

Spring 2017

# An analysis of original and emerging integrated marketing communication touchpoints among recent effie award winners

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An Analysis of Original and Emerging Integrated Marketing Communication Touchpoints  
Among Recent Effie Award Winners

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An Honors College Project Presented to  
the Faculty of the Undergraduate  
College of Business  
James Madison University

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by Amanda Zwerin

May 2017

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Accepted by the faculty of the Department of Marketing, James Madison University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors College.

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PUBLIC PRESENTATION

This work is accepted for presentation, in part or in full, at Zane Showker Hall on April 21, 2017.

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the James Madison University Honors College for giving me the opportunity to conduct independent marketing research as part of my program of study within the College of Business. This academic challenge has motivated me to learn outside of the classroom and explore the process of research. I am also grateful to the members of my committee for their support in reviewing my honors thesis. Dr. Irvine Clarke, III and Dr. Mert Tokman, have each contributed to this project and I appreciate their feedback and guidance.

I am extremely thankful for my honors thesis advisor, Dr. Theresa Clarke, who has been working on this project with me since day one. From initial brainstorming of an area of research to the final document, her encouragement and advice has been vital to my success. I am appreciative of the knowledge I have gained from working alongside Dr. Clarke.

As a result of my JMU Madison Achievement merit scholarship and the Edythe S. Rowley Honors Scholarship, I have been able to succeed as a Honors student in the College of Business. I appreciate the help that has been provided to me throughout my undergraduate career which enabled this prestigious Honors College project.

## **An Analysis of Original and Emerging Integrated Marketing Communication Touchpoints Among Recent Effie Award Winners**

### **ABSTRACT**

This study presents a brief overview of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) research, including effectiveness, and a discussion of the advertising competition landscape with a focus on the Effie Awards. We extend findings from the Quesenberry et al. (2012) study by investigating IMC touchpoint data within award-winning Effie campaigns from 2011-2016. Data was collected from the Effie database and then analyzed to explore how touchpoints have evolved. Results indicate that there are several new categories of touchpoints used in recent campaigns. We refer to these categories as Emerging Touchpoint Categories as a comparison against Quesenberry et al.'s category findings, hereafter referred to as Original Touchpoint Categories. In addition, the study also found that, on average, the mean number of touchpoints used in award winning campaigns is increasing. Researchers are encouraged to continue studying IMC touchpoint trends as this appears to be a rapidly changing area of award winning campaigns as one measure of advertising effectiveness.

## INTRODUCTION

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is a relatively new sub-field within the larger field of marketing. Various definitions of IMC have evolved while practitioners and academics alike struggle with how to measure the impact of IMC. As one means of assessing the extent to which IMC efforts are effective, we can look towards data within advertising competitions as these competitions often represent some of the very best work from industry. In marketing, effectiveness can be defined as ideas that have positive results in terms of how well a campaign satisfied challenging goals.

Adspur, the largest global directory of advertising awards, reported the existence of over 450 advertising competitions in 2016. Advertising competitions have made the industry more competitive and innovative. As a result, hundreds of agencies are vying for major advertising awards each year. There are local and global competitions that attract creatives, executives, and marketers alike. Adweek reported advertising competitions promote success of the whole team, not just the executives and creative directors (Boches, 2015). When competitions add or modify the award categories, it inspires agencies to enhance their work and increase creativity.

Rudy Gaskins, CEO of Push Creative and Society of Voice Arts and Sciences, created a list of reasons why advertising competitions are important. Select reasons include strengthening client relationships, improved strategic marketing for the agency, winning creates conversations between the agencies and new potential clients, and participation connects the advertising community to identify new trends and standards for advertising campaigns. Studying the winning campaigns from advertising competitions can provide insights to future generations looking to work in this dynamic industry.

Despite the size and scope of advertising competitions, such awards have been criticized in the academic literature for only focusing on industry-specific criteria such as creativity or the aesthetic aspects of marketing communications (Moriarty, 1996; Kover et al.,

1997; White & Smith 2001). The New York Times reported that the advertising industry has become obsessed with competitions that focus on creativity and promote high spending to promote agencies (Rothenberg, 1988). Often neglected with the vast array of competitions are measures of campaign effectiveness or success in terms of achieving the client's business goals. An Ads of The World article suggests the main problem with advertising awards is effectiveness is not at all considered in the judging process. Ultimately, the lack of recognition for advertising campaign effectiveness was reflected in the development of the Effie Awards by the American Marketing Association (Till and Baack, 2005). The Effies added campaign effectiveness into the advertising competition landscape by emphasizing the importance of business results over pure aesthetics and creativity in advertising campaigns. The Effie Awards are one of the few, if not only, professional advertising competitions that measure the creative aspects of the campaign as well as reward a focus on the effectiveness of the campaign based on audience and/or client standards. Because of the comprehensive nature of this particular competition, the Effie Awards are the focal point of this study.

Given rapid changes in the IMC landscape with the advent of new social media, it is important to understand how advertisers are adapting to new forms of communication. Advertising competitions, which typically represent the top work of any given agency, are expected to incorporate timely and relevant communication touchpoints within integrated campaigns. Touchpoints are "contacts" or unique interactions that a consumer has with a brand (Belch & Belch, 2015). For example, a consumer seeing a print ad would be one touchpoint and a consumer visiting a social media site would be another touchpoint. In a study of hundreds of Effie Award winning campaigns, Quesenberry et al. (2012), reported trends in the number of campaign touchpoints used, as well as categories used, within such campaigns between 1998-2010. Their study suggested that more research is needed to understand what factors are associated with campaign success in advertising competitions. Thus, the purpose of this

research is to replicate and extend on the Quesenberry et al. (2012) study using more recent data to determine if there are any new factors associated with campaign success.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### IMC Overview and Definitions

In the late 1980s, the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) formally defined Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) as "a concept of marketing communications, planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communications disciplines - for example, general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations - and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact" (Schultz, 1993, p. 17). This working definition recognized IMC as a value adding strategy for various marketing communication disciplines.

Since the 1980s, researchers started building off of the AAAA's definition to better understand the breadth and depth of the IMC concept. For instance, an alternative and more recent definition described the IMC concept as a plan focusing on the entirety of marketing communications, compared to developing a plan based on separate parts such as advertising, public relations and promotion (Schultz et al., 1993). The shift in point of view evolves with the understanding of IMC. Traditional advertising was no longer an effective method of marketing communications and, as a result, IMC emerged (Dilenschneider, 1991). Duncan and Everett (1993) used synergism to explain that IMC was more beneficial than if individual traditional areas of advertising chose its own goals and objectives for communication. However, some research supported the opposing idea that IMC was simply a reinvention of the wheel, meaning the concept has been in practice for years but the strategic integration of past communications creates a new technique (Duncan & Everett, 1993; Gronstedt & Thorsen, 1996). In addition, Eagle et al. (1999) reported the definition of IMC, including its differences from traditional marketing communications, has not significantly changed even with abundant academic support on the topic.

At the turn of the century, more recent studies continued evolving the definition of IMC as a theoretical understanding for why consumer reactions to marketing communications vary and how communicating can be better synchronized with enhancing consumer relationships (Duncan, 2002; Kitchen & Schultz, 2000; Kliatchko 2005; Vargo & Lusch, 2004; McGrath 2005; Schultz & Patti, 2009). Organizations began to understand the importance of implementing the IMC approach to communicate powerful messages about their brand to clients (Laczniak et al., 2005). Practitioners applied IMC throughout various aspects of brand strategy which required research and development prior to presenting external communications about their brand (Madhavaram et al., 2005). Kliatchko (2008) defined IMC as an “audience-driven business process” (p. 140) that all channels related to which the brand was affected. IMC can be summarized by four categories: stakeholders, content, channels, and results (Reinold & Tropp, 2012). These categories are managed to generate brand value through meaningful dialogue across IMC messages (Duncan, 2002). The evolution of IMC has resulted in the importance of implementing this strategy to strengthen brand equity (Madhavaram et al., 2005). In sum, since the original inception of the AAAA’s definition, contemporary definitions of IMC now incorporate stakeholder perspectives as well.

As a relatively new subfield of marketing, as the AAAA and other researchers proposed definitions of IMC, additional researchers began conducting studies about IMC. Reid (2005) found that brand awareness, brand loyalty, and sales were increased when IMC was implemented. Wind and Sharp (2009) investigated the influence of the new interactive-media platform on empirical generalizations gaps in advertising. A study conducted on 20 campaigns across various industries reported internet advertising performs similar to television ads, in contrast to advertisers’ perceptions of the two mediums who are reluctant to allocate spending from television to the Internet (Draganska et al., 2014). New technology has enabled marketers to collect incremental data on practically every touchpoint consumers interact. Communication with consumers can be effectively retargeted through different channels, specifically online, with

the use of individual-level data (Li & Kannan, 2014). Several studies explored the synergistic effects of offline and online touchpoints (Batra & Keller, 2016; Chang & Thorson, 2004, Havlena et al., 2007; Kumar et al., 2015; Wiesel et al., 2011) and cross-media research supports exposure to one marketing communication touchpoint does not affect the influence the exposure to another (Assael, 2011).

Marketing researchers have called for further studies that may contribute to our continued understanding of IMC effectiveness (Kitchen, Kim & Schultz, 2008; Laczniak et al. 2005; Quesenberry et al., 2012). Companies can benefit economically, through lowered expenses, when they can manage their IMC efforts effectively (Eagle et al., 1999). Madhavaram et al. (2005) discuss how IMC can positively affect the firm's efficiency and effective marketing communication thereby strengthening their financial performance. While the purpose of this study is not to dissect how the Effie Awards measure effectiveness, entrants might put behavioral results, business results and engagement as measures of effectiveness. Some examples from Effie award winning entry forms include reporting social media impressions, meeting sales goals and number of activations.

IMC can be seen as a valuation approach, in which a combination of assets are integrated to escalate strategic abilities for practitioners (Ratnatunga & Ewing, 2005). Percy (2008), a prominent researcher and editor in the marketing and advertising discipline contends that, while relatively new, IMC has become a critical component of successful marketing strategy. The slow growth of understanding IMC is attributed to practitioners' focus on IMC development and implementation rather than its measurement and effectiveness (Kitchen, Kim & Schultz, 2008). The evolution of marketing in the 21st century has realized the relationship between marketing spending on both customer acquisition and retention (Neckermann, 2004). As a result, IMC can be seen as a vital contributor to the new IMC paradigm (Ratnatunga & Ewing, 2005). If IMC is strategically implemented, brands may be able to compete more effectively in the 21st century marketplace (Kitchen et al., 2004).

## Measuring IMC Effectiveness

When practitioners discuss IMC effectiveness, they have varying perspectives regarding what that means and there are many ways that companies appear to be measuring their IMC effectiveness. The need to measure marketing communications effects has been a topic in advertising since the nineteenth century (Ratnatunga & Ewing, 2005). Before 2005, a survey suggested very few advertising agencies used measurements to evaluate IMC at their organization (Eagle & Kitchen 2000b; Kitchen & Li 2005; Kitchen & Schultz 1998). Since then, IMC effectiveness has been measured on a medium-by-medium basis, using variables such as target market recall, target market appropriateness, brand capabilities, performance in creativity award competitions, and compensation bases such as return-on-communication and return-on-marketing-investment.

A thorough review of the IMC literature revealed that IMC effectiveness measures can be viewed through three distinct lenses: 1.) Models and Equations, 2.) Metrics, and 3.) Competition Outcomes. Although the purpose of this study is not to analyze each lens, we briefly review each type here to help the reader understand how the IMC industry is challenged by numerous distinct methods to measure IMC effectiveness.

1.) Models and Equations: Research suggests IMC effectiveness depends on how appropriate the communication was for the intended consumer group when evaluating the connection to campaigns (Kilgour & Koslow, 2013). For instance, Reinold & Tropp (2012) developed an equation that includes factors such as brand touchpoint effectiveness and brand content effectiveness to assess the effectiveness of IMC. Sethuraman et al. (2011) claim effectiveness is often captured in terms of advertising elasticity, or an increase in sales or market share per increase in advertising. IMC variables can be manipulated to analyze what communication is needed for brand capability improvement (Ratnatunga & Ewing, 2005).

Practitioners have an enlightened understanding of consumer decision making and the communications that are motivating their journey. The Communication Integration Model (Batra

& Keller, 2016) provides helpful criteria to analyze IMC plans that are currently in action. This model includes the following factors: coverage, cost, contribution, commonality, complementarity, cross- effects, and conformability. Batra and Keller (2016) developed models that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of these marketing communications, known as the Communications Matching Model and the Communications Optimization Model. These models highlight the effectiveness of various categories of media throughout the multiple stages of the consumer decision making journey (Batra & Keller, 2016).

2.) Metrics: The first attempt to capture IMC effectiveness quantitatively began by measuring each medium of communication individually. For example, communication outcomes can be evaluated by metrics such as awareness, consumer recall, image, trust, emotion and loyalty (Batra & Keller, 2016). The quality of these measures can show insights about the effectiveness of the touchpoints in an IMC campaign (Krugman 1965; Reinold & Tropp, 2012; Wirth 2006). The media component of IMC effectiveness is specific to the targeted audience through measurements of aided recall applicable to those whom the communication was aimed at (Reinold & Tropp, 2012). Prior to the Internet, exposure to an ad was a common way communication effectiveness was measured (Assael, 2011). While these approaches were useful historically, today communication is consumed by essentially all mediums concurrently (Ewing, 2009), posing yet another challenge to the effective measurement of IMC.

The need for a measurement methodology for IMC is increasing parallel to the increase in types of marketing communications. Social media, for example, has caused more difficulty when trying to quantify the effectiveness of marketing communications (Barger & Labrecque, 2013). Social media metrics are more costly and therefore require marketers to think more specifically about measurements that are more informative (Fogel, 2010). If traditional IMC measurement objectives are implemented, the effectiveness of social media communication could be too narrowly judged. This new area of communication has required a combination of

web analytics and IMC metrics to accurately measure effectiveness (Barger & Labrecque, 2013).

As a result of a study conducted by Reinold & Tropp (2012), the assumption has been made that IMC effectiveness can be assessed via quantitative measures such as higher market share for the brand. Many organizations use IMC spending as a measure of effectiveness as there is a strong and supportive connection between expenditures throughout a specific marketing period and how the IMC spend can be advantageous to brand value (Ratnatunga & Ewing, 2005). Sometimes competitive metrics can be assessed such as Madhavaram et al.'s. (2005) approach whereby firms are compared against competitors' IMC efforts. As a final quantitative measure, some companies use compensation to evaluate IMC as an objective measurement benchmark (Kitchen, Kim & Schultz, 2008). Schultz and Kitchen (1997) believed a compensation approach to measuring Return-On-Communication or Consumer-Investment had the potential to further understand and expand the acceptance of IMC.

3.) Competitions: Advertising competition performance is a widely acknowledged form of assessing effectiveness. An interesting aspect of competitions is that it not only provides performance information that can be used internally within the organization, but it can be used to assist in stimulating the marketplace (Eagle & Kitchen, 2000; Fortini-Campbell, 1994). For instance, it can be a signaling mechanism to companies that are looking for a new agency. Good performance in these competitions can serve as a powerful PR tool that may help organizations attract and retain top talent.

Within many advertising competitions, a strong recurring theme is that ad effectiveness is directly or indirectly based on creativity. Industry practitioners have stressed the value of creativity for effective advertising communications (Buzzell, 1964; El-Murad & West, 2003; Goldenberg, Mazursky, & Solomon, 1999; Kover, 1995), therefore, it is a common belief that creativity has the strongest impact on effectiveness. Creativity has been studied in regards to marketing effectiveness through advertising award competitions which supported the notion that

creativity is a subjective concept, when judged by professionals, but is a strong enough measure to award a campaign's effectiveness (Amabile 1982; Kover, Goldberg & James 1995; Till & Baack, 2005; White & Smith 2001). Contrary to popular assumption, research shows creativity is measured via inconsistent methods that depreciate the reliability of creativity as an IMC measurement (Ang & Low, 2000, Ang, Lee, & Leong, 2007; Kover et al., 1995, Pieters, Warlop, & Wedel, 2002; Smith, MacKenzie, Yang, Buchholz, & Darley, 2007; Stone, Besser, & Lewis, 2000; Till & Baack, 2005).

The Effie Awards are the only competition that currently awards effectiveness in its own category, referred to as results, separate from commonly measured creativity dimensions within other prominent advertising awards. These awards incorporate innovation and strategy, however perceptions of originality may differ while the vital impact of strategy in effectiveness is constant (Kilgour, Sasser & Koslow, 2013).

Looking Ahead: There are clearly challenges associated with the operationalization of IMC effectiveness. Eagle & Kitchen (2000) suggest IMC is recognized as a competitive advantage for an organization's performance. However, despite the existing literature on IMC, research suggests that IMC does not connect clearly to organizational performance measures (Baker & Mitchell, 2000). This has resulted in a major barrier to the acceptance of IMC among industry practitioners and academics (Ewing, 2009). As the literature review suggested, there is not one way to measure IMC effectiveness. Measurements of effectiveness have evolved as marketing communication mediums changed. Marketing communication is expected to continue to change in unforeseen ways and measurements should evolve and improve based on new research. Measurements have and should continue to be an assessment of how well the campaign aligned with the marketing objectives to realize the true effectiveness of IMC (Patti et al., 2013).

For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on IMC effectiveness measurement based on advertising competitions. In the next section, the advertising competition landscape will be briefly outlined.

## **About the Advertising Competition Landscape**

According to Adspur [<https://www.adspur.com>], the largest global directory of advertising awards, there were approximately 63 advertising competitions in North America and 455 in the world. The 2016 Award Winning Agencies Database [[awardwinningadvertisingagencies.com](http://awardwinningadvertisingagencies.com)], reports some of the most significant award programs within the industry. A sampling of the major advertising competitions is depicted in Table 1 below to show the variety, scope, and primary judging focus of each award. Within these 20 competitions, over half of them included a creative component as the most heavily weighted judging criterion, with some including other areas such as innovation, interactive, technology, and global. There is also a trend of combining different judging categories, for example, IAB MIXX Awards evaluates creativity and interactive factors. Of the major advertising award competitions, the Effie Awards are currently the only category that includes some type of effectiveness component.

**TABLE 1. A Sampling of Major Advertising Award Competitions**

<b>Award Name</b>	<b>Competition Overview</b>	<b>Primary Judging Focus</b>
The ADC Annual Awards	Honors the most creative commercials in advertising, digital media, graphic design, packaging, and illustration.	Creativity, Art
AdWeek Arc Awards	Executives, producers and creative talent are honored for the exceptional branded storytelling developed in the past year.	Storytelling, Creativity
Adweek Project Isaac Awards	Rewards innovation in media, advertising and marketing, and technology to celebrate the various areas Adweek covers.	Innovation, Technology
The American Advertising Awards	The largest competition of advertising creativity to celebrate the best in the art of advertising.	Creativity
Andy Awards	Honors creativity in advertising on a global scale and recognizes individuals and organizations whose achievements have enhanced the industry standards.	Creativity
Cannes Lions	A global celebration of advertising that judges respected industry representatives on innovation and creativity.	Creativity, Innovation
The Caples Awards	Recognizes courageous leaders in direct marketing who utilize almost all channels to creatively interact with customers.	Innovation/Courage, Direct Marketing
CLIO Awards	Identifies creativity that impacts the global advertising space. The awards process is known for its democratic approach to select creative superiority.	Creativity
D&AD Professional Award	Rewards creative achievement in design and advertising to recognize the greatest creative work.	Creativity
DMA ECHO Awards	This competition looks at direct response marketing to recognize marketing campaigns that excel in strategy, creativity and results.	Strategy, Creativity, Results, Direct Response Marketing
Effie Awards	Effie, which stands for Effectiveness, rewards campaigns that have effective marketing strategy through communications that impact a brand's success.	Effectiveness
Healthcare Marketing IMPACT Awards	Honors healthcare marketing campaigns that highlight new ways of communicating healthcare information and challenges through social platforms.	Impact, Healthcare
Hermes Creative Awards	An international creative competition that rewards organizations and individuals for innovative concepts, designs and technologies.	Creativity, Innovation, Technology
IAB MIXX Awards	Highlights advancements in the interactive sector of creative advertising by evaluating strategy, development, media placement and ROI.	Creativity, Interactive
Internet Advertising Competition Awards	Awards online advertising success in email, digital newsletters, apps, web-based ads and social media throughout various industry categories.	Online Advertising
LIA	Global celebration of great achievements in advertising, digital, production, design, music and technology.	International, Media
The One Show	A distinguished award in advertising, design and interactive that celebrates creative excellence.	Creativity
SABRE Awards	SABRE (Superior Achievements in Brand Reputation and Engagement) recognizes outstanding public relations.	Public Relations
SXSW Interactive Innovation Awards	Rewards innovative interactive and connected advancements of design and technology.	Innovation, Interactive
The Webby Awards	The internet's greatest reward for interactive excellence online.	Online, Interactive

Academic researchers (Kilgour et al., 2013; Tippins & Kunkel 2006) have started exploring advertising competitions to better understand the nature of these endeavors. One study suggested that creatives place similar importance on strategy and originality when deciding if a campaign should earn an award (Kilgour et al., 2013). The results of their study support that creative advertising awards place a greater emphasis on originality and as compared to strategy. Research that focused on the Clio Awards in terms of adding value to the winning agency found that winning awards did not have a significant financial impact on the return on investment (Tippins & Kunkel 2006). While winning campaigns were awarded for

quality advertising, the relation between an award and actual financial benefits were not supported.

### **About the Effie Awards**

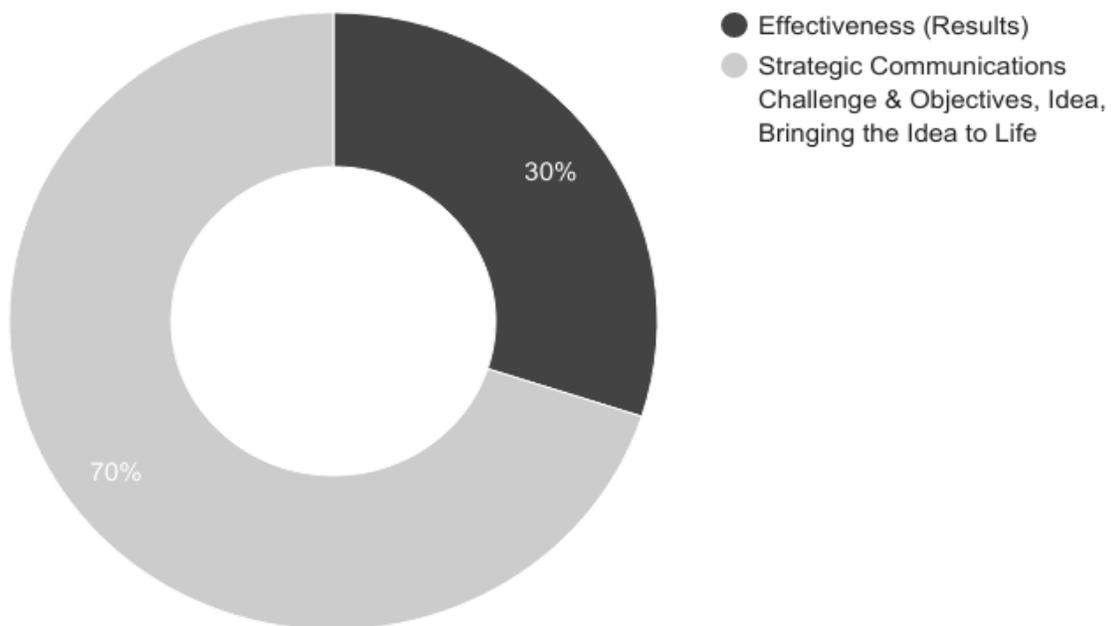
The Effie Awards are sponsored by Effie Worldwide, an organization dedicated to improving the practice of marketing effectiveness, and recognized by practitioners and advertising agencies across the globe. This prestigious award dates back to 1968, when receiving an Effie became a global symbol of accomplishment (Effie.org, 2016). Effie, which stands for *effectiveness*, highlights successful marketing ideas that have met client objectives and supports meaningful conversation about the most effective influences of marketing. The Effie Awards organization works closely with noteworthy researchers and media organizations to transform innovative insights into effective marketing strategies. The Effie Awards' main focus is on evaluating and rewarding each campaign on its effectiveness.

Today, Effie recognizes award-winning effective campaigns in the Global Effies and the Positive Change Effies, regional competitions in the Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East/North Africa region, the North American region, Latin America, and over 40 other national programs. Additionally, the Effies have numerous specific categories for entries based on industry (e.g., beauty, fitness, pet care, etc.)

The rigorous judging process starts by assigning jurors to review competition entries, known as cases that do not conflict with personal interest. Jurors look for how the marketing communications directly linked to the results when evaluating the context of past performance, competition, and category of the submission. During Round One and the Final Round, judges score each case on strategic objectives, the idea, executing the idea, and the measure of effectiveness, which makes up 30% of the score (Effie.org, 2016). As shown in Figure 1 below, in the Effie judging criteria 30% of points goes toward campaign effectiveness and 70% goes toward IMC plan and strategy. Jurors are consistently evaluating cases on effectiveness to determine which cases are finalists and which trophy - bronze, silver or gold - the finalists earn.

It is possible that a category will have no winner or there may be various winners at any trophy level. The Grand Effie award signifies the highest achievement in marketing effectiveness out of all cases in a given competition and is seen as a the best example for the entire industry. An Effie entry that has received a bronze, silver, or gold trophy endured two rounds of strict evaluation regarding the advertising industry’s most effective campaigns. In the Effie blog [<http://effieblog.com/tagged/Defining-Effectiveness>] where marketing practitioners were asked to respond to what constitutes as effective marketing, a recurring theme was identified. Specifically, effective marketing builds business and memorably reaches target audiences.

**FIGURE 1. Effie Awards Weighting of Judging Criteria**



Although the Effie Awards lay the groundwork for exploring advertising insights, minimal research has been conducted on this topic. Quesenberry et al. (2012) outlined previous studies related to the Effies and advancements made in improving the Effie Award competition (Moriarty, 1996; Wright-Isak & Faber, 1996; Kover et. al., 1997). Since then, research related to the Effie Awards has been limited to identifying message strategy in effective ads (Alt et al., 2014) or comparing the communication objectives to the campaign results (Patti et al., 2015).

Alt et al. (2014) found the distinctiveness (uniqueness) appeal was used in 10.04% of print communication, followed by a convenience appeal at 9.15%, in award winning Effie print ads. Alt et al.'s (2014) study found that that winning campaign messages focus on product features and benefits compared to consumer's emotions. Patti et al. (2015) found the majority of Effie entries include a specific communication task and target market in the campaign objective, however, while less than 5% specify a period or desired amount of change. This study also analyzed the hierarchy of effects stages (awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction and purchase) and uncovered the frequency of each stage is about the same to previous findings with a key difference in non-communication tasks that have increased to 30% in 2014.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Marketing campaigns that have been identified as effective in Effie Awards tend to use more than one medium of communication (Quesenberry et al., 2012). Quesenberry et al. (2012) found that, over a 13 year period, the average number of IMC touchpoints used by Effie Award winners demonstrated an increase between 1998 (2.63 touchpoints) and 2010 (5.78 touchpoints) with specific increases in PR and interactive media. The mean total number of touchpoints used in winning campaigns was 4.46 touchpoints. This study found that 3 to 5 touchpoint-campaigns were used the most frequently in Effie Award winning campaigns and less than 2% used 10-touchpoint campaigns or greater. Specifically, 80% of winning campaigns used TV as a touchpoint, 70% used print and 56% used interactive. Quesenberry et al. (2012) identified an increasing trend in the use of direct email, design, cinema, sponsorship, guerilla, and consumer involvement.

Since the time of their study, much has changed in terms of touchpoint choices available to marketers. In the past year alone, the amount of marketing solutions has grown 87% (Brinker, 2016) and the two largest communication categories are: 1) social media marketing & monitoring, and 2) display & programmatic advertising. As new technologies emerge, advertisers have more options to choose touchpoint categories which are essential to developing IMC campaigns. Did this expansion create corresponding increases in touchpoints used by Effie Award winners? Through the two research questions presented below, this study extends Quesenberry et al's. (2012) original work by exploring touchpoint usage and trends among Effie Award winners since 2010.

RQ1: Since 2010, which IMC touchpoint categories have increased in use, decreased in use, or stayed the same among Effie Award Winners?

RQ2: Since 2010, did the increasing trend in the use of IMC touchpoints among Effie Award winners continue?

## METHODOLOGY

Following the methodology of Quesenberry et al. (2012), this study collected published award-winning campaigns available from the subscription-based Effie Worldwide online database from 2011 to 2016. Data was obtained from entry forms which were completed by agencies and companies entering the Effie Awards competition. Campaign entry forms identified the brand client, the lead agency, campaign background information, campaign objectives/goals, an overview of the campaign execution, and campaign results. Submissions included a checklist that indicated the combination of communication touchpoints used in the campaign and determine the categories the campaign should be judged in. In total, 448 campaigns were retrieved from the database for evaluation in this research.

To analyze the content of the entry forms, one coder entered data by category and year. The Brand/Client name and award type (Gold, Silver, Bronze, or Finalist) were recorded next. A special section of the entry form entitled "Bringing the Idea to Life" included the checklist of IMC touchpoints used in the campaign. These touchpoints were organized and counted by main categories (e.g., Print) and subcategories (e.g., Magazines) used throughout 2011 to 2016. Quesenberry et al. simplified the checklist into 15 broad media categories, which are hereafter referred to as Original Touchpoint Categories in this study. Once all the data items were recorded from the entry form, descriptive statistics for each category and sub-category were calculated. Percentages of Effie Award-Winning campaigns by the number of media touchpoints used were calculated and sorted by one-touchpoint campaign, two-touchpoint campaigns, and so on to determine the distribution of winning campaigns based on the total number of touchpoints used. Finally, data was transformed into graphs to display trends over time.

## RESULTS

The first research question explored which IMC touchpoint categories have increased in use, decreased in use, or stayed the same. Table 2 illustrates the percentage of winning campaigns, found between the years 2011 and 2016, when using the Original Touchpoint Categories reported in Quesenberry et al.'s (2012) study. The number in each cell represents the percentage of winning campaigns that used the touchpoint category, for example, in 2011, 67% of the winning campaigns used TV as a touchpoint.

**TABLE 2. Percentage of Original Touchpoint Category Usage from 2011-2016 for Effie Award-Winning Campaigns based on the Categorization used by Quesenberry et al. (2012)**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Average
Number of Winning Entries per Year	45	86	76	84	68	89	-
<b>TV</b>	67	70	67	69	54	51	<b>63%</b>
<b>Radio</b>	40	41	28	32	22	18	30%
<b>Print</b>	56	60	55	49	49	43	<b>52%</b>
<b>Direct Mail</b>	13	20	20	14	6	9	14%
<b>Direct E-mail</b>	29	42	21	36	34	15	29%
<b>PR/Events</b>	53	56	50	51	48	42	<b>50%</b>
<b>Design</b>	9	14	8	10	1	8	<b>8%</b>
<b>Cinema</b>	18	12	14	10	10	12	13%
<b>Interactive</b>	91	97	88	92	94	83	<b>91%</b>
<b>Out of Home</b>	49	38	43	40	38	30	40%
<b>Trade Shows</b>	0	13	5	7	9	6	<b>7%</b>
<b>Sponsorships</b>	18	21	16	10	15	9	15%
<b>Retail</b>	42	47	47	43	35	29	41%
<b>Guerrilla</b>	24	28	39	40	13	25	28%
<b>Consumer Involvement</b>	49	58	47	61	57	33	<b>51%</b>

As seen in Table 2 above, on average over the observed years, the most frequently used touchpoint was interactive (91%), followed TV (63%), print (52%) and consumer involvement (51%). Over the six-year period radio, print and out of home usage in award winning campaigns declined the most. Although TV has declined since 2010, on average, 63% of winning campaigns still use this touchpoint. The majority of award-winning campaigns used the interactive category as a form of media communication and less than 10% of winning campaigns, on average, used design and trade shows.

An interesting observation of this study was that fourteen new categories were added after 2011. We hereafter refer to these 14 categories as the “*Emerging Touchpoint Categories*”. Table 3 on the following page identifies the Emerging Touchpoint Categories discovered as well as the year it was first introduced in the competition. We include 2011 because it is part of the date range for this analysis for this study, even though there were no new touchpoint categories used that year. Four new Emerging Touchpoint Categories were introduced in 2012, including distribution changes, pricing, sampling, and trade communication/promotion. The year 2013 was quite active with five new Emerging Touchpoint Categories: social networking, mobile/tablet, sales promotion, professional engagement, and point of case. The Emerging Touchpoint Categories of branded content, internal marketing, and international marketing were added in 2014. Ecommerce and search engine marketing were the most recent Emerging Touchpoint Categories in 2015. The fourteen Emerging Touchpoint Categories did not replace any of the Original Touchpoint Categories.

**TABLE 3. Emerging Touchpoint Categories Added into Effie Award-winning Campaigns Since 2011**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Distribution Changes		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pricing		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sampling		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trade Comm/Promo		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Networking Sites			✓	✓	✓	✓
Mobile/Tablet			✓	✓	✓	✓
Sales Promotion			✓	✓	✓	✓
Professional Engagement			✓	✓	✓	✓
Point of Care			✓	✓	✓	✓
Branded Content				✓	✓	✓
Internal Marketing				✓	✓	✓
International Marketing				✓	✓	✓
Ecommerce					✓	✓
Search Engine Marketing					✓	✓

Table 4a on the following page reveals the percentage of winning campaigns that used each of the Emerging Touchpoint Categories as they were introduced. For example, in 2013, 70% of award-winning campaigns used social networking sites as a communication touchpoint in their campaigns. On average, since the time each touchpoint was introduced, less than 10% of winning entries used ecommerce, professional engagement, pricing, point of case, sampling, distribution changes, trade communications/promotion, and international marketing. The trend in usage of branded content increased the most since the category first emerged. The most utilized emerging categories were social networking sites, mobile/tablet, branded content and search engine marketing. On average, 75% of award-winning campaigns used social

networking sites. Social networking sites and mobile/tablet usage in winning campaigns both increased 16% from when they were introduced in 2013. Overall, the data represents a trend towards digital communications in the award-winning Effie campaigns.

**TABLE 4a. Emerging Media Communications Touchpoint Usage by Category for Effie Award-Winning Campaigns (2011-2016)**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>N</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>89</b>
Distribution Changes		2%	0%	1%	0%	2%
Pricing		3%	0%	5%	0%	7%
Sampling		1%	0%	5%	0%	3%
Trade Comm/Promo		1%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Social Networking Sites			70%	62%	82%	85%
Mobile/Tablet			37%	51%	40%	53%
Sales Promotion			11%	7%	9%	12%
Professional Engagement			4%	2%	4%	2%
Point of Case			3%	4%	1%	0%
Branded Content				1%	43%	38%
Internal Marketing				8%	18%	16%
International Marketing				2%	0%	0%
Ecommerce					4%	11%
Search Engine Marketing					34%	42%

Table 4b below reorganizes the data from Table 4a to show, from highest to lowest, the average percentage of campaigns using each of the 14 Emerging Touchpoint Categories. Social networking sites and mobile/tablet were both introduced in 2013 and represent the most frequently used emerging categories on average. Conversely, distribution changes, trade communications/promotion, and international marketing were used less frequently since introduced in 2012, 2012, and 2014 respectively.

**TABLE 4b. Average Usage of Emerging Touchpoint Categories from 2011-2016**

<b>Emerging Touchpoint Categories</b>	<b>Average Percentage of Campaigns Using this Touchpoint</b>
Social Networking Sites	75%
Mobile/Tablet	45%
Search Engine Marketing	38%
Branded Content	27%
Internal Marketing	14%
Sales Promotion	10%
Ecommerce	8%
Professional Engagement	3%
Pricing	3%
Point of Case	2%
Sampling	2%
Distribution Changes	1%
Trade Comm/Promo	1%
International Marketing	1%

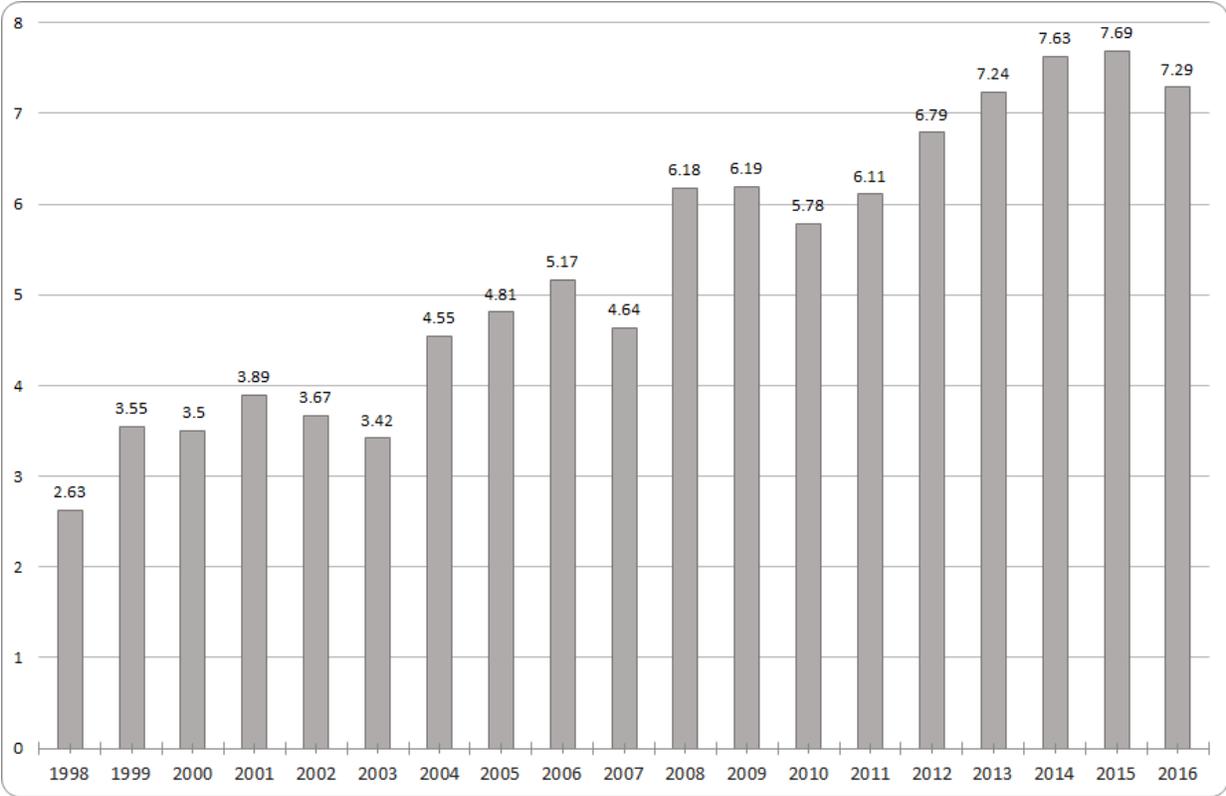
Quesenberry et al.'s study investigated the fluctuation of IMC touchpoints from 1998 to 2010. Their trend indicated an increase in use of PR/events and interactive in comparison to the other Original Touchpoint Categories. Their study suggested increasing use of these touchpoints in award winning campaigns are related to the rise of digital media touchpoint usage. In addition, the continued use of TV, radio, print and out of home touchpoints suggests newer media categories are not replacing former media usage touchpoints, but are being added to create a more effective IMC campaign.

The second research question investigated if the trend in the increased use of IMC touchpoints among Effie Award winners continued. Figure 2 on the next page illustrates the mean total number of touchpoints used in award-winning campaigns since 1998 and includes data from Quesenberry et al. (2012) as a point of comparison to this study. The mean total

number of touchpoints has increased since 2010 and this finding supports Quesenberry et al.'s (2012) observation that Effie award-winning campaigns are associated with an increasing number of communication touchpoints. However, the more recent data suggests award-winning campaigns have used a sharp increase in the average number of communication touchpoints. Specifically, in the past four years, the mean number of touchpoints used has exceeded seven as compared to Quesenberry et al.'s finding of 4.46 as the average mean number from 1998 to 2010.

A regression analysis was conducted to significantly test the increase in mean number of touchpoints in Figure 2 from 1998 to 2016. The outcome was a positive coefficient which supports an increase in touchpoints each successive year since 1998. This result is statistically significant with a p-value  $< 0.01$ .

**FIGURE 2. Mean Total Number of Media Touchpoints for Effie Award-Winning Campaigns (1998-2016)**



To further analyze these trends, Table 5 on the next page illustrates the distribution of all touchpoints, including Original Touchpoint Categories and Emerging Touchpoint Categories, used in Effie award-winning campaigns. This data reflects the number and percentage of award winning campaigns that used an exact number of touchpoints. For example, in 2011 there were five winning campaigns, representing 11% of the total campaigns that year, using two touchpoints. As shown in the last column, an average was taken across the six year period to determine the number of touchpoints used most frequently in award-winning campaigns. The largest number of award winners (12% each) used 5-touchpoint and 4-touchpoint campaigns, closely followed by 11% of campaigns using 8-touchpoint campaigns. The smallest percentage of usage among award winners were 13-touchpoint and 1-touchpoint campaigns.

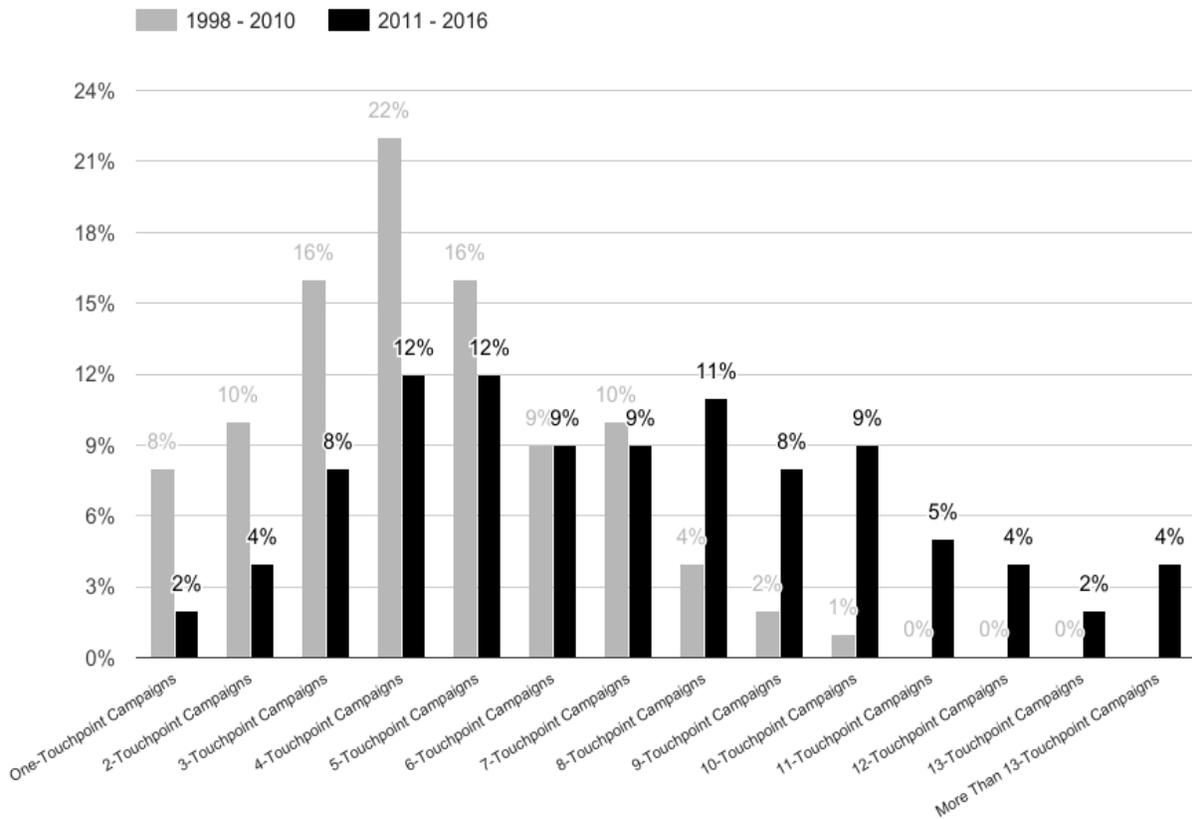
**TABLE 5. Distribution of Effie Award-Winning Campaigns by Number of Campaign Touchpoints Used (2011-2016)**

<b>Number of Campaign Touchpoints</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>Average</b>
1	(0)0%	(2)2%	(6)8%	(1)1%	(1)2%	(1)1%	<b>2%</b>
2	(5)11%	(5)7%	(1)1%	(1)1%	(1)2%	(1)1%	4%
3	(4)9%	(8)9%	(4)5%	(7)8%	(9)13%	(6)7%	8%
4	(5)11%	(7)8%	(13)17%	(6)7%	(6)9%	(16)18%	<b>12%</b>
5	(9)20%	(13)15%	(5)7%	(5)6%	(7)10%	(12)13%	<b>12%</b>
6	(3)7%	(12)14%	(2)3%	(8)10%	(7)10%	(8)9%	9%
7	(4)9%	(3)3%	(6)8%	(16)19%	(4)6%	(9)10%	9%
8	(7)16%	(5)6%	(14)18%	(10)12%	(3)4%	(8)9%	<b>11%</b>
9	(3)7%	(14)16%	(4)5%	(6)7%	(5)7%	(6)7%	9%
10	(2)4%	(5)6%	(7)9%	(8)10%	(11)16%	(5)6%	9%
11	(0)0%	(5)6%	(5)7%	(7)8%	(5)7%	(5)4%	5%
12	(1)2%	(2)2%	(3)4%	(4)5%	(4)6%	(5)6%	4%
13	(1)2%	(4)5%	(1)1%	(2)2%	(2)3%	(1)1%	<b>2%</b>
14+	(1)2%	(1)1%	(5)7%	(3)4%	(3)4%	(7)8%	4%

Figure 3 on the following page shows another representation of the distribution of the number of touchpoints used in Effie Award winning campaigns. Figure 3 1998-2010 illustrates a positive skewed distribution of the percentages recorded from 1998 to 2010. The emphasis on fewer touchpoint campaigns supports the low mean of touchpoints used during that time period. Figure 3 2011-2016 illustrates a bimodal distribution with “fat” tails or leptokurtic distribution during 2011 to 2016 Effie Awards. This suggests in the past six years winning campaigns have frequently used a higher number of touchpoints. However, there are still a significant amount of distribution for all amounts of touchpoint campaigns. The trend in greater than 11-touchpoint

campaigns is possible in recent years due to more available touchpoint categories, such as the Emerging Touchpoint Categories identified in this study.

**FIGURE 3: Percentages of Effie Award-Winning Campaigns by Number of Media Touchpoints (1998-2010 and 2011-2016)**



## DISCUSSION

### Managerial Implications

Performance in the Effie Awards is one of many possible indications that an IMC Campaign was effective. The current judging criteria emphasizes that award winning campaigns have met challenging advertising objectives and goals and thus the Effie Awards are used as the measure of effectiveness in this study. The recent evolution and addition of IMC touchpoints shows IMC has arrived and is definitely here now. Initially, IMC was just starting to be understood and was constantly being redefined (Dilenschneider, 1991; Eagle et al., 1999; Lacznia et al., 2005; Schultz et al., 1993) but now IMC is widely used for those who enter effectiveness competitions.

By analyzing Effie Award case studies in this research, insights can be recommended to advertisers who are creating strategic IMC campaigns in the future. First, advertisers wanting to compete in the Effie competition should consider including new emerging touchpoint categories such as the ones named in Table 3. In particular, the study found an increasing use of digital marketing in award winning campaigns. From the emerging categories, the ones that appeared most frequently in award winning campaigns were social networking and mobile/tablet. The rationale for this recommendation is because the overwhelming majority of award winning campaigns used social networking sites and mobile/tablet touchpoints. Search engine marketing and branded content were other emerging categories used frequently in award winning campaigns that should be considered for future campaigns.

Second, because only 1% of award winning campaigns included distribution changes, trade communications/promotion and international marketing, advertisers may want to limit use of these particular touchpoints in campaign entries, unless they are critical towards meeting campaign goals, since they are used less frequently according to the data.

Third, to increase the chances of winning an Effie Award, advertisers should consider using between 4 to 9 touchpoints. Assuming an upward trend in touchpoint usage continues,

advertisers may want to lean towards 8 to 9 touchpoints on average to remain competitive in the future. The study found that the overall number of touchpoints used in award winning campaigns has continued to increase since 2010, illustrating advertisers should utilize, on average, more touchpoints per campaign as compared to less. It can be assumed campaigns with more touchpoints may be more costly depending on the type of touchpoint selected.

Finally, because the majority of award winning campaigns, on average, used interactive and more than half of award winning campaigns on average used TV, print, and consumer involvement, advertisers are advised to create a blend of the original touchpoints and the emerging touchpoints to remain competitive in the Effie Awards competition. As Quesenberry et al. (2012) reported, and this study supports, the use of multimedia communications in campaigns is important in the IMC landscape to be effective. While the fourteen Emerging Touchpoint Categories have become popular since their formation, they have not replaced the use of the fifteen Original Touchpoint Categories such as interactive, TV, print and PR/events. Firms should continue to monitor the market for newly emerging technologies and mediums that may become the next big thing for IMC touchpoints.

#### Theoretical Implications

Similar to Quesenberry et al. (2012) findings, campaigns with a strong IMC base are certainly capable of winning Effie awards. Data collected in this study shows multi-touchpoint campaigns were used more frequently than single touchpoint campaigns, which supports Quesenberry et al. (2012) findings.

It is interesting that the Original Touchpoint Categories are still largely used in IMC campaigns alongside the Emerging Touchpoints Categories. The allocation of touchpoints used in award winning campaigns has enhanced our understanding of how IMC effectiveness is assessed via competitions.

This study continues to add to the growing, but small body of research about advertising competitions and IMC. A significant contribution of this study is adding to the IMC literature data

about the evolution that has taken place in the past six years. This shows the IMC field is dynamic and evolving in modern advertising. Continuing research in this realm is important to identify changes that are developing as a result of emerging touchpoints and measuring effectiveness in award winning campaigns. This study also contributed to the literature by identifying new Emerging Touchpoint Categories that were introduced since the previous Effie Awards study.

IMC campaigns that have earned the Effie Award suggests IMC is an important factor to continue studying and to be incorporated in current advertising practice and academics. Data collected throughout this study provides a richer analysis of emerging trends in IMC touchpoints and the relation to winning an advertising effectiveness award. Specifically, this study continues to support and advance the research conducted on integrated marketing communications effectiveness.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

While this study does not provide comprehensive guidance on how to win Effie Awards, it does provide some insights regarding the ideal number of touchpoints and touchpoint categories associated with recent award winning campaigns. This study recognized new emerging categories since the first study by Quesenberry et al. was completed in 2012. Future research replicating this study is suggested because it appears that IMC touchpoints are continuously evolving within new emerging categories. For instance, some new touchpoints used today are virtual reality, remarketing, and programmatic marketing but they are not currently captured within the current Effie judging criteria. Research should continue this exploration to see if changes continue in the number and combination of touchpoints used or if a threshold has been reached.

Since this study focused on analyzing winning campaigns there is no data available on the non-winning entrants to compare if they differed in the number of touchpoints and type of categories used. An examination of non-winning entrants would be a useful comparison. To extend this study, there are also different levels of Effie winners - finalist, bronze, silver, gold, grand Effie - that can be evaluated in future research for comparisons in the number and nature of touchpoints to find if there are differences based on the specific award category. It may be insightful to replicate this study in other geographic regions, for example the UK and Euro competitions, to provide additional insights on the effectiveness of IMC campaigns globally.

Future research might explore other variables associated with winning campaigns such as paid media expenditures, industry types, agency characteristics, and winners in multiple competition categories in order to detect additional patterns. Although this study collected award winning campaign data, it was limited to the Effie Awards entries. Future research could examine other competitions such as the ones identified in Table 1 to see how many and to what degree are they evaluating IMC versus narrow components of advertising components. Are

these competitions going to start to incorporate effectiveness into judging criteria or will the majority of the advertising industry remain largely based on aesthetics? Not only will other competitions include effectiveness, will IMC touchpoints continue to increase?

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