build a lasting and efficient relationship with consumers. Marketing and advertising have now taken the worth as a race among companies, everyone is running behind it to make its revenues grow more, but it also has some tactics to function it effectively. It is an Integration of marketing tools into the business for the sake of increasing revenue rate at the lowest cost (Bagaria, 2019). The concept of Integrated marketing changes the way for marketers and communicators, IMC includes some basic ways to interact with the client given below (Davenport, n.d.)

Figure 3 – Integrated Marketing communications



Source: Internet

Percy (2014) concludes that IMC is the link between messages and any method of communication.

2.1 Strategic Communication

LaBelle (1988) states that strategic Communication is a method by which a company can develop and evaluate customer needs and wants.

Strategic Communication can increase the purchase rate of product among customers. If a company will adopt new ways of communication with the customers, then their product will be more demanded in the market, such as printing precautions on the packing of the product and the ingredients used in the product, this is the way company is communicating with its customers by using a new strategy. The most strategic communication of PMI is through social media platforms. Also, the company communicates its messages on the packaging of the product, as well as participating in various events.

2.2 Promotional Mix

Promotions of the product are important to increase sales. Considering the promotional mix for PMI can be counted as various activities and promotions.

Advertising of PMI can be classified as online and offline promotional advertising. Unfortunately, PMI is not between the companies who can directly advertise their product, but they found many ways of doing it, like events, Instagram bloggers, etc.

Figure 4 – Advertising for Philip Morris International

Online	Offline
- Website of the company - Website of IQOS products - Famous Bloggers and Models - Social Media - Pages on Instagram, Facebook - Own social media channels (FB, Instagram)	- Packaging - Stores of selling points for IQOS - Different Events (Italy Fashion Week) - Posters of IQOS - Activities in point of sales - Direct marketing activities, like launching the IQOS.

Source: Author

2.3 Public Relations (PR)

Zhao (1999) defines public relations as art through which one can analyse the company's trends, predict the consequences, as well as implement the company's action strategies.

According to GGTC, following the analysis of the income statement of the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World (FSFW), which was funded by the PMI, it was found that almost all funding activities of PMI were aimed for PR, even if it should refer to scientific research.

PMI makes considerable investments in PR, as it is a tool for keeping and increasing the brand image and awareness.

Also, PMI uses Direct Marketing by sponsoring different events or participating in them. IQOS can be seen at many public big events, exhibitions and shows.

Also, the contract with many restaurants provides brand awareness. In movies, even is not exactly showed the brand name, it can be seen relaxed or nervous people who smoke. This is favourable to PMI, as the consumer unconsciously, after seeing someone smoking, they will do also.

2.4 Digital Communication

Today's increasing trends of digitalization, Philip Morris International uses this possibility as much as they can, by providing online services such as online customer service, promotional calls to the customers. Also, the company stores the data of the consumer as a record, especially if people buy online.

This is favourable to PMI because of banned advertising, they can't use traditional communication.

2.5 Media Relations

Media has become a catalyst for the reputation of any company, it the most compatible source of publicity of the product. Philip Morris is a well-known name among its competitors it benefits through making pleasant media relations.

2.6 Corporate Communication

It is important to consider all the stakeholders as significant parts of the company, internal and external members/audiences are essential elements to work with, it will build strong unity in and outside of the company.

3.0 Promotional Strategies

Regarding promotional strategies, PMI can be focused more on digital marketing. Even bloggers are not allowed to do marketing for any tobacco companies, indirectly, PMI can use these popular influencers to promote their products. Professional pictures with models pretending to smoke IQOS or a picture from the PMI store can make it more visible.

Sponsoring charity events can help PMI to raise brand awareness. Live videos from such events are favourable to PMI, who can't advertise directly their product. Also, live videos of CEOs of the companies, answering the questions can create a direct connection with a customer or potential customers. They can use the example of Gallant Dill or other famous influencers who became multi-millionaires just using Instagram or Facebook. Also, they could involve influencers specialised in handmade, to organise online workshops of recycling packages and

making some interesting stuff from the packages. Accidentally, all used packages can be all from PMI. Nobody can ban them from doing that. Creating #hashtags can also increase the PMI's awareness. But PMI should be careful to not let a person under 25 promote their product. Delivering smoke-free products in unique or personalised boxes can be an advantage for PMI. They can even make a collaboration with the Packlane company, which created unique packages for HP, Shopify, L'Oreal, etc. Product design and well packing can create an emotional connection with the customer and can distinguish from competitive companies.

Also, they can even make personalised IQOS products, to create the option for customers to have their name on the product or to add specific flavour or colour. Leaving nice or promotional messages in the boxes can also increase the sales of PMI.

Also, PMI can identify keywords to attract the caption, and when someone searches to buy a product online, to stop at the PMI page. Exhibitions of famous photographs that have pictures with smoking or IQOS products can be highly efficient.

Promotional products such as gifts, pens, lighter with the brand name, or by 2 get 1 for free, tote bags, etc. A creative and quality gift will make the consumer happy and want to publish it on social networks. It is like a marketing campaign with less money. But PMI should be careful and to deliver qualitative gifts. Promotional code through referral programs is also a very important tool for increasing brand awareness.

Remarketing is also a good strategy which PMI can use for IQOS or smoking free products. Free trials of PMI smoke-free products, giveaways, should be taken into account. Interactive content like quizzes, checklist, limited offer products, etc can be very useful.

Adherence to all avenues of integration of all marketing communication contributes to the development of PMI, as consumers go through all stages of purchasing the product. Thus, the company's image grows and the consumer PMI relationship is established. In this way, PMI increases its competitive advantage and protects itself from a possible attack from competitors. Even if it seems that the integrated marketing campaign is favourable for PMI, however, it must be taken into account that its efficiency can also be unsuccessful. It all depends on how the message is transmitted. A successful marketing campaign will lead to success for PMI.

4.0 Branding. Brand Equity

The Brand is anything that fulfills and satisfies the need of the customer, it can be in any form, such as a product having a physical body with a shape or service that the doctor provides in the form of consultation (Smithson, 2015).

Brand equity began to be studied in more detail in 1980.

According to Feldwick (1996), Brand equity represents the marketing effects that a product of a reputable company has.

Brand equity means placing value over the product, most famous recognized brands are the assets of any company (Aker, 2013), just like Marlboro is a well-known brand of the PMI company it is just like an asset for the company.

4.1 Keller's Brand Equity Model



Figure 6. Keller's Brand Equity Model – CBBE Model

4.2 Brand identity

Kapferer (2008) mentions that brand identity is the way consumers want to perceive the brand. It is the very first step on which the customer starts from knowing about the brand. A brand must have the ability that customer can easily distinguish it among others, that is why it is at the base of Keller's model.

Brand Identity of PMI has settled years ago, providing a quality product and sponsoring big public events. Nowadays, the brand identity of PMI slightly changed. It is precepted as company who are for smoking free world. Even the messages which can be seen on the PMI website "Unsmoke your mind" or "Deliver a smoke-free future" say about their identity brand.

Because this stage is very important, because is the base, it is favourable for PMI, as they show that they care about their consumers and the environment.

4.3 Brand Meaning

In Keller's model, it can be seen that brand meaning is divided into 2 parts.

4.3.1 Brand Performance

Brand Performance is favourable to PMI as it is a trusted company because they spend a lot of money on delivering the best products to customers, including product features, flavours, new smoke-free products. They also provide very good customer service. Style and design are also a strong factor for PMI as the new product IQOS is designed in a way that attracts people and easy to use. Also, they provide good pricing and offer free trials for 10 days in the UK. Comparing to other smoking products PMI products are more expensive, but is because they provide better quality.

4.3.2 Brand Image

Regarding the image of PMI, it is impossible to not remember the image of the cowboy of Marlboro brand, masculinity, or the red and white memorable colours. Anyway, the brand image of PMI is a more psychological, intangible association. In the consumer's mind, it creates relaxation or for some people, fashion. Because it is a leader in the tobacco industry, almost everyone knows Marlboro or Parliament's name. Brand image is favourable to PMI, but on the other hand, the PMI image can be unfavourable, as WHO or other against smoking NGO's create an image of health enemy and environment enemy product.

4.4 Brand Response

The brand response is based on judgment and feelings. Even judgment is not favourable to PMI, it looks like PMI can create a balance between judgment and feelings. Even the PMI is judged for the damage of the health and environment, because of its quality products, after being consumed, it creates a feeling of satisfaction and the consumers become brand advocacy.

4.5 Brand Resonance

When customers love using the brand, they feel a connection with it and with the other users of the same brand. A satisfied customer will encourage his family and friends to try this, this will be the ultimate publicity of the brand (Bhasin, 2019)

Brand resonance or brand relationship is based on:

- loyalty
- attitudinal attachment

- sense of community
- active engagement.

Kangu et al. (2017) mentioned that customer loyalty is the process of repeated purchases from customers. Hafeez & Muhammad (2012) elucidating that customer satisfaction has a very big impact on customer loyalty.

Quality products, special offers, carries for the health, etc, make a consumer loyal to PMI. According to Cummings (2002), the probability of a consumer changing the brand of cigarettes is very low.

Siegel et al. (1996) conducted a survey showing that only 9% of consumers have changed or sometimes change their main brand. It seems that brand loyalty is favourable to PMI. Once somebody starts to use a PMI product, the chance of switching is very low.

At attitudinal attachment, PMI can be named as little pleasure for consumers. As it contains nicotine and it creates dependents. This is favourable to PMI.

According to Hutton (1997) claims that some buyers are extremely attached to the brand and have such a good relationship that they will look for a product, namely with the same brand.

Regarding Keller's Brand equity model it is observed that for PMI is not difficult to build the basis of the model. And its emphasis on how important for PMI are the brand identity and brand meaning. Just because of positive reactions to the first 2 stages, PMI succeeds in the rest of the stages of Keller's model.

Keller's model is not easy to be built by new companies, as it requires many years and professional staff. Because PMI has more than a hundred years of experience, Keller's model just emphasises the power of this company and how strong is it.

Advantages: Aaker (1991) Brand Equity model

The advantages of Keller's model are that it helps to increase the perception of PMI products. Having a positive brand identity, it leads to good resonance. But this can also be a disadvantage. Kuhn et al (2008) suggest that feelings do not have such importance in industrial marketing and there is a need for some modifications concerning resonance. Especially for PMI, when most of the customers are not attached emotionally to the brand, but is more a habit, a dependence. Even most of the stages of Keller's seem to be favourable to PMI, the judgment stage (from the brand response), apart from good quality and competitiveness, is not favourable to PMI and this is the big disadvantage for the company, as it is hard to deal with facts (causing cancer, people die, pollute the nature).

5.0 Customer Journey Towards Philip Morris

(Norton & Pine, 2013) state that customer steps mapping can help a company identify customer perspectives and understand their world.

According to Edelman & Singer (2015), the success of a company is because the journey is a compelling, customized, and open-ended experience.

Figure 7. **Customer Journey of Philip Morris International**



Source: Internet

5.1 Stages of Customer Journey

Main stages of the customer journey are:

5.1.1 Awareness

Awareness for PMI can be smoking scenes from movies, social media posts, pictures, IQOS stores, e-mails. Also, one of the first meetings of PMI with the customer is done via the website. PMI website is very well structured, has an attractive design and they use a lot of light blue colour (same colour for PMI logo). According to ziare.com (www.ziare.com), blue colour conveys confidence, dignity and intelligence, infinity. Unconsciously, they penetrate the human mind and try to make a first impression from the first meeting. This is the first stage when a potential customer becomes aware of the brand. A survey on ONS (www.ons.gov.uk, 2015) stated that almost 90% of people involved in a survey said that is very important to influence the customer journey at the earliest stage.

After the awareness stage, the customer proceeds to consideration. The customer already knows PMI. Now, makes the price comparison, reads the feedback, etc.

5.1.2 Consideration

The consideration stage is favourable to PMI, as in the market, they are not too many competitors, and more of that, there are not too many subsidiary products.

PMI is a leader, but his main competitor is Japan Tobacco.

After considering the product, the customer needs to make a decision. In the tobacco industry decision is made between to smoke and not. Once this decision is made, PMI has a new customer.

5.1.3 Retention

Retention is connected with loyalty. As it was stated before, the chance of switching is just 9%. Retention is favourable for PMI, as nicotine from cigarettes causes dependence. Even customers are switching to a better product, like the smoke-free product, they also choose PMI, because of the trust in quality products of PMI.

5.1.4 Advocacy

Just a short search on the internet about customer's feedback, reveals that this stage is also favourable for PMI.

According to Glassdoor (<https://www.glassdoor.co.uk/>, 2020), 74 % of people who wrote feedback about PMI, recommended PMI to a friend, not just consumers, but also, there is a lot of positive feedback from people who worked for PMI. McKinsey (2009) claims that customer journey satisfaction increases customer satisfaction by 20% and revenue increases by 15%. This is the explanation of how PMI is a leader and why it has satisfied consumers.

5.2 PMI customer journey touchpoints

Pre-purchase customer of PMI is more based on social media or online advertising, especially for smoke-free products. Digital Marketing content plays a very important role for PMI, as it is a close touchpoint for potential customers or existing customers. Participating in events also can be counted as a precious touchpoint for PMI's customers.

Touching points *during the purchase* stage are also of high importance.

PMI provides very good customer service on their website. Also, there is available a wide range of product catalogs and customers can see all the features and details. On social media can be seen very good product reviews. On point of sales, there is professional customer service, as PMI invest a lot in training their employers. All these touchpoints during purchase make a

pleasant touchpoint for customers. Giving the opportunity of a free trial of smoke-free products is one of the best strategies from PMI regarding purchase touchpoints for smoke-free products. *Touchpoint after purchase.*

After purchasing the products, PMI writes e-mails to the customer, giving them a chance of winning a new product if they give feedback. Also, when a product is purchased online, PMI asks the customer if they can send offer letters or subscription renewals.

Even customer touchpoints are favourable for PMI.

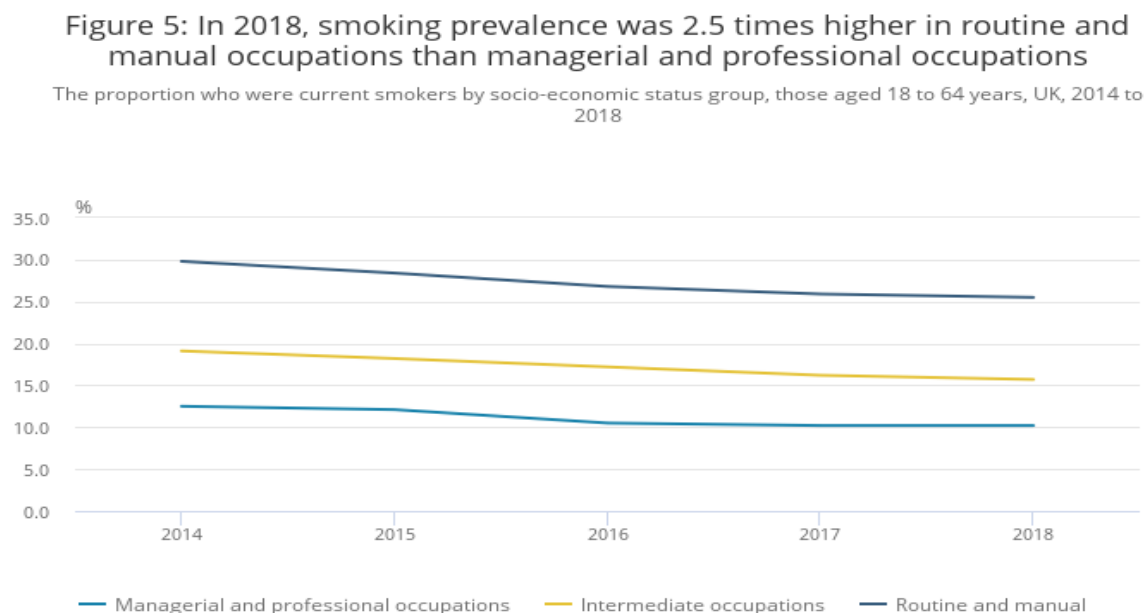
5.3 Customer journey map for PMI

Rawson et al. (2013) mention that to create a satisfying experience for customers, it is not only a matter of establishing customer touchpoints but also of being able to create a connection between them. This is a customer journey map.

Before creating a customer journey map for PMI, there is a necessity to understand who is PMI customer, a key customer.

According to ONS (www.ons.gov.uk), PMI, tobacco industry companies customers are people aged between 18 to 64 years. According to the same website, most PMI customers are with the intermediate occupation.

Figure 8 – Socio-economic status of PMI's customers



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

Lifestyle and values play a significant role in the global consumption of the tobacco market among young adults. PMI is trying hard not to portray the image of their commercials which attracts the youth to make a cigarette as their mark of status.

According to ONS (www.ons.gov.uk), taking into account the economic activity, in 2018, the percentage of unemployed people who smokes is 29,2 %, while people who were employed is 15,0%.

Also, the proportion of married consumers is 9,5%, while single consumers are 21%, and the percent of widowed, divorced, separated is 16.8 %. Also, PMI is doing marketing regarding the education of their customers. ONS (www.ons.gov.uk) mentioned that education plays a significant role. People with no qualifications (29,8% of current smokers) are more addicted to smoking than people with a degree (7,5% of current smokers).

Overall, the key customer of PMI is a customer with an intermediate occupation, usually not married and with an average salary.

Figure 9 – Customer Journey Map of PMI

Customer Journey Map of PMI	Awareness	Discover	Purchase	Use	Bond
Website		2.Search on the website the price	4. Purchase		
Store		3.Search in store for a variety	5.Purchase		
Call Centre					
Facebook				6.Review, Pics	
Web Forums					
Word of Mouth	1.Friend referral			7.Friend referral	
Mobile Phone					
E-mail					
Post					

Source: Author

There is a known fact that people begin to smoke if there are friends who are smoking or spend time with a group of people who smoke.

The strength of PMI consists of word of mouth fact. The weakness can be that a friend to whom is referral can choose a product of another company, after discovering that the price is high or after reading some reviews. This can be possible more for smoke-free products. Online marketing is various and it can be found a cheaper product.

6.0 Total Customer Engagement model to Phillip Morris International



Source: Internet

Kirby (2006) concludes that an Engaged customer plays a very high role for a company and word of mouth marketing is much more valuable than print advertising or television.

LaMalfa (2008) mentions that engaged customers bring high-value reviews, have a long business relationship and pose a lower risk to the company.

There are 4 important key elements of the total engagement model.

a. Customer value proposition

Even if PMI competes with other famous brands, they have something unique, namely the considerable investments in smoke-free products.

Since 2008, according to PMI (www.pmi.com), PMI has invested over USD 7.2 billion in the science and research of smoke-free products. For this, they hired over 400 scientists. The value proposition for them is: Unsmoke your mind.

b. Branding

Branding of PMI goes through a transformational period, by trying to replace regular cigarettes with alternatives. Their state for delivering a smoke-free product. In this way, they eliminate possible complaints or damage to the health or environment.

c. The Internal culture

The Internal culture element of PMI consists of achieving the goal by caring for society, for consumers and their health.

d. Customer experience

Customer experience is sorted very carefully by PMI. What is not common to all companies, PMI has a phone number, address, e-mail where a customer can call for any advice or other inquires. There is a line in each country. By trying to call on the number for the UK, is surprising that a customer can speak with a real person who provides quality customer service. The strength of PMI in its relationship with customers is that they are not focused on operational efficiency, but on customer privacy and a call can be extended until the consumer receives answers and clarifications to all questions and concerns.

The total Engagement model has advantages and disadvantages for PMI. They stand for a smoke-free future. This is an advantage, but at the same time, PMI doesn't say how they are going to make all smokers switch to smoke-free products. A regular pack of cigarettes, is around £10.80 (according to <https://www.tesco.com/>, 2020), while an IQOS (according to <https://uk.iqos.com/>, 2020) starts from £39 and hits for IQOS from £9. How all smokers will afford these costs? So, the message provided by PMI "delivering a smoke-free future" seems to not be for everybody and definitely, not for all the countries and the question is how PMI will engage all customers to their future.

6.0 Recommendations

PMI has very good marketing strategies, but there is also space for more. It is important to read customer reviews, as they can find precious information. For example, after reading some reviews about IQOS, it can be seen that some customers are complaining about the taste or smell of the IQOS. Also, there are some complaints about the duration of IQOS, the battery is not lasting long and it needs to be charged very often.

Also, PMI could introduce a product that offers what no other cigarette offers, waterproof packaging, or waterproof smoking free products.

PMI manages to build holistic marketing and the consumer will be satisfied in different touchpoints of the brand.

7.0 Conclusion

The purpose of this report was to analyse PMI from various marketing points of view and to follow the customer journey or to walk in the same shoes as PMI customers.

Although it is a leading company, however, there are still opportunities to grow or improve the PMI customer relationship.

Although it has a strategy that ensures their success, PMI will be identified as the enemy of health, the environment and even people's lives. Thus, it is very important for PMI to continue the development of social responsibility campaigns and to provide support for environmental protection. Threats from the government or anti-smoking institutions are not conducive to PMI, and to stay in the game, they must constantly diversify their products, cooperate with government regulations and fulfill their mission of delivering smoke-free future.

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