

Uses of Integrated Marketing Communications Strategies on Growth and Survival of Small and Medium Scales Enterprises in Benue State

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Abstract

Available empirical studies and literature show that suitable integrated marketing communications (IMCs) support sustained growth and survival of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) and other businesses. This paper cashes on this position and evaluates uses of IMCs on growth and survival of SMEs in Benue State. Both the knowledge gap and source credibility theories are utilised to describe how SMEs can apply them for their IMCs. Findings show that the extent to which SMEs in Benue State deploy IMEs is insignificant due to some prevailing challenges. consequently, it is recommended, among others, that SMEs in Benue State and beyond to consciously involve sustainable logical data collection and research for good IMC management.

Keywords: Marketing Communications, Integrated Marketing Communications, Small &Medium-Scale Enterprises

Introduction

Marketing, the world over, cannot be successful without effective use of communication, a core element in one of the four P's of marketing – i.e., Promotion. The four P's of marketing include Place, Product, Price and Promotion. Place has to do with the target geographical area in which the marketing activity revolves – covering where the marketer operates, the target consumers of the marketer's products or services, connecting channels or links between the marketer and the consumer. Product is what the marker has that meets the consumer's needs or wants. Products could be goods or services which are offered by the marker based on public demand. Price concerns what the consumer will sacrifice to get the marker's product or servicesin order to meet demand. Promotion covers a wide array of communication activities for successful marketing. Communications in marketing is basically aimed at meeting both the marketer and the consumer's information, awareness, knowledge or education needs. Combining varied communications tactics offer several advantages.

Small and medium scale business or enterprises occupy a significant place in developed and developing economies. They are significant in aiding sustainable development of societies. Chepkwony, Ondoro and Aila (2017) aver that Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are remarkably the driving forces to sustainable economic development of societies – developed and developing. The businesses practically account for ninety percent (90%) of businesses in both leading and developing economies by way of employment opportunities, income generation for governments and a good scale of impact on Gross Domestic Product, GDP. However, this segment of business is challenged by inadequate or improper communications that is made available to target

public, reliable information and education for the desired patronage that facilitate its sustainable growth and survival. SMEs in Africa lack adequate business information from both governments and service provider, which is attributed to poor information from weak communication structures (Muriithi, 2017). This justifies the strengthening and fusion of marketing communications tools. The fusion can blend in promotional activities such as advertising, Public Relations, digital marketing, sales promotion, direct marketing, digital, word-of-mouth, exhibitions, sales promotion etc. (Leva, Onyilo & Aer, 2024; Egwuenu & Aliku, 2018).

Contemporary communication support systems (hardware and software) incorporated by SMEs and other businesses result to low production costs, increased profits and rate of turnover. Inadequate or improper marketing communications are, rather, a significant hindrance. In the competitive marketing world, existing and potential customers or clients appear to adjust or re-orientate communication necessities to varied interactive avenues or systems. They desire operational, diverse and self-determining media channels or multimedia for knowledge on SMEs, their products and services. It is notable in today's complex world that SMEs and marketing businesses incorporate series of communication policies in their promotional mix. This is a response to the functional insufficiencies and the recognition that customers' information and education needs can effectively be met using diversified communication systems. In essence, in today's emerging social networks, marketers need to tilt to all-inclusive marketing communications strategy. SMEs and other marketers alike need to deploy impactful communications to target public for viable operations in the ever-changing competitive marketing world (Egwuenu & Aliku, 2018; Elijah, 2021, Leva et al., 2021).

In the light of the foregoing, it is obvious that communication is integral to effective operations of businesses in both developed and developing societies. Small and medium scale enterprises, which are significant to sustainable growth and survival of world economies gain much from marketing communications use. Through fitting marketing communications, existing and potential customers acquire knowledge about product/service, features, their prices and how to end up with the right buying decisions. With the right use of diversified but relevant marketing communications by SMEs, there is added value to their products or services. This influences the confidence to make the anticipated purchase decisions.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Small and medium-scale enterprises in every society contribute to sustainable economic growth. This is possible especially in situations where such businesses or enterprises integrate suitable marketing communication approaches. Integrated marketing communications (IMCs) tactics could cover a good array of promotional mix such as Advertising, Public Relations, digital marketing, direct marketing, and sales promotion. Studies (including Aliku, 2017; Leva, Onyilo & Aer, 2024) reveal that IMC contents capture and use far-reaching quantity of customer information for efficient SMEs operations. Some SMEs or businesses are oblivious that IMCs yield success in marketing. Prevailing opinions that marketing communication impact on marketing firms' performance only tilt on monetary sides where other facets, particularly, marketing communications or promotions are rarely studied for ample knowledge. Chepkwony, Ondoro and Aila (2017), in their study, found that IMCs have been practiced by SMEs but how it relates to performance, growth and survival is empirically unknown. It is against this backdrop that this study examines uses of IMCs on growth and survival of SMEs in Benue State–Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. What are the marketing communications strategies of SMEs in Benue State?

- ii. To what extent do SMEs in Benue State integrate marketing communications for growth and survival?
- iii. How do IMCs approaches of SMEs in Benue State enable their growth and survival?
- iv. What are the challenges to effective use of IMCs by SMEs in Benue State?

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMCS)

Integrated Marketing Communications, IMCs is basically a tactical marketing practice that involves planning, development, execution and evaluation of organised assessable swaying communication policy with existing and potential customers, as well as other relevant audiences – external and internal. IMCs concern combination of varied communication approaches to attain set marketing objectives or targets. It involves planned and organised incorporating of marketing promotion mix such as Advertising, Public Relations, direct marketing, digital or online marketing, sales promotion, word-of-mouth, exhibitions, sponsorship, packaging, personal selling, inscription on vehicles, clothing, building, etc. (Leva, Onyilo & Aer, 2024; Muthukumar et al., 2014; Elijah, 2021). The reason for integrating communications for marketing purposes is to principally reach every segment of target population. Best practices of IMCs enable easy utilisation of market-oriented messages by the people. It also births feedback thereby bringing about instructiveness and general knowledge regarding the marketers and their products/service features. The practice of IMCs is vital in the ever-changing, complex and competitive marketing world. Emerging technologies have also prompted the desire to adopt varied communications and multimedia channels in marketing communications.

IMCs, Al-Azzam, Alserhan, Al-Assaf (2024) assert, is organising plentiful marketing promotion aspects that link businesses' customers – potential or existing. Khizar et al. (2016) cited in Al-Azzam et al. (2024) affirm that IMCs is a methodical matching of some marketing promotion policies, in certain media, advertisements, sales promotions, personal selling, digital selling, Public Relations, exhibitions, sponsorships, word-of-mouth, sales promotion, personal selling, for a continual and cohesive message content that is customer-oriented. IMC is also described as a business strategy used to get maximum positive impact on the business. The American Advertising Agencies Association is cited to have defined IMCs as a wide-ranging strategy to additionally appraise the tactical functions of a variety of diverse communication practices or activities (Chepkwony et al., 2017). The IMC methodology holds that marketers take out chances for error, deception and misinterpretation. It emphasises greater exception on communication restriction. It also reflects business or marketers' promotional efforts on products or services cohesively. Use of IMCs is an enabler of economic, workable and operative gains (Aliku, 2017).

Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises (SMES)

Diverse definitions of SMEs, across the globe, show a challenging position to come by. Definitions of SMEs often vary according to regions, industry, size and assets. Muriithi (2017) notes that commonly used definitions are often quantifiable centring typically on the size of employees, assets, magnitude and income or profit. Nonetheless, a number of existing SME definitions describe those with less than 250 employees. However, a minute number of small businesses may have less than 50 employees with micro-businesses having a range of 5 to 10 workers. Not just that, more than 50% of businesses in low or lesser middle-income societies is less 100 workforces. SMEs are a driving force of world economies as they are a match to industrialisation in developing

and developed economies. The importance SMEs is obvious in developing countries as they account for 99% of all businesses (Muriithi, 2017).

In Nigeria, the Federal and State Ministries of Commerce embraced the standard of worth of fixed capital to describe small scale enterprises. In this wise, the value is a variation of ₦60,000 in 1972, ₦159,000 in 1975, ₦250, 000 in 1979, ₦500,000 in 1986, ₦2,000,000 in 1992 and ₦5,000,000 in 2003 and today. The figures omit landed properties and are prone to government decision power and prevalent public policy objectives (Ogechukwu, Oboreh, Umukoro & Uche, 2013; National Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

How IMCS Enhance Growth And Survival of SMES

Use of integrated marketing communications (IMCs) is essential for small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) and others alike. IMCs is a resultant effect of poor information resulting from formless communication structures and inadequate support systems. IMCs enable increased customer awareness and knowledge base. SMEs benefit from use of IMCs through unblemished, dependable and persuasive communications. SME Managers easily discern innovative techniques to leverage on the elements of marketing promotional mix such as advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, digital marketing, Public Relations, etc. for a cohesive, reliable and adapted synergy. The outcome is that SMEs communicate their products/services via varied canals to effectively create awareness and knowledge base of consumers leading to patronage. According to Azu (2014), IMCs makes it possible for consumers to know what products or services they offer, the location and features inherent in the products and services. The people now spend sizeable times on emerging media systems such as social media, internet, etc. Integrating digital technologies for marketing communications has also cut the cost of delivering the required knowledge to the public who, as a result, know about the SMEs, their product and service features (Camilleri, 2018).

Through IMCs, people are encouraged to purchase products or services offered by the SMEs. Potential customers may be inspired to make trials by purchasing products/services offered by SMEs. Persuasive and suitable IMCs are highly influential in this regard. For instance, some persons may be adamant or indecisive to communications endorsing a product/service but well planned and organised communications can induce favourable actions by making a trial purchase. When convinced, they then become regular customers thereby aiding increment in product and service patronage (Chepkwony et al., 2017).

When IMCs enable increased sales, there is the result of SMEs having an increment in the rate of turn-over. Generally, increased sales or patronage of products/services goes a long way to augment turn-over. Azu (2014) avers that a study on the influence of IMC on consumer valuation of products found that IMCs impact on consumer's valuation of products/services. This is because consumers are most likely to buy promoted products since it constructs consumer assurance. Through IMCs, existing and potential customers cultivates buying intent on particular products/services after assessing alternatives.

IMCs also strategic investment/reinvestment and financial integration. This could be aligned to positive decision towards increase in SME investment or reinvestment. Effective IMC activities that enable high purchase rate or sales as well as turn-over significantly interest individuals or entities to invest in SMEs. Business-persons and groups are always looking for opportunities where they can reap good profit as a result of high purchase or

sales. Through IMCs, managers of SMEs do monitor financial and strategic perspectives where opportunities for strategic investment, reinvestment and financial integration are unveiled. Since most SMEs and businesses invest massively on marketing communications, it is imperious for the managers to easily evaluate the success of IMCs. Proficient marketing communications managers play a prominent role in overall organisational strategic planning, new product/service development and investment/reinvestment. No SMEs will reap any financial benefits except via operative marketing communications assimilation.

Challenges To Functional IMCS By SMES

Efficient contribution of IMCs to some SMEs are challenged by some factors. Most functional SMEs possess the potentials of growing into large-scale or multi-national businesses but weak IMC outputs considerably eliminate the possibilities. For example, some SME have the requisite funds but lack proficient personnel or equipment to use workable IMCs could deter the survival and growth. Inconsistent planning and socio-cultural dynamics may also result to poor deployment of IMC strategies by SMEs. Some of the conspicuous challenges are as presented below.

Inconsistency in Planning: Some SMEs do not benefit effectively from IMCs because of discrepancy in the planning process. According to Egwuenu and Aliku (2018), most SMEs while planning for IMCs fail to imbibe the needed creative strategy and as result, adopt few or incompatible promotional mix. This scenario, no doubt, is not favourable to sustained survival and growth. The SMEs are unconscious of effective planning and general management of IMC programmes.

Absence of Inadequate skilled personnel: Most SMEs lack the required proficient personnel to manage their IMC endeavours. Those employed are often not well-trained to handle suitable IMCs for positive results. According to Ayozie et al. (2013), such IMC handlers lack the requisite knowledge for successful IMCs in SME operations.

Funding Shortfalls: Ample funding for IMC endeavours are essential for growth and survival of SMEs. Even with adequate skilled employees for IMCs, adequate budgeting is most vital. Shortfalls in IMC funding mars marketing promotion efforts. Poor funding and credit facilities are significant barriers. Ardic, Mylenko and Saltane (2011) say, SMEs are constrained to commercial bank financing particularly when it comes to long-term loans due to absence of collateral and low operational capital.

Inadequate Equipment: Some SMEs are constrained by basic equipment that support best practices for IMCs. Emerging technologies, for instance, greatly support IMCs, which are not easily accessible by SMEs (Aliku, 2017). In essence, the SMEs lack the capacity to suitably utilise the technologies for result-oriented IMCs.

Poor attitude to Marketing Promotion: Some SMEs are unmindful of professional use of promotional tools such as advertising, Public Relations, sales promotion, trade fairs, digital/online marketing and exhibitions, among others. This, Ayozie et al. (2011) say, also obstructs SMEs' growth and capacity to contend with superior businesses.

Theoretical Perspectives to IMCS in SMES Operations

Integrated marketing Communications (IMCs) when aligned with the Knowledge Gap philosophy will aid managers of SMEs to understand that in every social setting, there is a division of two groups: better-educated persons and those with low educational status. Propounded by Philip Tichenor, George A. Donohue and Clarice N. Olien in 1970, the Knowledge Gap philosophy holds that every member of the society does not evenly acquire information or knowledge is not evenly acquired by everybody. Individuals with higher socioeconomic status have greater ability of getting awareness or knowledge. In this wise, handlers of IMCs should accordingly adopt marketing communications strategies that will respectively meet the two categories of persons – the better educated and lesser educated – in the society. The theory, therefore, holds that the spread of information in a society can enable increased knowledge among those with lower and higher socioeconomic standing, (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). For instance, advertisements in newspapers or magazines as part of marketing communications of SME managers may only be handy to literate persons. On the other hand, Public Relations, direct/personal selling or word-of-mouth would provide the desired knowledge on SMEs, their products or services to all persons – literate or not.

The Source Credibility perspective also provides substantial guide on how managers of SMEs could approach the deployment of IMCs to target audiences. The source credibility theory was formulated by Carl Hovland and Walter Weiss in 1951. Hovland, C. Janis, I., Kelley, H. later improved on its tenets in 1953. Going by the source credibility thesis, before embarking on IMCs, SME managers must ensure that communication contents presented to the audiences are credible. As the sources of information they should ensure that every bit of information from IMC activities is credible. In doing this, they must ensure that their business enterprises are positively positioned while the products/services for offer actually meets public needs and demands. Information emanating from IMCs should in reality reflect the true nature of the products/services they have in stock.

In tandem with the thesis of the source credibility philosophy, two factors underline it: trustworthiness and expertise. This, as noted by Asemah et al. (2017), entails that the attitude that the audiences display when they receive a message content such as one emanating from IMCs, to a great extent is dependent on how they see the source – i.e., how and what they perceive the source (in this case, managers of SMEs carrying out IMCs) to be. Thus, people may easily be influenced by IMCs when handlers or managers of SMEs present themselves as credible. When the right source is used to transmit IMCs, it boosts the chances of having an effective message been utilised by the audiences but if the source is not trustworthy, they will not believe and be affected positively to the message. This, no doubt, calls for integrated marketing communications to be embarked upon by SMEs using credible or trustworthy channels.

Research Methodology

Survey design was adopted for this study with questionnaire utilised to collect the primary data. Makurdi, the Benue State capital was the area of study where FUA Global Resources (involved in animal & poultry farming), City Hospital and Precious Event Centre (is involved in event management, restaurant, bar and other hospitality services) were chosen using the purposive sampling technique. The choice of Makurdi as the study area was based on the fact that it is hub of diversified SME operations. The purposive sampling approach was used to ensure that the studied enterprises met the officially-accepted description of SMEs in Nigeria. Purposive

sampling technique gives room for expertise decision in sampling elements based on a study target. It is fairly cost-effective, comparatively practicable and appropriate to sample only elements germane to research design (Parveen & Showkat, 2017). The population of the study was staff of the sampled SMEs where official information shows that the total staff population of the SMEs is 54: FUA Global Resources has 12 staffers; City Hospital has 12 while Precious Event Centre has 30 workforces. Consequently, census sampling was utilised where the entire population of 54 were administered questionnaire on a face-to-face basis to ensure that the respondents were cleared of any misconception that may arise while answering questions in the instrument.

Census sampling was used because the entire population was considered as sample. Census eliminates sampling error and provides data on all the elements in a study (Singh & Masuku, 2014). Tables are used to present the data with Likert 5-Scale adopted for the analysis of data. Tables were used in presenting the data because they are easily comprehensible while the use of Likert 5-Scale was to enable respondents make informed and rated decisions on every response option contained in the questionnaire. Below is a description of the five elements in Likert Scale:

- 1. SA = Strongly Agree
- 2. A = Agree
- 3. N = Neutral
- 4. D = Disagree
- 5. SD = Strongly Disagree

Findings

Research Question One: *What are the marketing communications strategies of SMEs in Benue State?*

Research Question One is answered using the data contained in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Integrated Marketing Communications Tools of SMEs in Benue State

Response Option	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
Advertising	20(37%)	34(63%)	0	0	0	54(100%)
Public Relations	30(55%)	24(45%)	0	0	0	54(100%)
Sales promotion	0	14(19%)	40(74%)	0	0	54(100%)
Word-of-mouth	54(100%)	0	0	0	0	54(100%)
Exhibition	0	0	0	0	54(100%)	54(100%)
Digital marketing	0	40(74%)	0	14(19%)	0	54(100%)
Direct/personal selling	54(100%)	0	0	0	0	54(100%)

Source: Field Research, 2025

Table 1 shows that direct/personal selling and word-of-mouth are the most significant IMC strategies of SMEs in Benue State. This is followed by Public Relations, advertising and sales promotion. It therefore, implies that exhibition and digital marketing are not in the IMC activities of SMEs in the state. However, the finding is a pointer to use of integrated marketing communications by SMEs in Benue State. In essence, the studied SMEs integrate marketing communications strategies in their promotional activities. As rightly found by Leva, Onyilo and Aer (2024), the marketing communications integrated by SMEs and others businesses that can blend in promotional activities include advertising, Public Relations, sales promotion, direct/personal selling, etc. In relation to the tenets of the knowledge gap theory, managers of SMEs will understand that in every society, there are two categories of people –those who are better-educated and those with low educational status – they will be dealing with. Consequently, managers or handlers of IMCs when guided by the tenets of the knowledge gap philosophy will, as a result, adopt marketing communications that will respectively meet the communication needs of the two categories of individuals.

Not just that, The Source Credibility perspective provides substantial guide on how managers of SMEs could approach the deployment of IMCs to target audiences. Going by the source credibility philosophy, in carrying out IMCs, SME managers should transmit credible messages to target audiences by reflecting the true features of products/services they have for the public. As sources of IMCs, managers of SMEs must ensure every communication contents provided to the public are credible. This way, they must ensure that their business enterprises are confidently reliable with while the products/services essentially meets public demands. Message contents originating from IMCs should in reality factually replicate the real features of products/services they have in stock. When the right source is used to transmit IMCs, it boosts the chances of having an effective message been utilised by the audiences but if the source is not trustworthy, they will not believe and be affected positively to the message. This, no doubt, calls for integrated marketing communications to be embarked upon by SMEs using credible or trustworthy channels.

Research Question Two: To what extent do SMEs in Benue State integrate marketing communications for growth and survival?

Data contained in the table below provide the needed answer to Research Question Two.

Table 2: Extent to which SMEs embark on IMCs

Response Option	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
Very large	0	0	0	14(26%)	40(74%)	54(100%)
Large	0	0	4(7%)	10(19%)	40(74%)	54(100%)
Average	22(41%)	32(59%)	0	0	0	54(100%)
Minimum	34(63%)	10(19%)	10(19%)	0	0	54(100%)
Very minimum	30(56%)	24(44%)	0	0	0	54(100%)

Source: Field Research, 2025

Table 2 signifies that despite the incorporation of marketing communications strategies, the extent to which small and medium-scale enterprises embark on integrated marketing communications (IMCs) on an inconsiderable scale. This implies that SMEs do not give greater attention to adoption of integrated marketing communications. This may be far from the SMEs reliance on inadequate or improper communications they make available to target public. The finding also collaborates the position of Muriithi (2017) that SMEs in Africa lack adequate business information from both governments and service providers and that the problem is due to poor information from weak or insufficient communication structures from their operational activities.

Research Question Three:How do IMCs approaches of SMEs in Benue State enable their growth and survival?

Research Question Three is answered using the data contained Table 3 below.

Table 3:How IMCs enable growth and survival of SMEs in Benue State

Response Option	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
Increased customer awareness & knowledge	54(100%)	0	0	0	0	54(100%)
Increased patronage	0	54(100)	0	0	0	54(100%)
Increased turn-over	0	34(63%)	20(47%)	0	0	54(100%)
Strategic Investment/ reinvestment & financial integration	0	24(44%)	30(56%)	0	0	54(100%)

Source: Field Research, 2025

Table 3 unveils the areas in which the integrated marketing communications (IMCs) enable growth and survival of SMEs in Benue State increased customer awareness and knowledge based, increased patronage, increased turn-over and strategic investment/ reinvestment and financial integration. This finding is in tandem with Egwuenu and Aliku's (2018) position that in today's emerging social networks, marketers need to tilt to all-

inclusive marketing communications strategy. SMEs and other marketers alike need to deploy impactful communications to target public for viable operations in the competitive marketing world. In essence, IMC makes it possible for consumer to know what brands exist, what products or services they offer, the location and features inherent in the products and services. It could be contended that IMC makes life easier by creating awareness about the existence of brands and their services.

According to Muthukumar et al. (2014), IMCs are, in recent times, cost-effective than conventional media use. The people now spend sizeable times on emerging media systems such as social media, internet, etc. This has not just the cost of delivering the required information and knowledge to existing and potential customers who know about SMEs, its available products/services and their features. Camilleri (2018) also agrees IMCs raises awareness of target publics about SMES, their products and service features. On a whole, IMCs serve several functions which include: (i) To identify products and differentiate them from others (ii) To communicate information about the product. (iii) To induce the trial of new products by new users and to suggest repurchasing by existing users (iv) To stimulate a product distribution (v) To increase product use and (vi) To build brand preference and loyalty (Azu, 2014).

Research Question Four: *What are the challenges to effective use of IMCs by SMEs in Benue State?*

Research Question Four is answered using the data in Table 4.

Table 4: Factors that hinder SMEs from Functional IMCs

Response Option	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
Inconsistency in planning	54(100%)	0	0	0	0	54(100%)
Absence or inadequate skilled personnel	0	54(100)	0	0	0	54(100%)
Funding shortfalls	20(47%)	34(63%)	0	0	0	54(100%)
Inadequate equipment	30(56%)	24(44%)	0	0	0	54(100%)
Poor attitude to marketing promotion	54(100%)	0	0	0	0	54(100%)

Source: Field Research, 2025

Table 4 shows that inconsistency in planning, absence or inadequate skilled personnel, funding shortfalls, inadequate equipment and poor attitude to marketing promotion are challenges that hinder SMEs in Benue State to effectively adopt IMCs. The above findings imply that even as SMEs in Benue State adopt and benefit from IMCs, they encounter challenges to that effect. This may conveniently be held that through functional IMCs, SMEs in Benue State are potential large-scale or multi-national businesses but are constrained by some factors. While planning for IMCs, some SMEs fail to consider the creative strategy hence they adopt few or ill-assorted marketing communications (Egwuenu & Aliku, 2018). Ayozie et al. (2013) note that most SMEs engage unskilled persons in their IMCs, which tend to efforts in futility. Most SMEs face funding deficits due to lack of commercial bank financing. Funding issues further constrain acquisition of IMC support technologies (Ardic et al., 2011). On a whole, problem of finance and poor attitude to marketing promotion could be ascribed as birthing most challenges to functional IMCs by SMEs in Benue State and beyond.

Conclusion

Considering that marketing communications are tilted towards several sections using varied channels in the marketing arena, small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) have to integrate a sizeable number of marketing communications that is accurate, comprehensible and precise to avoid confusion and communicate effective integrated message contents via integrated marketing communications, IMCs. Against the backdrop of the study's findings, it is concluded that the extent to which the SMEs in Benue State deploy IMCs is insignificant. Be that as it may, IMCs of SMEs in the state aid high customer awareness, patronage, turn-over and strategic investment, reinvestment and financial integration. Conversely, conflicting, absence or scarce skilled personnel, funding shortfalls, scanty equipment and poor attitude to marketing promotion are challenges to functional IMCs of SMEs in Benue State. On this note, it is suggested that SMEs, after organized and cohesive planning, should critically examine available marketing communications tactics such as advertising, Public Relations, Direct/personal selling, sales promotion, exhibition, digital marketing, personal selling, packaging and a host of other ones, before deploying them.

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