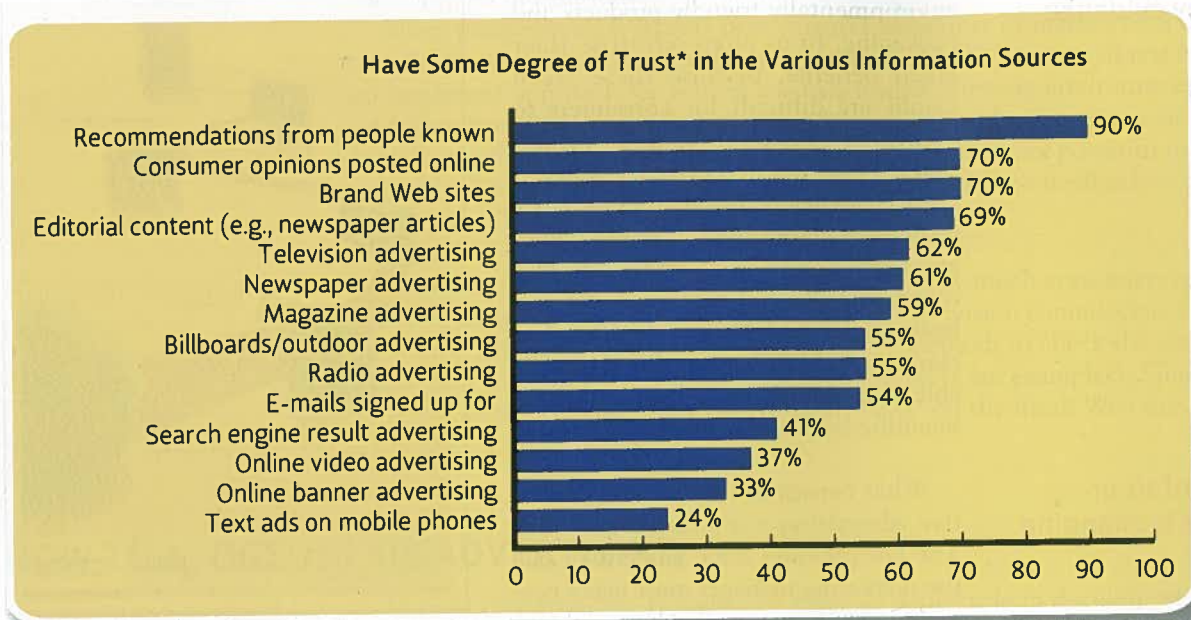


Exhibit 16-7 Customer Trust of Information Sources



Source: The Nielsen Company, Online consumer survey of over 25,000 Internet consumers from 50 countries, April 2009.

*E.g., 90% of respondents "completely trusted," or "somewhat trusted" recommendations from people they know.

channels. Advertising on television or in newspapers and magazines fares better, but the most trusted sources of information for customers are recommendations from others, especially people they know. Brand Web sites and editorial content (like newspaper articles or television news stories) are also near the top of the list.

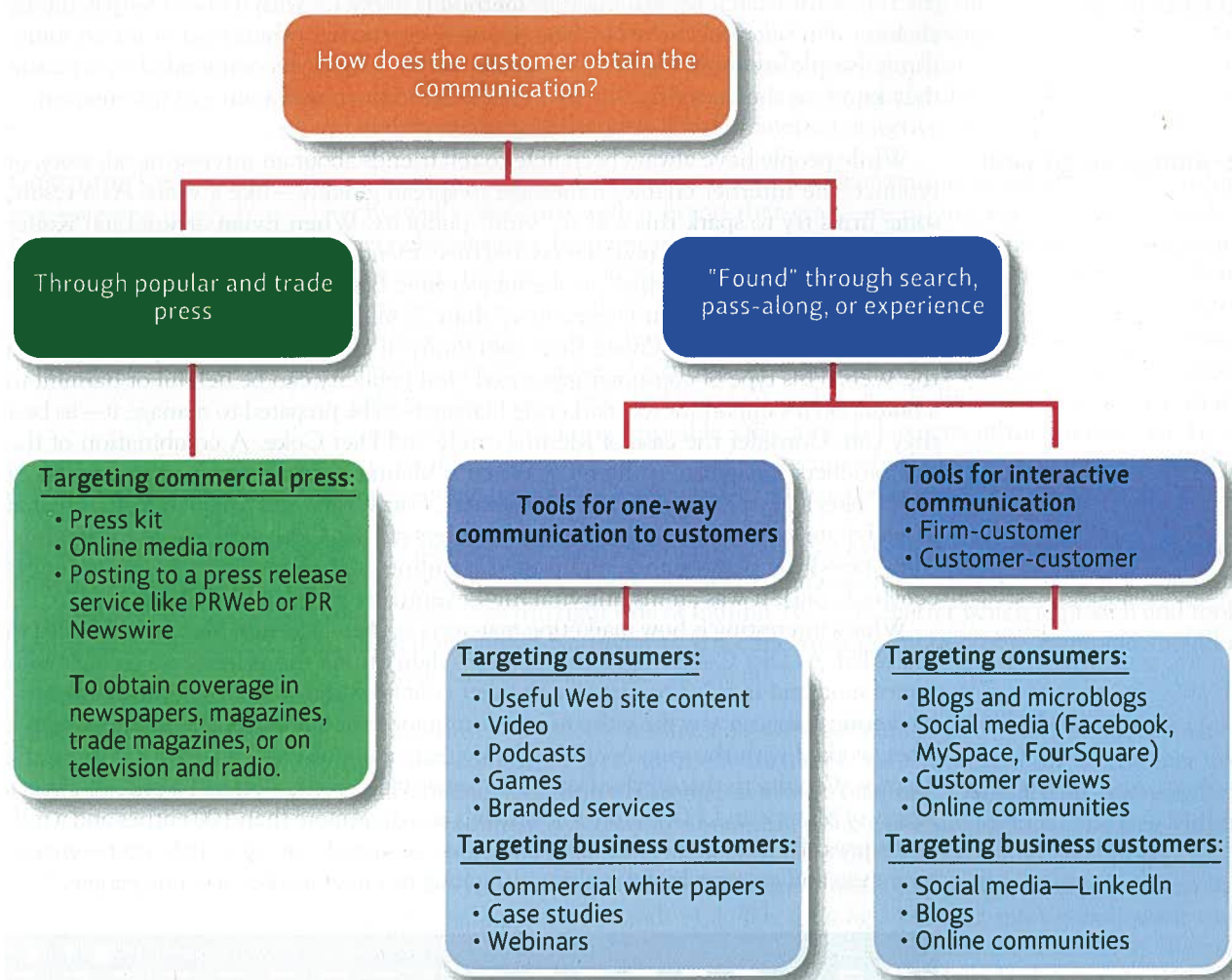
There are a wide variety of publicity tools. Given their potential as a trusted communication source, let's take a closer look at how they are being used today. Many of these tools are the result of advances in technology and changes in consumer behavior. Marketing managers must be on the lookout for new tools and try to understand how they can be used to support promotion objectives.

Getting coverage in the press

Exhibit 16-8 organizes our discussion of publicity. One message channel is the press—both popular (newspapers, magazines, and television) and trade (trade magazines). Let's start our coverage on the left side of Exhibit 16-8. For example, if a firm has a really new message, a published article may get more attention than advertising. Trade magazines carry articles featuring the newsworthy products of interest to people in a particular job or industry. Sometimes a firm's media relations people write the basic copy of an article and then try to convince magazine editors to print it. Both consumers and businesspeople tend to pay more attention to—and give more credibility to—articles rather than advertising.

Many companies use a public relations (PR) staff—or sometimes an outside PR agency—to provide information that makes it easy for the press to write stories about the company. PR develops press kits that include promotional materials designed for the media. To make it even easier, most major companies also have a "Press" section, or media room, on the corporate Web site that includes press releases and possibly photos or videos. For example, the acrobatic troupe Cirque du Soleil has a traveling show that visits different cities for several weeks at a time. Before it gets to a new city, Cirque du Soleil counts on advance press coverage to build excitement and sell tickets. The unique nature of Cirque's shows makes for a good story. So Cirque du Soleil stocks its Web site with videos and photos that make it easy for newspaper or television reporters to create a story highlighting an upcoming run of shows.

Southwest Airlines also uses press releases to generate publicity in the popular press. When it wanted to promote its special fares and new routes, its PR staff used a targeted approach to get attention from news reporters. Since many reporters research



story ideas on specialized search engines like PRWeb and Yahoo! News, the PR staff at Southwest wrote its press releases so they would appear at the top of the reporters' search lists. Southwest's PR staff researched what keywords reporters used most frequently on these search engines—and then put those words in press releases. For example, PR used the phrase "cheap airfare" because it was in four times as many search requests as "cheap airline tickets." Southwest also put a hot link to its special promotion fare Web page at the very start of each press release. The link allowed Southwest PR staff to track which press release worked best; then it used that information to fine-tune other messages. These extra efforts paid off. Southwest generated \$1.5 million in online ticket sales with just four press releases.³⁴

Marketers want to be "found" when customers "search"

Not all publicity relies on mass media message channels. Customers can also find publicity through search, pass-along, or experience. See the right side of Exhibit 16-8. Before we examine those tools in further detail, let's look at the consumer behavior behind search, pass-along, and experience.

In Chapter 14 we introduced the customer-initiated model of communication (see Exhibit 14-6). This model recognizes that customers are not passive receivers of communication; in fact, they often search and select information that meets their needs. We also noted that the Internet makes it easy for customers to conduct searches and find information. Because customers often search during the shopping process, marketing managers need to work hard to make sure that when customers search, their firm's Web site or other online material is "found."

managers and process engineers. The daily posts discuss technical subjects and clearly position Emerson as an expert with this influential target market.⁴²

Publicity emerges from effective marketing strategy planning

The marketing strategy planning process model (see Exhibit 2-9) should not be forgotten when creating a promotion blend that includes publicity. For example, marketing managers must understand their customers' comfort level with the Internet. How often do they surf the Internet? Are customers members of social media sites? If so, what sites? Do they regularly visit a blog? Are they "joiners" who will share their passion in an online community? Developing a community site, blog, or Facebook page will be futile if customers don't use the technology. Of course, even if customers understand the technology, marketing managers must develop content that's meaningful or customers will have no reason to return.

Other advertising principles work for publicity, too

While publicity doesn't involve the use of paid media, many of the principles outlined earlier in the chapter with respect to advertising apply to publicity as well. A firm's promotion objectives should guide the choice of tools. Publicity can be used to help a firm sell more products, generate leads for the sales force, get contributions to a charitable cause, or encourage people to join an organization. Exhibit 16-9 suggests which types of publicity might work best with some common promotion objectives. Measuring the effectiveness of publicity efforts can be elusive. In part this is because each type of publicity has different measures. As with advertising, the best measures should be tied to objectives.

Often publicity works in combination with other promotion tools—as part of an integrated marketing communications program with specific objectives. For example, Milwaukee Electric Tool Corp. wants its customers—which include retailers, contractors, and building professionals—to know about new models of its Sawzall electric saw, rotary hammer, and other tools. When the marketing manager looked at which pages of the Web site got the most attention, she found some customers especially liked to watch videos of the tools in action. So Milwaukee Electric Tool used its monthly e-mail newsletter "Heavy Duty News" to promote that feature of its Web site. Soon more than twice as many customers were watching videos at the company's Web site.⁴³

When developing publicity, marketing managers should also look at copy thrust; Web sites, videos, online communities, and other publicity tools all utilize words and images that communicate with a target market. In addition, most laws covering advertising apply to most of the publicity approaches outlined here. Common sense, honesty, and fairness are important.

Exhibit 16-9 Examples of Different Types of Publicity and Different Promotion Objectives

Getting attention & holding interest

- Viral videos
- Direct-to-consumer press releases
- Articles in the press

Developing a desired positioning

- Viral videos
- Games
- Branded services
- Commercial white papers

Arousing desire & obtaining action

- Customer reviews
- Case studies
- Webinars

Managing ongoing customer relationships

- Social media—Facebook, LinkedIn
- Blogs
- Online communities
- Podcasts, webcasts, and webinars