CHAPTER-I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

One of the basic concepts in marketing is the marketing mix. The marketing mix has traditionally consisted of four elements, namely product, price, place and promotion that are referred to as “four Ps”. It is very essential to bring together these four elements into one marketing program which is one of the basic tasks of marketing. Moreover combining the “Four Ps” facilitates the potential for exchange with consumer in marketplace, this study focuses on one of the four Ps, namely promotion.

The promotional element of the marketing mix is the element that consists of persuasive communication designed to communicate the benefits of the firm’s offering to the targeted market and convince them to purchase. This element plays a significant role in marketing mix because the successful implementation of other three elements depends upon the promotional elements.

Although the characterization of ” four Ps” has led to the wide spread use of term promotion for describing communication with prospects and customers, the term marketing communications is preferred by the majority of marketing practitioners. In fact, studying of marketing communication is a critical component of modern marketing. It is a vital aspect of a firm’s overall marketing strategy and a major determinant of its success. It has been even claimed that marketing and communications are virtually
inseparable and that marketing is communication, and communication is marketing3.

Marketing Communication is a collective term for all the communications functions used in marketing a product or service. Although implicit communication occurs via various elements of the marketing mix, the majority of a firm’s communications with the market place take place as part of a carefully planned and controlled marketing communications program. The basic tool elements to attain a firm’s communication objectives are generally referred to as marketing communications mix1.

It seems that, we may differ with regards to the elements that comprise the Marketing Communications Mix which is also known as Integrated Marketing Communication tools. Traditionally the marketing communication mix was comprised of four elements namely, advertising, sales promotion, public relations and personal selling. Recently, the marketing communication mix was expanded to include more elements such as, direct marketing and interactive marketing as major elements that modern marketers use to communicate with the target markets. Thus, modern marketers have adopted a new technology in reaching their target markets1.

Experts debate and argue the ultimate future of the internet; no one doubts its impact on the current marketing environment. Furthermore, all marketing functions indicate the potential of the internet to be inseparable component of IMC program which will add a unique way of communicating with both businesses and customers.
1.2 Integrated Marketing Communications:

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) referred to as “The new marketing communications paradigm”, which is an emerging concept, in the business world today. It is becoming more important to be able to implement and control the promotion strategy within the organization. No promotional tool should be used in isolation from the others. In recent times, IMC has received close inquiry as to its nature and its involvement in professional business circles. A key issue is how this concept should be defined. In general, IMC is supposed to harness the synergy created by combining various promotional tools, consequently delivering promotional messages with more intensity and more cost efficiency.

Although integrated marketing communications has become well known in the 1990’s on an international scale, there is no yet a common understanding of its full scope or of its exact definition. Some important definitions for IMC given as follows:

- The management and control of all market communications.
- Ensuring that the brand positioning, personality and messages are delivered in synergy across every element of communication and from a single consistent strategy.
- The strategic analysis, choice, implementation and control of all elements of marketing communications which efficiently, economically and effectively influence transactions between an organisation and its existing and potential customers, consumers and clients.
Many firms treat marketing communication mix elements as separate activities, current marketing philosophy hold the integration of these elements is imperative. The philosophy and practice of coordinating brand’s different marketing communications element is referred to as integrated marketing communications. The IMC concept is defined in a number of ways by different authors and writers such as, Wells, Burnett and Moriarty who described integrated marketing communications as “... the practice of unifying all marketing communication tools so they send a consistent, persuasive message promoting company goals to target audience”.5 Another definition by Clow and Baack given that “IMC is the coordination and integration of all marketing communication tools, avenues and sources within a company into a seamless program that maximizes the impact on consumers and other end users at a minimal cost”36. Recently one more definition is given by, Armstrong and Kotler, who define IMC as “... the concept under which a company carefully integrates and coordinates its many communications channels to deliver a clear, consistent and compelling message about the organization and its products”.6 Aforesaid definition, clearly confirms that, if marketing communications tools are integrated and implemented properly, IMC can produce strong message consistency and great sales impact. Moreover, it improves the firm’s ability to reach the right customers with the right message at the right time at the right place.

It is important that the combination of tools used and message delivered are integrated to increase the effectiveness, in order not
to generate confusion. Schultz, Tannenbaum, and Lauterborn are in turn questioning the often isolated view of marketing communication and say that it is not giving an accurate view on how it is functioning as a whole and how it should be managed today. The concept of integrated marketing communications (IMC) deals with the management of the overall message an organization delivers over a period of time. Further it is made clear that all sources of information concerning a product or service must be managed in order to move customers toward purchase and maintain them as loyal customers.

IMC emerged as a mean to develop and manage a holistic view of communication messages. There are three main differences between IMC and traditional marketing communications (Duncan & Moriarity 1997):

- A shift of focus from acquiring new customers to maintaining and developing them.
- Using a two-way communication instead of only one-way; communicating with customers, rather than just to them, and
- Making marketing communications less of a function of the company and more like a philosophy of conducting business.

Schultz et al. (1993) based the concept of IMC on the fact that customers store information about a product or service from various sources. Information is retrieved from different media channels, and also from relatives and friends who have experienced the product or service. This information is collected over a period of time. The message that is sent from an
organization today must fit with the message stored in the customer’s mind from earlier experiences. This is why an integrated marketing communication approach is critical to apply. It also gives marketers more control over the message delivered if internal and external communications are consistent.

The evolution of IMC as a new strategy for managing marketing communications is crucial for survival in the marketplace. The integration of messages and tools is also necessary for overcoming the noise that is out there. It has been said that the benefit of using an integrated approach to marketing communications is the consistency of the communication process, since it facilitates the transfer of customers through the buying process; before, during, and after sales. If the business image and the unified message are clear, the barrier of ‘noise’ is easier to overcome. Coherent messages, both in terms of communication and business functions, will develop a greater awareness of a product and service in customers’ minds.

For service firms, the involvement of the customer can also facilitate integration of marketing communications. It is being discussed that customers should be viewed as participants during the service production instead of passive users. This will integrate both parts, make the communication more efficient, and reduce possible dissatisfaction. Customers feel involved in the service process and it can affect their perception of the service given in a positive way. It is being claimed that IMC creates the use of relationship marketing, which in short means exchanges between
buyers and sellers for mutual benefit. Developing a relationship with the customer is the goal, and using IMC is how it is founded\(^9\).

There are a number of reasons for the important shift to integrated marketing communications; the following are some of the major catalysts of note for the public sector\(^{11}\).

- By coordinating marketing communication efforts, organizations can avoid duplication, take advantage of synergy across communication tools, and develop more efficient and effective marketing communication programs.
- The shift of marketing communication dollars from media advertising to other forms of promotion.
- The movement away from relying on advertising-focused approaches, which emphasize mass media such as network television and national newspapers and magazines, to solve communication problems.
- The fragmentation of media markets, which has resulted in less emphasis on mass media and more attention to smaller, targeted media alternatives.
- The rapid growth and development of database marketing, which has prompted many marketers to target consumers through direct mail, direct response advertising etc.
- The growth of the Internet especially digital/on-line marketing, which has changed the very nature of the way organizations communicate and interact with target audiences.
Integrated marketing communication is being used to coordinate all the messages the company articulates through advertising, direct marketing, public relations etc, which helps create a unified image and support relationship-building with customers. With the technology development new ways of doing old things always appear. The advances in technology has led to one of the most dynamic and revolutionary changes in the history of marketing, the dramatic changes in communications using interactive media such as the internet. The Internet allows communication on a two-way form instead of one way communication such as advertising. And two-way communication plays a major part of Integrated Marketing Communication.

1.3 INTERNETS AS AN ENABLING TECHNOLOGY:
The internet is the most well-known component of the information superhighway network infrastructure. Today, the internet is an information distribution system spanning several continents. The internet is a global network of interconnected network, which includes millions of corporate government's organizations and private networks. Many of the computers in these networks hold files, such as web pages, that can be accessed by all other networked computers. Every computer, cellular phone, or other networked devise can send and receive data in the form of e-mail or files over the internet. These data move over phone lines, cables and satellites from sender to receiver. Internet then consists of computers with data, uses who sent and receive the data files, and a technology infrastructure to move, create and view or listen to the content.
The internet in its fundamental level is a series of students for basic function, they are: firstly, file sharing with one or more parties, secondly, sharing e-mail with one or more parties, and, lastly, allowing one computer system user to log on to another computer system. Keeping these functions in mind, World Wide Web (www), file transfer, and e-mail, are created for international application. As we have different currencies, different stand-wells for money exchange. Similarly, there are different methods to send and receive e-mail files and so on; hence, there comes the internet standards. Internet standards help promoting tourism on the internet using IMC tools creating global market.

Now will come to tourism where it is the world’s largest industry accounted for 10.6 percent of world GDP, if all the components are combined under one umbrella, lodging, travel and foodservices. The industry supported creation of more than 5.5 million jobs during 2000s14. Only a few decades ago, if somebody would have assumed that the future of tourism and consequently of the hotels sector, would be the internet, such a view would have been considered as a science fiction scenario. However, today the constitute part of our daily life. Purchasing goods and services and making all kinds of transactions through the screen of a PC constitutes an indubitable reality.15

The rapid growth, that internet has known mainly during the recent years, establishes it as one of the most profitable sources of revenue for every business, regardless the part of the world that this business is located. As a result of that, the number of people that are visiting web pages of business and decide to trust them,
choosing essentially to be served electronically, is increasing continuously. Tourism service is intangible; the internet is a very good medium for intangible product and to communicate a marketing message IMC through the internet is beneficial. Companies can use IMC to expand their market shares since they stand to attract and retain customers when their IMC programs are well planned.

Integrated marketing communication produces a uniform message that may be capable of addressing the problems that services organization face when they must market an intangible product. Thus, IMC has the potential to produce a strong focus for an offering and seems to be an interactive tool for marketers accommodate the intangibility present in services, such as tourism offering. In order to communicate a marketing message, integrated marketing communication offers several tools, the tools that frequently used within the tourism industry. When the various communication tools used individually are not very influential among consumers but when the various communication tools are integrated, they tend to be very influential in inducing consumers to make purchase decision.

The internet is the glue of IMC program and the capability of the internet to tie together various elements of the IMC program. A proper integration of the internet into the IMC program requires that it is used creatively and as a component of the overall brand-building process. The internet can be used to amplify other IMC elements. Thus, it can be extracted that the internet is a good medium for IMC program and its element and from here comes
our interest in studying some of the elements (IMC tools in particular) effected by the internet and testing them on tourism sector in Jordan. Here as following we are going to discuss the internet and integrated marketing communication in details.

1.3.1 The Internet and Integrated Marketing Communication: An overview

With increased globalization of the world economies, for most enterprises, market opportunities seem to be endless these days. This in turn, causes heightened competition among the players in order to achieve better performance. Consequently, departing from the traditional commercial strategies and tactics, innovative managers are looking for unique ways to compete more effectively on a local, regional and global basis. The information superhighway is what many business leaders say will make these visions a reality in everyday business. The information superhighway is being shaped by advances in digital telephone networks, interactive cable television, personal computers, and online services and, finally, the Internet. These technological advances will inevitably change the face of business as we know it today. For most organizations, the information superhighway offers an abundance of opportunities. The Internet, in particular, provides a vast communications network that is driving the formation of a huge global electronic marketplace.

The Internet, known as the “International electronic network,” began in 1968 by the Advanced Research Projects Agency of the Department of Defence. Originally, known as the ARPAnet, the Internet was started as an experimental network connecting
different university computer centres throughout the country. In the 1980s, ARPAnet was broken into two distinct networks called Milnet and NSFnet. Milnet was used primarily for government purposes, while NSFnet, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), was used to support education and research.37

**The Internet Penetration and Diffusion in Jordan:**
While the Internet has been evolving for the past five decades, its presence as a part of everyday life in Arab world is relatively new. Jordan was not among the first to be connected to the internet in the area, it got linked to the internet in 1994 while the first connection in the region dates back to the early 1990's. In a very short period Jordan has become one of the prominent countries in the internet in the region. Moreover, the ISPs were very encouraged by His Majesty the Late King Hussein's directive allowing the ISPs to use Hashem one Earth station for the international Internet connectivity. His Majesty King Abdullah is continuing in this direction and is actively promoting the development of hi-tech enterprises in Jordan, including the Internet.( www.go.com.jo) A number of factors clearly determine the dimensions of Internet diffusion in Jordan. Some of these factors are positive and encourage diffusion; however, there are also many negative factors that dampen the level of use.

**The encouraging factors:**
There is a high level of awareness of the Internet and its possibilities among the population at large. This factor obviously supports broad diffusion. Evidence of this is the widespread existence and use of Internet cafes—a means of achieving access
by those who are aware but are unable to afford access from their homes. A study carried out limited its survey to the capital Amman and Zarqa because, these two cities constitute 60 per cent of the population of Jordan, Cafes from every part of Amman including both wealthy west and poorer East and also Zarqa which is known as an area where there are high concentrations of poor targeted and the results reveal that the Internet is an important networking tool and part of every day life for even poor or unemployed Jordanians18.

Government policy is quite enlightened in that it does nothing directly to impede the diffusion of the Internet or to control access, even in controversial areas. The government plans to enhance internet penetration up to 50 per cent of the population by 2011 from the current 12 per cent on track. Furthermore, in three years, the government will have connected all of the country’s public schools to the national broadband network as the capital’s public schools are already linked19.

Opposed to the positive elements outlined above, there are a number of factors impeding Internet diffusion in Jordan. Following are the main hindrances:

The poverty of the country, which makes personal computers a luxury, is an obvious impediment to Internet diffusion. This limits the user base and so affects the profitability of ISPs. Thus, poverty both deters users and limits the viability of ISPs; it is predicted that one or two of the present ISPs will discontinue service. The viability of ISPs is further affected by the high cost of providing
service. These costs were detailed in a special joint announcement of the ISPs in March 1999.\textsuperscript{38}

1. The high costs paid by the ISPs for International connectivity, which exceeds JD 75,000 per month for some ISPs.
2. The high cost paid by the ISPs for local telephone lines, which amount to JD 335 per line, knowing that ISPs use hundreds of these lines to provide the Internet service.
3. The 15\% revenue sharing tax, which is levied by the TRC on all ISPs.
4. the 10\% value added tax which is levied by the government on all Internet Invoices." Furthermore, ISPs pay an initial licensing fee of JD25000.

Thus, it can be observed that the Jordanian Royal family has supported the Internet penetration and diffusion in Jordan. Moreover, the government has also given a lot of efforts in spreading the use of computers and Internet in the country even though the government should give a hand to ISPs which is going to assist more in the internet diffusion in the country. We could say that one side of Jordanian's prosperity depends on spreading the Internet services between the public throughout the country.

The Internet has received a great deal of attention in the media and many companies have set up an Internet presence. Companies are quickly moving to use the Internet as a way of segmenting markets and doing something that ordinary promotional media cannot: reaching consumers across the country and around the world interactively and on demand – all at a
reasonable cost. The potential applications of the Internet are being expanded every day, and companies which are the first to exploit these opportunities will have a tremendous advantage over their more traditionally-oriented competitors.

The internet has become an increasingly important marketing tool and has had a dramatic effect on approaches to marketing and communications strategies. As a marketing communications tool, the internet is a new and highly powerful medium which cannot be ignored. It is thus important that marketers incorporate electronic media as an integrated element within the overall marketing communication mix.

Due to its unique capabilities, the Web presents a fundamentally different environment for marketing activities than traditional media. Web sites are the most common manifestation of the capabilities of the internet. Some websites have one or two main objectives, while others may have several. Nevertheless, a common purpose of all websites is marketing communications, even if this is not the express objective of the site.

This present study focuses on integrated marketing communication in an internet environment and investigates ways in which the IMC tools could be more effective online via the hotel’s website.

One of the main advantages of the Internet is that firms are provided with high global visibility and have access to customers from around the world. The hotels in Jordan attract and thus need
to communicate online with customers in both domestic and international level and provide them with every thing they need in an integrated form. As hotels are able to reach customers from around the world by means of the Internet, it can be deduced that communicating online with customers and client may be greatly beneficial for these hotels.

An elusive goal for any company is integrating all its marketing efforts and results into a cohesive plan. The lack of widespread success shows that managing marketing tools in an integrated way is not a simple task. One key to integrated marketing communications (IMC) is developing and building the database of customer information and transactions. Aaker's views of the internet is not that it is just another medium but that it is the "integrators" of the IMC program and it can amplify other IMC element.

1.3.2 Web Site as an Integration Tool:
A variety of marketing activities can be provided over the website. Many firms use web site to promote individual products as well as the overall company. For promotion, the design of a web site by IMC plan and specific objectives the site aims to accomplish is needed. The purpose of a web site is to create a positive public relation image, promote the product/service, sell product/service and also support the customers after sale. These marketing functions clearly indicate the potential of the internet to be a valuable component of the company's IMC program.
The web site of any company must be updated regularly to get consumers to return. Price and product or service information must always be up-to-date. The web site should also consistently emphasize the IMC theme and the company’s image.

The internet is an important component of a quality integrated marketing communications plan. The most critical decision facing businesses is choosing the functions that website should serve. Hence; every tool used on the web site should be carefully evaluated and integrated. Incorporating the internet into the IMC plan becomes easy when information technology, human resource and marketing departments and other existing departments included as the marketing team develops the program. If the are not, disaster can take place, for example, marketers at a major consumer goods company launched a highly successful web site that created 3000 customer queries a day, the problem was that no one had been hired by HR department to handle the queries. Thus, it can be noticed that integration of different departments ultimately results in combining various activities of IMC tools which will affect developing different industries.

1.3.3 The interactive potential of the internet:
One of the most dynamic and revolutionary changes in the history of marketing is being driven advances in technology and developments that have led to the dramatic growth of communications through interactive media, particularly the internet.
Interactive media allows for a back-and-forth flow of information where users can participate in and modify the form and content of the information they receive in real time\(^1\). Unlike traditional forms of marketing communications such as advertising, which is one-way in nature, the new media allow users to perform a variety of functions such as receive and alter information and images, make enquiries, respond to questions, and make purchases\(^1\).

Interactive media has four major characteristics that distinguish them from mass media and these include\(^{17}\):

1) They can target individuals as well as customer segments.
2) They enable customers and prospects to respond to a firm’s communications.
3) They are more measurable and accountable than mass media.
4) They demand more attention than mass media because of the personalized brand messages they carry.

Although the roots of online marketing still lie within the traditional marketing concepts, it branches out in a most important manner to encompass interactivity. Among the various characteristics of the internet, interactivity is certainly a defining and distinguishing feature not found in traditional media.

The internet’s potential for interactivity enables greater effectiveness in many aspects of online marketing. These include web advertising, building brand image, building customer loyalty, providing information, providing customer service, selling, public relations etc.
1.3.4 Integrated Marketing Communication Tools in an Online Environment:

One of the fastest growing and most dynamic areas of IMC is the growth of communication through interactive media, particularly the internet. Interactive media (internet) allows for a back-and-forth flow of information whereby users can participate in, and modify the form of content of the information they receive in real time. Consumers are able to assume an active rather than passive role in the response process for interactive advertising. They can decide whether they want to pay attention, collect and provide information, communication with product and service providers, and even make a purchase. Nowadays, effectiveness measurements in the interactive domain have focused primarily on the internet\textsuperscript{21}.

The meteoric rise of new electronic media such as the internet has altered advertising and marketing communication media\textsuperscript{22}. The major advantage of the internet as an IMC tool is its ability to deliver, a tremendous amount of information to consumers since, unlike traditional media advertising, it is not bound by time and space limitations. Moreover, the interactivity of the internet makes it possible for consumers to choose what type of information they want to attend to, so as to control the amount and depth of processing of this information, thus, the internet is particularly valuable for providing consumers with information that create a higher order of beliefs and affect. From here we decided to start working instead of talking about IMC by taking the most important part of integrated marketing communication “IMC tools” and test the effectiveness IMC tools over website on tourism in Jordan.
There are lots of IMC tools and each author has different classifications, Belch and Belch for instance divides them into advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing and personal selling. Kulluvaara and Tornberg (2003) add exhibition as a sixth possibility of gathering suppliers and distributors in a particular industry display their product/services and provide information to potential buyers.

IMC is an important promotion concept that has confronted both marketers and the advertising industry in recent years. It is also an important strategy in order to control and implement the use of various promotional tools. The tools within promotion (IMC tools) in this study are:

Figure 1.3.4 Designed by the researcher
1.3.4.1 ADVERTISING:
Advertising (Ads) can be used to build up a long term image for a product or trigger quick sales. Advertising can efficiently reach geographically dispersed buyers. Certain forms of advertising require a large budget, whereas other forms do not. Just a presence of advertising might have an effect on sale; consumers might believe that a heavily advertised brand/service must offer good value. Because of the many forms and uses of advertising it is difficult to make generalization.39

A range of definitions for advertising has been proposed. A few recent definitions are provided in the table (1.3.4.1.1) below.

Table no. (1.3.4.1.1): Definition of Advertising

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<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;.....any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of idea, goods or services by an identified sponsor&quot;. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;.....any paid form of non-personal communication about an organization about an organization, product, service, or idea by an identified sponsor&quot;. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;.....a paid mass-mediated attempt to persuade&quot;. 2</td>
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The main difference between advertising and other forms of marketing communications is that it is impersonal and communicates with large number of people through paid media channels. Nevertheless, as this study focuses on how IMC over the website affects the advertising in developing hotel service market, definition for internet advertising is given below.

The internet is regarded as an advertising medium similar to broadcast or print1. Internet advertising is defined as "..... a form of advertising in which the message is carried over the internet rather
than traditional mass media". There are two models for advertising on the internet. The two models are text-based and multimedia-based advertising. Text-based advertising operates through e-mail and bulletin boards. Multimedia-based advertising utilizes banners, buttons, interstitials and sponsorships.

The text-based advertising using e-mail is equivalent to direct mail that is used offline. E-mail has at least two advantages over direct mail. First there are no post charges, which mean that cost per thousands is much lower. Secondly e-mail offers a convenient opportunity for direct response. E-mail ads often include information or a link to the company’s website, where the user can obtain further information. The distribution of e-mail can be easily solved by acquiring an e-mail distribution list or generate one. This list is often generated out from the website registration, subscription registration or purchased records.

Multimedia-based advertising is the primary model used on web sites. Banners and buttons occupy designated space for rent on web pages. This is similar to print advertising, used by newspapers and magazines. However, the internet facilitates to use both audio and video behind a clickable button. Banners and buttons are also used to transfer the user to the merchant’s web site where the transactions or other objectives are achieved. Banners are quite helpful for brand communication but do not drive much traffic to a web site. To increase the banner effectiveness, marketers use selective targeting as design factor. Just as in traditional advertising, relevance of the ad is for the targeted audience, the more likely which will grab the user’s attention. Sponsorships are
also a part of the multimedia-based advertising. Sponsorship advertising involves an advertiser that pays for a particular web page or section of page attitudes.\textsuperscript{25}

Advertising within the tourism industry defined as "one classic communication tools used by marketing managers as part of marketing campaigns to develop awareness, understanding, interest and motivation amongst a targeted audience."\textsuperscript{26}

Tourism advertising online enables hotels, tour operators and attractions to reach people in their own homes and to communicate messages intended to influence buying behaviour. Tourism marketers are now also making greater use of the internet as a vehicle for advertising their offerings. Online advertising serves a useful purpose, especially as supplement to traditional advertising methods.

Internet has proved to be an effective means of advertising, marketing, distributing goods and information services.\textsuperscript{15} The application of the internet plays a very important role within the development of information technology (IT). It has been indicated that there is an increasingly available supply of tourism and travel resources on the internet encompassing a broader base of users and potential users. In general, the internet can be used in two distinct ways: first, as a source of data by which the user accesses resources purely to get information; and second, as a means of marketing and facilitating business transactions. The internet is changing the ways in which hotel sector plans, controls, and
integrates a majority of its business activities, including its marketing activities.27

1.3.4.2 PUBLIC RELATIONS:
Public Relations (PR) are the activities a firm undertakes to communicate to its stakeholders, like customers, trades, shareholders, government bodies, employees. The main goal is to achieve positive coverage in the media (newspaper, TV, radio, internet), create and reinforce the corporate image, sponsoring special events and advise management about key public issues. PR is more efficient than advertising in many ways: it is cheaper, creates product awareness and interest, launches new products, and influences specific target market segments, can cope with crisis and enhance the corporate image.

Public relation is found in every company and institution, irrespective of whether the company or institution wants it. Public relation deals with organizational relationships, which has the goal of attaining and maintaining accord with the many different social groupings on whom the company depends in order to achieve its mission.

This study focuses on public relations in relation to IMC. A number of authors have defined public relation in the context of IMC (see table no. (1.3.4.2.1)). A recent definition for public relations by Czinkota & Ronkainen 2001, who defined public relation as "....the marketing communication function charged with executing programs to earn public understanding and acceptance as well as building a strong company image"28.
Table no. (1.3.4.2.1) : Definition of Public Relations

".....management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or organization with the public interest, and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance". ¹

".....involves a variety of programs that are designed to promote or protect a company’s image or its individual products". ²⁹

".....communications that can foster goodwill between a firm and it’s many constituent groups". ²

Major public relations tools include news, speeches, special events, written materials, corporate identity materials and public service activities. A web site is also regarded as being a good public relations vehicle⁶.

The web site is however, unique public relations medium because it is the company who owns the channel. Companies thus have control over the messages that are communicated to the public via their web sites. There are a number of ways in which companies can utilize the internet for public relations purposes.

An interactive website is more extensive online public relations commitment. Interactive sites serve to inform and empower users. The interactive public relations are a way for the company to receive instant communication with the user, such as providing a communication channel for customers is an extremely important part of the customer service program. Normally the channel consists of feedback button or form, which delivers an e-mail message to the company²⁴.
1.3.4.3 SALES PROMOTION:
This is any initiative to promote an increase in sales. Sales Promotion (SP) gives economic incentives like price reduction, free samples or the possibility to win prizes. Sales promotion has been defined in a number of ways (see table (1.3.4.3.1)). A few recent definitions are provided in table. For the purpose of this study sales promotion is defined as “…..short-term incentives to encourage the purchase or sale of a product or service”6.

Table no. (1.3.4.3.1): Definition of sales promotion

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<tr>
<td>“.....those marketing activities that provide extra value or incentives to the sales force, the distributors, or the ultimate consumer and can stimulate immediate sales”.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>“.....consists of a diverse collection of incentive tools, mostly short-term, designed to stimulate, trail, quicken a greater purchase, of particular products or services by consumers or the trade”.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>“.....short-term incentives of gifts or money that facilitate the movement of products from producer to end user”.13</td>
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Sales promotion should add value to a product or service. This is something over and above the normal product offering that might make buyers stop and think about whether to change their usual buying behaviour, or revise their buying criteria.

Firms have found the internet to be a very effective medium for disseminating sales promotion1. One of the main benefits of the internet in this regard is that the web pages are relatively easy to update and are flexible. Hence, it is possible to target offers on various products or over a defined period via firm’s web site29.
Sales promotional tools offer three key benefits, namely communication (Gaining attention that may lead the consumer to the product), incentive (incorporating some concession or inducement that gives value to the consumer) and invitation (including a distinct invitation to engage in the transaction now). Sales promotion can also be used for short-term effects, such as emphasizing product offers and boosting sales\textsuperscript{29}.

Sales promotion within the tourism industry defined as "A short term incentives offered as inducements to purchase, including temporary product augmentation, which covers sales force and distribution network as well as customers". Furthermore, sales promotion with tourism products means that marketing managers are constantly distant with the need to manipulate demand in response to unexpected events as well as the normal daily, weekly, or seasonal fluctuations. Moreover, sales promotions are especially suitable for such short-run demand adjustments and they are vital weapons in the marketing armoury of most travel and tourism businesses\textsuperscript{26}.

When considering the tourism industry, offering electronic coupons is an effective way to encourage people to visits one's tourism firm. Providing coupons online makes it easy for tourists to receive them and will encourage prospective customer to visit one's location. Coupons also reduce the tourism firm's overall operating costs because people print the coupons on their own printers. In addition to coupons, firm can also promote other discounts or special offers through their websites\textsuperscript{30}. 

\textsuperscript{28}
1.3.4.4 PERSONAL SELLING:

Personal selling takes place when a salesperson sells a product, service or solution to a client. They try to fix the benefits of the product with the needs of the client. This tool in comparison with the rest improves the relationship with the client and does them longer.

Personal selling has been defined in a number of ways. A few recent definitions are provided in the Table (1.3.4.4.1) below.

Table no. (1.3.4.4.1): Definition of personal selling

<table>
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<td>&quot;.....personal presentation by the firm’s sales force for the purpose of making sales and building customer relationships&quot;.</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;.....person-to-person communication whereby sales people inform, educate, and persuade prospective buyers to purchase the company’s products or services&quot;.</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;.....the presentation of information about a firm’s products or services by one person to another person or to a small group of people&quot;.</td>
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Personal selling in relation to tourism defined as ".....a form of person- to person communication in which a seller attempts to assist and/or persuade prospective buyers to purchase the company’s product or service". Wells et al state that personal selling is of outmost importance when it comes to businesses that sell products that need to be explained, demonstrated and in need of service.

Personal selling differs from the other IMC tools presented thus far in that the message flows from a sender to a receiver directly. This direct and interpersonal communications allows the sender to
immediately receive and evaluate feedback from the receiver. The message can also be adapted to address the receiver's specific needs and wants\(^1\).

By its nature, the web is impersonal and the internet is designed more for sales support and generating inquiries rather than for making direct sales. However, the cost per customer is low on the web and a web site can be made more interactive from a sales perspective by a customer database that is able to personalize communication and relate it to offers that could appeal, based on a customer’s previous enquiries and sales history.

1.3.4.5 DIRECT MARKETING:
Over the last years Direct Marketing (DM) has grown fast. It includes direct mail, telesales, e-mails and order catalogues. The deal in words of marketingteacher.com is done directly between the manufacturer and the customer. The manufacturer addresses the named individual customer and its objective is immediate response. On one hand, it is more convenient and time saving for the customers and on the other, it allows the supplier a finer targeting, is much cheaper and forges continuing relationships with its customer. As a matter of fact it is more effective than advertising. To plan such activities, it is crucial to develop a database, which ought to target especially those, who are likely to respond, otherwise this may result into junk mails and low response.

Direct marketing has been described in a number of ways (see table no. (1.3.4.5.1). Belch & Belch defined direct marketing as
“....In which organizations communicate directly with target
customers to generate a response or transaction”.¹

Table no. (1.3.4.5.1): Definition of Direct Marketing

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<tr>
<td>“.....making direct connections with carefully targeted individual consumers to both obtain an immediate response and cultivate lasting customer relationships”.⁶</td>
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<tr>
<td>“.....the uses of consumer- direct channels to reach and deliver goods and services to customers without intermediaries”.²⁹</td>
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<tr>
<td>“.....is an interactive system of marketing that uses one or more advertising media to affect a measurable response and transaction at any location”.²</td>
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Direct mail is one of the most important advertising methods for tourism enterprises, however, hard to obtain right mailing lists and the tourism industry; previous visitors contain the most important mailing list sources³¹.

When it comes to online environment, the most important tool in direct marketing over the internet is the e-mail. E-mail has several advantages over postal direct mail. First, there are no postage or printing charges. The average cost of an e-mail message is less than $0.01, compared to $0.50 to $2.00 for direct mail. Second, e-mail offers an immediate and convenient avenue for direct response; in fact, e-mail ads often direct users to Web sites using hyperlinks. Third, and perhaps most important, e-mail can be automatically individualized to meet the needs of specific users¹³.

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1.3.4.6 Exhibitions:

Exhibition, a term meaning in general a public display, to which has a special modern sense as applied to public shows for goods and services for the promotion of trade. Exhibition is an emerging service industry; it plays a very important role in the aspects of restructuring and new market exploitation etc.

Almost every field of commercial, social and leisure activity is served by dedicated exhibitions and conferences in Jordan. The exhibitions provide valuable points of contact between manufacturers, suppliers and clients.

Exhibitions can be defined as "a periodic gatherings where manufacturers, suppliers and distributors in a particular industry display their products and provide information to potential buyers".

Exhibitions are unique as they are the only medium that brings the whole market together- buyers, sellers and competitors- all under one roof for a few days. Product and services can be seen, demonstrated or tested, and face to face contact can be made with a large number of relevant decision makers in short period of time. Relationships can be strengthened and opportunities seized if planned carefully.

Exhibitions offer an array of opportunities, problems and challenges to the keen marketing manager. They can be leveraged to the maximum effect by integrating them with other communication tools and developing a longer-term perspective incorporating an overall exhibition strategy. Technologies now
allow attendees and exhibitors to schedule appointments in advance of the event. E-mail marketing helps build interest and attendance.

The rapid growth, that internet has known mainly during the recent years, establishes it as one of the most profitable sources of revenue for every business, regardless the part of the world that this business is located. As a result of that, the number of people that are visiting web pages of business and decide to trust them, choosing essentially to be served electronically, is increasing continuously.\textsuperscript{14} Tourism service is intangible; the internet is a very good medium for intangible product and to communicate a marketing message, IMC through the internet is beneficial.

Integrated marketing communication produces a uniform message that may be capable of addressing the problems that services organization face when they must market an intangible product\textsuperscript{1}. Thus, IMC has the potential to produce a strong focus for an offering and seems to be an interactive tool for marketers accommodate the intangibility present in services, such as tourism offering. In order to communicate a marketing message, integrated marketing communication offers several tools, the tools that frequently used within the tourism industry as mentioned earlier these are advertising, public relation, sales promotion, direct marketing, personal selling and exhibition. When the various communication tools used individually are not very influential among consumers but when the various communication tools are integrated, they tend to be very influential in inducing consumers to make purchase decision\textsuperscript{16}. Also companies can use IMC to
expand their market shares since they stand to attract and retain customers when their IMC programs are well planned.¹⁶

A proper integration of the internet into the IMC program requires that it is used creatively and as a component of the overall brand-building process. The internet can be used to amplify other IMC elements. The internet is the glue of IMC program and the capability of the internet to tie together various elements of the IMC program¹. Thus, the internet is a good medium for IMC program and its elements.

1.4 Integrated Marketing Communication and Online Tourism Service.

Internet has proven to be an effective means of advertising, marketing, distribution goods and information services. The internet can be used in two distinct ways: first as a source of data by which the user accesses resources purely to get information; and second, as a mean of marketing and facilitating business transactions. The internet is changing the ways in which the hospitality industry plans, controls, operates, and integrates a majority of its business activities, including its marketing activities.

New technologies and the distinctive features of multimedia with internet provides ample opportunities and is specifically useful for dealing with service which is intangible in nature and transforming marketing mix variables to capitalize on the informational and transactional potential of the internet. The most common marketing practices include the transforming marketing mix (promotion,
distribution, product and service, and price) variables and tangibilizing the hotel offerings.

Some author argue that the product, price, point of sale and promotion fit in well with the internet. Promotion is the process by which a company communicates with the market, providing information about its products and services or about the company itself. The promotional mix (tools for IMC) with the help of the internet can work more efficiently to tangibilize and promote hotel services.

Today the world is completely different than even a few years ago. This especially valid regarding contemporary business world and international economics which are undergoing dynamic and significant changes. The critical key to success is no more connected to huge production industries but with service sector and the drivers for services development on a global scale.

Tourism sector is a service sector including movement of people from different countries for a period of time for the purpose of visiting certain destination and obtaining a range of benefits at visited place. The services of accommodation, travelling, education or for business purposes include only a limited number of the whole range, still there is one common thing. It is the distance between real and potential tourists and tourist destination. On the one hand this means tourists don’t know the destination prior their visit and they count on the information provided regarding their trip. On the other hand they can not try any samples of this product in order to decide whether to buy or not.
These two factors give critical importance to the ways and conduct of communicated message as regards the trip, hotel and services and lead to the conclusion for the critical importance of consistent dialogue with potential and real tourists in order to attract them as consumers and to retain them as loyal customers. This dialogue is possible through the ways of delivering marketing tourism product messages and through seeking constant feedback prior and after the tourism experience. This adds value to the service offering marketing communications.

Integrated marketing communication tools as mentioned before are usually perceived as advertising, public relations, direct marketing, sales promotion, personal selling and exhibition. What is common for tourism companies nowadays is they usually apply some or all of them without combining their usage so that to achieve synergy in the impact of marketing message and stronger influence on customers perceptions. IMC is to unite all or used marketing communication elements in order to influence in a stronger way to remind constantly of tourism product offering.

As tourism product distribution is mainly connected with selling information in respect of destination, place of accommodation, additional tourism services. It is of significant importance for tourism company success to use the advantage of World Wide Web. As maximum as possible the convergence between IMC and online tourism distribution appears to be strategic source of competitive priority of tourism companies with vision for the future.
Distribution of tourism services is facing considerable evolutionary and revolutionary process, characterized by significant deep changes in last years. Next to the traditional distribution (travel agents), internet and multimedia channels have been developed in recent years. Widespread internet adoption for more and more purposes contributed to the compulsory computerization and network connection of many tourism businesses. This led to the appearance of huge amounts of information on the disposal of billions of people including tourists who altered the ways of seeking information regarding their trips and accommodation.

When application of IMC concept is added in online environment it is more suitable for the tourist/customer to find the service easiest in the web media, to memorize the message and decide upon the purpose. If satisfied with the service after the customer will come back and buy the service easier. Hence effective application of IMC concept and brands being created through this concept could serve as some kind of guarantee in the purchase process.

Focusing attention on the evolution of the traditional form of tourism services distribution (Tour operator, travel agents), we have to take into account the role and importance of information and communication technology in the industry. Contemporary customers/tourists look for more rapid, more convenient ways in consumer behaviour, so they are directly their efforts when seeking for services to internet because of fast access to information, possibilities for instant reservations and buying on internet. IMC could successfully facilitate and accelerate this online distribution process through delivering communication elements
continuum. IMC could serve as tool to shorten the distribution channel.

1.5 The internet as a marketing communication medium:
As a medium, the internet has the potential to combine the characteristics of many other media\textsuperscript{17}. It offers capabilities similar to those of newspapers and magazines (text and graphics), radio (sound) and television (video) in one concise package. It offers by far the richest and most diverse content of any medium that has ever existed \textsuperscript{ibid}. Although it can be argued that, due to its interactive potential, the internet is largely a “pull” medium\textsuperscript{33}. It is also a “push” medium\textsuperscript{2}.

Traditional marketing communications media (particularly broadcast media), are push technologies. With push marketing tactics, the marketer delivers communications messages to the target audience at the marketer’s choosing, retaining control over when, where and how the advertising message is delivered\textsuperscript{2}. Push technologies follow the one-to-many communications model and are linear. Communications messages are thus “pushed” to target audience\textsuperscript{33}. Internet marketing incorporates the concept of push marketing and develops its own unique set of push marketing techniques using internet technologies. The web is based on a pull technology where the customer browser must request a web page before it is sent\textsuperscript{34}.

E-mail is the oldest and most widely used push technology on the internet. It is a push technology because one receives e-mail whether one asks for it or not. Other examples of internet push
marketing techniques include search engines, banner advertising, online promotions, affiliate marketing programs and online sponsorships. The internet also follows pull marketing tactics. With pull marketing, permission is requested from the target audience to send a marketing message.

The internet integrates stakeholders' communications. Most companies have links from their home pages to a site for investors and a site for media. Employees have access to an "intranet" site and suppliers to an "extranet" site.

The internet can also be used as a corporate and marketing communication tool. In corporate communications, the company website can be a PR medium to disseminate information about the company and its products to customers, investors, employees, staffs etc. to reinforce the corporate identity, to improve the company image, and to interact with these audiences. The company can be presented in a positive, entertaining, and amusing way. Basic information about the company can be communicated, questions about the company can be answered and detailed old and current news releases can be made available in a cost-efficient way.

Finally, the internet can also used in marketing communication, though reaching customers directly, informing them, creating brand awareness reinforcing brand image and brand attitudes stimulating them to take action and try the product and creating loyalty and building relationships with them (De Pelsmacker et al., 2004).
The internet as a marketing communication medium has a number of advantages for tourism firms which include.

1. Target marketing. A major advantage of the Web is the ability to target very specific groups of individuals with a minimum of waste coverage.

2. Message tailoring. As a result of precise targeting, messages can be designed to appeal to the specific needs and wants of the target audience. The interactive capabilities of the net make it possible to carry on one-to-one marketing with increase success in both the business and consumer market.

3. Interactive capabilities. The fact that the Internet can support two-way interaction between the Web site and the visitor is one of the greatest differences and benefits over traditional media. Because the internet is interactive, it provides strong potential for increasing customer involvement and satisfaction and almost immediate feedback for buyers and sellers.

4. Information access. Internet users are able to find a wealth of information about hotels, services and every subject imaginable over the Internet. Perhaps the greatest advantage of the Internet is its availability as an information source.

5. Speed. For those requesting information on a company, its products and for its services offerings, the internet is the quickest means of acquiring his information.

6. Complement to IMC. The Internet both complements and is complemented by other IMC media. As such, it serves as a vital link in the integrative process.
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