

## 360°

**What can be done to utilise the full potential of holistic communication?**

**This is a question faced not only by marketers and communications strategists**

**– it is also a challenge for market researchers.**

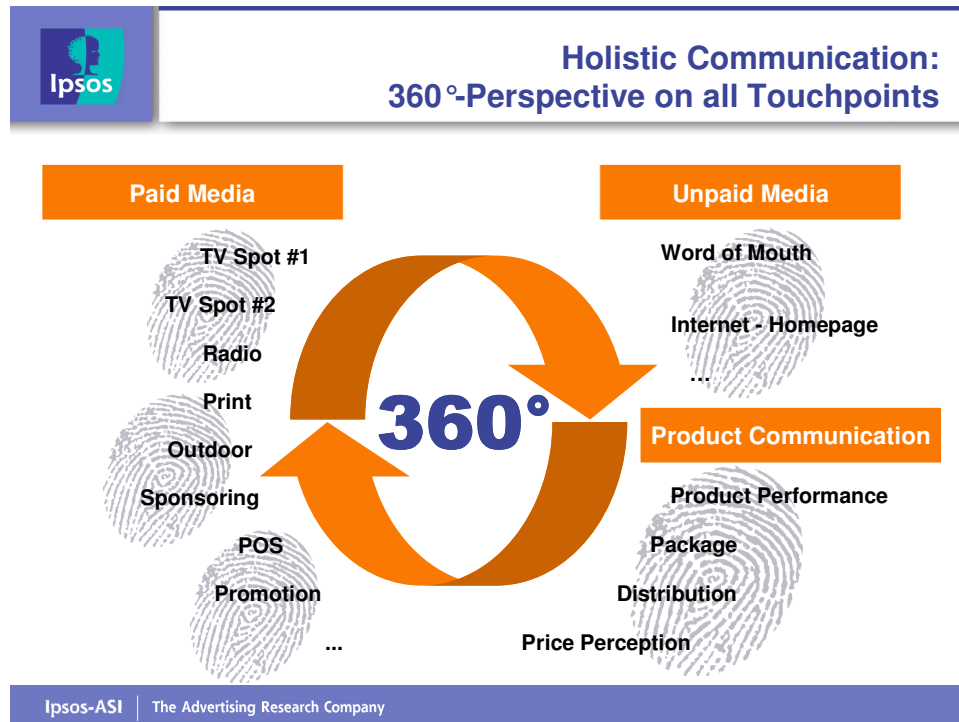


Figure 1: Holistic communication requires a 360° view of all potential touchpoints

Holistic communication is a complex marketing task. Measures in “paid media” (classic advertising, POS, sponsoring, mobile marketing and direct marketing), “non-paid” communication (PR, word-of-mouth propaganda, websites, etc.) and direct product communication (including such things as product experience, packaging) are components of a holistic communication concept. This is why marketing and communication require a 360° perspective which takes into account all of the touchpoints to the market and integrates them into the planning process (Figure 1). Holistic communication is also a complex task for market research, as the analyses require a 360° perspective. Firstly, a 360° perspective requires measuring the overall impact of a campaign. Secondly, in order to be able to derive recommendations for concrete actions, it is necessary to measure the contributions of each individual touchpoint to the overall impact. Finally, to ensure that the recommended actions are adequate, synergies for the touchpoints should also be determined.

## Impact and efficiency of communications

Does holistic communication achieve its intended purpose? In order to measure the impact and efficiency of holistic communication campaigns, it is first necessary to define the communications and marketing objectives. The market research institute can then use these objectives to determine suitable measurement indicators and thus evaluate the campaign accordingly.

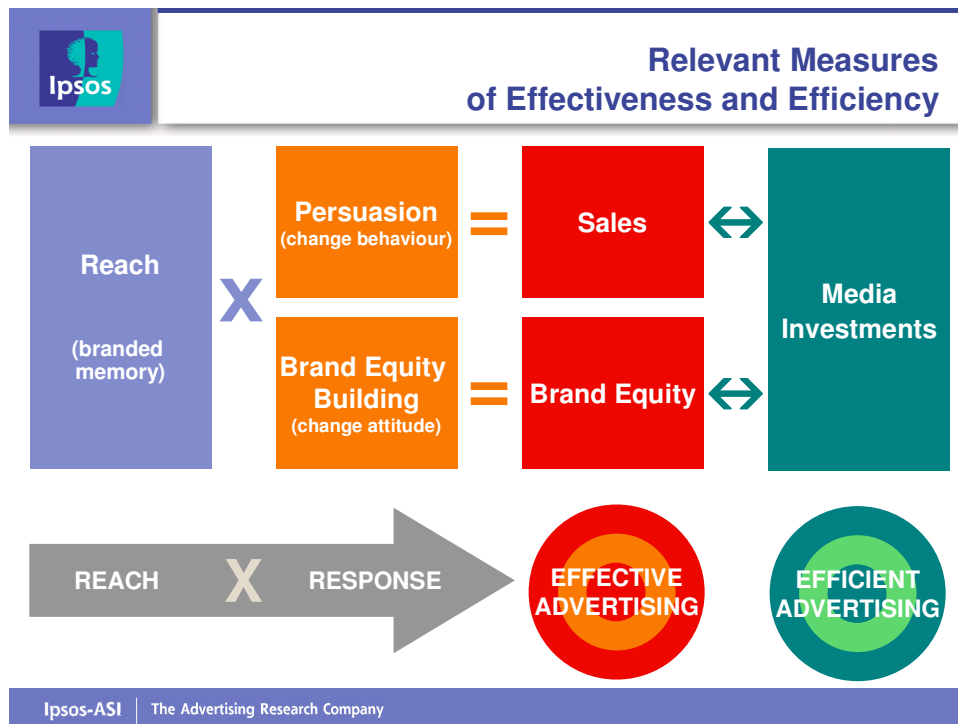


Figure 2: The effect of the touchpoints is the result of both Reach *and* Response

If the marketing objective is to increase awareness or to establish top-of-mind awareness, then it is necessary to measure Reach: The ability of the campaign to leave a branded impression in the memory of consumers (Figure 2).

Reach is a necessary condition for any Response of consumers. If the marketing objective is to increase sales, or to strengthen the brand's equity, then the campaign needs to be effective in terms of both Reach and Response. For this reason, it is not only necessary to measure short-term effects on sales, but also any possible long-term consequences for the equity and image of the brand (Figure 2).

It is also possible to determine the economic efficiency of the "paid" touchpoints through a comparison with the advertising budget employed, for example as spendings versus achieved key performance indicator, e.g. change in Brand Equity (Figure 2).

In a series of case studies, Ipsos used 360° instruments to examine various communication campaigns in a variety of industries. The 360° pre-tests and post-tests were carried out in Germany, France, Canada and the USA.

### **The earlier, the better!**

The spontaneous reaction of one of our customers to the results and analysis was: "If only we had conducted these tests earlier!" Those who wait to conduct tests until their advertising agency has finalised the campaign, risk unnecessary delays and considerable costs for any modifications that might be recommended. Or, even worse, time or budget restrictions might result in going on air without any desired improvements. As a consequence, one should use the agency pitch as an opportunity to benefit from market research by screening out the best creative idea *and* by analysing how to optimise the campaign. Early testing enables to answer the following questions: Which creative idea offers the greatest chance of success? Is this a "nice idea" for a television commercial, or a concept which is suitable for being executed in a wide variety of ways in various media? What could be further optimised? What needs to be kept in mind when finalising the idea? A pre-test at an early stage of the campaign development also makes it possible to brief the agency how to optimise the campaign when finalising the executions.

### **Integrated execution**

In order to take advantage of the potential synergies of holistic communication, it is necessary that consumers be able to recognise that the individual advertising media are all part of the same campaign. As our case studies have demonstrated, this requires a number of components. Firstly, clear branding is necessary to ensure that the advertised brand gets credit. Secondly, there must be a clear campaign key visual, i.e. the campaign must contain some characteristic elements in all executions so the audience can define each execution as being a part of that specific campaign. If an execution lacks of the campaign's key visual, it might hardly be able to contribute to the success of the campaign due to a lack of synergies.

### Holistic message

Case studies have shown that it is relatively difficult to send a clear and concise message with a campaign comprising a wide variety of advertising materials in a wide variety of media. When presented with a large number of signals in a campaign, consumers tend to pick and choose those which they like or which are most noticeable. This means that the following is particularly true for holistic communication: the message must be clear and simple. As a result, holistic communication requires intensive preparation when developing and reviewing the advertising strategy.

### Case study

In one case study, Ipsos examined a campaign for the complete relaunch of an established brand. The most important communication objective was to establish a new unique positioning in order to increase the strength of the brand.

The campaign consisted of two creative elements: a new key visual which convincingly conveyed the new strategic positioning and a new packaging design which was easily recognisable and which had a strong appeal.

These two elements had already been examined separately by market research. The question is whether these two elements, each of which was very promising individually, be able to work together effectively in the campaign?

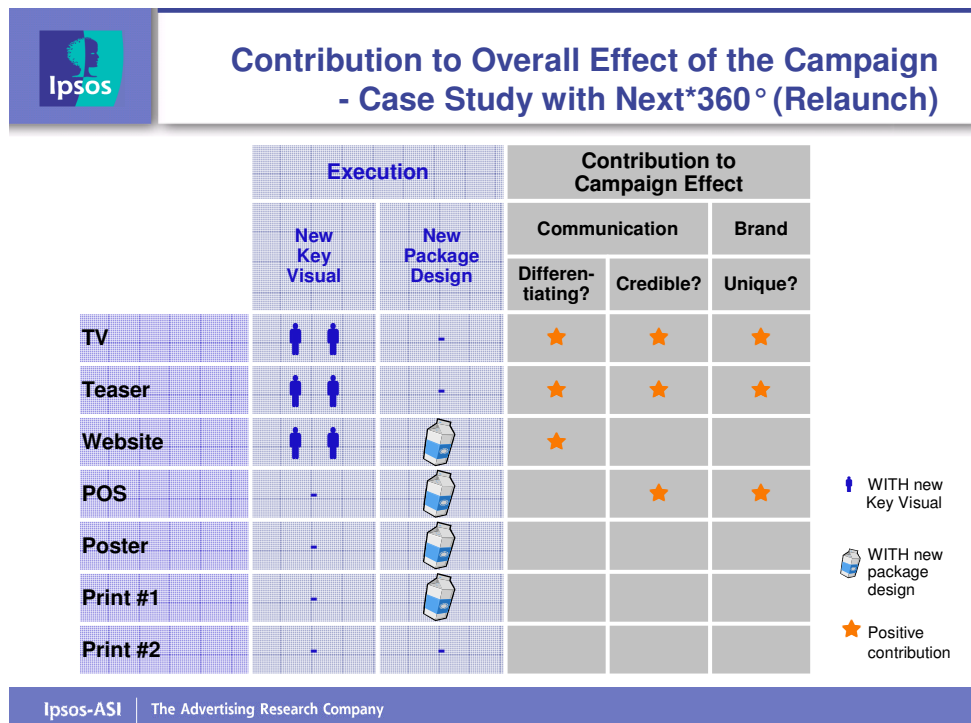


Figure 3: Creation and effectiveness of the elements of the campaign

These are the main results of the pre-test with the new Next\*360° tool:

- The television commercial and the flyer, which are focused on the new key visual, credibly communicate a differentiating message and work successfully to promote the new unique positioning of the brand
- The website, which presents both the key visual *and* the packaging, is perceived as being differentiated, but is not considered to be credible. As a result, the website does not contribute to the unique positioning of the brand
- The communication at the POS, the poster and the first print ad are not able to convey any differentiating message. Only the planned communication at the POS is able to contribute to an unique image of the brand thanks to its unique design.
- The second print ad, which does not depict either of these two creative elements, also does nothing to contribute to the success of the campaign.

The recommendations were based in part on these results: the new, successfully functioning key visual should be present in all media in order to better utilise the potential synergies of holistic communication. As a result, the new packaging design should be given less prominence in the communications, or the relationship between the packaging and the new key visual should be elaborated on, which might also increase the credibility of the website.

This case study showed that holistic communication requires the integration of both the message and the execution. Only then is it possible for the campaign to fully exhaust the potential synergies. At the same time, it is necessary to address the relevant consumer insights in order to communicate the corresponding relevant benefits in a differentiated and credible manner.

## **Media**

Television is not always the strongest element of a campaign. In one case study, for instance, a print ad in an exceptional format outperformed a mediocre commercial – both with regard to its potential to gain attention as well as with the response it provoked. In addition, the case studies also confirmed the considerable potential of holistic communication: the weaker the lead medium, the more the other media are able to contribute to the overall success. The ability to know what is being contributed by each element of the campaign and their synergies makes it possible to design the media plan such that the strengths are maximised while compensating for the weaknesses of other elements – assuming, that is, that the pre-test not only reflects the entire campaign, but also its individual elements and the combinations thereof.

**The earlier, the better!**

Once the entire media budget has been invested, market research cannot help any longer to spend it more efficiently – the millions have been spent. This is the main disadvantage of longsome and elaborate time series analyses. It is better when one knows soon after the airing – perhaps after the first or second flight – how the remaining millions could be more invested efficiently in order to increase the return on the media investment. Even an observation at a specific point in time can, as a post-test, offer valuable information on the efficiency of the individual touchpoints and their synergies, as in the case studies using Brand\*Graph 360°. In order to determine the effectiveness of the campaign over time, it is also possible to expand the post-test into a tracking.

**Effects in the target groups**

The touchpoints demonstrated different impacts in the case studies, which sometimes varied according to the target groups. Key differences were identified for costumers versus non-costumers: Among customers, the product and the product-specific communications (e.g. website) generally played a key role. Among non-customers, mass media and word-of-mouth communication made a bigger contribution to Brand Equity (see Figure 4). This type of detailed analysis allows for a better targeting, in terms of both the media mix and the content.

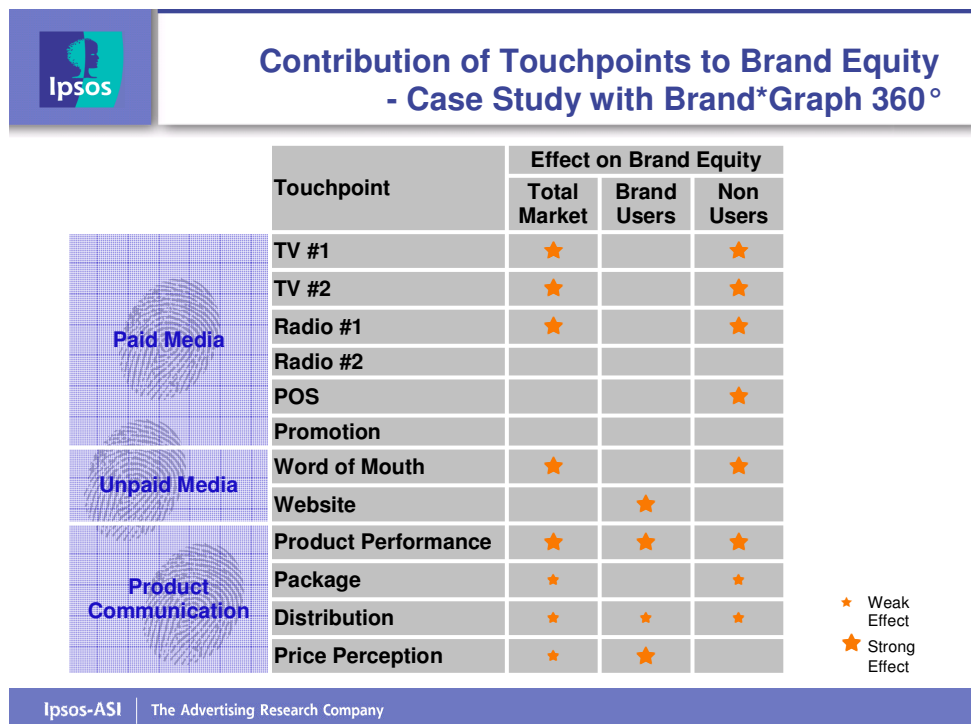


Figure 4: Effects of the touchpoints on Brand Equity

In order to optimise the media mix, it is not only necessary to determine the isolated impacts of the individual touchpoints, but also the synergies that exist. In one case study, for instance, it was revealed that television only worked together with at least one other medium. It is especially important to be aware of synergies with holistic communication in order to be able to make the correct decisions.

### **Conclusion**

In order to take full advantage of the potential of holistic communication campaigns, it is necessary to obtain a 360° perspective in marketing and communications research. All campaign elements and touchpoints need to be taken into account. In order to optimise touchpoints and media planning, it is necessary not only to study the overall impact of the campaign, but also to measure the individual contribution of each touchpoint and the synergies. 360° pre-tests and post-tests that meet these objectives are available. There is one aspect which is particularly important: The earlier an investment is made in market research, the greater the chance to direct the marketing investment in campaign development and media spending more effectively and efficiently.

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**About the authors:**

Hartmut Geibig is the Country Manager of Ipsos ASI, the communications research arm of Ipsos, in Germany. He has long been dealing with the topic of holistic communication, both as a researcher and in his many years as a marketing executive in the industry.

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**Ipsos GmbH:**

Ipsos GmbH is a subsidiary of Ipsos SA, which is headquartered in Paris. Market research institutes in more than 40 countries worldwide belong to the Ipsos Group, which is the world's third-largest market research group. Ipsos ASI is one of the five specialised subsidiaries of Ipsos GmbH and is the world's leading provider in the field of copy testing. ASI, which stands for “Advertising, Systems & Insights”, is the global strategic business unit within Ipsos which is specialised in communications research. Both the Next\*360° pre-test and the Brand\*Graph 360° tracking tool were specially developed for holistic communication.