**Problem Statement**

As discussed in the course, brands and customers communicate with *each other,* making brand communication a two-way process. They do this in hundreds of ways; some of these ways are structured, while many are not controlled or structured by marketers, such as word-of-mouth conversations or website auctions. As a marketer or marketing communication professional, you must **map customer-brand contact points**as part of your situation analysis. **Once these channels/points are identified,**you can trategise how to tap into these channels of communication to meet marketing/Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) objectives.

**Process of mapping brand contact points:**

Once a product/service has been identified for the study, the following steps must be taken:

* *Identify the core target customer*: Define this clearly, for example, ‘housewives living in metro cities, who care for their families more than anything else, age 30–45 yrs, with kids, etc’. The definition should have both demographic and psychographic details.
* *Do qualitative research to map brand contact points:*Before you proceed to the measurement step, you should know what we are measuring. Hence, talk to 20 sample customers belonging to the target audience to identify all possible channels. Find out what channels customers are most present on. It is recommended that you conduct in-depth unstructured interviews. Record these conversations using a voice recorder.
* *Create a questionnaire to measure brand contact points:*The questionnaire should measure how many customers believe/agree that **pre-listed** contact points are relevant in their purchase decision-making. Hand this questionnaire to them while interviewing them. Use **both** aided and unaided checks (check what customers initially tell you without prompting them, and then check other channels after prompting them). This is an important step. Report data on both aided and unaided responses. Also, check **how** relevant consumers believe each channel is for the given product category buying process. Use a five-point scale (from ‘not important at all’ to ‘very important’).

**Note:** As you conduct research, **record** (take pictures, record voice notes, scan ads, photocopy other material, etc.) **all examples** of communication between the brand and its customer.

Take pictures of the mall, sampling exercise, flea markets, cinema halls, local kiranawalla, posters on the wall, SMSs/emails/pop-ups/banners etc. by brands on the internet, door-to-door salesman, delivery van, delivery boy/girl, anything where your brand and its customers are getting in touch.