

# Public Relation Strategies for Promote the TV Digital Case Study: Thairath TV and Voice TV

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**Abstract**— This research aimed to study developing public relations strategy to promote TV Digital for Thairath TV and Voice TV. The research approach by the qualitative method and content analysis and interviews will provide. The result show that the TV digital broadcasting should operate the marketing communications department to interaction especially with the care of the audience member or fan page, public relations campaign, special event and adjust target group different segment as a "working" and a new era of live TV or Urban and make more variety of tools and options than traditional media. And find more media partners to create awareness to the audience. The research suggested that public relation media could access behavior of target group at working age, especially social media should be used. Moreover, they wanted to come with a group of friends at leisure or convenient time to provide image and sound quality than ever.

**Keywords**— public relation strategies, TV Digital, Thairath TV, Voice TV

## I. INTRODUCTION

IN the Transcending the norms of conventional strategic marketing practices, businesses increasingly turn to new and/or alternative methods to increase their competitiveness, all within a globalised and harsh environment characterised by hyper-competition and incessant change, both at the business and the consumer ends. In this context, this research finds that marketing public relations (MPR) offers organisations an effective means to the same end that is both economically and practically viable in the majority of cases. Moreover the research conceptually develops its empirical findings to construct a consumer focused MPR framework in the strategic marketing context, based on contemporary consumer and strategic theory. The stated that when one thinks of comparing advertising and public relations, it is like comparing apples and oranges, since although they both belong to the broad general category of communications, they are significantly different, both conceptually and practically. Researchers in general have worked relentlessly over many years to achieve the ideal combination of advertising, public relations, direct marketing and all their promotional 'siblings'. The end result of this effort was the evolution of an integrated marketing communication (IMC) approach to the promotional element of the marketing mix strategy.

IMC is regarded as a more holistic, strategic and customer-focused way of planning and implementing the promotional

process. IMC is perceived as "the integration of specialized communication functions that previously have operated with various degrees of autonomy". The growing body of literature demonstrates the emphasis placed on IMC. In practice, the Thairath TV and Voice TV Executives especially, had always tried to coordinate the marketing communication disciplines. There is also evidence to suggest that despite the development of the IMC theory, practitioners are hesitant in strategically integrating the various promotional elements and instead have adopted a more tactical approach. In academic terms (and research), the struggle for integration of the promotional tools has not been easy, partly due to the confusion and debate between the marketing and PR disciplines. In the past, marketers had treated PR simply as part of the marketing mix. When one turns to the literature of marketing management, in fact, one frequently comes across attempts to assign public relations a role under the domain of marketing. One of the striking features of many of the marketing textbooks is the lack of recognition of the vast literature related specifically to public relations. This indicates that PR is largely subsumed under the marketing function and that PR activity is usually treated as a product of publicity and given a subordinate role, under marketing. Many marketing academics, including, in their various writings have made a number of attempts to subsume public relations activity under marketing. They assume that the marketing mix is made up of a set of controllable variables that a firm uses to influence a target market. Specifically, proposed that among these variables, public relations should be conceived as a part of marketing in the performance of its communication role. On the other hand, PR-focused academics, such as suggest that the public relations and marketing functions, as structured within an organization, have different missions to fulfil and therefore appeal to different paradigms or models of the organisation's social environment and to communications systems that are designed and utilised in that environment. According to marketing managers tend to elevate marketing activities to a dominant position and marketing is treated as a company's most important commitment.

Within this organizational framework, public relations activity is not seen as an equal partner with marketing, but as a technical function - a set of tasks designed to assist the marketing function in a direct way. The Public Relations Society of America which represents the views of many PR practitioners and academics contended that public relations

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fulfilled many organisational functions, with marketing only being one of these.

This debate created a natural tendency for PR and marketing to be seen as complementary and converging disciplines, both in academia and in the business world, a tendency that gradually led to the emergence and growth of the concept of marketing public relations.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Public Relation Strategies*

The term marketing public relations was coined in the 1980s in an effort to distinguish the use of public relations techniques in achieving marketing objectives from the general practice of public relations. It is an 'all encompassing' term integrating concepts and tools from public relations, marketing, advertising and research. Harris and Whalen stipulate that its growth was supported by the recognition of its intrinsic value by business executives and the ability of PR professionals to develop PR campaigns in support of marketing strategies. MPR was in fact described as the largest and fastest growing segment of a fast growing industry.

A study of the global market for PR services carried out by revealed that 20 per cent of the fee income of PR firms throughout the world was generated by PR for consumer goods. The defined MPR as "a comprehensive, all-encompassing public awareness and information program or campaign directed to mass or specialized audiences to influence sales or use of a company's products or services". The MPR refers to "the use of public relations strategies and tactics to achieve marketing objectives". MPR plays a significant role in the process of launching a new product as well as in the repositioning of a mature product: it can build interest in a product category, influence specific target groups, defend a product which experiences public problems and build the corporate image in a way that reflects favourably on its products/services. The emphasised the effectiveness of MPR in winning consumers' trust, celebrating special occasions and sponsoring special events and programmes. The posits that MPR has the potential to enhance the visibility of products and organisations, inform stakeholders in relation to issues that are critical to the organisation, influence public opinion favourably towards the organisation, as well as encourage the trial of products and increased usage. defines MPR as "any program or effort designed to improve, maintain, or protect the sales or image of a product by encouraging intermediaries, such as traditional mass media, the electronic media, or individuals, to voluntarily pass a message about the firm or product to their audience of businesses or consumers".

A number of studies have been carried out in order to identify the degree of awareness of the business sector regarding MPR. One of these is a survey carried out among 286 Advertising Age subscribers who held marketing and advertising positions with client organisations. Among the key findings were the following:

MPR was once referred to as product publicity and was incorporated into PR campaigns. Gradually, it evolved into a

holistic and comprehensive communication programme targeting mass or well-defined specialty audiences, with the aim of creating awareness and giving information about products and services to boost sales.

The concept combines many different tools and techniques, which have traditionally belonged to the PR discipline, within an all-encompassing campaign. MPR continues to evolve as the lines between product publicity, public relations, promotion and advertising are becoming increasingly blurred. Its growth and popularity is further supported by the move towards integrated marketing communications and the tendency of Thairath TV and Voice TV Executives to provide a "full service" to their clients by planning and integrating various promotional tools such as advertising, public relations, and direct marketing.

For several years, advertising and PR professionals worked separately and independently even though both had the same goal, which was to increase the company's sales. This resulted from a lack of coordination, cooperation, synergy, and mutual planning, and effected a duplication of efforts, inefficiency and ineffectiveness.

However, the rapidly changing environment in relation to consumers (demographics, lifestyles, media use, buying and shopping patterns), technological progress (digital satellite systems, internet), new media (cable TV, electronic mail, mobile phones) and social media (Facebook, blogs, YouTube) has forced marketers to reflect and adapt to these environmental changes and developments by adopting an integrated marketing communications approach to their promotional and marketing strategies.

These strategies ultimately aim for the desired economically effective and efficient agility and adaptability competencies to fit the highly competitive and ever-changing contemporary business environment.

MPR adds credibility to the message because consumers perceive MPR as news or opinions which are more trustworthy, thus strengthening IMC through trust-based relationships. In addition, the rising costs and declining effectiveness of mass advertising, the increasingly competitive marketplace and the heightened pressure to break through consumer resistance, indifference and clutter create an environment which is conducive for the growth of MPR. Super Bowl advertising is an example that illustrates the complementary role that MPR plays to advertising and IMC campaigns. MPR contributes significantly to the publicity that builds up around the TV commercials broadcast during the Super Bowl.

A few weeks before the game and in the weeks following the game, the media and consumers engage in a frenzy of word-of-mouth communication about the Super Bowl commercials. Discussions and media commentary cover topics that span from who the advertisers will be to rumours about commercials. In 2008, the New England Patriots vs. New York Giants game was watched by 97.5 million viewers. After the game, millions more saw the commercials on the Web and others wrote and/or read hundreds of articles and/or participated in numerous conversations about the ads. The MPR component added value to the ads and heightened their impact. MPR also complements

sales promotion, much in the same way as it does advertising. MPR uses publicity stunts and event marketing to create a “buzz” around sales promotion activities. As a result, the combination of the two has more value to the firm than the sales promotion alone. When it comes to personal selling, MPR ‘prepares the ground’. Media mentions and word-of-mouth communication contribute by creating awareness of products and their use among consumers. Once this is achieved, sales people can approach potential customers and help them in their purchase decision process. MPR supports the sales force by informing people and hence creating a lead on which to build a profitable relationship. Direct marketing and MPR interact in the same way as personal selling and MPR. MPR creates and enhances consumer awareness of a product or company through media mentions and word-of-mouth communications which subsequently lead to consumers who are more receptive to the direct marketing message. When it comes to PR, MPR uses PR tools in order to achieve marketing objectives, but at the same time, the two concepts need to be integrated in order to achieve organisational goals. Overall, MPR has the potential to synergise with other forms of marketing communications to increase the effectiveness of the overall promotional campaign and to ensure a sum that is greater than its components’ individual cumulative strengths.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### Research Approach

This research explored the suitability of qualitative research in the public relations and marketing communications field. Qualitative research enables a researcher to be mindful and to understand the lived experience of a phenomenon. Since the aim of the present study is to shed light onto the practice of MPR in the specific sector, the adoption of a qualitative research approach rather than a quantitative research method was justified. The qualitative research approach enabled the researchers to uncover and study perceptions, attitudes and experiences of practitioners in relation to the MPR concept, since the existent literature revealed that the knowledge and understanding regarding MPR is limited. According to qualitative research is mostly associated with an interpretive paradigm which enables researchers to understand social reality from the point of view of the research participants.

The interpretive paradigm guided the present research study since the aim was exactly to understand MPR through the interpretations and experiences of practitioners. The researchers adopted a case study approach to exploring the experiences and perceptions of practitioners in relation to MPR, as implemented by advertising and Thairath TV and Voice TV Executives in Thailand. According to “case study is an intensive examination, using multiple sources of evidence, of a single entity which is bounded by time and place”. The claims that the importance of case studies has rapidly grown along with the need to understand complex social phenomena, since it enables a researcher to investigate in depth the characteristics of real-life situations such as organisational and managerial processes, individual lifecycles, and international relations.

According to the purpose of the case study is “to increase knowledge about real, contemporary communication events in their context”. This is in fact the case with the current study: understanding the way the Thairath TV and Voice TV Executives implements MPR.

A fundamental decision relating to the case study research approach is whether to use a single-case study or a multiple-case study. In the current research study, the researcher adopted a multiple-case design that offers the (within-limits) generalization advantage. Single case design is generally suitable for a deep but narrow investigation of a single phenomenon.

The research conceptual framework is shown in Fig. 1.

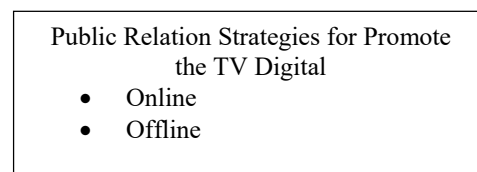


Fig. 1 Research Conceptual Framework

### IV. FINDINGS

The study revealed that there has been a 25 per cent drop in advertising in the previous year (2012). Television’s advertising revenues have also seen a year-on-year drop. TV revenues dropped from € 325 M to € 293 M. Advertising revenues for print media dropped from € 76 M in 2011 to € 58 M in 2012. According to Matrix media, the media advertising pie is traditionally divided between TV, press and radio with 70 per cent going to TV, 20 to print and 10 to radio. The result of falling revenues for TV and print has seen media owners carry out a series of layoffs and salary cuts to delay closure. The negative developments in the media sector have had a direct impact on the marketing communication strategies adopted by Thairath TV and Voice TV Executives.

Thairath TV and Voice TV Executives have in fact started to redesign their marketing communication by shifting some of the emphasis placed on advertising to MPR.

#### Key MPR ideas

The study’s findings revealed that the majority of practitioners interviewed do not use the ‘MPR’ term in practice, although they do implement the concept. The understanding and interpretation of various terms depends greatly on each organisational culture and the terminology used in each organisation. We do not use the term MPR. We recognise the tactics that relate to MPR by designing a specific strategy or activity. However, if we used the term MPR it would be confusing. (Executive Director) It is not important what terms you use as long as you use the correct words. I think PR is common sense. A client wants to generate awareness, change perceptions, create knowledge and you need to work with these objectives. Whether you say MPR or CPR.

Especially in a place like Thailand, are still going to use similar tools in different ways that would make your ‘words’ come true. (PR Agency Director) The practitioners interviewed

identified the following ideas as the ones that underpin the MPR concept:

- MPR directly or indirectly contributes to the achievement of marketing and sales objectives
- MPR enables companies to promote the products/services in a trustworthy way
- MPR makes the media and the public interested in a cause, product or service
- MPR prepares the public for news
- MPR has the ability to create favourable perceptions towards brands
- MPR encourages favorable word-of-mouth communication.

These ideas can be integrated to form a new definition for MPR: MPR is a promotional tool that directly or indirectly contributes to the achievement of marketing and sales objectives by promoting brands and causes in a trustworthy manner, creating media and public interest in them, preparing the public for news, creating favourable perceptions and stimulating positive word-of-mouth communications.

It is obvious from the definitions given that the understanding of the concept depends on the MPR expertise/experiences and knowledge of the practitioners interviewed. The practitioners perceive MPR differently, depending on which MPR function they consider as the most important. Nevertheless, some of the practitioners defined MPR as they would define the overall PR discipline. This indicates the close relationship and interdependence of the MPR and CPR (Corporate Public Relations) concepts.

TABLE I

PRESENTS SOME VERBATIM QUOTATIONS GIVEN BY THE INTERVIEWEES THAT HIGHLIGHT THE WAY IN WHICH PRACTITIONERS CONCEPTUALISE THE MPR CONCEPT

Job title of interviewees	Verbatim Quotations
Digital and PR Manager of a communications agency	MPR is a PR activity which helps the company to achieve its marketing and/or sales objectives either directly or indirectly, through the projection of the company's image and key messages via the mass media.
Executive Director of an advertising agency	MPR includes tools for achieving the marketing objectives.
Head of a PR department of a communications agency	MPR is a way of promoting a client without using above-the-line promotion.
Managing Director of an advertising agency	MPR is an activity organized and planned to cultivate the grounds for a product/service. In other words, to make consumers interested in a product/service and to prepare the market for them. MPR is the effort to create inventions to attract the audience.
Client Service Director of a communications agency	The whole PR is about having relations with different publics. It is a unique communication tool when you identify your target groups and hoe your strategy will reach these target groups all the time. Then, when talking about MPR, the target group is mostly customers.
Executive Director of a brand building agency	MPR is a way, function of a company that aims at increasing the social capital of a brand by creating favourable perceptions

The factors that led to the growth of MPR

The practitioners interviewed believe that today's consumers are more informed, educated, sophisticated and even critical of the promotional techniques used by companies. This highlights the importance of using MPR, which has the potential to instill trust and create a favourable environment for the communication process to take place. The study revealed the following as the key factors that have enhanced the importance of the MPR concept in the local market:

Advanced technology and telecommunications that enable customers to be more informed about brands and share word-of-mouth communication faster

- Smaller promotional budgets
- Fragmentation of media, which makes it more difficult to reach target audiences

Increasing competition in the advertising and PR sector in Thailand, which forces local Thairath TV and Voice TV Executives to adopt more efficient and unique marketing communication techniques and approaches.

The interviewees claimed that MPR is an important marketing communication tool due to its ability to effectively achieve the following goals:

- Building relationships with customers on the basis of a face-to-face interaction and two-way dialogue
- Generating awareness and brand recognition
- Making media interested in the promotional campaigns, thus creating credibility for the products/services and brands
- Communicating a key message about the products/services to target audiences in a way which does not always appear as a promotion
- Differentiation from the competition.

The local practitioners interviewed stipulated that there is a shift from traditional promotional tools such as advertising and direct marketing towards 'new' contemporary approaches such as MPR, digital PR, and social PR. Nowadays, the availability of the internet, the invention of smart communication gadgets, the emergence of social media and networks and the growth of digital TV have moved the communications field to another dimension and have resulted in a more educated, informed and sophisticated market:

According to the interviewees, customers are overwhelmed with promotions, so the key is to transfer the message to the target audience in a way which does not appear as traditional promotion. And this is exactly when and how the need for MPR emerged. MPR enables companies to promote products/services indirectly through interaction and entertainment, thus creating curiosity and interest in the communication. MPR has the ability to attract the attention of media and hence provide thirdparty endorsement, which can make the message more believable. Another factor behind the growing importance of MPR is the reduction in promotional budgets. Many practitioners believe that tighter budgets may motivate clients to invest in MPR campaigns, since MPR can generate free media coverage as opposed to paid advertising.

## V. CONCLUSION

The notions' importance is highlighted in this paper's context, calling for a significant change in both the direction and the timelines of strategic marketing processes. While textbook principles call for an evolutionary development from 'aims' to 'tactics (mix)', the abandonment of conventional strategy for the sake of agility, effectiveness and efficiency has reversed the process implementation. Consequently, practically, executives first need to evaluate their company's perception management tools competences, then design their value propositions according to what their competences can support, and then develop the strategic marketing aims that can reflexively adapt to changes. Equally importantly, the process route must change to incorporate and integrate marketing notions with PR ones to adopt the MPR philosophy. These do not constitute a conceptual devolution, but rather a strategic revolution in the whole approach to MPR and strategic marketing itself.

Further research may strengthen both the value and validity of this work through a similar methodology applied in different countries, ideally over a number of countries with subsequent comparisons. The conceptual model development (still a provisional one) needs empirical testing, both towards validation, but also towards refinement and industry-specificity. This research also bonds well with key contemporary strategic and consumer researches. A targeted research, therefore, to interrelate the MPR concepts hereby developed, with newly developed but established concepts in the wider business theory context, would also be universally beneficial to scholars and executives alike.

Concluding, it is worth noting that supplementing the established importance of its empirical and conceptual findings, this research carries further value owing to reasons that the authors cannot take credit for. These stem from the simple fact that while strategic communications' effectiveness and economic efficiency were until recently the key to industry leadership and greater profit margins, their role has changed to fit the hyper-competition characterizing developed markets. A successful MPR function therefore, executed in the right strategic marketing context and with the proper strategic marketing aims is not anymore a competitive advantage luxury; it is a necessity and a key to survival.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Luedech Girdwichai, The President of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand for financial support. Also, the author would like to thank to Asst. Prof. Dr. Prateep Wajeetongratana, the Dean of Faculty of Management Science for the full support in this research.

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