

A Model of Integrated Marketing Communication for Community Products: “Chi-Hot” Parsley Balm of Klong Yong Sub-district, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand

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Abstract

Herbal products are famous for their affordability, ease of production, and health benefits. People are more aware of their health. The biennial fragrant plant parsley has essential oils that can be used for various applications. It is extracted for inhaler balms under the brand “Chi-hot” (“Chi” is parsley in the Thai language). This research aims to explore consumer behavior of herbal balm and develop an integrated marketing communication (IMC) model for selling parsley balm. This survey collects data by questionnaire from 256 consumers selected by convenient sampling method. Descriptive and inferential statistics analyzed the data. 78% of respondents have used herbal balm, and 48% purchase 1-2 times/month. The reasons for purchase are Price (38%), Brand (26%), and Quality (11%). IMC's model for selling parsley balm consists of Public Relations, Word-of-Mouth Marketing, Event Marketing, Advertising, Direct Marketing, Promotions, and Personal Selling. Parsley balm can be developed as a community herbal product to promote local wisdom and enhance local revenue. IMC's model of Public Relations, Word-of-Mouth Marketing, Event Marketing, Advertising, Direct Marketing, Promotions, and Personal Selling is effective for selling herbal products. Local manufacturers can employ this model easily with low investment.

Keywords: *Balm, Parsley, Integrated Marketing Communication (Imc), Local Wisdom, Herbal Product.*

Introduction

Currently, agricultural raw materials have a high potential but need better economic value due to their short shelf life and environmental damage susceptibility. Product development, therefore, plays a vital role in adding value to agricultural raw materials, can lead to the development of desirable products in the international market, and plays a vital role in reducing Thailand's trade deficit by product. Some types of agriculture can be developed and added value to a price many times higher if talking about what Thai people like to use and carry together as a household and personal medicine is an inevitable balm (Theerawej & Silpcharu, 2000).

Herbal balm has recently gained popularity because it is a product with a simple manufacturing method and a low cost and because of the trend of using herbs for improved health. The use of plants to cure or relieve sickness symptoms is traditional knowledge passed down from generation to generation. Currently, herbs are playing a role as individuals begin to pay greater attention to their health. Herbs have fewer adverse effects than antibiotics. It has no detrimental effects on the body and is very secure. It has no toxicity potential and can be utilized with adverse reactions or side effects.

Furthermore, Thai herbs are well-known and widely recognized around the world. The international trade of herbal products, including Thai herbs, significantly impacts the global economy. The interest in herbal products is growing in developing and developed countries [Santhosh et al., 2019]. Medicinal plants are gaining importance worldwide due to their benefits and medicinal value. Asian countries, including Thailand, export medicinal plants and their products [Walia et al., 2020]. Thailand has a wide variety of fruits and vegetables available all year round, and postharvest technologies are necessary to prolong their shelf life or process them into value-added products [Ika et al., 2017]. Establishing multiple herbal crude drug repositories and centralized testing can help maintain authentic natural health product standards and certify the authenticity of herbal products (Dinh et al., 2021). Promoting herb-related enterprises can

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enhance villagers' income and boost the country's economic metrics, making Thailand the ASEAN herb hub (Gassinee, 2021).

Parsley is an intriguing Thai plant since it is high in beta-carotene, vitamin A, vitamin B1, vitamin B2, vitamin B3, vitamin C, calcium, iron, niacin, and essential oils. Folic acid can be found in the leaf and entire coriander stem, both popular in Japan and encouraging people to eat together. This section's scientific data discovered a group of substances with good antioxidant activity, including flavonoids (FLAVONOIDS) such as QUERCETIN, QUERCETIN 3-GLUCURONIDE, ISOQUERCITRIN, QUERCETIN-3-O-BETA-GLUCURONIDE, and RUTIN; lactone substances (LACTONES) such as COUMARINS, CORIANDRIN (FUROISOCOUMARIN), and CORIANDRONES. (Uthaiwan, 2021; Wannee et al., 2021).

Parsley is a biennial aromatic plant from the Apiaceae family, native to the eastern Mediterranean but naturalized in most parts of Europe and cultivated worldwide. It is used as a garnish and flavoring agent in various cuisines. The plant has pinnately divided leaves and umbels, and it contains essential oils in all parts, with phenylpropane and terpene compounds as main components. It contains flavonoids, carotenoids, polyacetylenes, vitamins, and minerals. Parsley has a long tradition of use in treating urinary tract disorders and has been found to have various medicinal properties such as diuretic, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and hypoglycemic effects. Different parts and varieties of parsley have different chemical compositions, and the content of active compounds can be influenced by factors such as harvest time and conservation method (Milka et al., 2021; Gbolade & Lockwood, 1999; Frank, 2020; Sandi, 2020; Osinska, 2012).

The world's consumption of inhaler balm varies depending on various factors such as geographical location, climate, and lifestyle habits. Inhaler balm, also known as nasal inhalers or sticks, is a popular product for relieving nasal congestion and promoting easy breathing. People often use them for colds, allergies, or to feel refreshed.

In Southeast Asia, inhaler balms are popular due to the region's tropical climate and occasional air pollution concerns. The market for inhaler balms is competitive, with a wide range of brands and variations available to consumers. In Thailand specifically, inhaler balms are readily available in pharmacies, convenience stores, and online platforms. The price of inhaler balms can vary depending on the brand, size, and specific ingredients. On average, a standard-sized inhaler balm in Thailand may range from 50 to 100 Thai Baht, but prices can be higher or lower depending on the brand and location of purchase. It is important to note that market prices can fluctuate over time due to various factors such as supply and demand, production costs, and market competition. They should check with local retailers or online platforms specializing in health and wellness products for the most accurate and up-to-date pricing information.

Balm consumers in Thailand have traditionally exhibited continual use in daily life, with addiction to familiar scents and high brand loyalty. They rely on word of mouth for advertising and public relations strategies, as they trust the product quality. Distribution channels have been limited to community cooperatives or drug stores, but now, more efficient online channels are available through platforms like Facebook, Shopee, and Lazada (Nachayapat et al., 2020; Alisa et al., 2017).

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is a strategic approach that combines various marketing communication tools and channels to create a unified and consistent message to the target audience. It aims to deliver a seamless and synchronized experience across different communication platforms to enhance brand awareness, build customer relationships, and drive desired actions. IMC positively and significantly affects brand equity from the customer perspective (Perwito et al., 2021). The principles of IMC cover the latest concepts and tools in marketing and communications, presenting topics in light of their underlying theories and principles (Ang, 2021). IMC plays a vital role in the current marketing communications landscape, and further empirical research is needed to examine customer-perceived IMC (Francisco et al., 2021). IMC is a core part of business success in the 21st century, but many firms offer little more than sales-orientated mass marketing, failing to move beyond the most basic form of its operation (Philip et al., 2020). IMC has attracted the interest of marketing and management scholars, and there is a theoretical debate on definitional and measurement issues (Janire et al., 2021).

Integrating marketing strategies is essential. Various integrated marketing strategies can be employed to enhance the visibility, education, and, ultimately, the adoption of inhaler balms. 1. Social Media Engagement: Utilizing social media platforms is an effective way to reach a broad audience and engage with potential users. Creating dedicated social media profiles for the inhaler balm brand can facilitate sharing of educational content, user testimonials, and tips for managing respiratory conditions. Collaborating with influencers in the health and wellness niche can help expand the reach and credibility of the brand. 2. Cross-Promotion with Healthcare Providers: Establishing partnerships with healthcare providers, including doctors, clinics, and respiratory specialists, can significantly boost the reach and credibility of inhaler balm products. Collaborating on joint seminars and workshops or even offering exclusive discounts to patients referred by healthcare professionals can create a strong endorsement and increase product adoption. 3. Educational Content Marketing: Developing a blog or website dedicated to respiratory health can be a valuable resource for individuals seeking information about managing their conditions. Creating informative and engaging content, such as articles, videos, infographics, and downloadable guides, can position the inhaler balm brand as an authority in the field. This content can highlight the benefits of inhaler balms and provide tips for improving respiratory health. 4. Mobile Applications: Developing a mobile app that assists users with inhaler balm usage reminders, tracking symptoms, and providing educational content can enhance user engagement and adherence. The app can also offer personalized recommendations based on user data, creating a more tailored experience and fostering user loyalty. 5. Community Building: Building an online community or forum where individuals can share their experiences, ask questions, and receive support can create a sense of belonging for those using inhaler balms. This community can serve as a platform for knowledge exchange, fostering engagement and brand loyalty.

Measurement and evaluation are essential in integrated marketing communications (IMC) to assess the effectiveness of marketing communication efforts and optimize future strategies. Marketers can identify the most successful approaches in reaching the target audience and driving desired results by measuring and evaluating the outcomes of different channels and messages. This is achieved through data analytics and market research techniques, which provide valuable insights for decision-making and campaign optimization (Javier et al., 2020; Hans et al., 2019; Ang, 2021). IMC emphasizes the importance of understanding consumer needs and behavior, and effective measurement and evaluation help create adequate offerings, build sustainable relationships, and ultimately drive sales and brand loyalty (Tatjana et al., 2019).

Organizations can achieve several benefits by implementing Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). IMC helps create a unified and consistent brand image, leading to a more impactful and effective marketing communication strategy. It also increases brand recognition and enhances customer loyalty, as demonstrated by Laroussi's study on McDonald's consumers [Ang, 2021]. IMC improves marketing efficiency by integrating various traditional and digital communication channels, as discussed by Ang in the context of marketing in the digital age [Sergey et al., 2021]. This integration allows for wider-reaching and more effective campaigns. Additionally, IMC provides organizations with a more decisive competitive advantage in the marketplace, as highlighted by Sulaeman and Kusnandar's research on embroidery. Implementing IMC can improve brand recognition, customer loyalty, marketing efficiency, and a more decisive competitive advantage for organizations.

Dizziness cures are popular, with a market value of billions of baht. These products are used by people of all ages, including young people who experience dizziness from working in front of a computer or an office for long periods. The market for these products is more comprehensive than for middle-aged individuals (Pan, 2016; Concetta et al., 2021).

For this reason, the researcher has started to study the development of products from local knowledge to increase marketing efficiency by bringing parsley, an agricultural plant the villagers have, to extract parsley and use to make balm. Another source of income has studied marketing channels for selling products to the villagers so that they can use them to increase sales to achieve the most outstanding results.

A Conceptual Framework

A study of marketing communication for community products in Klong Yong Sub-district, Nakhon Pathom Province: a case study of parsley balm under the brand "Cheese Hot ."The conceptual framework of the research is as follows:

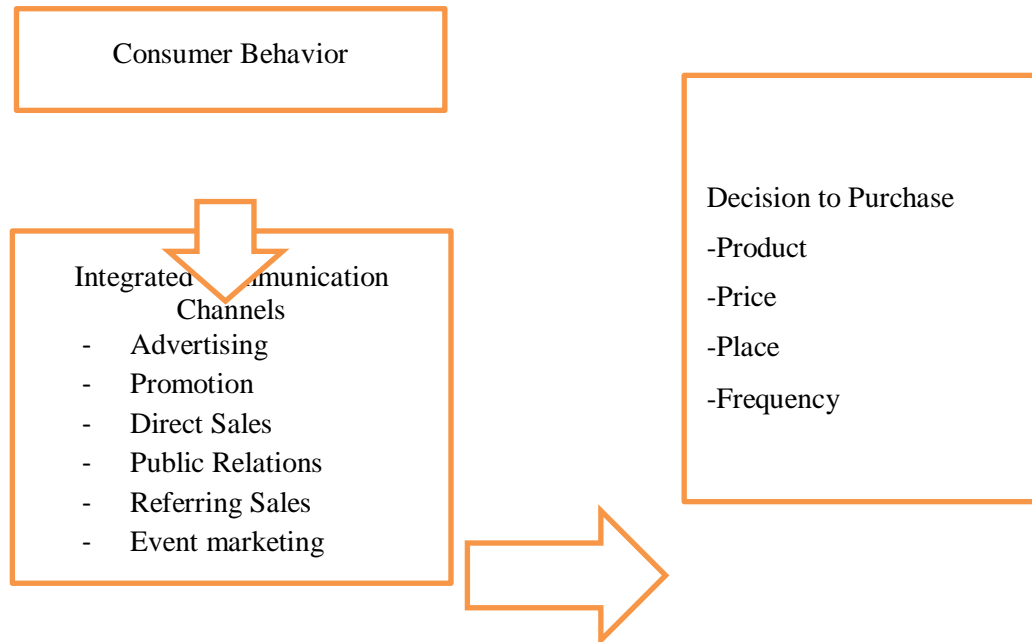


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Authors, 2023

Research Methodology

This survey research collects data from 256 consumers selected by convenient sampling method. The research instrument is a questionnaire created from a conceptual framework and research objectives and is tested for validity by IOC (Index of item objective congruence). According to the expert assessments, all items measuring the constructs had an IOC rating greater than 0.67, indicating they were valid (Turner & Carlson, 2003). Data collection is done online and on-site with consent from samples. Descriptive statistics analyzed data: mean and standard deviation as well as inferential statistics: Chi-square and Pearson's Correlation with a significant level of .05

Result and Discussion

Consumer Behavior

The findings reveal that 78% of respondents have experience using herbal balm. 55% have used herbal balm 3-4 times per week, and 48% purchase herbal balm regularly 1-2 times per week. The main reasons for their purchases are price(38%), product branding (26%), and quality (11%). The preferable price for respondents is USD1.45-1.55 (59%).

Table 1. Preference of Marketing Communication Channels for Herbal Balm

| No. | Marketing Communication Channel | <i>M (out of 5)</i> | SD | Interpretation |
|-----|---------------------------------|---------------------|------|--------------------|
| 1 | Advertising | 4.11 | .83 | High Preference |
| 2 | Promotion | 3.71 | 1.27 | High Preference |
| 3 | Personal Selling | 3.66 | .68 | High Preference |
| 4 | Public Relations | 4.45 | .73 | Highest Preference |
| 5 | Direct Marketing | 3.95 | 1.15 | High Preference |
| 6 | Words of Mouth Marketing | 4.37 | .86 | Highest Preference |
| 7 | Event Marketing | 4.31 | .85 | Highest Preference |

M = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation

Source: Researchers, 2023

The findings reveal that Public relations has the highest preference for marketing communication channels for herbal balm ($M = 4.45$, S.D. .73), followed by Word of Mouth Marketing ($M = 4.37$, SD .86), Event Marketing ($M = 4.31$, SD .85), Advertising ($M = 4.11$, SD .83), Direct Marketing ($M = 3.95$, SD 1,15), Promotion ($M = 3.71$, SD 1.27), and Personal Selling ($M = 3.66$, SD .68), respectively.

Table 2. Preference of odors for *Chi-Hot* Parsley Herbal Balm

| No. | Odors | <i>M (out of 5)</i> | SD | Interpretation |
|-----|-----------------|---------------------|-----|--------------------|
| 1 | Jasmin flavor | 4.61 | .93 | Highest Preference |
| 2 | Rose flavor | 4.33 | .87 | Highest Preference |
| 3 | Lavender flavor | 3.56 | .78 | High Preference |
| 4 | Sakura flavor | 4.57 | .91 | Highest Preference |
| 5 | Peach flavor | 4.31 | .77 | Highest Preference |

M = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation

Source: Researchers, 2023

The findings reveal that the Jasmin flavor has the highest preference for *Chi-Hot* parsley balm ($M = 4.61$, SD.93), followed by Sakura flavor ($M = 4.57$, S.D. .91), Rose flavor ($M = 4.33$, S.D. .87), Peach flavor ($M = 4.32$, S.D. .77), and Lavender flavor ($M = 3.56$, S.D. .78), respectively.

Table 3. Preference of Distribution Channels for *Chi-Hot* Parsley Herbal Balm

| No. | Odors | <i>M (out of 5)</i> | SD | Interpretation |
|-----|-----------|---------------------|-----|--------------------|
| 1 | Facebook | 4.34 | .81 | Highest Preference |
| 2 | Instagram | 2.07 | .74 | Medium Preference |
| 3 | Line | 4.29 | .75 | Highest Preference |
| 4 | Shopee | 4.17 | .83 | High Preference |
| 5 | Lazada | 3.03 | .78 | High Preference |

M = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation

Source: Researchers, 2023

The findings reveal that Facebook has the highest preference for *Chi-Hot* parsley balm ($M = 4.34$, SD.81), followed by Line ($M = 4.29$, S.D. .75), Shopee ($M = 4.17$, S.D. .83), Lazada ($M = 3.03$, S.D. .78), and Instagram ($M = 2.07$, S.D. .74), respectively.

*The Relationship between Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) and the decision to purchase the Shi-hot balm brand***Table 4.** Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | .603 ^a | .592 | .291 | .992 | 1.682 |

Source: Researcher, 2023

The findings reveal that the relationship between IMC and the decision to purchase Chi-hot parsley balm is high, and the relationship between variables is at a high level ($R=.603$), $R^2=.592$. It is interpreted that IMC variables affect the decision to purchase **Chi-Hot** parsley balm for 59.2%

Table 5. The Relationship of the Decision to Purchase **Chi-Hot** Parsley Balm

| Variables | The decision to purchase Chi-hot parsley balm | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | B | S.E. | Beta | t | Sig. |
| (Constant) | 3.157 | .497 | | 7.281 | .000* |
| Advertising | .457 | .226 | .441 | 2.534 | .002* |
| Promotion | .314 | .130 | .486 | 1.653 | .001* |
| Personal Selling | .308 | .097 | .404 | 2.870 | .039* |
| Public Relations | .554 | .180 | .609 | 2.078 | .018* |
| Direct Marketing | .392 | .153 | .416 | 2.144 | .025* |
| Words of Mouth Marketing | .487 | .098 | .498 | 2.898 | .025* |
| Event Marketing | .482 | .110 | .418 | 2.201 | .041* |

*Dependent Variable: Decision to purchase *Sig. $\geq .05$*

The analysis of the decision to purchase found that Advertising has a causal relationship to the decision to purchase at a significant level of .05 ($\beta_{\text{Advertising}} = .441$, Sig. = .002), Promotion has a causal relationship to the decision to purchase at a significant level of .05 ($\beta_{\text{Promotion}} = .486$, Sig. = .001), Personal Selling has causal relationship to decision to purchase at significant level of .05 ($\beta_{\text{Personal Selling}} = .404$, Sig. = .039), Public Relations has causal relationship to decision to purchase at significant level of .05 ($\beta_{\text{Public Relations}} = .609$, Sig. = .018), Direct Marketing has causal relationship to decision to purchase at significant level of .05 ($\beta_{\text{Direct Marketing}} = .416$, Sig. = .025), Words of Mouth Marketing ($\beta_{\text{Words of Mouth Marketing}} = .498$, Sig. = .025), Event Marketing ($\beta_{\text{Event Marketing}} = .418$, Sig. = .041). This is interpreted that 7 IMC variables have a causal relationship to the decision to purchase significantly.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study concludes that 78% of respondents have experience using herbal balm. 55% of them have used herbal balm 3-4 times per week, and 48% purchase herbal balm regularly 1-2 times per week. The main reasons for their purchases are price(38%), product branding (26%), and quality (11%). The preferable price for respondents is USD1.45-1.55 (59%).

The present study has shown that the prevailing marketing ethics philosophy inside the organization is under investigation, and its manifestation in customer behavior is objectivism. According to Lincoln and

Doutt (1989, as stated in Kirkpatrick, 2005), the objectivism theory posits that life is the fundamental measure of value.

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) that influenced the sample group's decision to buy *Chi-Hot* parsley balm consisted of advertising and sales by Personal Selling, public relations, and promotional activities. It will help increase the sale of the product, which is the Shi-hot brand balm, as well as other strategies.

Advertising plays a pivotal part in augmenting revenue for firms. Advertising has a crucial role in raising awareness, stimulating interest, and shaping customer behavior by successfully promoting products or services. Advertising uses a combination of imaginative communication, visually appealing elements, and deliberate positioning to engage prospective consumers effectively and influence their inclination toward acquiring a specific product or service. Advertising plays a crucial role in establishing brand identification and fostering customer loyalty. When a brand constantly conveys its distinct value proposition through advertising efforts, buyers develop associations with specific attributes or advantages linked to that brand (Ang, 2021; Chen et al., 2020).

The establishment of familiarity and the cultivation of a good view can result in the repetition of purchases and the dissemination of recommendations to others, eventually facilitating sales development. Moreover, advertising enables firms to target a wider demographic (Douglas et al., 2020). Companies may effectively reach diverse demographic segments and geographic regions by employing a range of communication channels, including television, radio, print media, internet platforms, and social media. The extensive scope of this outreach enhances the likelihood of engaging potential clientele who lack awareness regarding the product or service being presented. In essence, advertising is a potent mechanism for augmenting sales by facilitating consumer awareness, influencing consumer behavior (Momeni et al., 2013), establishing brand recognition, and expanding target audience reach. The ability to differentiate oneself in a highly competitive market and effectively convey the worth of one's products or services is advantageous for businesses (Travis, 2019).

Personal selling is a highly efficacious strategy for augmenting sales, especially for items like inhalable balms. In contrast to advertising, personal selling entails direct engagement between a sales representative and prospective clientele. There are several strategies via which personal selling may enhance sales for inhaler balm. Relationship establishment: Personal selling allows salespeople to cultivate connections with consumers. Salespeople can offer tailored suggestions and effectively respond to uncertainties and inquiries by comprehending their customers' requirements, inclinations, and apprehensions (Bert et al., 2021). Using a tailored strategy fosters a sense of trust and confidence, augmenting the probability of a successful transaction. Illustrating product advantages: Within personal selling, sales representatives can physically exhibit the advantageous qualities of inhaled balm to prospective clientele. Salespeople may successfully articulate the product's value proposition, demonstrating its functionality and elucidating its diverse applications. The practical involvement in a particular activity may significantly influence customers' decision-making process when purchasing. Addressing objections: Personal selling facilitates the immediate resolution of objections or concerns raised by clients. Salespeople possess the capacity to furnish comprehensive information and resolve any uncertainties about the efficacy of inhalable balms or their appropriateness for individual requirements (Johannes et al., 2021). The implementation of a customized strategy serves to mitigate worries and enhance client confidence in the product. Personal selling facilitates the provision of customized solutions by allowing salespeople to comprehend the unique requirements of consumers and present personalized recommendations. Salespeople can enhance the purchasing experience by actively listening and providing appropriate recommendations for inhalation balm products. Using such a high degree of personalization has the potential to augment client satisfaction levels and bolster revenue figures significantly. Post-sales support: Personal selling extends beyond the point of sale. Sales representatives can offer post-sales assistance by implementing several strategies, such as proactively reaching out to consumers, addressing any inquiries or concerns that may occur after the purchase, and ultimately assuring a high level of customer contentment (Barbara et al., 2021). Providing individualized attention and assistance fosters a favorable client experience, which in turn can generate repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth recommendations. In general, personal selling in the context of inhaling balm

facilitates direct engagement, establishing relationships, product exhibitions, addressing objections, customized solutions, and providing assistance. These aspects assist in sales augmentation by facilitating a customized purchasing experience and fostering client trust in the goods (Harindranath et al., 2021).

Public relations and promotional endeavors might play a pivotal role in augmenting sales for inhaled balm. These tactics play a significant role in enhancing the sales process. Establishing brand credibility: Public relations initiatives, such as disseminating news releases and garnering media attention can contribute to developing brand credibility for inhaled balm. Positive reviews, endorsements, and references in reputable journals or media channels can foster favorable perceptions of a product. Consequently, prospective consumers may exhibit a greater propensity to acquire inhalation balms due to the enhanced credibility derived from public relations endeavors (Ursula et al., 2021). The establishment of product awareness: Public relations and promotional endeavors are vital in generating awareness of inhalation balms. Press releases, social media campaigns, events, and collaborations have the potential to stimulate excitement and cultivate customer interest (Jing et al., 2021).

Enhancing the level of visibility and exposure guarantees that prospective clients are cognizant of the product's presence and the advantages it offers. Disseminating knowledge and raising awareness: Public relations endeavors may furthermore serve the purpose of educating and enlightening the general public regarding the distinct applications, characteristics, and advantages of inhalable balms (Joanna et al., 2021). Press releases, blog posts, and instructional content effectively emphasize the distinctive selling propositions, constituent elements, and the capacity of a product to cater to specific requirements or apprehensions. This data provides clients with the necessary knowledge to make well-informed purchase choices, enhancing sales probability. The impact on customer perception may be observed through promotional efforts, including the implementation of discounts, special offers, and loyalty programs, which have the potential to shape consumer attitudes and encourage their adoption of inhaled balm. These promotional strategies elicit a perception of time sensitivity or enhanced worth, enhancing the product's attractiveness and motivating buyers to engage in a purchase. By utilizing various promotional strategies, companies can draw in fresh clientele and encourage recurring transactions (Torunn et al., 2021). One such approach is establishing partnerships and collaborations, whereby public relations initiatives entail teaming up with influencers, bloggers, or pertinent entities to endorse the product known as inhaled balm. By leveraging the established audience and reputation of partnering entities, these alliances have the potential to enhance the reach and effectiveness of promotional endeavors. The exposure and endorsement of inhaled balm can significantly enhance sales by effectively presenting the product to previously untapped and pertinent consumer segments. In essence, public relations and promotional endeavors play a significant role in facilitating the marketing of inhaled balm by establishing brand credibility, generating awareness, providing consumer education, influencing perception, and utilizing strategic alliances (Sharma et al., 2021). These techniques contribute to generating interest, improving brand exposure, and eventually stimulating sales growth for the product. That may be why such a strategy can motivate consumers to buy Shi-hot balm.

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