

Examining the use of communication activities within SMEs in the Vaal Triangle

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Declaration

I declare that this research is my own work. The research is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Business Administration at the NWU Business School.

It has not been, according to my knowledge, submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Hanlie Smuts

Date

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Abstract

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have a very important role to play in the South African economy. Not only do they contribute to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but they also create jobs to remedy the problem of ever-increasing unemployment.

SMEs face many challenges in their day-to-day operations. Maybe the most significant challenges are driving sales, increasing profits, surviving and eventually even thriving financially.

To achieve this goal, marketing is of the utmost importance. Viewing marketing communication as an integrated process that is intended to create long term mutually beneficial business relationships, is key.

This study specifically examined the use of four tools of integrated marketing communication: public relations, marketing, sales promotions, and direct marketing, within the SME context in the Vaal Triangle. A quantitative study utilising survey questionnaires was conducted within the SME population in Vanderbijlpark by means of a convenience sample. The data from 80 respondents was collected and analysed with the help of a statistician.

The findings indicated that public relations is not optimally used by SMEs in the Vaal Triangle. Marketing, sales promotions, and direct marketing is used to a greater extent, but in those cases, such actions are seldom, if ever, measured.

The study recommended that SMEs learn about cost effective ways to reach as many stakeholders as possible and to actively seek new ways of creating and maintaining communication with their audiences.

Keywords

Integrated marketing communication, marketing, communication, public relations, advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing.

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Chapter 1: Nature and scope of the study

1.1. Background

In South Africa, 6.18 million people who were unemployed in 2017 and the ever-tightening economy continued to make job losses commonplace within our communities. The South African unemployment rate measured at 27.7% in the second quarter of 2017 (Trading Economics, 2017). While the number of unemployed persons declined by 37 000, the number of employed persons fell by 113 000. Therefore, the unemployment rate remained unchanged from the previous period (which measured at its highest in 13 years).

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have a pivotal role to fulfil against this backdrop. The entrepreneurial spirit and rising new enterprises can add value to the South African economy, by creating jobs and providing sustainable income to the millions who are struggling in this harsh economy. Starting a new business however, often entails financial risk and expenditure. The new owner may have experience in the industry or sector that the business will operate in, but such a person is rarely experienced in management sciences and practice.

1.2. Problem statement

In their study of micro and small enterprises in Ireland, Kennedy and Wright (2016:383) found that many new small businesses do not have the resources to properly manage the communication function within their businesses. These authors found that such enterprises are usually run by an owner/manager who has technical, product, or service experience and knowledge in the industry or sector that the company will function in, but is rarely experienced in marketing, communication, or management practice. Finding activities such as communications being managed without proper research and reasoning, managed by inexperienced and untrained staff members or managed reactively instead of planned and proactively, is commonplace in small businesses.

The Vaal Triangle is situated about 60 kilometres south of Johannesburg. The area was founded around industry and flourished into a large town as smaller businesses were established to support the bigger industries. Such small businesses would be

started by an owner with technical knowledge in their trade, but seldom with knowledge or experience in other management practices, such as marketing.

Kotler and Keller (2015) defines marketing as a function of the organisation by means of which the organisation and its stakeholders benefit from the ways that value is created, communicated and delivered to customers and from the ways that the organisation's relationship with those customers are managed. The authors advocate for an integrated approach [i.e. integrated marketing communication (IMC)] where instead of advertising only, performance and integrated communication come into play when managing this function.

The buy-in of management is essential to IMC success in companies with smaller budgets, smaller staff compliments and less resources. This is the reasoning of Chaihandhanchai and Anantachart (2017:4) who argue that the ideal manager must at least have some level of marketing knowledge.

When an external factor, which is not within the control of management, influences the image and reputation of the company negatively, e.g. the business is denied credit due to unproven rumours, the importance of IMC becomes clear. When a new competitor enters the market and the business's sales plummet, the value of marketing and communication on an integrated level becomes clear. In such cases, management may find that it is already too late to attempt to manage the company's image or reputation. Measures will then have to be applied to reduce the damage, which could have been prevented by proper management of the so-called "soft issues". Some form of marketing would have to be done to stimulate sales in order to break even at the end of the month. It is essential for the owners and managers of SMEs to understand IMC and its tools in order to pro-actively manage it for the good of the business. The problem would be to understand how the average Vaal Triangle-based SME employ IMC and its tools, and whether or not they measure any results that such activities might yield.

1.3. Research questions

Considering this background, the following specific research questions can be formulated:

- i. Which IMC activities does SMEs in the Vaal Triangle and surrounding areas employ?
- ii. Are these businesses measuring their communication function in order to determine whether or not it created value for the organisation?

1.4. Contribution of the study

Throughout the literature that was studied in preparation for the research to be done, continual references are being made to the dearth of research on IMC within small and medium sized enterprises (Einwiller & Boenigk, 2012; Kennedy & Wright, 2016; Odoom, Narteh & Boateng, 2016; and Odoom, 2016). This study may identify possible future research that can be done to add to the research on IMC in the SME environment.

The OECD Report (2010) classified SMEs as “forming the backbone of wealth generating activities in many industrialised and fast-expanding economies”. The South African economy is facing many challenges that come with a bad credit rating, political instability, and service delivery issues (Niselow, 2018). Considering such a statement, the thriving of SMEs within the South African economy will prove beneficial to all. This is why the outcome of the study will also be shared with the SMEs within the Golden Triangle Chamber of Commerce in order to create value to their enterprises. The science of communication is greatly undervalued in the geographical area where they are situated. This is evident by the number of marketing and communications agencies successfully operating in the Vaal Triangle. This study can go some way to explaining the value thereof.

The extent to which respondents conduct proper planning and measurement regarding communication actions within SMEs will be assessed with this study.

1.5. Delimitations and assumptions of the study

1.5.1. Scope of the study

Chauke (2015:23) refers to the two types of communication research that can be conducted: basic communication research – looking at phenomena within the communication sphere to explain it by means of the development of theories and

applied communication research – researching practical issues within a communication environment and looking for solutions to remedy it. This study conducted applied communication research, looking at communication activities and problems surrounding it against the SME backdrop and suggesting solutions that may remedy it. The focus of this study is on small and medium businesses (employing less than 200 employees) within Vanderbijlpark and the surrounding areas (Vanderbijlpark, Sasolburg, Vereeniging, and Midvaal).

For the purpose of this study, with the measurement of efforts as well as the population in mind, the four ingredients/tools of IMC as discussed by Keegan (2016:443), and Gillespie & Hennessey (2016:434) were examined in the context of the SME. The four ingredients are: advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and direct selling.

1.5.2. Assumptions under which the study will be conducted

The study will assume that some form of advertising, public relations, sales promotion, or direct marketing is being conducted within the business of every respondent.

It cannot be assumed that a respondent knows the academic terminology and what is exactly meant by a certain term; therefore, the instrument was constructed to be clear on what is meant when asking a certain question.

1.6. Definition of key terms

The following key terms will be used in this study. More attention will be given to an in-depth definition of each term in the literature review in Chapter 2.

1.6.1. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

Einwiller and Boenigk (2012:339) defines IMC as “*a management process of analysis, planning, organising, executing and evaluating the communication of a company with its varied external and internal stakeholders, based on communication objectives that are aligned with corporate strategy and applying instruments that are aligned in terms of content, form and timing*”.

1.6.2. Small and medium-sized enterprises

The National Small Business Act (102 of 1996) defines an SME as a business entity with 200 fulltime paid employees (or less, dependent on the industry and nature of the business), with a turnover of R39 million (or less, dependent on the industry and

nature of the business) and a total gross asset value (fixed property excluded) of R23 million (or less, dependent on the industry and nature of the business). National Small Business Act (Department of Trade and Industry, 1996).

1.6.3. Tools of IMC/promotion mix/communication mix/marketing mix

A specific blend of the ingredients of the IMC mix/tools of IMC refers to various communication activities relating to communicate customer value and build relationships (Nguyen, 2016).

1.6.4. Advertising

Keegan (2015:420) defines advertising as any form of sponsored or paid message that is delivered in a non-personal way.

1.6.5. Public relations

A strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their publics (Keegan, 2015).

1.6.6. Sales Promotion

Pervez, Ghauri and Cateora (2016:481) define sales promotion as actions that intend to attract customers and promote certain products.

1.6.7. Direct Marketing

Kotler and Keller (2012:485) describe direct marketing as using channels that are aimed directly at reaching the consumer and delivering services or goods to the consumer without the help of marketing intermediaries.

1.7. Abbreviations

Within the chapters to come, some industry abbreviations will be used. Table 1.1 below will provide a meaning for each of these abbreviations.

Table 1.1: Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
IMC	Integrated Marketing Communication
PR	Public Relations
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises

1.8. Objectives of the study

Lyons (2018) asserts that good research objectives are the driver behind the entire research methodology. He observes six guiding principles to consider when developing objectives for any study.

The objectives should:

- i. Be presented in a brief and concise manner;
- ii. Be listed as a logical cycle;
- iii. Be realistic;
- iv. Be operationally phrased;
- v. Use action words, that can be measured and evaluated and
- vi. Be static once the study begins, and not change constantly (Lyons,2018).

1.8.1. Primary objective

The primary objective of this study is to examine the use of communication activities in the Vaal Triangle. The study will hone in on IMC specifically and the four tools namely public relations, marketing, sales promotions and direct marketing. The primary objective will be to:

- Determine which IMC tools and platforms are used in an SME in the Vaal Triangle.

1.8.2. Secondary objectives

When the use of IMC tools and platforms are understood, the following secondary objectives can be achieved:

- Determine if IMC efforts are measured;
- Determine if IMC efforts are planned;
- Ascertain the importance that the average Vaal Triangle SME attaches to IMC actions and
- Determine what Vaal Triangle SMEs can do to better utilise IMC in their businesses.

1.9. Research Methodology

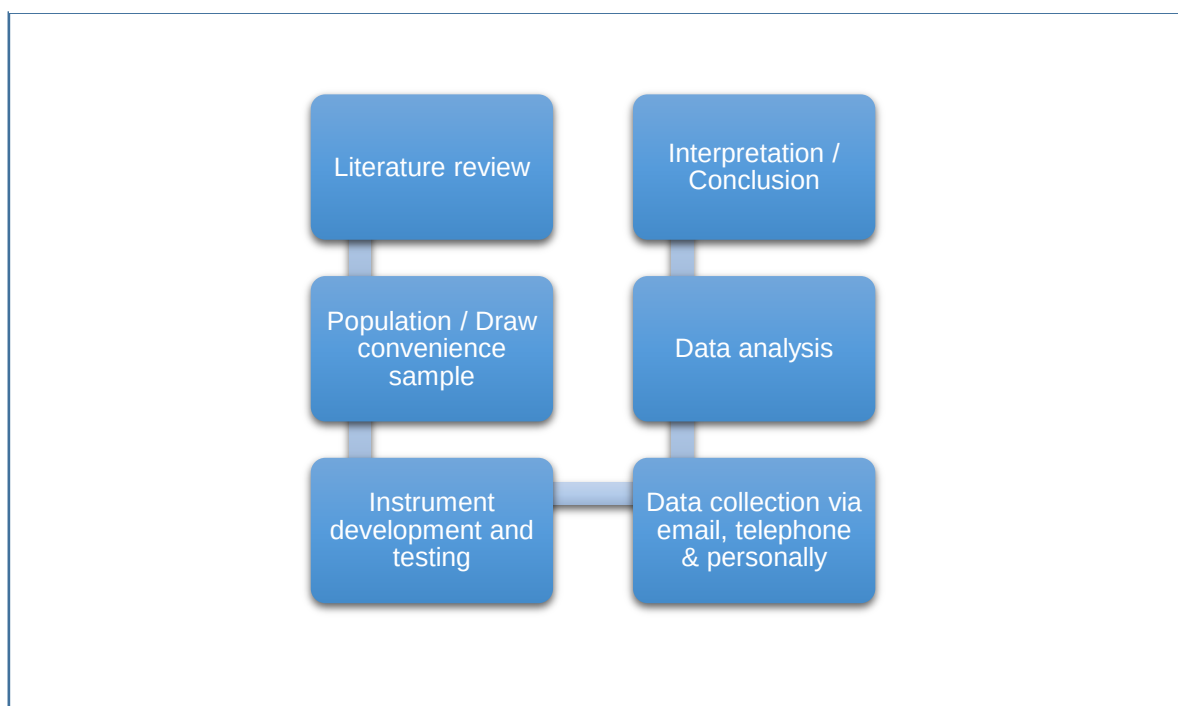
1.9.1. Description of overall research design

The research design is graphically depicted in Figure 1.1 below.

The study employed a quantitative research method to assess the use of IMC within the SME set up. McLeod (2017) defines quantitative research as looking to find facts about social trends (assuming a reality that is fixed and measurable), collecting data by means of measuring something, measuring is done by analysis using numerical comparisons and statistical inferences, and then report on it by means of statistical data.

In the initial phase of the research, a review of literature on the subject of IMC and the tools employed in the IMC process, was conducted. Resources such as books, articles, journals, and online sources were consulted to create a theoretical basis from which a quantitative research questionnaire could be constructed. The questionnaire was approved by the NWU's Statistical Consultancy Services and pilot tested to determine fine tune the instrument and the time it would take to complete. The questionnaire was then distributed among 100 qualifying small businesses to assess the way that they use IMC in their businesses. The distribution was done via email after making personal contact via telephone, and by means of personal delivery and collection. A total of 80 questionnaires were returned and statistically analysed. This amounts to an 80% response rate.

Figure 1.1: Overall research design



1.9.2. Population and sampling

The study investigated the use of IMC in small and medium enterprises, situated in the Vaal Triangle (including Vanderbijlpark, Sasolburg, Vereeniging, and Midvaal/Meyerton) and the way in which they employ IMC as a part of their daily management strategy. The respondents will be owners/managers of such businesses who are involved in the management of the organisation. The unit of analysis (the entity that will be examined) will therefore be small and medium sized businesses, operating within the Vaal Triangle area.

A convenience sample was drawn from businesses from random sectors and industries that operate as a small or medium business.

1.9.3. Data collection: survey questionnaire

The data collection instrument that will be used in this study can be found in Appendix A in this document. A survey questionnaire was used to facilitate the collection of primary data in this study. Surveys are the most widely used non-experimental research instruments. It is used as a way to measure information at a certain time, within a certain group. The instrument was validated by a statistical consultant prior to use (Debois, 2016). The first part of the questionnaire was structured to gather information on the respondent and the business he/she represented. Questions about the four tools of IMC (public relations, advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing) that was chosen to be examined, was asked subsequently by means of Likert scales. This practice would lend reliability to the questionnaire.

The marketing environment within the company was then investigated and respondents were asked to indicate who within the company was responsible for which functions. This way the importance that was attached to the different functions could be gauged (if management wanted to personally see to a certain action, it is clear that they deemed it as very important). Every question was asked to determine (1) if the company spends any time planning their IMC efforts and (2) whether or not they measure such efforts.

1.9.4. Data analysis

The data was analysed with the assistance of a professional statistician utilising IBM SPSS statistics for Windows programme, version 25.0. The complete analysis is detailed in Chapter 3.

1.10. Research Ethics

This study did not involve the participation of a vulnerable group who could not give informed consent; no participant was required to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time; no sensitive topics were discussed; no drugs, placebos or other substances were administered to participants; nor did it involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind; nor any physical, psychological or socio-economic intervention.

The nature of the study did not require any blood or tissue samples from participants nor did it induce any physical, psychological, or social stress or anxiety, or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life. This study did not require the personal identification of individuals for follow-up evaluation and no financial inducements or inducements of any other kind were offered to participants. The image of the NWU, the NWU School for Business and Governance, or any other institution however affected/involved in the project was not negatively affected by this research or put in a bad light.

The informed consent form is attached in Appendix B and the ethical clearance documents in Appendix C.

1.11. Layout of the study

The breakdown of chapters for this study is as follows:

- i. Chapter 1: Nature and scope of the study
- ii. Chapter 2: Literature review
- iii. Chapter 3: Empirical investigation
- iv. Chapter 4: Conclusion and recommendations

1.12. Summary

This chapter elucidated on the background from which the problem statement originated. The problem statement led to two primary research questions that the study intends to answer.

The chapter continued on the research design and the way that the sample was drawn from the population, how the survey was constructed and data was gathered.

The statistical analysis of the data, limitations and assumptions, as well as ethical considerations were also discussed. The chapter concluded by detailing the layout of the chapters to follow.

Chapter 2 will conduct a review of the literature on the subject that was consulted during this study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

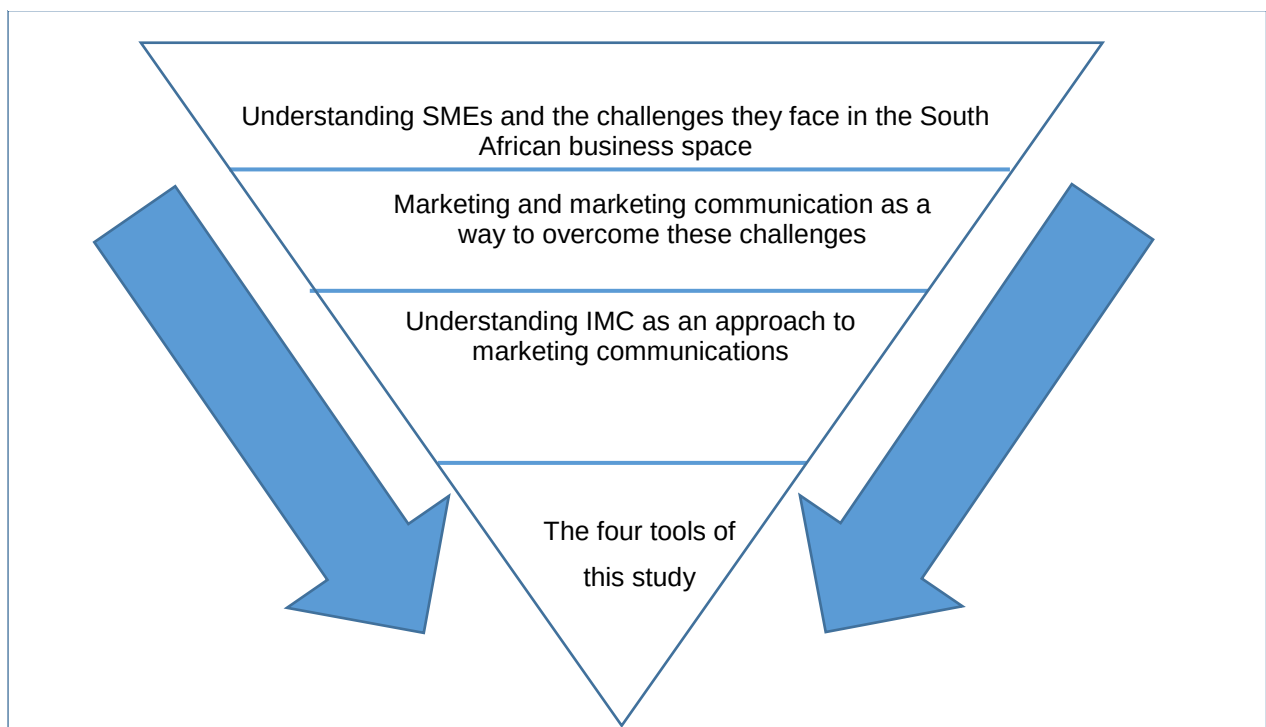
2.1. Introduction

Odendaal (2017) writes that the number of SMEs in the South African business environment is steadily increasing. She refers to South Africa as emerging and quotes the Gauteng provincial manager of the Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda) in saying that the number of SMEs in South Africa has increased from 1.6 million in 2000, to 2.4 million only seven years later (2007) and reaching a high of 5.6 million in 2010.

The National Development Plan (2011:123) concurs with this finding adding that small businesses are pivotal to job creation and as a result strengthening the economy. In the manufacturing industry, SMEs bring in only 10% of revenue, but accounts for 20% of employment (NDP, 2011).

The purpose of this chapter is to perform an analysis of the literature in order to create an understanding of IMC and the different tools that can be used to conduct effective IMC. Figure 2.1 below illustrates the layout of the chapter.

Figure 2.1: Layout of literature review



The nature of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) must be understood seeing as it is the background against which the study was conducted. This chapter will continue to look at the role of SMEs and the challenges that it faces within the South African economy. The importance of marketing and the place of marketing communication will then be investigated. The rest of the chapter will then hone in on IMC for the purpose of the study and finally on the tools or instruments that the study investigated.

2.2. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs)

2.2.1. Conceptualisation of an SME

The National Small Business Act (102 of 1996) (Department of Trade and Industry, 1996) categorises SMEs as medium, small, very small, or micro enterprises according to certain characteristics. Businesses are defined according to five elements, originally established by the act. These elements are standard industrial sector and subsector classification, size of class, equivalent of paid employees, turnover and asset value (excluding fixed property). According to this categorisation, the National Small Business Act (102 of 1996) defines a SME as follows:

An entity of business with 200 or less fulltime paid employees (depending on the industry and nature of business), with a turnover of R39 million or less (again, depending on the industry and the nature of the business), and with a total gross asset value (excluding fixed property) of R23 million or less (again, depending on the industry, but also on the nature of the business). The different SMEs may be classified according to the National Small Business Act (The Department of Trade and Industry, 1996).

The Act then continues to divide businesses according to the industry that they are operating in. In more capital-intensive industries such as mining and quarrying, an income of no more than R30 million will constitute a medium sized business. This figure seems quite large when compared to the agricultural sector, where an income of less than R4 million rand could constitute a medium sized business. It can therefore be said that the classification deals with specific types of businesses in a different way. Table 2.1 illustrates the way in which the Act classifies different SMEs.

Table 2.1: SME classification according to the National Small Business Act

Sector or subsector in accordance with the standard industrial classification	Size of class	The total fulltime equivalent of paid employees	Total turnover	Total gross asset value (fixed property excluded)
Agriculture	Medium	100	R5 million	R5 million
	Small	50	R3 million	R3 million
	Very small	10	R0.50 million	R0.50 million
	Micro	5	R0.20 million	R0.10 million
Mining and quarrying	Medium	200	R39 million	R23 million
	Small	50	R10 million	R6 million
	Very small	20	R4 million	R2 million
	Micro	5	R0.20 million	R0.10 million
Manufacturing	Medium	200	R51 million	R19 million
	Small	50	R13 million	R5 million
	Very small	20	R5 million	R2 million
	Micro	5	R0.20 million	R0.10 million
Electricity, gas, and water	Medium	200	R51 million	R19 million
	Small	50	R13 million	R5 million

Sector or subsector in accordance with the standard industrial classification	Size of class	The total fulltime equivalent of paid employees	Total turnover	Total gross asset value (fixed property excluded)
	Very small	20	R5.10 million	R1.90 million
	Micro	5	R0.20 million	R0.10 million
Construction	Medium	200	R26 million	R5 million
	Small	50	R6 million	R1 million
	Very small	20	R3 million	R0.50 million
	Micro	5	R0.20 million	R0.10 million
Retail and motor trade and repair services	Medium	200	R39 million	R6 million
	Small	50	R19 million	R3 million
	Very small	20	R4 million	R0.60 million
	Micro	5	R0.20 million	R0.10 million
Wholesale trade, commercial agents, and allied services	Medium	200	R64 million	R10 million
	Small	50	R32 million	R5 million

Sector or subsector in accordance with the standard industrial classification	Size of class	The total fulltime equivalent of paid employees	Total turnover	Total gross asset value (fixed property excluded)
	Very small	20	R6 million	R0.60 million
	Micro	5	R0.20 million	R0.10 million
Catering, accommodation, and other trade	Medium	200	R13 million	R3 million
	Small	50	R6 million	R1 million
	Very small	20	R5.10 million	R1.90 million
	Micro	5	R0.20 million	R0.10 million
Transport, storage, and communication	Medium	200	R26 million	R6 million
	Small	50	R13 million	R3 million
	Very small	20	R3 million	R0.60 million
	Micro	5	R0.20 million	R0.10 million
Finance and business services	Medium	200	R26 million	R5 million
	Small	50	R13 million	R3 million

Sector or subsector in accordance with the standard industrial classification	Size of class	The total fulltime equivalent of paid employees	Total turnover	Total gross asset value (fixed property excluded)
	Very small	20	R3 million	R0.50 million
	Micro	5	R0.20 million	R0.10 million
Community, social, and personal services	Medium	200	R13 million	R6 million
	Small	50	R6 million	R3 million
	Very small	20	R1 million	R0.60 million
	Micro	5	R0.20 million	R0.10 million

(Source: Department of Trade and Industry, 1996)

It has been established that SMEs are growing in South Africa and that such businesses are of value to South Africa and its economy.

2.2.3. The importance of SMEs to the South African economy

Moya (2018) reports on the alarming unemployment rate in South Africa by indicating that it rose to 27.5% in the third quarter of 2018. This rate is up from 27.2% in the previous quarter, the highest unemployment rate since the third quarter of 2017. It means that 6.21 million people are now without a regular income. Jobs are desperately needed to remedy the rising unemployment rate. We look to SMEs to create these jobs.

The Banking Association of South Africa (2018) sees SMEs as drivers of business growth and development, not only in South Africa, but globally. The Association

estimates SMEs to account for 91% of formal business within the economy, 60% of the labour, and a contribution to the GDP roughly amounting to 34%.

The average SME does not only contribute to the South African economy but also encourages diversification by developing new sectors with loads of potential for growth within the economy. SMEs within the technology sector bring new platforms for other businesses. These platforms in turn, create channels for local, regional, and international growth, especially in the BRICS economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) (Banking Association, 2018).

Despite being important to South Africa, and globally, managing a SME sustainably and successfully is no easy task. SMEs face an array of challenges every day.

2.2.4. Challenges that SMEs face in the South African context

In a 2017 article, Business Tech (2017) reported on the future of business survey; a monthly opinion poll conducted among SMEs in 17 countries with the aim of determining their sentiment, activities, and the challenges they are facing. The survey identified the top three challenges as:

- i. Attracting new business (indicated by 71% of respondents);
- ii. Sustaining their profitability (indicated by 53% of respondents);
- iii. Growing their revenue (indicated by 53% of respondents).

The Banking Association of South Africa (2018) adds to this list of challenges that SMEs in South Africa face:

- i. Corruption and crime;
- ii. Access to technology and low capacity for production;
- iii. Lack of skills in management;
- iv. Lack of skilled labour;
- v. Accessing markets and developing relationships with their customers; and
- vi. Being able to compete with large companies. Kennedy and Wright (2016:382) also point out that SMEs have to be able to compete with much larger companies within their sector regardless of their size.

Attracting new business, sustaining profitability, growing revenue, securing finance, accessing markets, and competing with large companies, are all challenges that can be addressed by means of marketing communication. The research of Oboreh *et al.* (2011:231) have proven that SMEs who employ traditional marketing methods with the goal of attracting new business and retaining existing customers, can expect to see an increase in sales and therefore, a rise in profit. Dzisi and Ofosu (2014:108) however, noted that the use of traditional marketing strategies for such a purpose, relates to an increased performance of such SMEs to a greater extent than non-traditional marketing strategies. The authors attribute this fact to the traditional marketing methods attracting mass attention; also the attention of potential customers.

The correct and efficient employment of management tools such as IMC will prove to add value to any SME and contribute to their success. Lamb *et al.* (2017:31) agree with this statement when stating that the main goals of any business are survival, profit, and growth. These authors argue that marketing is essential in achieving these goals.

Understanding marketing, the role of marketing communication and the success that comes with an integrated approach to marketing communication (IMC), will therefore assist the SME in overcoming most of these challenges.

2.3. Marketing and communication

According to Lamb *et al.* (2017:5) marketing can be defined as consisting of two elements: a philosophy, attitude, perspective and/or orientation that emphasises the satisfaction of the customer; and a set of activities that is utilised to implement this philosophy. From figure 2.2, it is clear that these authors subscribe to a framework of planning the marketing function, which start by choosing the objectives that the marketing effort must reach; then a SWOT analysis must be conducted to understand the position of the business. The competitive advantage of the business must next be understood and a market segment must be chosen together with the positioning that the business desires for itself. The last point of the process is constructing the marketing mix (Purely Branded, 2018).

Figure 2.2: Framework for planning marketing



(Source:Lamb *et al.*, 2017:4)

The marketing mix consists of the four P's:

Product: The product can be defined as whatever the business intends to sell. It may be tangible or intangible (a service), but in the end it is what will satisfy the needs of the customer.

Price: Once the product is understood well, there are pricing decisions to be made. The product will be positioned differently related to its price.

Place: It is often said that the success of marketing is offering the right product, at the right time, in the right place, at the right price. Looking at the location that will be best in converting potential clients into actual clients will prove very important to the success of the business' marketing efforts.

Promotion: Promotion entails the elements of marketing communication and how it is used to communicate value to the customer in order to reach marketing goals i.e. promoting the company and its products or services.

Bhasin (2018) defines marketing communication as different tactics and methods that may be used by companies to convey messages about its products and services to potential customers in a way that is unique and creative. It may be direct or indirect in nature, but the end-goal is reaching the customer and influencing their behaviour. Leonard (2018) argues that marketing communication is vital to driving sales in a company and generally ensuring sustained maximum profits. Pribanic (2018) agrees and adds that utilising the marketing communication tools should be done in an integrated manner. This concept is referred to as integrated marketing communication (IMC).

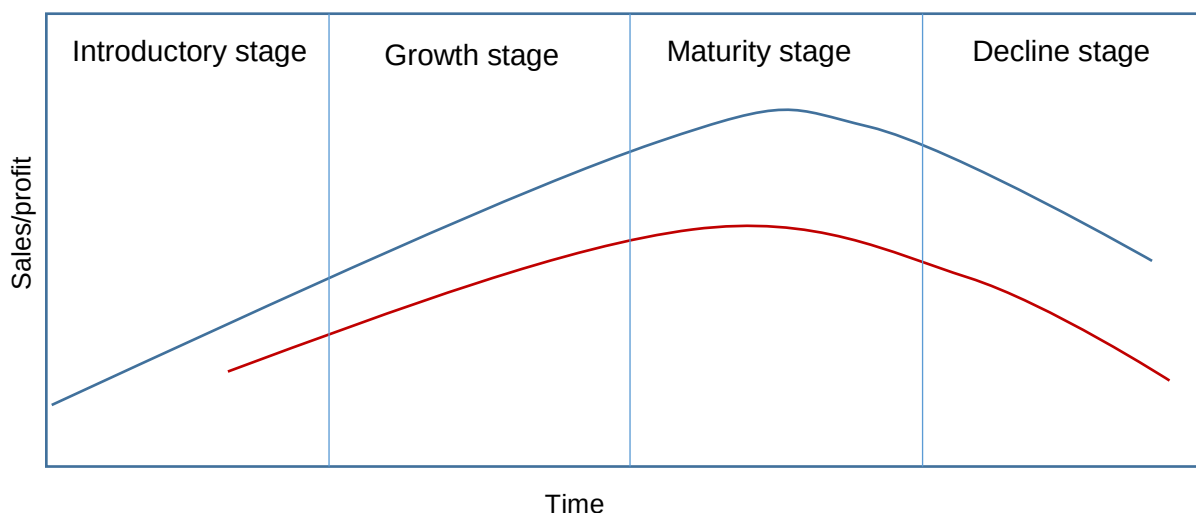
2.4. Integrated marketing communication (IMC)

As the product finds itself in different stages of the product life cycle, it requires different interventions from the tools of IMC. Before IMC can really be understood, the product life cycle needs some elucidating.

2.4.1. The product life cycle

The product life cycle explains the timeframe over which a product is developed, introduced to the market and, eventually, removed from the market. (Investopedia, 2018). It details the sequential stages that every product goes through until said removal (Business Jargon, 2017). Figure 2.3 may be used to illustrate the product life cycle.

Figure 2.3: The product life cycle



(Source: Investopedia, 2018 & Business Jargon, 2017).

- **Introductory stage:** In this stage, the product is new to the market and the business tries to create interest and awareness to subsequently establish a market for the product. In this stage, the company is required to invest in the product by spending on research, branding and trademarks, as well as extensive advertising.
- **Growth stage:** The growth stage sees the company selling more and achieving more sales. Production expands and the operation can benefit from economies of scale to further increase profits. During this stage, the competition comes into play and enters the market with similar goods or services. The company is then required to maintain or increase the quality of their product and/or even introduce new features.
- **Maturity stage:** This stage is characterised by decelerated growth and increased competition. The company has to introduce new advancements to, or other functions of, the product in order to keep their position in the market.
- **Decline stage:** In the end, the product reaches a place in the lifecycle where profits decline, the competition becomes cutthroat and the customer starts using the competitor product. When the product reaches this stage, the business must decide whether to maintain the product (introducing new features or new uses) or to abandon the product (discontinuing or withdrawing the product from the market) and moving on.

IMC must be employed to introduce the product to the market, keep it in the growth stage as long as possible, and devise solutions to keep profits up in the maturity stage. If the strategy demands that the product be maintained after it had reached the decline stage, management will once again turn to IMC to revive the product and start the life cycle from the start. IMC is of vital importance to ensure profitability in the business. This chapter will now continue to create understanding of the concept of IMC.

2.4.2. Defining IMC

Widely regarded as the authorities on IMC, Kotler and Keller (2012:476) refer to the concept of IMC as marketing communication but defines it as an integrated way by which a company endeavours to inform, persuade, and remind consumers – directly or indirectly – about its products, services, or brands. They add that this function is also used to show consumers how and why a product is used and it allows the organisation to link its brand with a person, place, event, or even a feeling thus contributing to brand equity.

The literature proves that different researchers on different continents have different names for, what is essentially, the same thing. Other definitions for IMC could include that of Barker (2013:8), who understands IMC as being a flow of analysing, planning, organising, implementing, and monitoring. Of particular interest in her definition, is that the process aims to create a synergy between diverse sources of communications (both internal and external) with certain groups of people in order to portray the company in the same light throughout i.e. creating a consistent impression or image of the business. The different elements of the IMC mix must therefore work together to reach the same objectives and speak to the intended audiences.

Einwiller and Boenigk (2012:339) also resort activities such as analysis, planning, organising, executing, and evaluating of communication of a company under the process of IMC. These authors specify varied stakeholders (internal and external) as recipients of that communication, and emphasises that the objectives of the strategy and instruments that are applied in reaching those objectives align with the corporate strategy, as well as practical considerations such as content, form, and time. From this definition, the importance of choosing the correct tools of IMC to suit the message and to align with the company's strategic objectives becomes very clear.

Porcu *et al.* (2012:326) defines IMC as an interactive and systematic process of planning across functions. These authors agree with Barker (2013:8) that IMC also entails the optimal formulating of messages to different stakeholders or publics with the idea of communicating a single, coherent, and transparent message in order to reach a place of synergy where profitable relationships can grow. This definition therefore adds that mutually beneficial business relationships should be an aim of IMC.

These definitions based on the research identify four dimensions of the concept of IMC:

- i. One voice: All channels/tools deliver the same message. This is the integrated part of integrated marketing communication. This is why there is a need for a universal strategy to manage the tools of IMC (marketing, public relations, sales promotions and direct marketing). Angelopulo and Barker (2013:15) add to the list of tools that make up marketing communication, also known as the promotional mix: personal selling, sales management, publicity, sponsorship,

and internet. All of these tools and the platforms that resort under each are discussed in Table 2.2. All these tools must convey the same message.

- ii. Interactivity: IMC aims to get an on-going dialogue going between the organisation and its stakeholders.
- iii. Cross-functional planning: The focus of the planning function is the organisation as a whole and not only the use of messages and channels.
- iv. Profitable long-term relationships: Interactively communicating to stakeholders over a period of time will lead to long term relationships and in turn positively influence the value of the brand.

Porcu *et al.* (2012:321) makes a distinction between three approaches to the way that IMC is seen:

- i. From the inside, out: The first approach focuses on what the organisation does by means of the strategic implementation of a variety of IMC tools in order to achieve a clear, consistent communication outcome with optimal impact. The problem with this approach is that it focuses so much on IMC as a way to make the elements (tools) of communication speak in one voice that it neglects to do so with a strategic vision of the company as a whole. Porcu *et al.* (2012:322) agrees with the importance of reaching a maximum marketing communication effect by speaking with one voice. However, they make a clear distinction between the tools of the communication mix and the different purposes that they can be used for. These tools will be discussed in Table 2.1.
- ii. From the outside, in: The second approach looks at the customer, client or user and what they would like to see or hear, at what time, in what location, and how. Porcu *et al.* (2012:322) see this approach as an improvement on the first approach as it is based on gaining a better understanding of the market that the business serves. This approach starts with the customer, client, or user and works its way back into the planning of the business, by identifying ways and means to reach that customer, client or user. The problem with this approach however, is that IMC is not only a communication function but also a business and brand management function.
- iii. A cross-functional strategic approach: Porcu *et al.* (2012:322) favours this approach seeing that it implies a synergy of all departments and external service providers with the purpose of planning and managing mutually

beneficial business relationships. It implies a circular process, starting with building relationships, creating value and earning revenue, attracting new clients, and retaining current ones. These authors offer a new definition for IMC: A cross-functional process that creates and maintains mutually profitable relationships with stakeholders by strategically managing messages that are sent to such groups and engaging in researched, purposeful discourse with them.

2.4.3. Tools of the IMC mix

Keegan (2016:443) argues that IMC has four tools namely advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and direct marketing. Gillespie and Hennessey (2016:434) agree with these four tools.

Kotler and Keller (2012:479), however, adds to Keegan's list by adding the following tools: events and experiences, word-of-mouth marketing, and personal selling. The latter two authors formulated a very useful table detailing the different tools of the IMC mix and the various platforms that resort under each ingredient/tool. This classification is illustrated in Table 2.2, below.

For the purpose of this study, with the measurement of efforts, as well as the population in mind, a limitation was placed on the number of communication avenues within the IMC mix that were examined in the context of the SME. Keegan's (2016:443) four tools namely advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and direct marketing were investigated against an SME backdrop.

The reason for the limitation was that investigating only these four tools enabled the researcher to conduct a more detailed research and to focus on understanding these four elements. Another reason was the nature of the SME. As discussed earlier in this chapter (point 2.2.3), the South African SME face many challenges among which the lack of finances and the lack of management know-how. These four elements are the best known tools and can be employed at relative low costs (when choosing suitable platforms as listed in Table 2.2). It therefore makes sense to investigate them specifically.

Table 2.2: Kotler and Keller's IMC tools and the common communication platforms that resort under each

Advertising	Sales promotion	Events and experiences	Public relations and publicity	Direct and indirect marketing	Word-of-mouth marketing	Personal selling
Print and broadcast adverts	Contests, games, sweepstakes	Sports	Press kits	Catalogues	Person-to-person	Sales presentations
Packaging outers	Premiums and gifts	Entertainment	Speeches	Mailings	Chat rooms	Sales meetings
Packaging inserts	Sampling	Festivals	Seminars	Telemarketing	Blogs	Incentive programmes
Cinema	Fairs and tradeshow	Arts	Annual reports	Electronic shopping	Social media	Samples
Brochures and booklets	Exhibits	Causes	Charitable donations	TV shopping		Fairs and trade shows
Directories	Demonstrations	Factory tours	Publications	Email		
Reprints of adverts	Coupons	Company museums	Community relations	Voicemail		
Billboards	Rebates	Street activities	Lobbying	Company blogs		
Display signs	Low-interest financing		Identity media	Websites		
Point of purchase displays	Trade-in allowances		Company magazine			
DVDs	Continuity programmes					

(Kotler and Keller, 2012:479).

The literature was consulted to define and determine the effective use of these four tools, starting with advertising.

2.5. Advertising

Keegan (2015:420) defines advertising as any form of sponsored or paid message that is delivered in a non-personal way. Kotler and Keller (2012:478-490) acknowledge that advertising is usually the central point of an IMC campaign, but say that it seldom stands alone. The latter two authors identify three characteristics of this tool of IMC:

- i. Pervasiveness: The seller has the option of repeating the message over and over again to ensure it reaches the potential customer. In the same way the customer can receive the message and compare it to the competition.
- ii. Amplified expressiveness: The organisation can portray itself, its services, and its brand in an amplified and creative way using sight and sound.
- iii. Control: The advertiser can choose what message it wants to send.

Frolova (2014:5) defines advertising as consisting of the following main elements. She asserts that advertising:

- i. Is a form of communication, which is paid for (and can be very expensive, depending on the channel);
- ii. Is sponsored by an identified party;
- iii. Uses media channels to distribute the message (mostly one-way communication which only hopes to attract attention and lead to some form of action);
- iv. Aims the message at a certain audience;
- v. Can be quite impersonal (therefore has a detrimental effect on persuasiveness compared to interpersonal communication); and
- vi. Is targeted at someone specifically.

Kotler and Keller (2012:479) identified eleven platforms that may be used by a business to advertise: 1) print and broadcast advertisements; 2) outer packaging of a product; 3) inserts inside the packaging of a product; 4) cinema advertisements; 5) brochures and/or booklets; 6) listing the company in a directory; 7) reprinting an advertisement that was previously utilised; 8) erecting a billboard; 9) using display signs; 10) displays at the point of purchase; and 11) advertising on DVDs.

Lamb *et al.* (2017:386) identify the four different types of advertising that may be used dependant on the objectives of an advertising campaign and where the product finds itself within the context of the product life cycle.

i. Institutional advertising

Institutional advertising is also referred to as corporate advertising. This type of advertising aims to promote the institution or company in its entirety and not only a certain part or product thereof. The objectives it seeks to achieve are to gain the favour of the audience, and to establish or maintain the brand of the organisation. (Lamb *et al.*, 2017:386).

ii. Product advertising

Product advertising aims to promote a specific product or service as well as its benefits (Lamb *et al.*, 2017:387). The product's place in the product life cycle will determine which one of the following types of advertisements are employed:

- Pioneering advertising

Pioneering advertising aims to stimulate a first or pioneering demand for a new product or service. This type of advertising is heavily relied upon during the introductory phase of the product life cycle; educating the customer on the benefits and uses of the product, and creating awareness and interest (Lamb *et al.*, 2017:387).

- Competitive advertising

Also referred to as brand advertising, this type of advertising is used to differentiate the company's product from other competing products that are emerging during the growth stage of the product's life cycle. The objective of competitive advertising is to build demand for the specific brand and not necessarily for the type of product. It emphasises small differences, aims to establish recognition of and positive connotation with the brand. The aim of competitive advertising is to encourage the customer to choose the company's brand above that of the competition (Lamb *et al.*, 2017:387).

- Comparative advertising

To get the message across and reach the company's objectives, the marketing manager must choose a platform that will reach their identified market segment best. Not all messages reach the customer best by means of paid advertisements.

Some instances allow the company to reach its target market using an IMC tool that comes without a major cost element and with an increased credibility i.e. public relations.

2.6. Public relations (PR)

According to Keegan (2016:436) the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) sought to redefine the term public relations. The Society requested input from academics, practitioners, and the public at large and they received more than 900 definitions. The winning entry defined public relations (PR) as a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their publics.

Mmutle (2017:11) defines public relations as the systematic planning and distribution of messages in order to manage the image of the business, while evaluating public attitudes and interests, and executing actions to earn the understanding and acceptance of the public.

In her study on the public relations efforts within SMEs in the nano-technology industry, Nell Huang-Horowitz (2015:345) found that the responsibility of public relations management within a small enterprise is often shared. The research of this researcher found PR to be of vital importance to SMEs for them to: 1) formulate an identity for itself; and 2) then create a good reputation.

Hong *et al.* (2012:536) studied the importance of crisis communication readiness by conducting case studies on actual crisis management practices of five SMEs. These authors explained that SMEs also have to deal with crisis events that disrupt their businesses (which can include natural disasters, unforeseen social or political change, and economic influences). Lamb *et al.* (2017:388) add suppliers,

shareholders, government role players, as well as employees to the list of stakeholders that the PR function is used to communicate to.

The practice of public relations employs publicity and a variety of other tools – including special publications, participation in community activities, fundraising, sponsorship of special events, and various public affairs activities – to enhance an organisation's image. Kotler and Keller (2012:497) add press kits, speeches, seminars, annual reports, charitable donations, publications, community relations, lobbying, and internal communications as other PR related activities. PR is often chosen over advertising as IMC tool. Kotler and Keller (2012:491) list the qualities of PR that make it so appealing:

- i. High credibility: Stories from an outside source are deemed much more trustworthy than messages generated by the organisation itself;
- ii. Ability to reach buyers that are hard to find: Consumers that keep away from mass media may be reached in this manner; and
- iii. Dramatization: Telling the story behind the product, company, or CEO.

While a credible and popular IMC tool with a knack for reaching consumers, PR is not the only tool or instrument that may be employed successfully in SMEs. Sales promotion also has a very important role to play.

2.7. Sales Promotion

Pervez, Ghauri and Cateora (2016:481) define sales promotion as any actions with the purpose of attaining customers and promoting products.

Gillespie and Hennessey (2016:447) define sales promotion as adding value to a product in order to generate sales. These authors provide the examples of coupons, gifts, and price reductions, but also add the following activities to resort under sales promotion:

- i. Sport promotions and sponsorships: Purchasing signs and advertising space at sports events, and gaining publicity from the mass media presence at the event or sponsoring a sports team or event.

- ii. Product placement: Having your product appear in a television show or a movie. A good example is the Volvo motor vehicles driven by the main characters in the Twilight series of movies.
- iii. Buzz marketing (word-of-mouth): When marketers try to get the attention of the consumer to sell the product, but also to get them talking about it.

Kotler & Keller (2012:479) list sales promotion platforms as contests, games and sweepstakes, premiums and gifts, sampling, fairs and tradeshow, exhibitions, demonstrations, coupons, rebates, low-interest financing and trade-in allowances.

Cateora, Gilly and Graham (2011:454) added point of purchase displays to their list of sales promotion platforms while defining sales promotions as activities in the short term aimed at the consumer or retailer with specific goals such as getting the consumer to try the product or immediately buy it, introducing the consumer to the brand or outlet, getting retail point-of-purchase displays, encouraging outlets to keep the product in stock, and supporting and boosting advertising and personal sales.

Kotler and Keller (2012:491) identify three benefits of sales promotion:

- i. It grabs the attention: The customer is led towards the product;
- ii. Incentive: The customer gains some value from it; and
- iii. Invitation: It includes a specific invitation to act on the message immediately.

Hassan *et al.* (2015:262) employ the AIDA (attention, interest, desire and action) model of marketing communication when examining the use of digital media in SMEs and found sales promotion as pivotal in creating desire. They recommend using discounts, buy-one-get-one-free offers, and similar sales promotions to help create the desire and nudge the customer towards a purchase. These authors also recommend that a business should keep the following in mind when opting to utilise sales promotion as an IMC tool:

- i. Objectives of the campaign must be formulated: These objectives may include selling more units of a product, urge new users to try the product, encouraging purchases in quiet times, or building loyalty to the brand.
- ii. Choosing the right promotional tool: Ensure that the promotional platform used will be suitable in reaching the objectives set. This may be for trade-promotion (business-to-business) or business-to-salesforce (aimed at gathering business leads, impressing customers, and motivating the company's own salesforce).

- iii. Develop the programme and pre-test it: By considering the size of the incentive, the terms and conditions of participation, how long the promotion will be running, how and when it will be distributed, and the total budget allocated to the effort, the sales manager can now develop the programme. Before starting the programme however, it is wise to test the efficiency of the programme.
- iv. Implement and evaluate it: Prior to the launch of the programme, it is imperative that the marketing manager decides how the effort will be measured. Sales figures or conducting surveys with customers will prove to be invaluable to measuring the marketing effort (Hassan *et al.*, 2015:262).

2.8. Direct marketing

Kotler and Keller (2012:485) describe direct marketing as the utilisation of consumer direct channels (CD channels) to reach customers and deliver goods or services without using a marketing intermediary. Key and Czaplewski (2017:327) view the one-on-one, personal nature of direct marketing as its distinguishing feature, creating a relationship with gaining a response as the chief objective. They see big data as the engine driving the direct marketing effort as a properly maintained database lies at the heart of direct marketing success.

Keegan and Green (2015:464) compare direct marketing to mass marketing as seen in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Keegan and Green's comparison between direct marketing and mass marketing

<u>Direct marketing</u>	<u>Mass marketing</u>
Marketer adds value for the customer by arranging for delivery to their door.	Typically, the benefits of the product do not include delivery.
Marketer controls the product from order to delivery.	Marketer usually has nothing to do with the process as the product is turned over to the distribution agents.
Direct-response advertising is employed to generate an immediate enquiry or an order.	Advertising leads to building the image, awareness, and loyalty. The actual purchase comes much later.

<u>Direct marketing</u>	<u>Mass marketing</u>
Repetition is used within the ad/offer.	Repetition is used over a period of time.
Customer perceives higher risk as the purchased product is not seen.	Customer perceives less risk as the product is seen and contact is made with the product.

Source: Keegan & Green, 2015:464.

Kotler and Keller (2012:486) see direct marketing as an interactive system that utilises different platforms to acquire a measureable response. It involves reciprocal interaction with the customer and involves targeting the potential client or customer, personalising the message, being flexible and valuing the privacy of the potential customer. The authors specify the platforms of particular value to the direct marketing process as catalogues, mailings, telemarketing, electronic shopping, television shopping, email campaigns, voicemail, company blogs, and websites.

Utilising some or all of the tools of IMC must be done with a purpose in mind. By documenting the problem and planning a solution for it, management can proactively and purposefully direct the company's journey towards solving the problem.

The proper planning of integrated marketing communication can therefore be investigated.

2.9. Planning and measuring IMC

Kitchen and Burgmann (2010:11) recommends that proper market research must be done prior to employing IMC instruments to achieve any marketing goal. They advocate for gaining information pertaining to the customers, their different backgrounds, and their wants or needs, during the process of planning. The customer's perspective on relevant issues must be better understood, as should their motivation and behaviour. Their viewpoint relates the outside-in perspective that was discussed earlier in this chapter.

Patti *et al.* (2017:351) agrees that any IMC efforts are senseless if not done with specific objectives in mind. Objectives provide a framework for the measurement and assessment of effectiveness of IMC efforts by providing valuable information

regarding the use of the many media and channels available for use in IMC campaigns as well as the complete impact of such campaigns.

Kotler and Keller (2012:482) recommend properly planning the IMC effort by identifying the audience, determining objectives that must be reached by the effort, designing communications, selecting channels, establishing the budget, and deciding on the right mix of media. These authors also recommend measuring the results that the effort was meant to achieve and managing the process, restarting if need be.

There are many ways to do planning. For the purpose of this study, any evidence of a planning process or premeditated intention will be deemed valuable seeing as the study did not aim to evaluate any processes, but merely to investigate the prevalence of planning actions.

While investigating the social media marketing for small and medium enterprises in Helsinki, Trong Hieu Nguyen (2012:10) investigated the five factors that may be used to measure the effectiveness of IMC activities:

- i. Customer responses;
- ii. Market performance;
- iii. Brand exposures; and
- iv. Channel support or level of channel cooperation.

For the purpose of the study and to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1, any evidence of a measurement process will be deemed valuable seeing as the study did not aim to evaluate any processes, but merely to investigate the prevalence of measurement actions.

2.10. Summary

The South African economy is facing many challenges, one being the unacceptably high unemployment rate. SMEs have an undeniable role to play in creating jobs and strengthening the economy in this way. Yet, the South African SME faces a variety of challenges every day making it hard to survive. Properly applying marketing management principles and marketing communication in an integrated way has been proven to drive sales and increase productivity, especially when used in the correct way in the various stages of the product life cycle.

For the purpose of this study, the literature review looked at this concept and specifically at four tools of IMC, namely advertising, public relations (PR), sales promotion, and direct marketing. The proper utilisation of these tools, adequate planning, execution and measurement of such efforts, may see the small business finding itself in a different position regarding its customers. They may find that it is building a relationship with its customers, getting valuable feedback from them, and being able to implement new ways of reaching new customers, while providing a better product to their existing customer corps.

Chapter 3 will look at the scientific way in which the study was conducted, explaining the questionnaire that was used in the survey and report back on the findings of the study.

Chapter 3: Empirical investigation

3.1. Introduction

In Chapter 1 of this document, an overview of the study, its importance and the problems it aims to solve were discussed. The chapter briefly touched on the concept of IMC and its importance in the SME context.

Chapter 2 looked at the literature around the concept of IMC and the four ingredients, or tools, which the study is investigating. Reviewing the literature enabled the composition of a quantitative survey that looked at the application of IMC practices, specifically regarding advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and direct marketing.

In the first part of this chapter, the scientific methods employed in constructing the research design will be discussed. A survey was conducted by means of a questionnaire that intended to find out if SMEs in the Vaal was using IMC and whether or not they measured their efforts to determine the return on investment. The study is exploratory and provides insight into the way that SMEs think about IMC and specifically advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and direct marketing.

In the second part of this chapter, the results of the questionnaire will be statistically analysed and assessed to understand IMC in the SME context and finally looked at answering the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

3.2. Research methodology

Conducting an empirical study entails considering the research design, selecting the population and drawing a sample, compiling and testing an instrument, limitations to the study, distributing the questionnaires and collecting the data, capturing the data and analysing it statistically.

All of these steps will be discussed below.

3.2.1. The research design

The research design can be seen as a plan detailing how to get participants to the research that is to be conducted (subjects and respondents) and how information

may be obtained from them (Welman & Kruger, 1999:46). It describes the work that will be done with research subjects in order to answer the research questions.

The research design of this study can be described as follows:

This study employed a quantitative method to assess the use of IMC in the SME set up.

The research started with a review of literature on the subject of IMC and the tools employed in the IMC process. Resources such as books, articles, journals, and online sources were consulted to create a theoretical basis from which a quantitative research questionnaire could be constructed. Phophalia (2010:5) describes quantitative research as research based on quantified measures. Such research analyses findings by means of statistics. Closed-ended questions and answers on a Likert-scale would not only suit the nature of the question that the study aimed to ask, but would also provide results timeously and effectively.

The questionnaire was approved by a statistical consultant and piloted to determine the clarity of the instrument and the time it would take to complete.

3.2.2. Population and sampling

A major consideration was determining the target population that is relevant to the research. The study will look at standard practice in small and medium enterprises, situated in the Vaal Triangle (including Vanderbijlpark, Sasolburg, Vereeniging, and Midvaal/Meyerton) and the way in which they employ IMC as a part of their daily management actions. The respondents will be owners/managers of such businesses who are involved in the management of the organisation. The unit of analysis (the entity that will be examined) will therefore be businesses: small and medium enterprises, operating within the Vaal Triangle area. From this population, a sample had to be drawn. A sample refers to a purposeful selection of a certain amount of individuals from the population who will be able to provide the data that is necessary to enable the researcher to reach a conclusion from the research conducted (Jankowicz, 2000:192). A convenience sample was drawn from random businesses in and around the Vaal. The researcher also physically visited random businesses in an effort to increase the rate of response. The sample (100 businesses) represented

businesses from random sectors and industries and adhered to the criteria (or the kind of respondent) that is required for the study.

A total of 80 questionnaires were returned or retrieved and statistically analysed. This amounts to an 80% response rate. Data Spring (2018) reports the following percentages for research response rates dependant on the methodology of the research: Online questionnaires, 30%; telephonic interviews, 80%; emailed questionnaires, 50%; personal interviews, 80%. After conducting this research by means of a combination of online questionnaires and personal interviews, an 80% response rate may be considered successful.

3.2.3. Compiling the instrument

A copy of the questionnaire can be perused in Appendix A. As already mentioned, the literature review was the starting point of the research on the subject of marketing, communication, and an integrated approach to marketing communication (IMC).

Resources such as books, articles, journals, and online sources were consulted to create a theoretical basis from which a quantitative research questionnaire could be constructed.

The questionnaire was approved by a statistical consultant and informally tested to determine the clarity of the instrument and the time it would take to complete.

A cover letter for the attention of the respondent preluded the questionnaire. The respondent was thanked for taking the time to complete the questionnaire and informed that it was for the purpose of the researcher's studies towards completing a master's degree in business administration. The researcher offered to share the information obtained from the study with the respondent in order to add value to the enterprise of the respondent.

The letter further ensured the respondent that there are no right or wrong answers, that the respondent's answers will remain confidential, that the purpose of the research is to identify trends within SMEs in the area and that the questionnaire will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. The latter was tested informally with test respondents who are not familiar with subject content.

The questionnaires were distributed via email and personally, after initial contact was made via a telephone call.

3.2.4. Limitations of the study

The first limitation with regards to this study is the sample size: the convenience sample of 100 businesses (of which 80 responded), is a very small part of the total SME sector in the Vaal Triangle and more so, in South Africa. The findings can therefore not be generalised.

The conclusions drawn from the study can, however, certainly be used to identify issues that small businesses are facing, new channels that they are utilising to address their IMC needs, and their general attitude towards the importance of IMC.

For the purpose of this study, with the measurement of efforts as well as the population in mind, a limitation was placed on the number of communication avenues within the IMC mix that were examined in the context of the SME. Keegan's (2016) four tools, namely advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and direct marketing were investigated against an SME backdrop.

The reason for the limitation was that investigating only these four tools enabled the researcher to conduct a more detailed research and to focus on understanding these four elements. Another reason for the limitation was the nature of the SME. The South African SME faces many challenges among which the lack of finances and the lack of management know-how. These four elements are the best-known tools and can be employed at relative low costs (when choosing suitable platforms as will be discussed in Chapter 2). It therefore makes sense to investigate these four tools specifically.

3.2.5. Collecting, capturing, and analysing the data

As mentioned earlier, the questionnaires were distributed, to businesses within the sample, electronically after making telephonic contact with representatives of those businesses. Many questionnaires were also personally delivered to respondents and personally collected after they have been completed.

The instrument was numbered in order to make data analysis easier. The data was captured and submitted for analysis by a professional statistician. The analysis of the data and findings thereof will be presented in complete detail in the next part of this chapter.

3.2.6. Presentation of results

The data that was gathered by means of the questionnaires was analysed to uncover the significance of the responses. The data was analysed by means of the IBM SPSS statistics for Windows programme, version 25.0.

The quantitative data was captured by the researcher and statistically analysed with the assistance of a professional statistician. Frequency tables for the different questions were compiled and analysed to understand the spread of data and indicating valid percentages.

The reliability of the multiple-choice questions in the questionnaire was tested by means of Cronbach's Alpha. Heo *et al.* (2015:86) defines a question as reliable if the same results would be measured in case an individual would retake the survey, under the same conditions. It assumes that the aspects being measured are linked to each other. The test would give a result in numbers between 0 and 1. A good result would be above 0.70, a better result is 0.80, and the best result is above 0.90 (Statistics Solution, 2018).

The data was found to be non-normally distributed through calculating skewness and kurtosis values, as well as conducting the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Arsenault (2017) describes the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test as an efficient method of testing if two samples are significantly different from one another. The test rejects the null hypothesis i.e. that it is possible that two samples come from the exact same distribution. Arsenault formally defines the test as a statistic that assigns a quantity to the distance between the empirical distribution function (regarding the sample) and the cumulative distribution function (regarding the reference distribution), or between the functions of empirical distribution of two samples (Arsenault: 2017).

Surbhi (2017) explains the concepts of skewness and kurtosis in an easy to understand comparison as below in table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Comparing skewness and kurtosis

Comparison basis	Skewness	Kurtosis
What it means:	The tendency of a distribution of data that determines the symmetry thereof around the mean.	A measurement of the respective sharpness of the curve, in the frequency distribution.
What it measures for:	The degree of lop-sidedness in the distribution of the data.	The condition of a distribution that resembles the form of a tail (tailedness).
What it is:	An indicator of a lack of equivalence in the frequency distribution.	The measure of data which is either peaked or flat related to the normal distribution.
What it represents:	The amount and direction of the skew.	How tall and sharp the central peak is.

(Source: Surbhi, 2017)

The p-values (reported on later in this chapter) were found to be significant, indicating non-normality of the data, and therefore non-parametric statistical calculations were used for further data analysis. In order to determine if there were differences within the answers of certain questions, the Kruskal-Wallis test was utilised. The Kruskal-Wallis test is a non-parametric test. This means that it does not make the assumption that the data is from a distribution that can be completely described by the two parameters of mean and standard deviation, the way that a normal distribution can (McDonald, 2014:157).

In order to calculate the effect sizes of possible differences, non-parametric *post-hoc* tests were carried out, using a Bonferroni correction to compensate for Type 1-errors. Napierala (2012) explains that the Bonferroni correction is an adjustment that is made to P-values when several dependent (or independent) statistical tests are being performed at the same time on a single set of data. The Bonferroni correction is used to reduce the chances of obtaining a false-positive (Type 1-errors that were

referred to earlier) when multiple pair wise tests are performed on a single set of data (Napierala,2012). These consisted of comparing calculated mean rank differences to the critical differences calculated for specific groups (Field, 2018).

The questionnaire and its findings will now be explained in more detail.

3.3. Questionnaire

A copy of the questionnaire may be referred to in Appendix A.

A cover letter for the attention of the respondent preluded the questionnaire. The respondent was thanked for taking the time to complete the questionnaire and informed that it was for the purpose of the researcher's studies towards an MBA. The researcher offered to share the information obtained from the study with the respondent in order to add value to the enterprise of the respondent.

The letter further ensured the respondent that there are no right or wrong answers, that the respondent's answers will remain confidential, that the purpose of the research is to identify trends within SMEs in the area. The questionnaire was piloted with test respondents who are not familiar with subject content.

The questionnaire utilised a Likert Scale in a total of eight questions. The reliability of these questions were assessed by means of Cronbach's alpha. Goforth (2015) refers to Cronbach's alpha as a measure of internal consistency of a concept, in other words if the question would yield the same results if retaken under the same conditions. Goforth (2015) asserts that the standards for a good result when using Cronbach's alpha depends on the scale that is being measured, but that a coefficient between 0.65 and 0.8 or higher would indicate a good measure of reliability.

The Cronbach's alpha measurements for the different questions may be summarised as follows in table 3.2:

Table 3.2: Reliability statistics as per Cronbach's alpha

IMC constructs	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Construct 1: Planning and measurement for PR activities	4	0.847
Construct 2: Use of public relations	12	0.824
Construct 3: Planning and measurement for advertising	4	0.762
Construct 4: Use of advertising	14	0.737
Construct 5: Use of Sales promotion	10	0.855
Construct 6: Use of Direct marketing	9	0.810
Construct 7: Use of Personal selling	2	0.709
Construct 8: Marketing communication environment	7	0.772

All of the questions that utilised a Likert-scale measured a Cronbach's alpha of between 0.709 to 0.847. It can therefore be asserted that these questions are reliable for use in the questionnaires. The questionnaires could therefore be distributed and the gathering of data could commence. The questionnaires were distributed via email and personally, after initial contact was made via telephone call.

The questions in the questionnaire will now be analysed and discussed in detail.

3.4. Discussion of the results/ statistical analysis

3.4.1. Question 1: Your business and you

Questions 1.1 to 1.10 were aimed at understanding the biographical compositions of the group of respondents and the nature of the various businesses in which they operate. The findings of these questions are useful to understand the composition of the sample.

The first question (1.1) listed the different industry classifications that an SME could resort under, according to the National Small Business Act (Department of Trade and Industry, 1996). The respondent only had to indicate, by means of ticking the correct box, which industry their business resorts under. For the purpose of

presenting the results, the different industries have been listed from the one represented by the most respondents, to the ones that was not represented in the study. The different respondents represented their respective industries as follows:

1. **Retail:** The majority of respondents are operational in the retail sector. A total of 25 participating respondents indicated their business to belong to this sector. This amounted to **32.1%** of all respondents.
2. **Community, social, and personal services:** **21.8%** (n=17) of respondents do business within the category of community, social, and personal services.
3. **Catering, accommodation, hospitality, and tourism:** 11 respondents indicated their operations fall into this category. This accounts for **14.1%** of respondents.
4. **Finance and business services:** A total of 7 respondents provide finance and business services (**9.8%**).
5. **Manufacturing:** **5.1%** (n=4) of respondents were operating in the manufacturing industry.
6. **Construction:** **5.1%** of participating respondents indicated their business to belong to this sector (n=4).
7. **Wholesale trade, commercial agents:** **5.1%** (n=4) of respondents operate as wholesalers or commercial agents.
8. **Transport, storage, and communication:** **3.8%** of respondents operate in this sector (n=3).
9. **Motor trade and repair services:** **2.6%** of participating respondents indicated their business to belong to this sector (n=2).
10. **Electricity, gas, and water:** A single respondent (**1.3%**) operates in electricity, gas, and water.
11. **Agriculture:** **No respondents** from the agriculture sector took part in the study.
12. **Mining and quarrying:** **No respondents** from the mining and quarrying sector took part in the study.

Question 1.2 was formulated to determine the size of the business by the number of permanent employees (excluding the owner) that it employs.

1. 0-5 employees (1), which indicates a micro business;
2. 6-50 employees (2), which constitutes a small business; or
3. 51-200 employees (3), which indicates a medium sized business.

Table 3.3: Number of permanent employees

		Frequency	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0-5 (Micro)	51	63.7	63.7
	6-50 (Small)	23	28.7	92.5
	51-200 (Medium)	6	7.5	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	

As can be seen from Table 3.3, a total of 63.7% (n=51) of respondents operated in a micro business, employing up to a maximum of 5 employees; 28.7% (n=23) operated in a small business, employing up to 50 employees; and 7.5% (n=6) of businesses are medium sized, employing between 51 and 200 employees. The descriptive statistics indicated that the mean for the number of permanent employees was 1.44 with a standard deviation of 0.633.

Intended to assess the financial well-being of the company, Question 1.3 asked for an estimated figure indicating the total annual turnover over the last three years with a space to fill out the turnover for the years 2015, 2016, and 2017. This question however, proved to be a weak point within the questionnaire, as most respondents did not feel comfortable with disclosing financial information, therefore the question showed a low rate of response. The responses are summarised in Table 3.4 below:

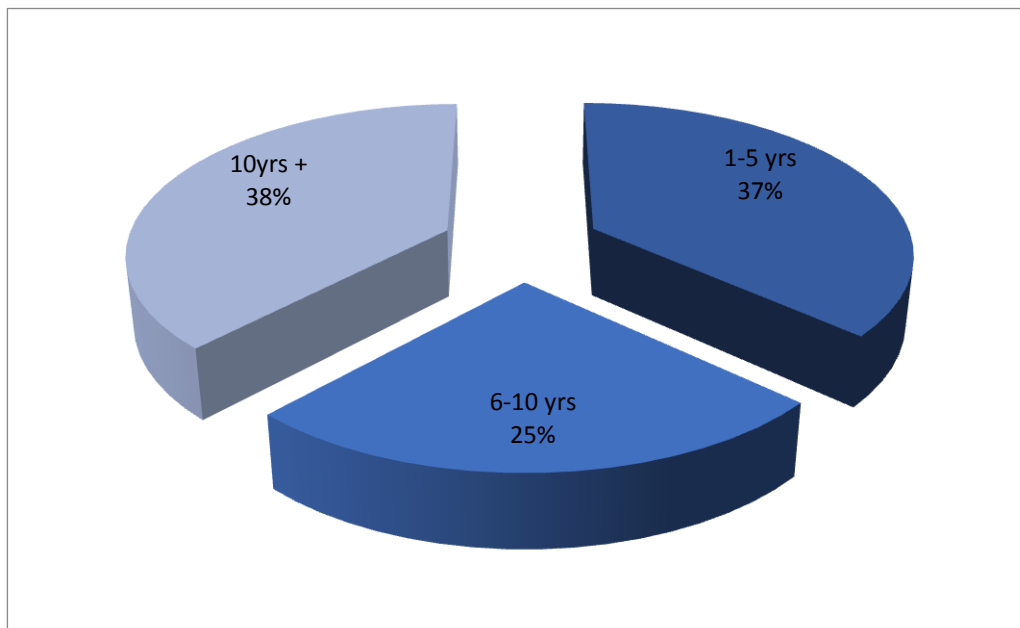
Table 3.4: Average turnover per annum for the years 2015, 2016, and 2017

Year	N	Minimum turnover	Maximum turnover	Mean
2015	17	R 50 000	R 6 000 000	R 1 940 950.53
2016	17	R 100 000	R 7 000 000	R 2 342 328.59
2017	19	R 60 000	R 8 000 000	R 2 401 568.16

Question 1.4 tried to determine the age of the current business. Figure 3.1 (below) indicates the responses to be as follows:

1. 1-5 years (which was coded as 1): 36.7% of respondents (n=29) represented new businesses which was established in the last 5 years;
2. 6-10 years (which was coded as 2): 25.3% (n=20) of respondents were from businesses which had been operating for 6-10 years; and
3. Longer than 10 years (which was coded as 3): 38% of respondents (n=30), represented businesses that have been operational for longer than 10 years.

Figure 3.1: Years in business



The descriptive statistics revealed the mean for this question to be 2.01 with a standard deviation of only 0.870. This indicates that the average business that took part in the study had been in business for 6-10 years.

The purpose of Question 1.5 was to determine the way that the respondent got involved in the business:

1. The owner started the business: Indicated by 73.3% (n=55) of respondents;
2. The business was already in existence when the owner acquired it: Indicated by 18.7% (n=14) of respondents;
3. The owner bought a franchise: Only 3 respondents (4%) indicated having bought a franchise;
4. Inherited (family business): Another 3 respondents (4%) indicated that they are running a family business.

A total of 5 respondents (6.3%) refrained from indicating an answer to this question.

Question 1.6 assessed the business' plans to grow in the future. It asked whether the business planned to employ more people in the future, to which the respondent could answer only "yes" or "no".

Table 3.5: Will you employ more people in future?

		Frequency	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	No	30	38.5	38.5
	Yes	48	61.5	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	
Total		80		

As explained in Table 3.5, most businesses had the intention of growing: 61.5% of 48 respondents (n=48) indicated that their businesses would employ more people in the future, while only 38.5% (n=30) indicated they will not. Two respondents (2.5%) did not complete this question.

The respondent was asked if the business was a member of the local chamber of business in question 1.7, to which the respondent could again only answer "yes" or "no". Table 3.6 below indicates that 86.1% of businesses (n=68) were not members of the local chamber of business. 13.9% of respondents (n=9) who took part in the study, was from businesses that are members of their local chamber of business. One respondent (1.3%) did not answer this question.

Table 3.6: Are you a member of chamber of business?

		Frequency	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	No	68	86.1	86.1
	Yes	11	13.9	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	
Total		80		

The aim of question 1.8 intended to determine the gender of the respondent to which the respondent could only indicate “male” or “female”. A total of 46.3% (n=37) males participated in the study, while 53.8% (n=43) of respondents were female.

The objective of Question 1.9 was to determine the age of the respondent.

As Table 3.7 explains below:

1. Between 22 and 37 years (1): 31.3% of respondents (n=25) indicated to be between 22 and 37 years;
2. Between 38 and 53 years (2): The majority of respondents, 52.5% (n=42) indicated their age to be between 38 and 53 years;
3. Between 54 and 72 years (3): 16.3% of respondents (n=13) indicated to be between 54 and 72 years of age;
4. 72+ years of age (4): No respondents who participated in the study fell into this age group.

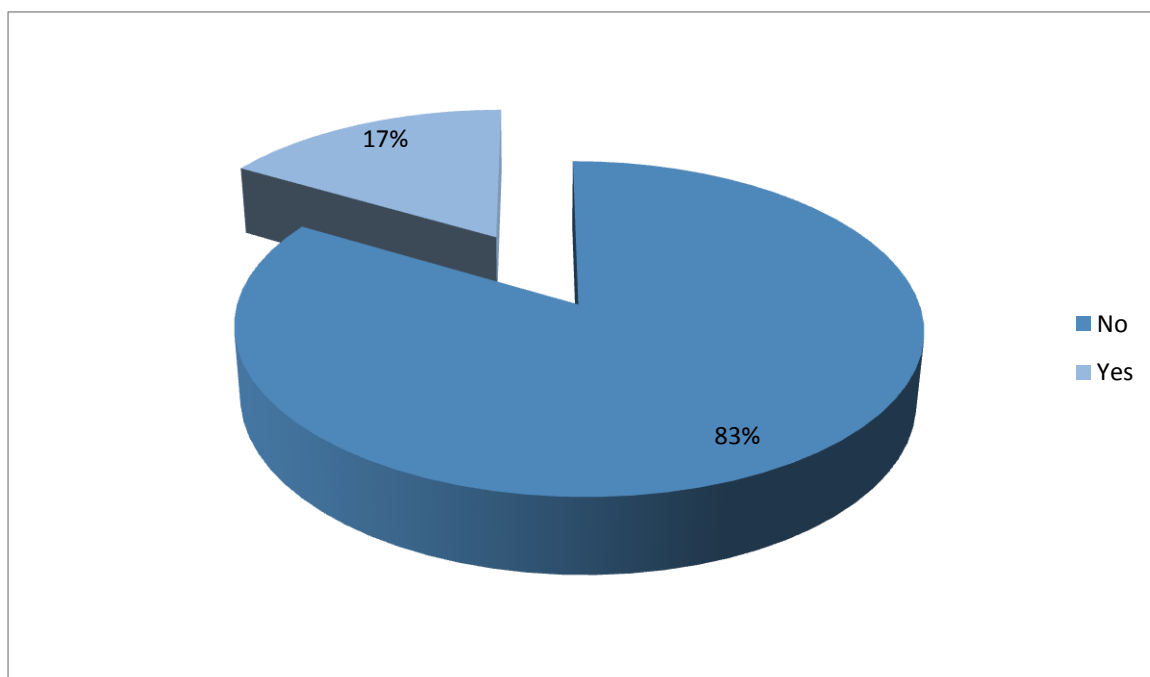
Table 3.7: Age of the respondent

		Frequency	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	22-37 years	25	31.3	31.3
	38-53 years	42	52.5	83.8
	54-72 years	13	16.3	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	

The descriptive statistics showed that the mean of the respondents' ages amounted to 1.85 with a standard deviation of 0.677. This indicated that the average age of respondents fell high in the age group between 38 and 53 years.

Question 1.10 concluded the questions about the respondent and the business by asking the respondent if the business employs a full time, qualified communications or marketing manager, to which the respondent could answer "yes" or "no". Figure 3.2 below clearly indicates that the majority of businesses 83.5% (n=66) do not.

Figure 3.2: Do you employ a full time, qualified communications or marketing manager?



This concluded the first part of the questionnaire and paints a clear picture of the different organisations that were represented in the study. The next part of the questionnaire looked into the use of the IMC tool, public relations (PR).

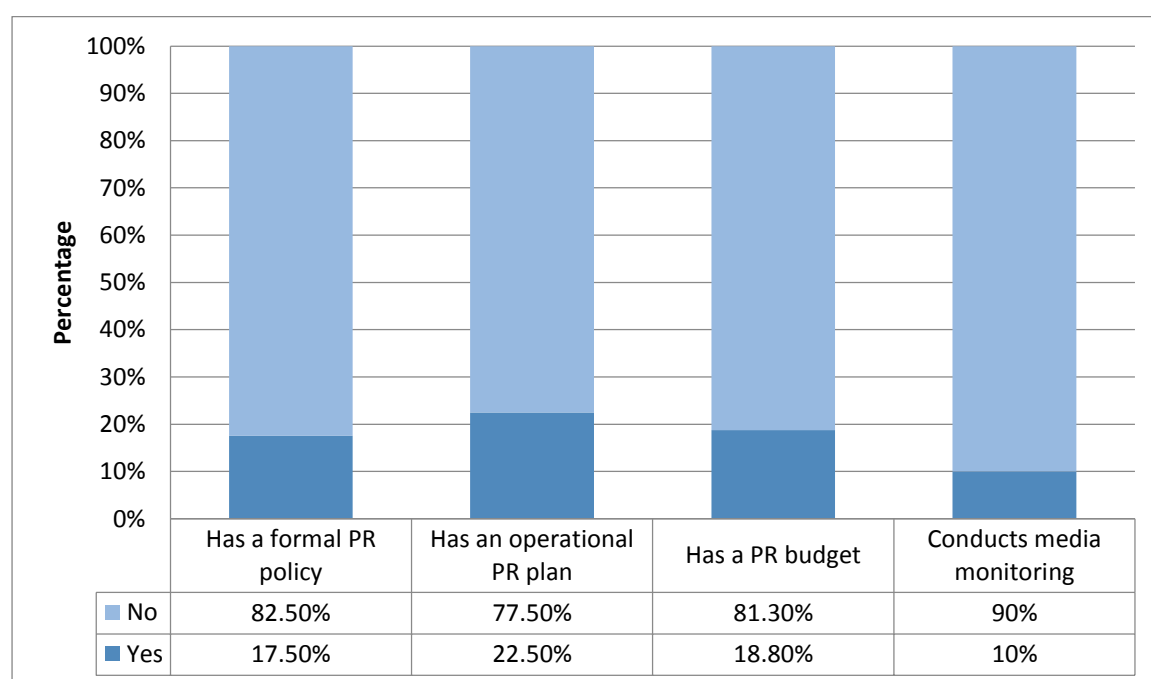
3.4.2. Question 2: Public relations (PR)

Question 2 investigated PR in the SME context. In order to ensure that the respondent would understand what was meant with the concept of each of the tools, a short definition was included at the beginning of the question pertaining to each respective tool. In the case of PR: communicating messages to create a favourable image with the company's different publics/stakeholders.

The reliability of question 2.1 regarding the planning and measurement of public relations was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. The four items worked out to 0.847, which is a good score indicating good reliability.

The first part of question 2 (2.1 to 2.4) consisted of "yes" or "no" questions to determine the extent to which the business plans and measures PR. Figure 3.3 below paints a clear picture of the following: the amount of businesses that uses a PR policy (17.5%, n=14); an operational PR plan (22.5%, n=18); has a formal PR budget (18.8%, n=15); or that conducts media monitoring (10%, n=8).

Figure 3.3: Understanding the planning and measurement of PR



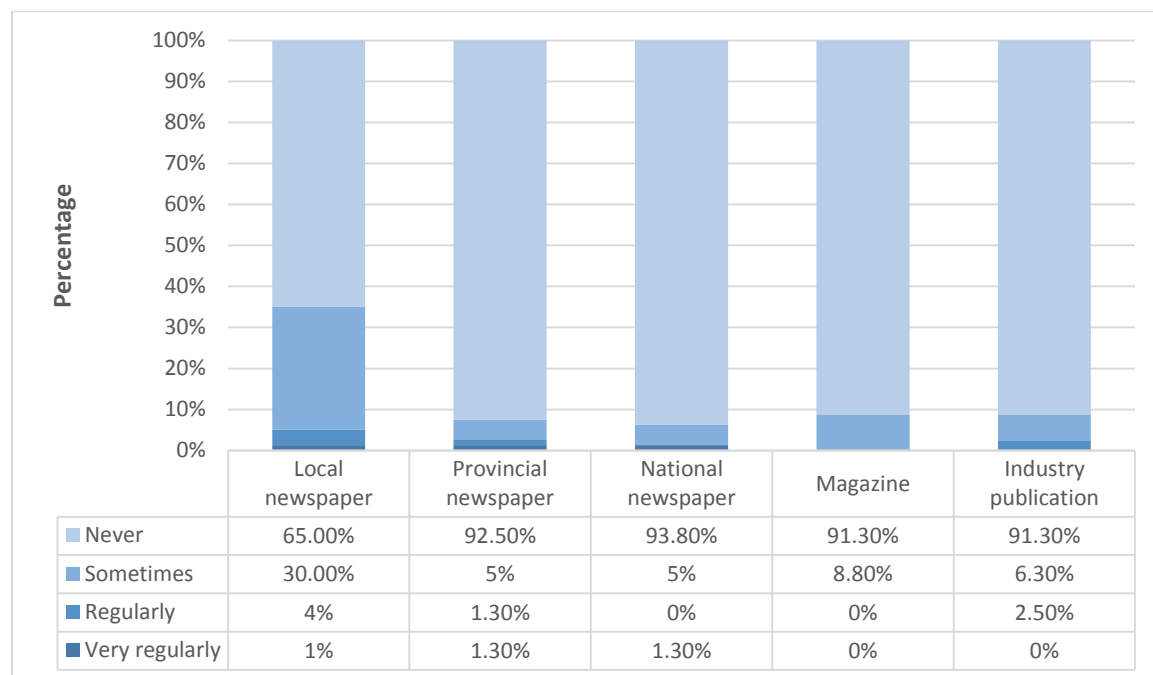
The second part of question 2 (2.2, question no. 1-13) was purposed to assess the use of PR within the business. It asked the respondent to indicate the frequency that the business used different platforms of PR in the last 12 months. The respondent could indicate one of four levels of frequency: never, sometimes, regularly or very regularly.

This question was formulated as a four point Likert-scale with a total of 12 items and was tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. It worked out to 0.824, which is a good score indicating good reliability.

The first question assessed the business' or representatives' presence in an unpaid feature of any kind (article, write up, story or report) in the previous 12 months. A total of 72.5% (n=58) of respondents have not featured in any medium in an unpaid feature in the last year. Of the respondents who have indicated that their businesses have indeed featured in the media, 16 (20%) featured sometimes, while only 5 (6.3%) featured regularly and a single respondent (1.3%) very regularly.

The next five questions looked specifically at printed media.

Figure 3.4: Use of PR platforms



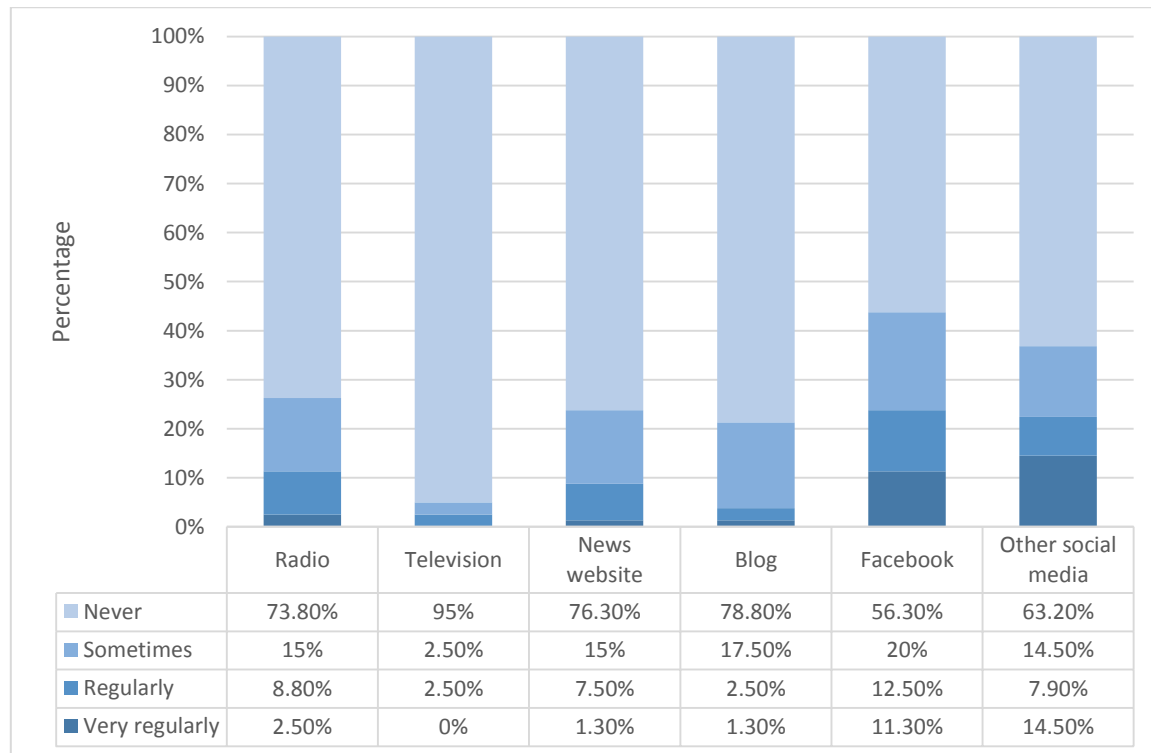
As indicated by Figure 3.4 above, only 5% of respondents (4% (n=3) regularly and 1% (n=1) very regularly) have featured in the local newspaper regularly or very regularly in the last year. A total of 30% (n=24) have indicated that they have featured sometimes and the remaining 65% (n=52) have not featured in the local newspaper in the last 12 months at all.

Just over 2.6% (n=3) of respondents, 1.30% regularly and 1.30% very regularly, have featured in the provincial newspaper regularly and very regularly respectively. A total of 5% (n=4) have indicated that they have sometimes featured in a provincial newspaper while the remaining 92.5% (n=74) have never featured in the last 12 months. The information detailing the use of PR in the remaining platforms listed, painted a similar picture: 93.8% (n=75) indicated to never have featured in a national newspaper in the last 12 months, 91.3% (n=73) have never featured in a magazine,

and the same percentage (91.3%, n=73) have never featured in an industry publication in the last 12 months.

The following six questions focussed on PR platforms other than printed media.

Figure 3.5: Use of PR platforms (continued)



As indicated in Figure 3.5, television has hardly ever been utilised in the last 12 months, with 95% (n=76) of respondents indicated to have never featured on television.

Radio has been utilised sometimes by 15% (n=12) of respondents, regularly by 8.8% (n=7) and very regularly by 2.5% (n=2), leaving 73.80% (n=59) never resorting to using radio as a PR platform. News websites and blogs showed quite similar results, showing 15% (n=12) of respondents sometimes using news websites and 17.50% (n=14) sometimes using blogs, both showed 1.30% (n=1) of respondents indicating very regular use of these platforms.

The popularity of Facebook and other social media platforms, was clearly visible by the 11.30% (n=9) of respondents who indicated that their business features on a Facebook news story very regularly, 12.5% (n=10) indicating that they feature regularly and 20% (n=16) only sometimes utilising this platform. This leaves only 56.30% (n=45) of respondents who have never utilised Facebook as a PR platform in the last year; this is significantly lower than the other figures that have been seen

so far. 63.2% (n=48) of respondents have never utilised other social media platforms for PR. Other social media features have, however, been utilised very regularly by 11 (13.8%) respondents, regularly by 6 (7.5%) and sometimes by 11 (13.8%).

Number 13 of Question 2 asked the respondent to indicate if their business had utilised any platform other than the ones mentioned in PR efforts in the last 12 months. Only one respondent (1.3%) responded by indicating that their business also uses the social media channel Instagram.

The descriptive data indicated a mean of 1.25 for PR with a standard deviation of 0.493. This indicates that the most answers were for high in the first category (the first category indicated a tool never being used in the last 12 months).

When specifically looking at measurement, there are significant differences to be seen between variables.

3.4.3. Question 3: Advertising

Question 3 investigated the next IMC ingredient/tool, namely advertising. This question also featured a short definition in order to ensure that the respondent understood what was meant by the concept, advertising, in the context of this research project.

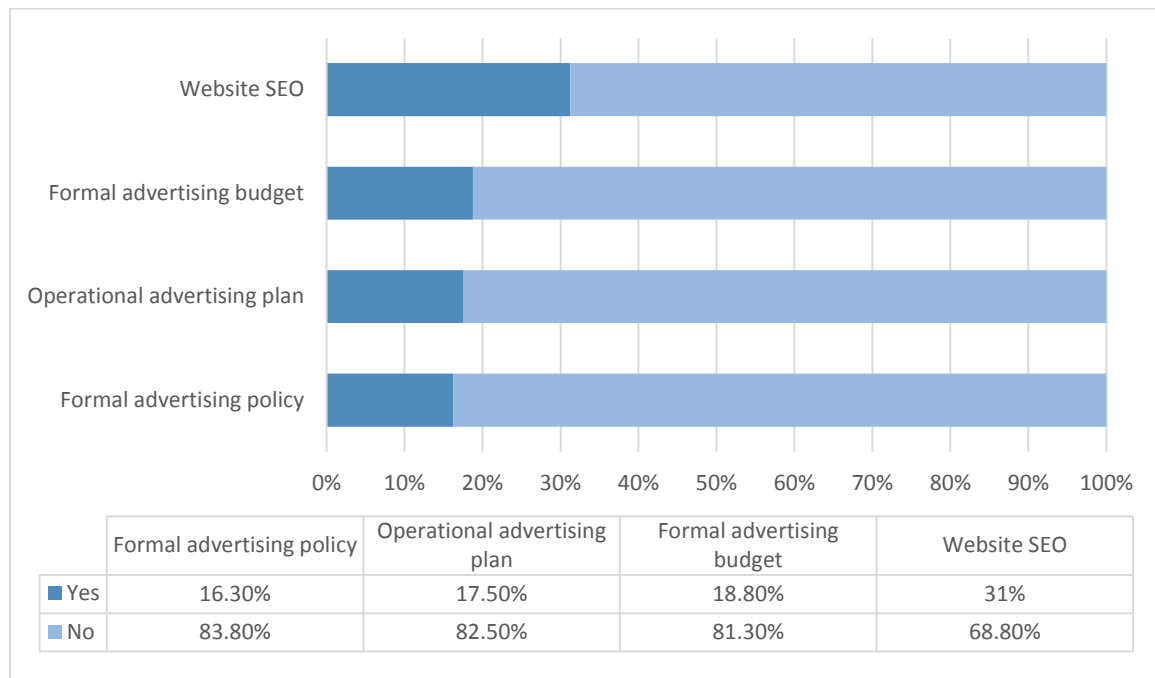
Advertising is defined by Lamb *et al.* (2017:10) as specific messages paid for by the business to communicate a very particular (positive) message to the person or group of persons that it is intended for.

The reliability of question 3.1 regarding the planning and measurement of advertising was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. The four items worked out to 0.762, which is a good score indicating good reliability.

The first part of question 3 (3.1) consisted of four questions assessing the planning that goes into the advertising process within the respondent's business. The respondent could answer only "yes" or "no" to each of these questions.

Figure 3.6 certainly shows that more thought is going into advertising than into PR; 16.3% (n=13) has a formal advertising policy, 17.5% (n=14) follows a formal advertising plan, 18.8% (n=15) allocates money to a formal advertising budgets and 31% (n=25) has optimised their websites for search engines.

Figure 3.6: Planning of advertising



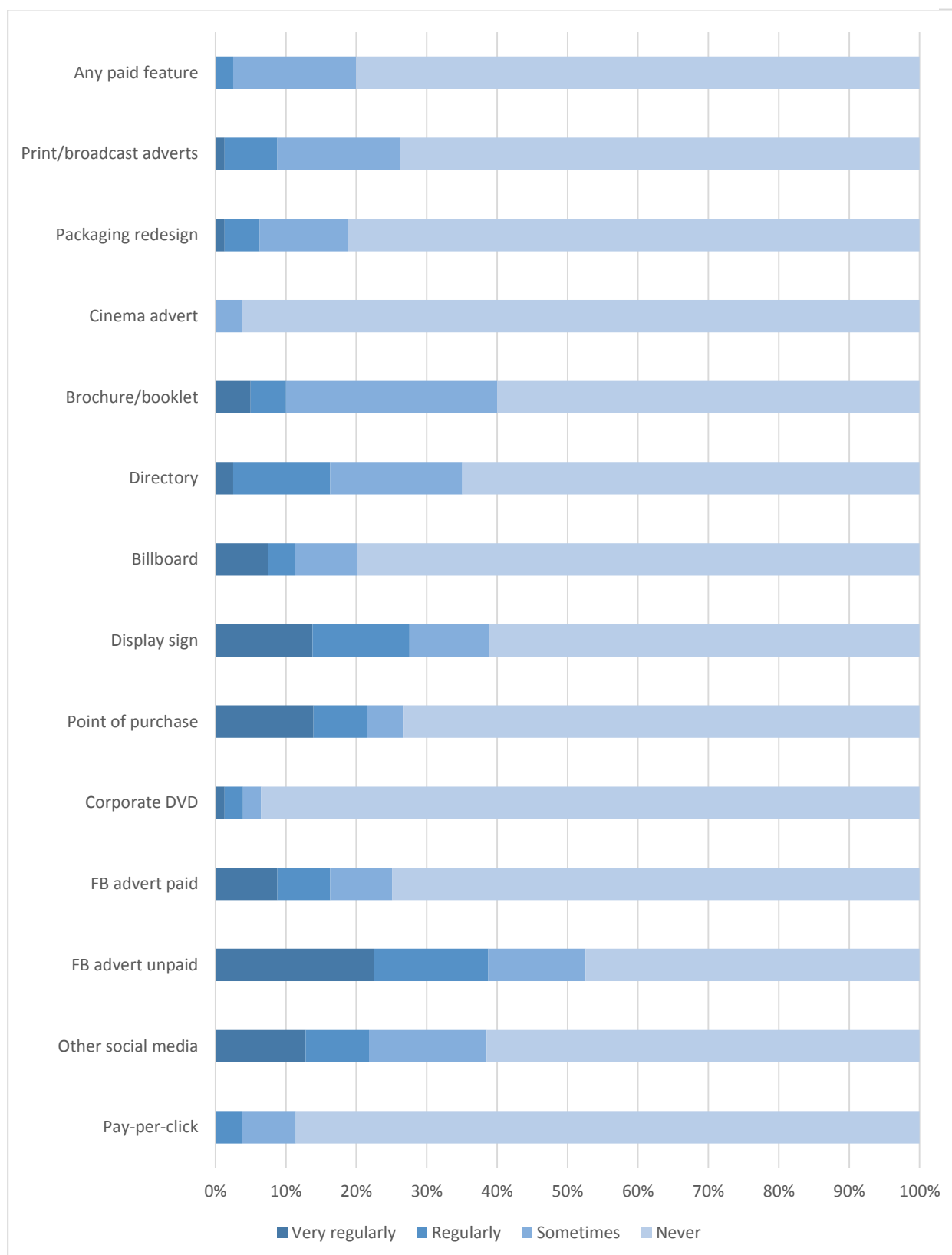
The use of advertising within the respondent's business was assessed in the second part of question 3 (3.2, no. 1-15). These questions were purposed to assess the use of advertising within the business. It asked the respondent to indicate the frequency that the business used different platforms of advertising in the last 12 months. Again, the respondent could indicate one of four levels of frequency (never, sometimes, regularly, very regularly).

The reliability of question 3.2 regarding the use of advertising was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. The 14 items worked out to 0.737, which is a good score indicating good reliability.

From Figure 3.7 the use (or non-use) of the different advertising platforms can clearly be seen. The first question assessed the use of any paid feature in the media during the last 12 months. Only 2 respondents (2.5%) indicated regular use (0% chose the "very regular" option), 17.5% (n=14) admitted to using a paid feature sometimes while 80% (n=64), indicated that they never use paid advertising.

When asked about printed and broadcasted advertising, the responses indicated that 73.8% (n=59) of respondents never engage in printed or broadcasted adverts, 17.5% (n=14) using it sometimes, 7.5% (n=6) using it regularly, and 1.3% (n=1) using it very regularly.

Figure 3.7: Use of advertising platforms



The responses to packaging redesign were quite surprising seeing as the redesign of a product's packaging could turn out to be an expensive exercise. 81.3% (n=65) of respondents indicated to have never conducted a packaging redesign, 12.5% (n=10) of businesses have done a redesign sometime in the last year, 5% (n=4) have done so regularly, while one respondent (1.3%) redesign their packaging very regularly.

Cinema advertising is another platform that comes with considerable cost. Most respondents (96.3%, n=77) therefore indicated to have never used it, while three respondents (3.8%) have indicated that their businesses utilised this platform sometimes during the last 12 months.

A total of 30% of respondents (n=24) indicated that they have advertised in a brochure or booklet sometime during the last 12 months. Another 10% indicated either regularly or very regularly doing so (5%, n=4; 5%, n=4) in the last year and 60% (n=48) indicating never using this platform.

The use of a directory seemed also to be utilised more frequently than most platforms measured thus far. A total of 15 (18.8%) respondents have featured in a directory sometime in the last 12 months, 11 (13.8%) respondents indicated to have done so regularly, and two (2.5%) very regularly.

Six respondents (7.5%) admitted to featuring on a billboard very regularly in the last 12 months, and three (3.8%) indicated the "regular" option. Another seven (8.8%) revealed that they have featured on a billboard sometime in the last 12 months. The remaining 80% (n=64) have never done so.

The use of a display sign seems to be the most popular yet. Eleven respondents (13.8%) disclosed the fact that they have used display signs regularly in the last 12 months. Another eleven (13.8%) have done so regularly. Nine respondents (11.3%) have used a display sign sometime in the specified time frame while the remaining 61.3% (n=49) have never done so.

Point of purchase displays try to catch the customer's eye for the purpose of upselling just before the purchase transaction is done. 73.4% (n=58) of respondents have never utilised this platform. Of the remaining respondents, 5%, n= 4 has used it sometime in the last year, 6 respondents (7.6%) have used it regularly and 11 (13.9%) respondents have used point of purchase displays very regularly in the last 12 months.

The use of a corporate DVD has only been employed by a few. 2 (2.6%) respondents have indicated that they have used it sometime during the last 12 months, 2 indicated regular use and 1 (1.3%) very regular use of a corporate DVD. The remaining 93.6% (n=73) have never used this platform.

When looking at Facebook advertising and differentiating between paid and unpaid, the results shows that paid advertising is certainly used on Facebook, but that the main use of Facebook for advertising purposes by this group of respondents are unpaid. 22.5% (n=18) uses unpaid Facebook advertising very regularly, 16.3% (n=13) indicated regular use and 11 (13.8%) indicated using it sometime in the last year. Only 47.5% (n=38) indicated to never have used unpaid Facebook advertising in the last 12 months. The use of paid or sponsored Facebook advertising is evident in the total of 25% of respondents indicating that they have used it in the last 12 months [8.8% (n=7), sometimes; 7.5% (n=6), regularly; and 8.8% (n=7), very regularly]. 75% of respondents (n=60) have, however, not used it in the last year.

Other social media have been used by a substantial amount of respondents. Only 61.5% (n=48) have indicated that they have not used other social media in the last 12 months. 16.7% (n=13) have indicated using it sometimes, 9% (n=7) regularly and 12.8% (n=10) very regularly feature on other social media. The various social media used is specified in question 3.3.

Pay-per-click advertising was utilised significantly less: 3.8% (n=3) of respondents used this platform regularly in the last year, while 6 of them (7.6%) used it sometimes. The remaining 88.6% (n=70) did not engage in pay-per-click advertising in the last 12 months.

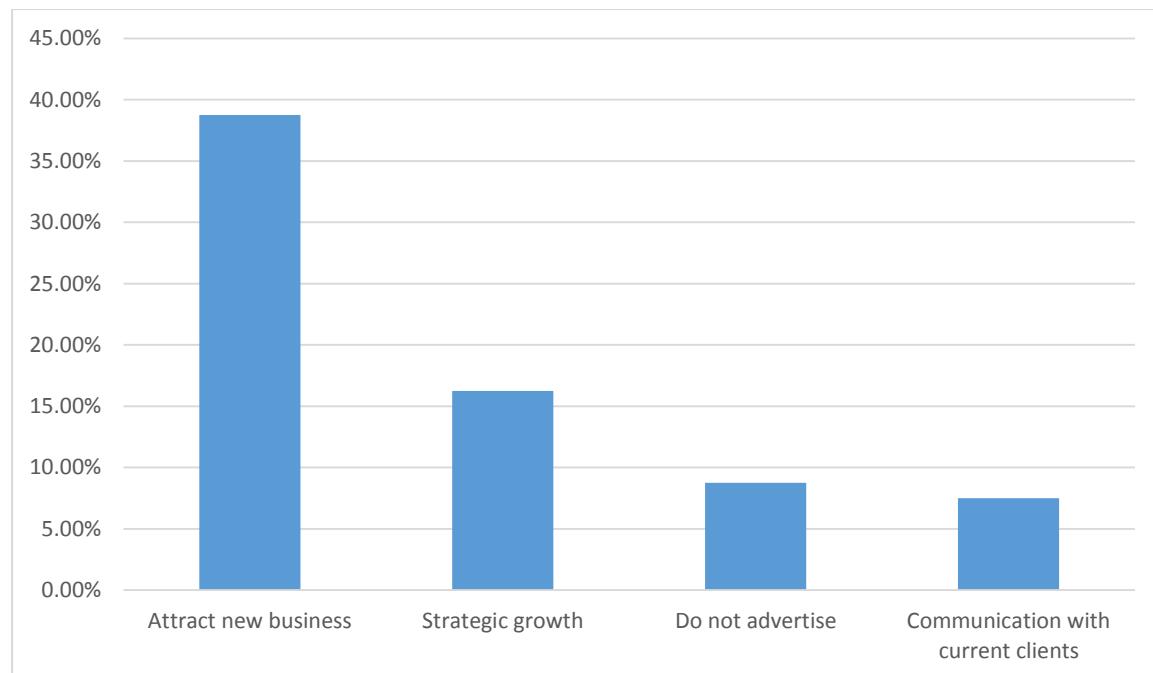
The last question assessing the use of advertising, asked respondents to indicate if they have used another platform of advertising. Five respondents (6.3%) indicated that they also employ WhatsApp, 6 respondents (7.5%) indicated use of Instagram, while LinkedIn, Word-of-Mouth and email each received a single mention (1.3%).

Question 3.3 was an open-ended question. This question intended to find out why the respondent advertises. The themes of their responses are illustrated in Figure 3.8 and can be reported as follows:

A total of 31 respondents (38.75%) indicated that they advertise to attract new business. The strategic growth of the business was given as another reason for

advertising (16.25%, n=13). A group of respondents used this space to indicate that they do not advertise (8.75%, n=7) while another group (7.5%, n=6) uses advertising as a way to communicate with the current customer base (be it for specials or other reasons). A last theme could be identified as respondents listed actions that they are trying to solicit from customers by means of advertising: to make donations (2.5%, n=2), to download an application (1.3%, n=1), or to buy from the online store (1.3%, n=1).

Figure 3.8: Why respondents advertise



The next section of the questionnaire assessed sales promotion.

3.4.4. Question 4: Sales promotion

Question 4 looked at the next tool of IMC that was included in the study, sales promotion. The questionnaire provided a short definition of the concept of sales promotion: Pervez, Ghauri and Cateora (2016:481) define sales promotion as actions that intend to attract customers and promote certain products.

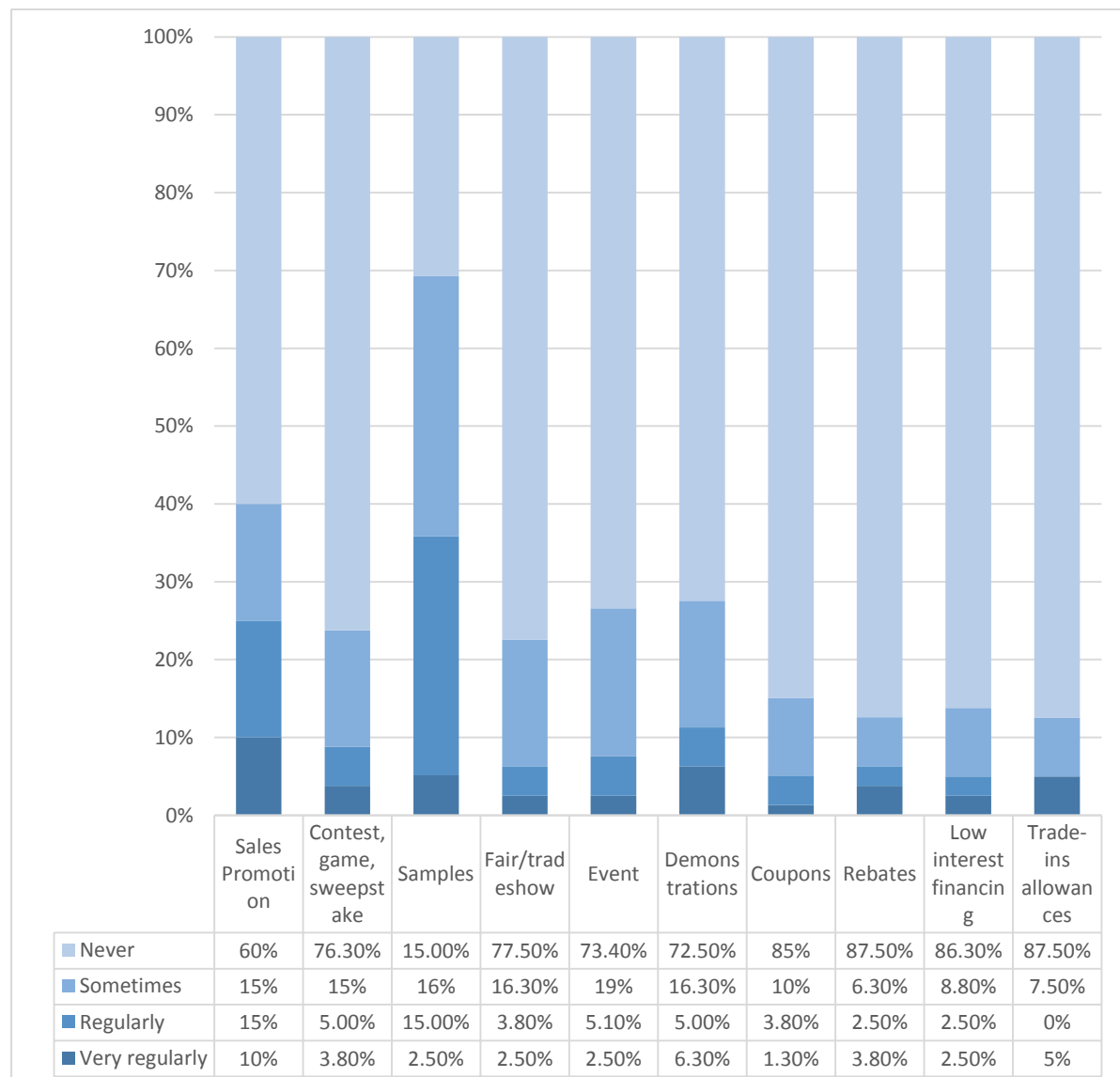
The questions (no. 1-11) were constructed to assess the use of sales promotion within the business. It asked the respondent to indicate the frequency that the business used different platforms of Sales Promotion in the time span of the last 12 months. Again, the respondent could indicate one of four levels of frequency: never, sometimes, regularly or very regularly.

The reliability of the question regarding the use of sales promotion platforms was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. The 10 items worked out to 0.855, which is a good score indicating good reliability.

Figure 3.9 shows a total of 40% of respondents run a sales promotion in the last 12 months. 10% (n=8) did so very regularly, 15% (n=12) did so regularly while another 15% (n=12) only sometimes engaged in a sales promotion. The remaining 60% (n=48) indicated to never have done so in the past year.

The next question tested the respondents' use of a contest, game, or sweepstake. A total of 76.3% (n=61) indicated that they have never utilised this platform, 15% (n=12) answered sometimes, 5% (n=4) regularly and 3.8% (n=3) very regularly.

Figure 3.9: Use of Sales Promotions platforms



Investigating the use of samples as a sales promotional platform, revealed that 66.3% (n=53) of respondents indicated that they have never utilised samples in the last 12 months. 16.3% (n=13) had used it sometime in the last year, 15% (n=12) regularly, and 2.5% (n=2) very regularly.

A total of 62 (77.5%) respondents indicated that they have never exhibited at a fair or tradeshow in the last year while 13 (16.3%) indicated that they did sometime in the last year, 3 (3.8%) did it regularly, and 2 (2.5%) very regularly. Exhibitions at other events measured similarly with 58 respondents (73.4%) never exhibited at another event, while 15 (19%) respondents indicated to have done so sometimes in the last year, 5.1% (n=4) regularly, and 2.5% (n=2) very regularly.

The use of demonstrations to generate sales has been embraced by 11.3% of respondents 6.3% (n=5) of whom have done so very regularly and 5% (n=4) regularly. A total of 13 (16.3%) respondents have utilised demonstrations sometime in the last year, while 72.5% (n=58) have never done so.

Upon looking at the use of coupons as a sales promotion platform, findings indicated a total of 68 respondents (85%) never having used it in the last 12 months. The remaining 15% have employed coupons in the last 12 months, of which 10% (n=8) sometimes, 3.8% (n=3) regularly, and one respondent (1.3%) very regularly.

Using rebates to generate sales and providing low interest finance are two platforms that may be used for the promotion of sales. Although 70 respondents (87.5%) have never used rebates, 5 (6.3%) indicated to have sometimes used it in the last year, 2 (2.5%) regularly, and 3 (3.8%) very regularly. Although 69 respondents (86.3%) have never used trade-in allowances to generate sales, 6 respondents (7.5%) indicated to have used it sometimes, 4 (5%) respondents use it very regularly.

3.4.5. Question 5: Direct marketing

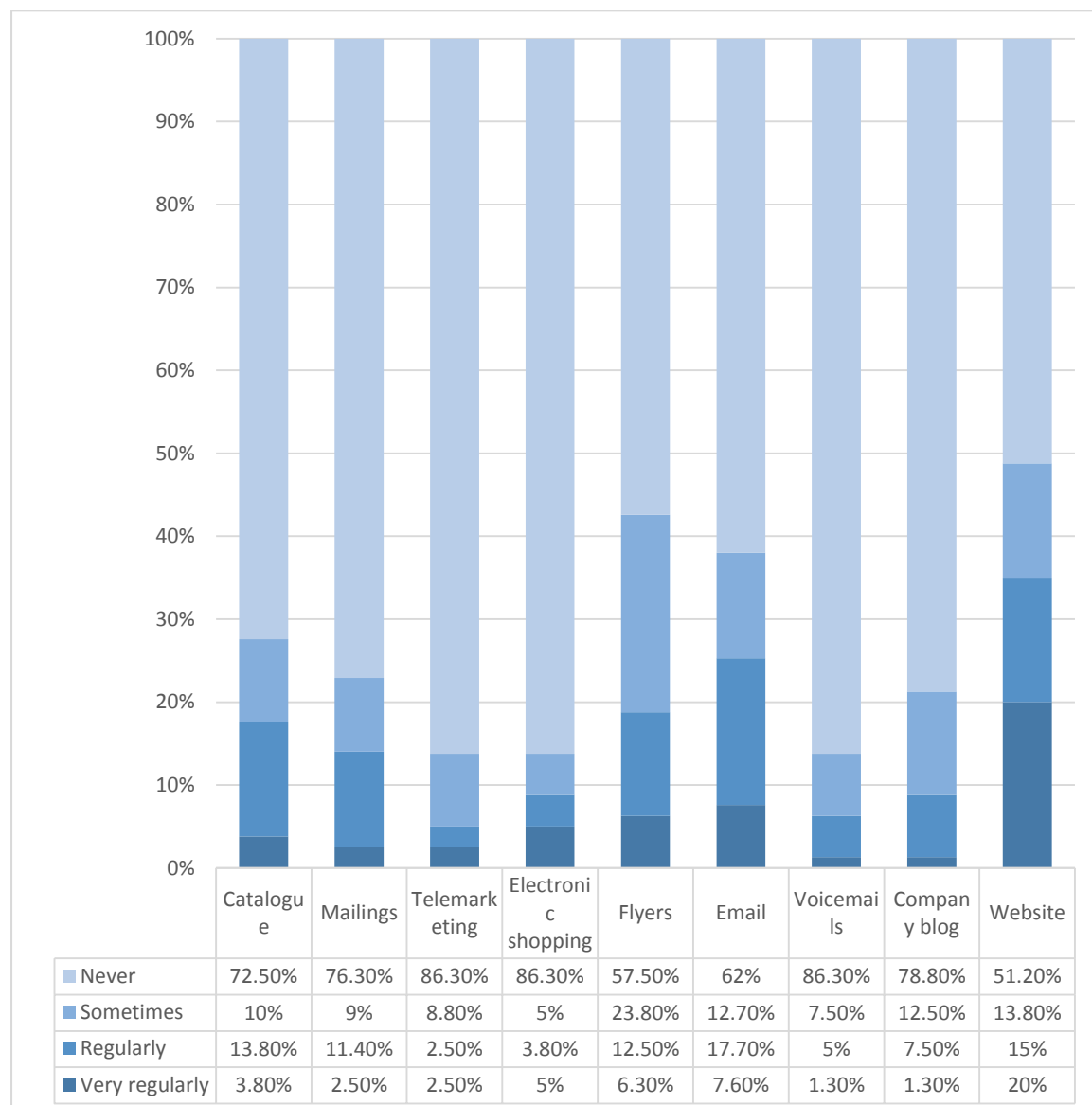
Question 5 measured the use of direct marketing in the business. The questionnaire provided a short definition to create understanding of the term “direct marketing” with the respondent: direct marketing can be seen as a form of advertising where the company communicates directly to the customer with the aim of selling its products (Kotler & Keller (2012:485). The question then continued to measure how regularly the following direct marketing platforms were utilised by the business to reach its business goals in the last 12 months. The respondent could indicate one of four levels of frequency never, sometimes, regularly or very regularly.

The reliability of this question was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. The 9 items worked out to 0.810, which is a good score indicating good reliability.

Figure 3.10 clearly illustrates the use of direct marketing platforms by the respondents in this study.

Upon investigating the use of catalogues as direct marketing platform, 72.5% of respondents (n=58) indicated that they never used it in the last 12 months. 10% (n=8) used it sometimes, 13.8% (n=11) indicated regular use and 3.8% (n=3), very regular use.

Figure 3.10: Use of Direct Marketing platforms



The platform of mailings has never (in the last 12 months) been used by 61 respondents (77.2%), sometimes by 7 respondents (8.8%), regularly by 9 respondents (11.3%), and very regularly by 2 respondents (2.5%).

Telemarketing as a platform of direct marketing measured that 86.3% (n=69) of respondents never engaged in this platform in the last 12 months. 8.8% (n=7) have done so sometime during the last year, while 5% employed it regularly, or very regularly (2.5% (n=2) regularly and 2.5% (n=2) very regularly).

Electronic shopping as a platform for direct marketing measured a very regular use by 4 respondents (5%) and regular use by 3 (3.8%) of respondents. A total of 4 respondents (5%) indicated to only have used electronic shopping sometimes in the last 12 months.

Flyers were identified as a platform that is used more frequently. 23.8% (n=19) of respondents indicated that their businesses have used flyers to generate sales in the last 12 months. 12.5% (n=10) of respondents revealed that they have used flyers regularly in the last year while 5 respondents (6.3%) did so very regularly, leaving 46 respondents (57.5%) having never engaged in this platform.

The use of email as a way to generate sales measured similarly: 62% (n=49) respondents have never utilised email to generate sales in the last 12 months while 10 respondents (12.7%) indicated that they have done so sometimes, 14 (17.7%) regularly and 6 respondents (7.6%) very regularly.

Measurement of the use of voicemail as a direct marketing platform revealed 86.3% of respondents not using it at all (n=69), and 11 respondents using it, where 6 used it sometimes (7.5%), 4 used it regularly (5%), and 1 respondent indicated that their business uses it very regularly.

The use of a company blog as a means of direct marketing was then assessed by the questionnaire. The assessment revealed that it was used sometimes by the businesses of 10 respondents (12.5%), regularly by 6 (7.5%), and very regularly by 1 (1.3%). The remaining 78.8% (n=63) indicated that they have never used a company blog to generate sales.

The use of a website measured the best of all the direct marketing platforms. It is used very regularly by the businesses of 16 of the respondents (20%), regularly by 12 (15%), and sometimes by 11 (13.8%). A total of 41 respondents (51.2%)

indicated that they have never used a website to generate sales in the last 12 months. Number 11 of Question 5 enabled the respondent to indicate another way of direct marketing that was not listed.

Number 11 of Question 5 assessed the use of measurement in the business' direct marketing efforts. The respondent was asked whether or not the business built in a way of measurement when employing direct marketing platforms. A promotion code or call to action was used to serve as an example. The respondent could answer by ticking "yes" or "no".

As shown in Table 3.8, of the respondents who did respond, 25.6% (n=20) indicated that they do in fact build a way of measurement into their direct marketing efforts.

Table 3.8: Measurement of direct marketing efforts

		Frequency	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	0	36	46.2	46.2
	No	22	28.2	74.4
	Yes	20	25.6	100.0
	Total	78	100.0	
Total		80		

3.4.6. Question 6: Personal selling

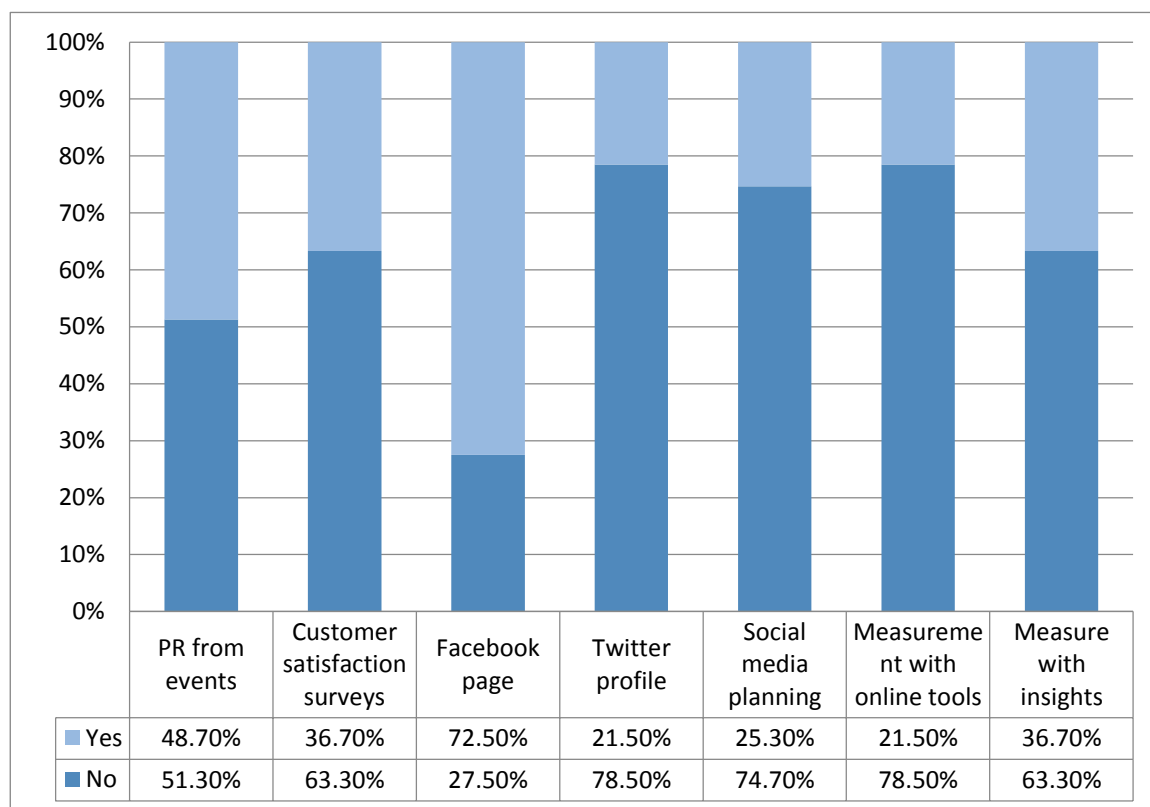
Question 6 briefly looked at the use of personal selling. The question defined personal selling as "when a marketer or sales representative sells products or services to clients" (Lamb *et al.*,2017:12). The question looked at the use of sales representatives (reps) as a way of directly reaching the customer. The question indicated that 30% (n=22) of respondents did use sales reps in the last 12 months, 2.5% (n=2) indicated that their businesses set sales targets for reps, 3.8% (n=3) pays commission to their reps dependent on reaching that target. The question also assessed the use of telephone sales reps. 10.1% (n=8) of respondents indicated that their businesses make use of telephone sales reps.

3.4.7. Question 7: The marketing communication environment

Question 7 was formulated to understand the environment regarding marketing communication in the business. It consisted of 7 “yes” and “no” questions, each describing the way that the business conducts a certain activity that is related to marketing and communication, thus creating a clearer understanding of the marketing and communication environment in the business.

The reliability of this was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. The 7 items worked out to 0.772, which is a good score indicating good reliability.

Figure 3.11: Marketing communication environment



As is clear to see from Figure 3.10, Facebook seems to be a very popular channel for businesses to keep in contact with their stakeholders as 72.5% of respondents (n=58) have a business Facebook profile. 48.7% of businesses try to gain publication from their events or actions while customer satisfaction surveys (done by 36.7% of respondents) enable feedback from the one stakeholder who critically influences business success, namely the customer.

3.4.8. Question 8: Responsibility

The purpose of Question 8 was finding out what importance the business assigned to each of the following platforms: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, the company website, media enquiries, photography, events, and press releases.

The respondent was asked to identify who within the structure of the business is responsible for managing each of these activities, in order to assess the perceived importance that the business attaches to that activity. The options were:

- Junior level: receptionist/clerk
Logic would dictate that if an activity is left to a junior/inexperienced person, it is not of significant importance to the manager/owner of the business.
- Intermediate level: more experienced person who has been with the company for a long time.
If an activity is left to such a person it is regarded as more important than those actions in the hands of a junior level employee, but still not important enough to require the attention of someone in management, or the owner themselves.
- Management: a manager, be it a formal communications manager, an operations manager, or a marketing manager.
If the responsibility of an activity is allocated to management, it would indicate that the activity is regarded as quite important to the business as an entity.
- Owner: the owner alone or leading a team.
An activity that falls in the responsibility of the owner it could mean that it is regarded as very important. It could also be the result of a very small staff compliment.
- Contractor: a paid contractor or specialist.
If the company is willing to pay an outside specialist to handle an activity, it means that a great level of importance is associated with it. It means that the owner or management admits that the function is important and requires an expert opinion.

- Not utilised in our company

The activity is not applicable to the type of business. It could however also mean that the possibilities of the activity and the value it could add to the company, was not properly assessed, and is not known to the company.

Table 3.9: Responsibility for the Facebook page

		Valid percentage
Valid	Junior level	2.5
	Intermediate	11.4
	Manager	16.5
	Owner	35.4
	Paid contractor	5.1
	Not used	29.1
	Total	100.0

Table 3.9 indicates that Facebook is not utilised in a total of 29.1% of businesses (n=23). The responsibility for this platform is carried either by the owner (in 35.4% of businesses, n=28) or by a communication, operations or marketing manager (16.5%, n=13).

Table 3.10: Responsibility for the Twitter page

		Valid percentage
Valid	Junior level	2.5
	Intermediate	2.5
	Manager	3.8
	Owner	12.7
	Paid contractor	1.3
	Not used	77.2
	Total	100.0

Table 3.10 shows that Twitter is not utilised in a total of 77.2% (n=61) businesses. The responsibility for the use of this platform mostly lies with the owner (in 12.7% of businesses, n=10).

Table 3.11: Responsibility for LinkedIn

		Valid percentage
Valid	Junior level	1.3
	Intermediate	1.3
	Manager	3.8
	Owner	16.5
	Paid contractor	2.5
	Not used	74.7
	Total	100.0

Table 3.11 detailed that LinkedIn is not utilised in a total of 73.8% (n=59) of businesses. The responsibility for the use of this platform mostly lies with the owner (in 16.5% of businesses, n=13).

Table 3.12: Responsibility for the website

		Valid percentage
Valid	Junior level	1.3
	Intermediate	5.1
	Manager	7.6
	Owner	19.0
	Paid contractor	8.9
	Not used	58.2
	Total	100.0

A total of 58.2% (n=46) of respondents do not make use of a website. As can be seen in Table 3.12, among those who do, the responsibility of the website is mostly carried by the owner (19%, n=15). A paid contractor is used for this function by 8.9% (n=7) of businesses, while the manager manages it for a total of 7.6% (n=6) of respondents.

Table 3.13: Responsibility for media enquiries

		Valid percentage
Valid	Junior level	1.3
	Intermediate	3.8
	Manager	7.6
	Owner	16.5
	Paid contractor	5.1
	Not used	65.8
	Total	100.0

Table 3.13 indicates that the media and possible enquiries from the media is not anticipated by 65.8% of respondents (n=52). A further 16.5% (n=13) of respondents indicated to use

Table 3.14: Responsibility for photography

		Valid percentage
Valid	Junior level	2.5
	Intermediate	5.1
	Manager	3.8
	Owner	19.0
	Paid contractor	2.5
	Not used	67.1
	Total	100.0

The responsibility for photography that may be needed for IMC purposes, is summarised in Table 3.14. It indicates, however that 67.1% (n=53) of respondents do not see photography as a marketing or communication activity that is needed in their business. Those who do, mostly indicated that the owner is responsible for photography.

Table 3.15: Responsibility for events

		Valid percentage
Valid	Junior level	1.3
	Intermediate	5.1
	Manager	12.7
	Owner	19
	Paid contractor	2.5
	Not used	59.5
	Total	100.0

Table 3.15 illustrates the responsibility that is taken for events with IMC purposes within the company. 59.5% (n=47) of respondents indicated that events are not used in their business. Of the ones who do use events, most indicated that the owner takes responsibility for it (19%, n=15) otherwise a communication, operations, or marketing manager (12.7%, n=10) takes care of this activity.

The writing and distribution of press releases are not activities undertaken by many of the businesses who took part in the research. It is not used by 69.6% (n=55) of respondents. When it is utilised, it is taken care of by the owner in most cases (19%, n=15) as can be seen in Table 3.16.

Table 3.16: Responsibility for press releases

		Valid percentage
Valid	Junior level	2.5
	Intermediate	2.5
	Manager	1.3
	Owner	19.0
	Paid contractor	5.1
	Not used	69.6
	Total	100.0

In order to determine if there were differences within the answers of certain questions, the Kruskal-Wallis test was utilised.

3.5. Testing significant differences: the Kruskal-Wallis test

As explained earlier in the chapter, by calculating skewness and kurtosis values (refer to 3.2.6 for a definition of these terms) as well as conducting the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the data was found to be non-normally distributed. The p-values (illustrated in the tables that follow as the adjusted significance) were found to be significant, indicating non-normality of the data, and therefore non-parametric statistical calculations were to be used for further data analysis. In order to determine if there were differences within the answers of certain questions, the Kruskal-Wallis test was utilised.

In order to calculate the effect sizes of possible differences, non-parametric *post-hoc* tests were carried out, using a Bonferroni correction to compensate for Type 1-errors. These consisted of comparing calculated mean rank differences to the critical differences calculated for specific groups (Field, 2018).

3.5.1. Results

The focus of the study was on the measurement efforts that SMEs apply in the event that they do use the tools of IMC to add value to their business. The different ways of measurement will therefore be of particular value to answering the research questions.

The statistic of the test, i.e. H , has a chi-square distribution with one value for its associated degrees of freedom: $k-1$ (when k is equal to the number of groups involved). Lane (2012) explains chi-square by referring to a standard normal deviate as a random sample from the standard normal distribution. The chi-square distribution is the distribution of the sum of the normal deviates squared. The degrees of freedom of the distribution can be determined by adding the number of standard normal deviates together (Lane, 2012).

The consequent exact/Monte Carlo estimate of significance for each comparison indicated possible differences; however, it did not indicate where the differences might be. The data was also ranked as part of the calculation and these mean ranks could be used to interpret eventual effect sizes.

Within the measurement of direct marketing, it was found that there was a significant difference between respondents that do not use direct marketing and those who do not measure it. Table 3.16 provides information on which significant differences were found, as well as their respective effective sizes. Once the significant differences became clear, it was possible to calculate each effect size with the equation $r = Z/\sqrt{N}$ (where Z is the associated value from the table of the standard mean distribution and N equals the total number of participants comprising the concerned groups) (Field, 2018). Using the significant differences as reference, the mean ranks of compared groups were used to interpret the final reported effect sizes.

The tables below will illustrate the differences. Where the significance is smaller than 0.05 (very significant) the figure is followed by an asterisk. Where the adjusted significance is smaller than 0.01 (very, very significant) the figure is followed by two asterisks (Field, 2018). The last column in the tables lists the estimated effect sizes which indicates the strength of the relationship between the variables that was compared to each other (Tomczak & Tomczak, 2014:19)

Where the measurement of direct marketing (DM) is concerned, a few significant differences were measured when compared to the responses indicated for PR.

Table 3.17: Kruskal-Wallis findings for direct marketing measurement & PR

Variable 1	Ranking	Ranking	Variable 2	Adjusted significance	Effect size
<i>PR Unpaid feature in the media</i>					
Do not use DM	36.38	48.07	Do not measure DM	0.047*	-0.274
<i>PR Unpaid feature on news website</i>					
Do not use DM	35.18	47.36	Do not measure DM	0.024*	-0.300
<i>PR Unpaid feature on a blog</i>					
Do not use DM	31.00	52.61	Do not measure DM	0.000**	-0.556
Measure DM	40.38	52.61	Do not measure DM	0.045*	0.276
<i>PR Feature in a Facebook news story</i>					
Do not use DM	30.72	54.91	Do not measure DM	0.000**	-0.493
Measure DM	38.35	54.91	Do not measure DM	0.009**	0.296
<i>PR Unpaid feature on other social media</i>					
Do not use DM	31.71	47.40	Do not measure DM	0.008**	0.349

The findings as in Table 3.17 are of special interest seeing that only one factor (the one with the lowest significance) deals with traditional media. These results show that respondents, who indicated not to measure direct marketing, are quite likely to utilise PR by means of new media platforms including news websites, blogs, Facebook news stories, and other social media. These efforts are however, not measured at all.

The differences that were of significance for direct marketing and advertising are detailed in Table 3.18 below.

Table 3.18: Kruskal-Wallis findings for direct marketing measurement & advertising

Variable 1	Ranking	Ran- king	Variable 2	Adjusted significance	Effect size
<i>Advertising: Paid feature in the media</i>					
Do not use DM	35.72	47.77	Don't measure DM	0.015*	-0.317
<i>Advertising: Redesign of packaging</i>					
Do not use DM	33.01	45.95	Measure DM	0.009**	-0.338
<i>Advertisement unpaid Facebook</i>					
Do not use DM	33.33	47.80	Don't measure DM	0.036*	-0.284
<i>Advertising unpaid on other social media</i>					
Do not use DM	33.21	47.64	Don't measure DM	0.021*	-0.309
<i>Advertising: Pay-per-click</i>					
Do not use DM	35.53	45.71	Don't measure DM	0.0090**	-0.339

From the findings in this table, the regular use of online platforms are evident again, unfortunately all without being measured (respondents indicated Don't measure DM). The one point that indicated measurement of direct marketing efforts was the redesign of packaging. This may indicate the reason behind the redesign: a reaction to the measurement of efforts.

Where the measurement of direct marketing (DM) is concerned, a few significant differences were measured when compared to the responses indicated for sales promotion platforms. These differences are detailed in Table 3.19 below.

Table 3.19: Kruskal-Wallis findings for direct marketing planning & sales promotion platforms

Variable 1	Ranking	Ranking	Variable 2	Adjusted significance	Effect size
<i>Sales Promotions: Sent samples</i>					
Do not use DM	33.46	53.25	Do not measure DM	0.000**	-0.433
<i>Sales Promotions: Exhibited at fair/tradeshow</i>					
Do not use DM	32.75	48.77	Do not measure DM	0.001**	-0.403
<i>Sales Promotions: Exhibited at other events</i>					
Do not use DM	31.72	49.86	Do not measure DM	0.000**	-0.438
<i>Sales Promotions: Demonstrations</i>					
Do not use DM	30.78	48.89	Do not measure DM	0.000**	-0.423
<i>Sales Promotions: Low interest financing</i>					
Measure DM	37.92	48.25	Do not measure DM	0.044*	0.276

Table 3.19 shows that the most respondents who indicated the use of sales promotional platforms as listed, do not measure the efforts conducted within direct marketing, for whatever reason.

The comparison of differences between direct marketing planning and the mean of the four IMC tools, namely public relations, advertising, sales promotion, and direct marketing, shows the following significant differences.

Table 3.20: Kruskal-Wallis findings for direct marketing planning & IMC tools

Variable 1	Ranking	Ranking	Variable 2	Adjusted significance	Effect size
<i>Public relations</i>					
Do not use DM	32.09	45.62	Do not measure DM	0.006**	-0.357
<i>Advertising</i>					
Do not use DM	30.76	44.58	Do not measure DM	0.014*	-0.331
<i>Sales promotion</i>					
Measure DM	34.34	58.52	Do not measure DM	0.000**	0.507
<i>Direct marketing</i>					
Do not use DM	28.00	50.19	Do not measure DM	0.000**	-0.464

Table 3.20 clearly shows that the use of the different tools of IMC, does not indicate the measurement of direct marketing efforts within the business.

Comparing the measurement of PR efforts, with the use of such efforts, revealed the findings that are detailed in Table 3.21. Recoding the variables and indicating when all of the measurement points in the question was indicated or if none of the measurement points were indicated, the following could be deduced.

Table 3.21: Kruskal-Wallis findings for PR measurement and use in different PR platforms

Variable 1	Ranking	Ranking	Variable 2	Adjusted significance	Effect size
<i>Unpaid feature in the local newspaper</i>					
None	36.66	63.21	All	0.030**	-0.381

<i>Unpaid feature in a provincial newspaper</i>					
Plan	37.50	60.64	All	0.009**	0.416
None	38.21	60.61	All	0.000**	-0.589
<i>Unpaid feature on a news website</i>					
None	37.53	60.93	All	0.033**	-0.377
<i>Unpaid feature on a blog</i>					
Plan	32.60	67.50	All	0.011*	0.410
None	37.60	67.50	All	0.000**	-0.504
<i>Unpaid feature in a Facebook news story</i>					
None	32.91	66.86	All	0.002**	-0.452

The findings revealed in Table 3.21 indicates that respondents who represented businesses who have featured in unpaid features in a local or provincial newspaper, on a news website, on a blog or in a Facebook news story, have also indicated that they engage in all of the planning and measurement actions that the questionnaire enquired about.

Table 3.22 shows the differences between some of the advertising platforms and the measurement of PR.

Table 3.22:Kruskal-Wallis findings for PR measurement and use of advertising platforms

Variable 1	Ranking	Ranking	Variable 2	Adjusted significance	Effect size
<i>Advertising: Paid feature in print/broadcast</i>					
None	37.66	74.33	Budget	0.025*	-0.386
<i>Advertising: Redesign of packaging</i>					
None	38.75	62.79	All	0.007**	-0.424

The respondents who indicated that their business have featured in a paid advertisement in print or broadcast in the last 12 months, also indicated that they have a budget specifically dedicated to PR.

The differences between the use of PR measurement and the use of sales promotion platforms were elucidated on in Table 3.23.

Table 3.23: Kruskal-Wallis findings for PR measurement and sales promotion platforms

Variable 1	Ranking	Ranking	Variable 2	Adjusted significance	Effect size
<i>Sales promotion: Ran a sales promo</i>					
None	37.34	64.79	All	0.038*	-0.374
<i>Sales promotion: Low interest financing</i>					
None	37.88	63.71	All	0.000**	-0.518
<i>Sales promotion: Trade-in allowances</i>					
None	37.66	57.93	All	0.007**	-0.423

The respondents whose businesses ran a sales promotion in the last 12 months, who offered low interest financing in order to generate sales, and those who utilised trade-in allowances to generate sales, all answered “yes” to all of the PR measurement and planning questions.

A significant difference between the measurement and planning of PR and the use of direct marketing platforms were observed in the results in Table 3.24.

Table 3.24: Kruskal-Wallis findings for PR measurement and direct marketing (DM) platforms

Variable 1	Ranking	Ranking	Variable 2	Adjusted significance	Effect size
<i>Direct marketing: Telemarketing</i>					
None	38.57	67.20	Plan	0.000**	-0.493

<i>Direct marketing: Company blog</i>					
None	37.75	60.86	All	0.023*	-0.388

Most of the respondents, who use telemarketing as a direct marketing platform, also have an operational PR plan in place. Most of those who employ a business blog as a form of direct marketing, utilise all of the PR planning and measurement items as assessed in the questionnaire.

Table 3.25 details the significant differences that were measured between advertising measurement and planning and the use of advertising platforms.

Table 3.25: Kruskal-Wallis findings for advertising measurement and advertising platforms

Variable 1	Ranking	Ranking	Variable 2	Adjusted significance	Effect size
<i>Advertising: Feature in print/broadcast adverts</i>					
None	34.98	65.42	All	0.004	-0.438
<i>Advertising: Feature in a directory</i>					
None	33.62	68.12	Budget & Website	0.034	-0.376

The respondents, who have featured in a print or broadcast advert in the last 12 months, mostly indicated that they utilise all the ways of planning or measuring advertising as enquired about on the questionnaire. The respondents who featured in a directory in the last 12 months, mostly indicated to also have an advertising budget and a functioning website.

The significant differences between advertising measurement and the use of sales promotion platforms have been summarised in Table 3.26. Those respondents who indicated that they have used a contest/game or sweepstake in the last 12 months, have indicated that they use all of the measurement tools for advertising as listed in question 3 on the questionnaire. The same significant difference could be seen for the use of coupons, rebates, and low interest financing.

Table 3.26: Kruskal-Wallis findings for advertising measurement and sales promotion platforms

Variable 1	Ranking	Ranking	Variable 2	Adjusted significance	Effect size
<i>Sales promotions: Contest/game/sweepstakes</i>					
None	36.90	67.92	All	0.002**	-0.462
<i>Sales promotions: Coupons</i>					
None	36.15	62.92	All	0.001**	-0.478
<i>Sales promotions: Rebates</i>					
None	35.50	56.93	All	0.010**	-0.412
<i>Sales promotions: Low interest financing</i>					
None	36.89	62.17	All	0.001**	-0.468
<i>Sales promotions: Trade-in allowances</i>					
None	35.50	65.33	All	0.028*	-0.383

The test for the differences between advertising measurement and the mean of the other IMC tools revealed the following as illustrated by table 3.27.

Table 3.27: Kruskal-Wallis findings for advertising measurement and other IMC tools

Variable 1	Ranking	Ranking	Variable 2	Adjusted significance	Effect size
<i>IMC tools: Public relations</i>					
None	34.11	67.00	Budget & website	0.004**	-0.452
<i>IMC tools: Sales promotion</i>					
None	33.72	51.93	Website	0.034*	-0.379
None	33.72	64.75	All	0.002**	-0.455

As indicated in Table 3.27 above, the majority of respondents who indicated using public relations, have a formal advertising budget and maintain a live website. Of the

respondents who used sales promotion, the majority maintains an active website as well as all of the measurement and planning functions indicated in question 3 of the questionnaire.

Table 3.28 summarised the findings from the test for significant differences between elements of the marketing communication environment as assessed in question 7 in the questionnaire and findings regarding PR. When comparing the mean to the measurement of PR activities (question 2.1) to the marketing communication environment, the majority of respondents indicated that they measure their actions by means of an online measurement such as Google Analytics, rather than looking at social media insights. Then looking at an unpaid feature on a blog, the majority of respondents indicated that they use all of the measurement and planning functions of PR. As would be expected, respondents who use Facebook and social media indicated that they use online measurement as well as social media insights.

Table 3.28: Kruskal-Wallis findings for marketing communication environment & PR measurement

Variable 1	Ranking	Ranking	Variable 2	Adjusted significance	Effect size
<i>PR: Unpaid feature in a provincial newspaper</i>					
Insights	36.50	74.50	Online	0.015*	0.392
<i>PR: Unpaid feature on a blog</i>					
None	33.27	53.61	All	0.025*	-0.376
<i>PR: Unpaid feature in a Facebook news story</i>					
None	29.05	62.17	Online & insights	0.008**	-0.412
<i>PR: Unpaid feature on other social media</i>					
None	30.53	57.17	Online & insights	0.037*	-0.373

The significant differences between advertising measurement and sales promotion platforms can be seen in Table 3.29. The majority of those respondents who indicated to have used a contest, game, or sweepstake in a sales promotion the last

12 months, revealed that they use all of the advertising measurement tools as listed in the questionnaire. The majority of those respondents who indicated to send samples to prospective customers, indicated using customer satisfaction surveys and measure their efforts with social media insights.

Table 3.29: Kruskal-Wallis findings for advertising measurement and sales promotion platforms

Variable 1	Ranking	Ranking	Variable 2	Adjusted significance	Effect size
<i>Sales promotion: Contest, game, or sweepstake</i>					
None	34.30	58.00	All	0.006**	-0.420
<i>Sales promotion: Sent samples</i>					
None	36.45	72.83	Survey & insights	0.045**	-0.357

Table 3.30 below reveals the findings when tested for significant differences between advertising measurement and the use of direct marketing platforms.

Table 3.30: Kruskal-Wallis findings for advertising measurement and direct marketing platforms

Variable 1	Ranking	Ranking	Variable 2	Adjusted significance	Effect size
<i>Direct marketing: Mailings</i>					
None	34.00	54.00	All	0.037*	-0.366
<i>Direct marketing: Electronic Shopping</i>					
None	34.00	53.50	Online & insights	0.038*	-0.363

Most of the respondents who indicated to have used mailings as a direct marketing platform in the last 12 months have indicated that their businesses use all of the advertising measurement and planning actions. The respondents who utilised electronic shopping as a direct marketing platform in the last 12 months have indicated to especially use online and social media insights as ways of measuring their advertising efforts.

3.6. Chapter summary

In this chapter, the research method was discussed. The questionnaire was discussed by looking at every question systematically. The reliability of certain questions was tested by means of Cronbach's Alpha. All questions tested above 0.7 indicating good levels of reliability.

The frequency of questions was discussed. Significant differences between different questions were then investigated by reporting on Kruskal-Wallis tests.

In Chapter 4, the findings will be summarised and discussed in detail. Recommendations will be made regarding ways that SMEs can use the findings to add value to their marketing communication efforts. The possibility of further research will also be elucidated to.

Chapter 4: Conclusion and recommendations

4.1. Introduction

In Chapter 1, the problem that led to this study was investigated closer and research questions were identified in order to clarify the goal of the study. Chapter 2 elucidated to the literature on the subject. The literature review provided a firm theoretical foundation upon which a questionnaire could be constructed. Chapter 3 looked at the gathering of the data, the analysis, and also the reporting of the results.

The last chapter will discuss conclusions of the study and will make a set of recommendations to enhance IMC in the SME environment. Further research opportunities will also be discussed.

4.2. Main findings of the study

This study was conducted to reach the following primary and secondary objectives:

Primary objective

The primary objective of this study was to examine the use of communication activities in the Vaal Triangle. The study honed in on IMC specifically and the four tools namely public relations, marketing, sales promotions and direct marketing. The primary objective was to:

- Determine which IMC tools and platforms are used in an SME in the Vaal Triangle.

This objective will be discussed in detail in 4.2.1 below.

Secondary objectives

The secondary objectives of this study was to:

- Determine if IMC efforts are measured;
- Determine if IMC efforts are planned;
- Ascertain the importance that the average Vaal Triangle SME attaches to IMC actions and
- Determine what Vaal Triangle SMEs can do to better utilise IMC in their businesses.

These findings of the study will be discussed in detail using these objectives as guide in point 4.2.2 to 4.2.5 below.

4.2.1. IMC tools and platforms used by Vaal SMEs

The use of IMC activities will be discussed by referring to the four tools of IMC that was specifically measured by the study.

- Public relations: Public relations is an IMC tool that is rarely used by the businesses that took part in the study. The local newspaper is used by some respondents (35%, n=28) . Publishing in the provincial newspaper (7.60%, n=7) and industry publication (8.8%, n=8) seem to be something that is done, but to a very small extent.

Unpaid features on the radio (26%, n=21) and news websites (21%, n=20) are also used, but again, to a small extent. The most popular platforms used in this regard are Facebook (43%, n=35) and other social media channels (37%, n=28). From the open-ended questions can be derived that WhatsApp and Instagram are two popular channels. The characteristics of these platforms regarding high reach and low cost may contribute to this trend. Finding reasons for trends like these could be a very insightful future study.

Businesses who have featured in unpaid features in a local or provincial newspaper, on a news website, on a blog or in a Facebook news story, have also indicated that they engage in all of the planning and measurement actions such as: having a formal PR policy, operational PR plan, a PR budget and conducting media monitoring. It therefore seems that the respondents measure their PR efforts when they engage in PR efforts. Respondents who indicated using public relations, have a formal advertising budget and maintain a live website, indicative of a positive attitude towards IMC and the importance thereof.

- Advertising: When it comes to advertising, Facebook (unpaid: 52.6%, n=42; paid: 25%, n=20) and other social media channels (38.5%, n=30) are once again the most favoured platforms to use. An open ended question indicated that these other social media channels include WhatsApp (6.3%, n=6), Instagram and LinkedIn (1.3%, n=1 each) The use of brochures (40%, n=32), display signs (38.9%, n=31) as well as directories (35%, n=28) are quite popular as were broadcast advertisements and

point of purchase display scored equally (26.3%, n=21). The Vaal Triangle has many local radio stations bringing broadcasting within reach and budget of the average business. The use of billboards were also indicated significantly, (20.1%, n=16) and the redesigning of packaging were chosen by quite a few businesses (18.8%, n=15). Platforms that scored low include: Cinema advertising (3.8%, n=3) and corporate DVDs (6.5%, n=5).

- Sales promotions: Sales promotion is the one IMC tool that proved to be used regularly by the businesses who took part in the study: a total of 40% (n=32) of respondents indicated to have used this IMC tool during the last 12 months. The use of samples (33.8%, n=27) seems to be especially popular as was also measured with events (26.6%, n=21) and contests, games or sweepstakes (23.8%, n=19). Exhibitions at fairs or trade shows (22.6%, n=18) also proved to be a way that businesses that was represented chooses to promote themselves. Less popular platforms of this tool was demonstrations (16.3%, n=13), coupons (15%, n=12), rebates as well low interest financing (both scoring 12.6%, n=10). Trade-ins indicated to be the least popular with only 10 respondents (11%) having used it in the last year.
- Direct marketing: Directly marketing to the customer also seemed to be a tool of choice for the businesses that took part in the study. More than half of the businesses represented, however, still do business without a website. A total of 48.8% (n=39) indicated to have a website. The use of email (38%, n=30), electronic shopping (13.8%, n=11) and a company blog (21.3%, n=17) all measured well, illustrating the regular use of online platforms again. More traditional platforms such as flyers (42.6%, n=34), catalogues (27.6%, n=22), mailings (22.6%, n=18) and telemarketing (13.8%, n=11) are still utilised significantly.

The one point (that resorted under advertising) that indicated measurement of direct marketing efforts was the redesign of packaging. This may indicate the reason behind the redesign: a reaction to the measurement of efforts. Investigating the reason for this trend presents an opportunity for further research.

4.2.2. Measurement of IMC activities

- PR: Only 10% (n=8) of respondents indicated that their businesses employ the services of a media monitoring company, such as NewsClip, to monitor their PR efforts.
- Advertising: The respondents, who have featured in a printed or broadcasted advert in the last twelve months, mostly indicated that they utilise all the ways of planning or measuring advertising as enquired about in the questionnaire. The respondents who featured in a directory in the last twelve months, mostly indicated to also have an advertising budget and a functioning website. Advertising therefore seemed to be understood better, seeing that respondents budget for it and plan for it when it is used.
- Sales promotions: There seems to be some kind of relationship between sales promotions and advertising. Of the respondents who indicated that they have used a contest/game or sweepstake in the last 12 months, the majority have indicated that they use all of the measurement tools for advertising as listed in question 3 on the questionnaire (having an advertising policy in place, following an operational advertising plan, having a formal advertising budget and optimising the company website for search engines). The same significant difference could be seen for the use of coupons, rebates, and low interest financing. Of the respondents who used sales promotion, the majority maintain an active website as well as all of the measurement and planning functions of advertising.
- Direct marketing: The results revealed a link between direct marketing and PR, namely respondents who indicated not to measure direct marketing, are quite likely to utilise PR by means of new media platforms including news websites, blogs, Facebook news stories, and other social media. These efforts are, however not measured at all. It would seem as if businesses with the expertise about such channels, utilise it, but do not measure their efforts. This statement may be proven by the responses generated when respondents were asked about the measurement of direct marketing efforts. A total of 25.6% (n=20) indicated that the businesses that they represented measure their direct marketing efforts. Another 36 respondents (46.2%) did not answer the question, indicating that they either do not measure their direct marketing efforts or that they are unsure of the exact meaning of the concept.

A total of 36.3% (n=29) indicated that their businesses enable feedback from customers by means of customer satisfaction surveys.

A total of 72.5% (n=58) of respondents indicated that their businesses have a Facebook page, while another 21.50% (n=17) have a Twitter profile. However, only 25.30% (n=20) indicated that their business have a social media plan in place and only 36.70% (n=29) measure the success of such campaigns by means of page insights. The success of IMC efforts by means of online tools such as Google analytics are only measured by 21.50% (n=17) of businesses who took part in the study.

4.2.3. Planning of IMC activities

- PR: Only 17.5% (n=14) of respondents indicated that they have a formal PR policy in place, while only 22.5% (n=18) have an operational PR plan that guides the business in their IMC efforts. Only 18.8% (n=15) have a budget for PR. A total of 48.7% (n=38) respondents indicated that they consider ways to gain PR mileage out of an event, function or action.
- Advertising: Only 16.3% (n=13) respondents have a formal advertising policy in place, 17.5% (n=14) follows a formal advertising plan and 18.8% (n=15) allocates a budget forward formal advertising. A total of 31% (n=25) of respondents indicated that their websites have been optimised for search engines.

4.2.4. The importance that the average Vaal Triangle SME attaches to IMC

Most respondents (83.5%, n=66) indicated that their businesses do not employ a full time, qualified communications or marketing manager. This fact may be entirely indicative that businesses attach little or no importance to IMC, however, seeing that 51 respondents (63.7%) represented micro businesses, employing five or less permanent employees.

When asked why their businesses advertised, a total of 8.75% (n=7) respondents indicated that they do not advertise at all i.e. that they attach no importance to advertising. A total of 38.75% (n=31) respondents saw the value of advertising in attracting new business, 16.25% (n=13) respondents saw the value of advertising in strategically growing their businesses and a group of 7.5% (n=6) saw the value of advertising in communicating to current customers.

The respondents who took part in the study were asked to indicate the role players within the business who takes responsibility for the different IMC tools, platforms or related activities. The owner of the business was indicated as the person who mostly takes responsibility for the Facebook page (35.4%). All of the other activities measured as not being used in most businesses:

- Twitter page (not used by 77.2% of businesses, when used it is managed by the owner, 12.7%);
- LinkedIn profile (not used by 74.7% of businesses, when used it is managed by the owner, 16.7%);
- Website (not used by 58.2% of businesses, when used it is managed by the owner, 19%);
- Media enquiries (not used by 65.8% of businesses, when used it is managed by the owner, 16.5%);
- Photography needed for IMC activities (not used by 67.1% of businesses, when used it is managed by the owner, 19%);
- Events (not used by 59.5% of businesses, when used it is managed by the owner, 19%);
- Press releases (not used by 69.6% of businesses, when used it is managed by the owner, 19%).

The value of these activities are clearly either not realised or understood by the businesses who took part in the study. Where it is indicated that the owner takes responsibility for an activity, it may mean that it is seen as an important function that only the owner must manage. It may also only reflect the small size of the business seeing that the owner does most everything in a small business, by themselves.

4.2.5. What Vaal Triangle SMEs can do to better utilise IMC in their businesses

The results as discussed in this chapter so far, has indicated that the businesses who took part in the study, does not optimally utilise the tools of IMC. When these tools and their platforms are used, it is not properly planned and it is not properly measured. Any business action that is not planned and measured, can not be managed.

The findings of the study could not indicate whether the tools are not used due to a lack of perceived importance, a lack of finance or merely a lack of truly understanding how to use them for which purpose. Vaal Triangle SME's can therefore invest in training, at the very least on management level, in IMC and its tools and platforms.

4.3. Contribution of the study

The study provided an understanding of the perceptions within the businesses that took part of IMC, its tools and platforms. It proved that better care and reflection can go into planning and measurement regarding communication actions within SMEs of the businesses who took part in the study.

The findings of the study will be shared with the respondents and the members of the local Golden Triangle Chamber of Commerce to create awareness of this fact and encourage small business owners to pro-actively think about not only implementing IMC tools and platforms into their management actions, but properly plan it prior to, and measuring its outcome after having utilised such efforts.

According to Cronbach's alpha, the questionnaire has employed questions with a good rate of reliability (elucidated to in table format in table 3.2 in chapter 3). The same instrument can therefore be used to measure the use of IMC tools and platforms in other environments. This creates the opportunity for further study.

4.4. Evaluation of achievement of study objectives

Point 4.2 above, discussed the findings of the study using the objectives that was set prior to the study, as guide for the arguments made.

The primary objective of this study was to examine the use of communication activities in the Vaal Triangle. The study honed in on IMC specifically and the four tools namely public relations, marketing, sales promotions and direct marketing.

This objective was reached. The study discussed the use and perceptions of IMC tools and platforms of respondents representing 80 SMEs around the Vaal Triangle.

The secondary objectives of this study was to:

- Determine if IMC efforts are measured: this objective was reached as discussed in point 4.2.2 above. Further study can focus on specific tools or specific platforms or repeat the same study within a larger sample or other area.

- Determine if IMC efforts are planned: this objective was reached as discussed in point 4.2.3 above. Further study can focus on specific tools or specific platforms or repeat the same study within a larger sample or other area.
 - Ascertain the importance that the average Vaal Triangle SME attaches to IMC actions: this objective was reached and discussed in point 4.2.4 above.
 - Determine what Vaal Triangle SMEs can do to better utilise IMC in their businesses: this objective was reached and discussed in point 4.2.5 above.
- After interpreting the results of the study, the recommendations that follow will also contribute to reaching this objective.

4.5. Recommendations and managerial implications

The researcher recommends the following after having conducted this study:

- i. Businesses can better utilise low-cost, high-reach IMC tools and platforms.
- ii. SMEs in the Vaal Triangle are not familiar with the benefits of public relations. Advertising, sales promotions, and direct marketing seems to be understood better.
- iii. The use of online platforms in all of these tools are not engaged in optimally.
- iv. Representatives from business must constantly seek information about new and different ways to market their business and communicate to its stakeholders.
- v. There is room for an instrument for SMEs in the Vaal Triangle breaking down these concepts and showing their benefits to any business. This instrument can take the form of a checklist with “yes” or “no” answers, leading the owner or manager of a SME through a process to find the right mix of IMC tools, tailored for their specific business with its specific needs. The development and testing of such an intervention could be a fruitful exercise towards a PhD.

4.6. Recommendations for future research

Further study may be conducted by widening the sample to the province, Gauteng, nationally to South Africa and internationally e.g. BRICS countries. Honing in on specific IMC tools and/or platforms may also provide a wealth of knowledge and opportunity for further research.

4.7. Conclusion

The South African SME is a vital part of the economic sustainability of the country. To run a SME is a tall order, leaving owners and managers having to think innovatively, always considering the bottom line, which is increasing sales, and subsequently, profits.

Integrated marketing communication and its tools and platforms, provide ways for a SME to create a mutually beneficial business relationship with the client, constantly communicating with their stakeholders, and encouraging feedback in order to deliver better products and services. This way a business will gain and maintain a competitive advantage.

This chapter summarised the main issues that this study uncovered by referring to the research questions. Firstly, by detailing how the four IMC tools are used by SMEs in the Vaal Triangle, and secondly, by discussing the way that it is measured.

SMEs in the Vaal Triangle should make it their business to market their business as best they can and learn from their efforts by building a way of measurement into their every effort.

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6. Appendices

6.1. Appendix A – Questionnaire

Examining the use of communication activities within SME's in the Vaal Triangle

1. Your business and you

1.1 Sector or subsector in accordance with the standard industrial classification

Agriculture	1	Mining & quarrying	5	Electricity, gas & water	9
Manufacturing	2	Construction	6	Retail	10
Motor trade & repair services	3	Wholesale trade, commercial agents	7	Catering, accommodation, hospitality, tourism	11
Transport, storage and communications	4	Finance and business services	8	Community, social and personal services	12
Other (briefly explain):					

1.2 Indicate the number of permanent employees

0-5 (Micro)	1	6-50 (Small)	2	51-200 (Medium)	3
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1.3 Write down the total annual turnover of your organisation over the last 3 years.

2015	2016	2017

1.4 Years in current business:

1 to 5 years	1	6-10 years	2	Longer than 10 years	3
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1.5 How did you get involved in the business?

I started the business.	1	I bought an existing business.	2	I bought a franchise.	3	Inherited (family business)	4
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1.6 Do you plan to employ more people in the future?

Yes	1	No	2
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1.7 Are you a member of your local chamber of business?

Yes	1	No	2
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1.8 Gender:

Male	1	Female	2
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1.9 Age:

22-37	1	38-53	2	54-72	3	72+	4
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1.10 Our company employs a full time, qualified communications/marketing manager.

Yes	1	No	2
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Understanding the way you communicate/market

2 Public relations (communicating messages to create a favourable image with the company's different publics/stakeholders).

2.1 Planning and measurement	Yes	No
1.Our company has a formal public relations policy in place (a formal document that explains how the business utilises public relations).	1	2
2.Our company has an operational public relations plan in place (a formal document that details operational goals regarding PR and plans on how to achieve those goals).	1	2
3.Our company has a formal public relations budget.	1	2
4.Our company has a contract with a media monitoring company, such as Newsclip.	1	2

2.2 Use of public relations	Never	Sometimes	Regularly	Very regularly
1.How often have your business or a representative thereof been featured in an unpaid feature in the media in the last 12 months?	1	2	3	4
2.In the last year, we have featured in a local newspaper.	1	2	3	4
3.In the last year, we have featured in a provincial newspaper (eg. Beeld).	1	2	3	4
4.In the last year, we have featured in a national newspaper (eg. Rapport).	1	2	3	4
5.In the last year, we have featured in Magazine (eg. De Kat)	1	2	3	4
6.In the last year, we have featured in an Industry publication (eg. Engineering News)	1	2	3	4
7.In the last year, we have featured on the radio.	1	2	3	4
8.In the last year, we have featured on television.	1	2	3	4
9.In the last year, we have featured on a news website.	1	2	3	4
10.In the last year, we have featured on a blog.	1	2	3	4
11.In the last year, we have featured in a news story on Facebook.	1	2	3	4
12.In the last year, we have featured on other social media.	1	2	3	4
13.Other (please specify):				

3 Advertising (specific messages paid for by the business to communicate a very particular (positive) message to the person or group of persons which it is intended for).

3.1 Planning and measurement	Yes	No
1.Our company has a formal advertising policy in place (a formal document that explains how the business utilises public relations).	1	2
2. Our company has an operational advertising plan in place (a formal document that details operational goals regarding advertising and plans on how to achieve and measure those goals).	1	2
3. Our company has a formal advertising budget.	1	2
4. Our website is optimised for search engines.	1	2

3.2 Use of advertising	Never	Sometimes	Regularly	Very regularly
1.How often have your business or a representative thereof been featured in a PAID feature in the media in the last 12 months?	1	2	3	4
2. In the last year, we have featured in print or broadcast adverts.	1	2	3	4
3. In the last year, we have done a packaging redesign.	1	2	3	4
4. In the last year, we have featured in a cinema advertisement.	1	2	3	4
5.In the last year, we have featured in a brochure or booklet.	1	2	3	4
6.In the last year, we have featured in a directory.	1	2	3	4
7.In the last year, we have featured on a billboard.	1	2	3	4
8.In the last year, we have featured on a display sign(s).	1	2	3	4
9.In the last year, we have used point of purchase displays	1	2	3	4
10.In the last year, we have made a corporate DVD.	1	2	3	4
11.In the last year, we have employed Facebook advertising (paid).	1	2	3	4
12.In the last year, we have employed Facebook advertising (unpaid).	1	2	3	4
13.In the last year, we have featured on other social media.	1	2	3	4
14.In the last year, we have employed pay-per-click advertising.	1	2	3	4

15. Other (please specify):

3.3 Why do you advertise?

4. Sales promotion (a type of marketing used to introduce new products, sell out stock, attract customers or improve sales for a period of time).

	Never	Sometimes	Regularly	Very regularly
1. How often have your company or a representative thereof been involved in the running of a sales promotion in the last 12 months?	1	2	3	4
2. In the last year, we have run a contest, game or sweepstake.	1	2	3	4
3. In the last year, we have sent our customers samples.	1	2	3	4
4. In the last year, we have exhibited at a fair or tradeshow.	1	2	3	4
5. In the last year, we have exhibited at another event.	1	2	3	4
6. In the last year, we have used demonstrations to generate sales.	1	2	3	4
7. In the last year, we have used coupons to generate sales.	1	2	3	4
8. In the last year, we have used rebates to generate sales.	1	2	3	4
9. In the last year, we have used low interest financing to generate sales.	1	2	3	4
10. In the last year, we have used trade-in allowances to generate sales.	1	2	3	4
11. Other (please specify):				

5. Direct marketing (a form of advertising where the company communicates directly to the customer with the aim of selling its products).

	Never	Sometimes	Regularly	Very regularly
1. In the last year, we have used catalogues to generate sales.	1	2	3	4
2. In the last year, we have used mailings to generate sales.	1	2	3	4
3. In the last year, we have used telemarketing to generate sales.	1	2	3	4
4. In the last year, we have used electronic shopping to generate sales.	1	2	3	4
5. In the last year, we have used flyers to generate sales.	1	2	3	4
6. In the last year, we have used email to generate sales.	1	2	3	4
7. In the last year, we have used voicemail to generate sales.	1	2	3	4
8. In the last year, we have used a company blog to generate sales.	1	2	3	4
9. In the last year, we have used our website to generate sales.	1	2	3	4
10. Other ways that we use direct marketing:				

	Yes	No	We don't use direct marketing
11. When we do employ direct marketing, we build in a way of measurement (eg. Promotion code or call to action).	1	2	3

6. Personal selling (when marketer or sales representative sells products or services to clients).

	Yes	No	Not applicable
1.Our company employs sales representatives to sell our products or services.	1	2	
2.Our company employs telephone sales representatives to sell our products.	1	2	
3.Our sales representatives have monthly targets that they are required to meet.	1	2	3
4.Our sales representatives work on commission.	1	2	3
5.Our sales representatives work on a basic salary and commission.	1	2	3

7. Marketing communication environment	Yes	No
1.When planning any event, function or action, we tend to think of ways to get it published in the media.	1	2
2.Our company conducts customer satisfaction surveys to assess the level of our reputation with customers.	1	2
3.Our company has a Facebook page.	1	2
4.Our company has a Twitter page.	1	2
5.Our company strategically plans the way that social media is used.	1	2
6.Our company measures our media presence by means of an online tool such as Google alerts.	1	2
7.We measure our Social media presence by means of the insights page.	1	2

8. Who is responsible for the following within the structure of your company?

	Junior level– Reception/ Clerk	Intermediate level –More experienced person who has been with the company for a long time	Management – A manager. Be it a formal communications manager or operations or marketing manager	Owner – The owner alone or leading a team	Contractor – We pay someone to do it for us	Not utilised in our company
1.Facebook	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.Twitter	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.Linkedin	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.Website	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.Media enquiries	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.Photography	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.Events	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.Press releases	1	2	3	4	5	6

9. Are there any other ways that you apply in the marketing and communication of your business that were not mentioned in this questionnaire?

--

Thank you, the researcher.

6.2. Appendix B – Informed consent

Examining the use of communication activities within SME's in the Vaal Triangle

Dear Respondent

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

It is part of an academic research project and mini-dissertation that will be submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree, Master's in Business Administration (MBA).

Upon completion of the study, the researcher will gladly share the information with you in the hopes of adding value to your enterprise.

- Note that there are not right or wrong answers.
- Your answers will remain confidential.
- The research is merely to identify trends within SME's in the area.
- It will take you no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you.

I, the participant, declare that I have not been forced or coerced into participating in this research project and that I may withdraw from this study at any time.

Name

Date

6.3. Appendix C – Ethical clearance



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Economic and Management Sciences Research
Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)
Tel: 018 299-1427
Email: Bennie.Linde@nwu.ac.za

8 October 2018

Prof R Lotriet
Per e-mail

Dear prof Lotriet,

FEEDBACK – ETHICS APPLICATION: JA SMUTS (11954191) – MBA

Your application for ethical clearance – *Assessing the use of integrated market communication within SMEs in the Vaal Triangle* – has been evaluated on the 28th of September 2018.

Outcome:

The application was approved as a low-risk study.

Ethics nr: (A) NWU-00691-18-S4

Prerequisites:

Detail on the distribution and collection of questionnaires is needed.

The distribution and collection of the questionnaires should at no time compromise the anonymity of the participants. Therefore, the suggestion is that the researcher or a neutral person who is not from the chamber handle the distribution and collection process. The fact that information will be shared with the chamber must also be included in the cover letter of consent of the questionnaire.

Suggestion:

The informed consent letter (pt. 3) indicated ten minutes to complete the questionnaire; please confirm through a test and adapt the proposed time, if necessary.

Yours sincerely,



Prof B Linde
Chairperson: Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)

Original details: (11153431) C:\Fakulteit\Bestuur\Wetenskapelike\Bestuur\Eliek\28 September 2018\JA Smuts\28 September 2018
File reference: 9.1.5.3

6.4. Appendix D – Proof of language editing

Language Editor's Declaration



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Date: 28 November 2018

Simone Barroso
Qualified language practitioner
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interpreting (Afr↔Eng)

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Walter Sisulu Street, Potchefstroom
2531

To whom it may concern,

This document certifies that the manuscript listed below was edited for proper English language, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and overall style by one or more qualified text editor(s) at Language Matters.

Manuscript title: Examining the use of communication activities within SMEs in the Vaal Triangle

Author(s): Hanlie Smuts

Date Issued: 28 November 2018

Simone Barroso

B.A. Language Practice (2010)
B.A. Hons. Language Practice (2011)
Associate Member of the Professional Editors' Guild (PEG)
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