

## INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION FOR HERBAL TEA INDUSTRY USING BENCHMARK APPROACH

Rakha Zahra Raihan, S.T.P<sup>1</sup>  
Melia Famiola, S.T.P., MT, Ph.D <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Business and Management, Institut Teknologi Bandung (SBM-ITB), Indonesia,  
(E-mail: rakha-zahraraihan@sbm-itb.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup>School of Business and Management, Institut Teknologi Bandung (SBM-ITB), Indonesia,  
(E-mail: melia.famiola@sbm-itb.ac.id)

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**Abstract:** *Herbal tea or can be called tisane is a growing industry. Along with the increasing awareness of consumers towards health, herbal products have become a trend in society that has driven the herbal tea market. The global herbal tea market is spread into and Asia Pacific, North America, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The Asia Pacific is expected to show the highest growth rate in the coming years due to public acceptance of the history of consumption of food and beverages and herbal teas. Therefore, the model to market and communicate the product should be determined to reach a wider market. Integrated Marketing Communication is an audience-driven business process of planning and managing stakeholders, content, channels, and results of a brand communication programs and to deliver a clear, consistent, and compelling message about the organization and its products. This research will find out the integrated marketing communication that suits to be implemented in flower and herbal tea companies as general. The method used in this research is the benchmarking method. The benchmark model result is to have packaging in advertising channel, event in events and experience channel, seminar and community relation in public relation channel, social media, website, and YouTube in social media marketing channel and newsletter in direct and database marketing channel.*

**Keywords:** *Integrated Marketing Communication; Benchmark; Herbal Tea*

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## Introduction

The development of human life in this digital era has developed very rapidly. Communication media and technology play a very significant role in living life today. Therefore, almost all fields take advantage of this communication media and technology to carry out activities. One of the activities it does is marketing activities with many objectives such as increasing brand awareness, selling products or services, increasing brand equity, etc. Marketing has touched us all in our daily lives. Marketing with its systems and activities can familiarise us with the company and product brand names being offered. Various new methods are starting to emerge by integrating various technologies and marketing communication tools to achieve these goals. One method that can integrate technology and marketing tools is Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). The definition of Integrated Marketing Communication is an audience-driven business process of strategically managing stakeholders, content, channels and results of brand communication programs (Kliatchko, 2008). This Integrated Marketing Communication has a function to integrate stakeholders outside, and inside the company, online and offline platforms, what content is suitable for each platform and the results of this IMC are based on financial aspects and consumer behavior (Kliatchko, 2008; Schultz & Schultz, 2004).

Research initiated by Accenture (2020) who reported that due to Corona Virus Pandemic, consumer's priorities have changed. They predicted that the customers are adopting new habits and behaviours that many anticipate will continue in the long term, which is the ever-increasing focus on health, rise in conscious consumption, and growing love for local. The World Health Organisation seeks to capitalize on the use of traditional medicines including herbal medicines in its 2014– 2023 strategy, to keep populations healthy through providing access to effective and affordable alternatives to medicine, and to provide healthcare choices coherent with people's cultural practices (World Health Organization, 2013). Along with the increasing awareness of consumers towards health, herbal products have become a trend in society that has driven the herbal tea market. The global herbal tea market is spread into and Asia Pacific, North America, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The Asia Pacific is expected to show the highest growth rate in the coming years due to public acceptance of the history of consumption of food and beverages and herbal teas in the Asia Pacific, with the largest market share of 36.47% of the global herbal tea market. As of 2018, tea is the beverage of choice in Asia with the highest production. From this region, China is the world's largest producer and consumer of herbal teas to (Transparency Market Research, 2017).

Companies, as marketers now realise that they are more than just developing affordable quality products and potential distribution channels. However, they still have to communicate with current and potential customers (Duncan, 2002). Therefore, what the flower and herbal tea companies must do is formulate an effective marketing communication strategy. The goal is to introduce product advantages to the audience or potential consumers. For a product to be desired, companies as marketers realise that they are currently more than just developing affordable quality products and/or viable distribution channels, but they still need to communicate with current and potential customers. Therefore, the product must be able to use the right marketing communications. One of the ways this can be done is with Integrated Marketing Communications. Since there is no specifically Integrated Marketing Communication strategy for flower and herbal tea companies, this study aims to develop integrated marketing communications for companies engaged in the flower and herbal tea (tisane) industry. The result of this research is an Integrated Marketing Communication strategy used for the flower and herbal tea industry.

## Literature Review

Three points will be discussed in Literature Review which is Integrated Marketing Communication, Herbal Tea and Benchmark

### Definition of Integrated Marketing Communication

Integrated Marketing Communication is a natural evolution of marketing communications. IMC has brought drastic changes in at least three main areas: the marketplace, media and communications, and consumers. The advances in information and technology are the factor that these changes happened and caused a significant shift from the mass marketing, product-centred theories of marketing popularised in the 1950s and 1960s to the more customer-centric, database-driven, interactive, and measurable approaches of integrated marketing communications (Schultz, Patti, & Kitchen, 2013). Marketing and communication methods, practices, and ways of thinking abound in the era of mass marketing, and mass communication has been a revolutionary way of affecting the marketplace and communications landscape of the twenty-first century. (Kerr, Schultz, Patti, & Kim, 2008; Schultz, 1992; Schultz, Tannenbaum, & Lauterborn, 1993).

The word "Integrated Marketing communication" is developing each year for the last three decades, from the American Association of Advertising Agencies in 1989 until now. Though authors and scholars in marketing communications have not reached an agreement on the general concept and scope of IMC, this Table below will provide the definitions of Integrated Marketing Communication.

Table 1. Definition of Integrated Marketing Communication

Author	Year	Definition
American Association of Advertising Agencies	1989	A marketing communications planning concept recognises the added value in a program that combines several strategic disciplines such as general advertising, direct marketing, promotion and public relations, and combines these disciplines for clarity, consistency, and communication impact (American Association of Advertising Agencies, 1989).
Schultz	1992	The process of managing all resources regarding the product/service disclosed by the customer or prospect that allows the customer to perform sales behaviour and maintain customer loyalty (Schultz, 1992).
Keegan et al	1992	Strategic coordination of all communication and media by the organisation to influence the perception of overall brand value (Keegan, Moriarty and Duncan, 1992).
Percy L	1997	Integrated marketing communications is a process of developing and implementing various forms of persuasive communication programs with customers and prospects over time (Percy, 1997).
Kotler et al.	1999	Integrated Marketing Communication is a concept in which a company carefully integrates and coordinates various communication channels to convey a clear, consistent, and compelling message about the organisation and its products (Kotler and Armstrong, 1999).

Duncan	2002	A cross-functional process for creating and maintaining beneficial relationships with stakeholders by controlling and influencing all communicated messages sent to these groups and driving data-driven conversations with them (Duncan, 2002).
Schultz & Schultz	2004	Integrated Marketing Communication is a process of strategic business that have steps such as to plan, develop, execute and evaluate a coordinated, measurable, and persuasive brand communication projects over time with consumers, prospects, and external and internal audiences (Schultz and Schultz, 2004).
Raman & Naik	2005	Integrated Marketing Communication is a program which plans and executes various marketing activities to reach total impact with consistent messages (Naik and Raman, 2005).
Kliatchko	2008	IMC is an audience-driven business process of strategically managing stakeholders, content, channels and results of brand communication programs (Kliatchko, 2008)

Kliatchko's definition in 2008 revised his previous writing in 2005, which is more relevant today. Therefore, the author concludes that the definition of Integrated Marketing Communication is an audience-driven business process of planning and managing stakeholders, content, channels, and results of a brand communication programs (Kliatchko, 2008) and to deliver a clear, consistent, and compelling message about the organization and its products (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

### **Integrated Marketing Framework**

A crucial ingredient for many communication success stories is a well-developed integrated marketing communications (IMC) program. Some of the world's most successful brands have benefited from carefully blending communication options of all types. Unquestionably, one of the most important topics concerning the future of advertising is how marketers should design, execute, and evaluate IMC programs (Keller, 2016). In developing an Integrated Marketing Strategy, these steps are followed in sequence. The steps for the development process of IMC was described by Schultz and Kitchen (2004). These stages are:

1. **Content** requires cross-functional and interpersonal communications within and outside the business to achieve synergy and consistency, which creates —one sight, one sound.
2. **Channels**, where organisations collect the extensive information about the customer and apply to arrange marketing communications and to evaluate the feedback and then the most favourable channel in the mind of the prospect, is selected.
3. **Stakeholders** who declare accessible data sources and globally segmented databases are built on understanding and identifying the relevant and profitable customers
4. **Results** where the firms frequently control the marketing communications performance from ROI perspective.

The stages mentioned above are confirmed by Kliatchko's (2008) research which states that IMC has four pillars which explained below:

#### **1. Stakeholders**

Stakeholders can be defined as all the relevant publics or multiple markets with which any given firm interacts. A corporation's stakeholder contains external and internal audiences. External audiences may refer to customers, consumers, potential consumers

and other entities outside the organisation, while internal audiences refer to those within the organisation, such as employees, managers, etc. (Schultz & Schultz, 2004).

## 2. Content

Content in Integrated Marketing Communication consists of messages and incentives. The message refers to the brand idea, idea or association, and all other values or perceptions that a marketer passes on to a customer, while an incentive is a short-term offer or reward to the consumer for doing something. It is valuable to both the company and the consumer (Schultz & Schultz, 2004).

## 3. Channels

A fundamental concept in IMC is the expanded notion of marketing communications channels, including those that may not have been considered or strictly classified as communication channels in the past (Schultz & Schultz, 1998). The relevance and preference are the main determinants in considering the marketing channels to use in preparing an integrated media plan (Schultz & Schultz, 2004). The Integrated Marketing Communication use deliberate process planning guidelines to take the consumer's perspective into account when deciding which channels that will be the most effective at reaching the target audience (Kliatchko, 2008).

## 4. Results

The Integrated Marketing Communication approach measures behavioural responses and outcomes in a financial ratio (Schultz & Walters 1997). An Effective Integrated Marketing Communication plan is intended to provide customers with relevant, consistent and clear messages. Therefore, the purpose of marketing communication is to create awareness, educate and make a good impression to get the desired position in the minds of the clients. Ultimately, they aim to drive potential customers through a purchase funnel (Camilieri, 2018).

The four pillars are mutually continuous and form antecedents and consequences. In the planning and execution of the new IMC program, the pillars are considered as antecedents while when the program requires feedback and evaluation, the four pillars can function as consequences.

### Integrated Marketing Communication Channels

Table 2 below represents Nine Major Marketing Communication channels and components, as Keller wrote in 2016. These nine major marketing communication channels also can be called a marketing communication mix (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Below is the Table of the communication mix, and its components:

Table 2. Marketing Communication Channels

Channels	Components	
Advertising	- Print and broadcast ads	- Leaflets
	- Packaging	- Billboards
	- Cinema	- DVDs
	- Brochures	- Directories
	- Poster	
Sales Promotion	- Games	- Exhibit
	- Contest	- Demonstration

	– Premium and gifts	– Coupon
	– Fairs and trade shows	– Rebates
Events and Experience	– Sports	– Factory tours
	– Entertainment	– Street activities
	– Arts	
Public relations and publicity	– Press kits	– Charitable donations
	– Speeches	– Publications
	– Seminars	– Community relations
	– Annual reports	– Company magazine
Online and social media marketing	– Websites	– Third-party chat rooms, forums and blogs
	– Email	– Facebook
	– Search ads	– Twitter
	– Display ads	– YouTube channels and videos
	– Company blogs	
Mobile Marketing	– Text Messages	– Social media marketing
	– Online marketing	– Apps
Direct and database marketing	– Catalogs	– Electronic shopping
	– Mailing	– TV shopping
	– Telemarketing	
Personal selling	– Sales presentations	– Samples
	– Sales meetings	– Fairs and trade shows
	– Incentive programs	

Source: Kotler & Keller, 2016

According to (Kotler & Keller, 2016), the channels is divided into "traditional" or offline communication channels (advertising, sales promotion, public relation, personal selling, events and experience) and online communication channels (online marketing, social media marketing, mobile marketing and database marketing).

Developing the best IMC program requires selecting the best combination of communication options and strategically managing the relationships between the options selected (Schultz & Schultz, 1998, 2004; Schultz et al., 1993). In developing the optimal IMC program, marketers should essentially be “media neutral” and evaluate all communication options based on effectiveness and efficiency. Marketers ultimately care only about achieving their communication objectives and moving consumers along in their decision journey. Any means of communications that will effectively and efficiently facilitate those goals should be considered (Keller, 2016).

### Herbal Tea

Herbal teas date back to Medieval medicine and were undoubtedly enjoyed in the countryside long before the first tea clipper arrived in London. Their use, until the last decade, was largely therapeutic and distribution limited to the health food trade. The profile of herb tea drinkers is

close to that of speciality teas, i.e. young, female and in the higher socio-economic groups. However, in style, there is a bias towards vegetarianism and adoption of a healthier lifestyle. It is probably for their great variety of taste and function that herbal teas are becoming increasingly popular, they are growing fast and may be expected to become dominant over the next decade (Gill, 1992). And this statement is supported by Hicks (2001) that said in particular new types of herbal, fruit-flavour and decaffeinated teas are becoming popular.

Herbal tea or tisane offers many benefits for health. Tisanes are a fusion of dried leaves, seeds, herbs, nuts, bark, fruits, flowers, or other vegetable elements that give flavour and provide benefits; also herbal teas do not contain caffeine (Priya, Veeranjanyulu, Memorial, Narasaraopet, & Petlurivaripalem, 2016). These 'herbal teas' contain a wealth of compounds and could play a significant role in delivering nutrients and chemicals to compensate for low-quality diets (Poswal et al., 2019). Consumption of tisane shows many health benefits such as contain antioxidant, hepatoprotective, choleric, diuretic, anti-inflammation, anti-cancer, anti-anemia, hypoglycemic and neuroprotective effects in addition to a stimulant, relaxing, calming, detoxifying and metabolic regulatory features.

### **Integrated Marketing Communication Benchmark for Herbal Tea Industry**

Benchmarking definition is an exemplar driven teleological process operating within an organization to intentionally change an existing state of affairs into a superior state of affairs (Moriarty & Smallman, 2009). So the author did a benchmark approach by seeking companies that have herbal tea product. The companies are Twinings, Celestial Seasonings, and Traditional Medicinals for international brand and East Bali Cashews, Herbilogy, Sila Tea, Tema Tea, Tea et al and Havel tea for national brand. Each company is seen how the marketing communication strategy is doing by looking at the content and channels used.

Table 3. Integrated Marketing Communication Benchmark

	<b>Channels</b>		<b>Contents</b>
	<b>Offline Channels</b>		
<b>Celestial Seasonings</b>  “Blended with care: From Seed to Sip”	<b>Advertising</b>		
	Packaging		Product Information
	<b>Sales Promotion</b>		
	Coupon, Rebates		
	<b>Online Channels</b>		
	<b>Publicity</b>		
	Annual Reports		Financial report, CSR report
	<b>Online &amp; Social Media Marketing</b>		
	Website		Product information, Tea Story, Giving Back Story, Celestial Seasonings Story, FAQ
	YouTube		Product story, Product information
	Facebook Twitter Instagram		Customer interaction, Campaign, News, product information, Tutorials
	<b>Mobile Marketing</b>		
	Application		Marketplace, product information

	<b>Direct and Database Marketing</b>	
	Newsletter	Coupon, Specific news, Discount, Events
<b>Traditional Medicinals</b>  “Benefit of plant power”  “Embrace plant power”  “Plants possess great power”	<b>Channels</b>	<b>Contents</b>
	<b>Offline Channels</b>	
	<b>Advertising</b>	
	Packaging	Certification
	<b>Sales Promotion</b>	
	Coupon, Rebates	Free 1 day delivery over \$45, 10 off using codes to buy from website
	<b>Online Channels</b>	
	<b>Publicity</b>	Annual Reports
	<b>Online &amp; Social Media Marketing</b>	
	Search Ads	Google ads
	Website	Product information & benefit, Plant story, Herbal tea journals, Impact Story, Certifications, Career, Community story, Traditional Medicinals Story, FAQ, Events story, Marketplace
	YouTube	Product Information, Specific product for specific function for health, tutorial to make tea, a scientific story about tea
	Facebook Twitter Instagram	Customer interaction, Campaign, News, product information, herbal product benefit, IG live session with expert, Quotes
		<b>Direct and Database Marketing</b>
	Newsletter	Coupon, Specific news, Discount, Events
<b>Twinings</b>  “Discover the art of tea Satisfy all your senses”	<b>Channels</b>	<b>Contents</b>
	<b>Offline Channels</b>	
	<b>Sales Promotion</b>	
	Coupon, Rebates	Free shipping in UK above \$35 Promotional code
	<b>Online Channels</b>	
	<b>Online &amp; Social Media Marketing</b>	
	Website	Product information, Career, Twinings Story, FAQ
	YouTube	Product Information, tutorials how to make tea, challenge, company story, tea story, gift ideas, Twinings tea tasters, advertisement, foodservice training
	Facebook Twitter Instagram	Customer interaction, Campaign, News, product information

	<b>Direct and Database Marketing</b>	
	Newsletter	Coupon, Specific news, Discount, Events
<b>Herbilogy</b> “#BetterU”	<b>Channels</b>	<b>Contents</b>
	<b>Offline Channels</b>	
	<b>Sales Promotion</b>	
	Coupon, Rebates	In-store discount
	<b>Online Channels</b>	
	<b>Social Media Marketing</b>	
	Search Ads	Google ads
	Website	Product information, Support farmer and local Commitment, Herbilogy Story, Sourcing story, FAQ, Marketplace, Life hacks, Recipes. Career, News, Testimonials
	YouTube	Tea tutorial, product information,
	Facebook Twitter Instagram	Customer interaction, Campaign, News, product review, Product information, Product-specific benefit
		<b>Direct and Database Marketing</b>
	Newsletter	Coupon, Specific news, Discount, Events
<b>East Bali Cashews</b> “We close the gap between farmers and the food on your table”	<b>Offline Channels</b>	
	<b>Advertising</b>	
	Packaging	Product Information, Local Product pride
	<b>Sales Promotion</b>	
	Coupon, Rebates	Discount
	<b>Online Channels</b>	
	<b>Social Media Marketing</b>	
	Website	Product information, Product ingredient, Impact story, East Bali Cashews Story, Process of making products, Career and wholesale information, FAQ, Activities
	YouTube	Events story, product information, Impact story
	Facebook Twitter Instagram	Customer interaction, Campaign, News, Events story, product information, Impact story
	<b>Direct and Database Marketing</b>	
	Newsletter	Coupon, Specific news, discount
<b>Sila Tea</b>	<b>Channels</b>	<b>Contents</b>
	<b>Offline Channels</b>	
	<b>Sales Promotion</b>	
	Coupon, Rebates	In store discount

“Commitment to Harmony, enhancing the image of Indonesian tea for the welfare of farmers, consumers and business people”	<b>Events and Experience</b>	
	Donation	Occasionally on certain days
	<b>Online Channels</b>	
	<b>Public Relations</b>	
	Seminar	Webinar about tea and farmer
	<b>Online &amp; Social Media Marketing</b>	
	Display Ads	Instagram ads
	YouTube	Kaleidoscope, Sila experience with popular persons, tutorial, product information
Facebook Twitter Instagram	Customer interaction, Campaign, Career, Activities, Product information	
<b>Tema Tea</b>  “Taste, Aroma, Empathy and Mind” are four characteristics of Tema”  “Tea is personal”	<b>Channels</b>	<b>Contents</b>
	<b>Offline Channels</b>	
	<b>Sales Promotion</b>	
	Coupon, Rebates	
	<b>Events</b>	
	Workshop	Tea Blending workshop
	<b>Online Channels</b>	
	<b>Social Media Marketing</b>	
	Online Ads	Google ads, Instagram ads
	Website	Product information & benefit, Career, Tema Story, Marketplace
	YouTube	Product information
	Facebook Twitter Instagram	Customer interaction, Product information, plant story and benefit, Giveaway, News, Events
	<b>Direct and Database Marketing</b>	
Newsletter	Coupon, Specific news, Discount, Events	
<b>Tea et al</b>  “A cup of exceptional indulgence”	<b>Channels</b>	<b>Contents</b>
	<b>Offline Channels</b>	
	<b>Sales Promotion</b>	
	Coupon, Rebates	Discount
	<b>Public Relation</b>	
	Community Relations	T.E.A Society
	Workshop	Beauty workshop, Events, Tea workshops
	<b>Online Channels</b>	
	<b>Social Media Marketing</b>	
	Search Ads	Google ads
Website	Product information, Tea et al Story, FAQ, Marketplace	

	Facebook Instagram	Customer interaction, Campaign, News, Product information, Gift Ideas
	Blog	Event information
	<b>Direct and Database Marketing</b>	
	Newsletter	Coupon, Specific news, Discount, Events
<b>Havel Tea</b>  “Made responsibly for You, People & Planet”	<b>Channels</b>	<b>Contents</b>
	<b>Offline Channels</b>	
	<b>Advertising</b>	
	Packaging	Biodegradable tea bag
	<b>Online Channels</b>	
	<b>Social Media Marketing</b>	
	<b>Public Relation</b>	
	Seminar	Tea Class
	<b>Online &amp; Social Media Marketing</b>	
	Display Ads	Instagram ads
	Instagram	Customer interaction, Campaign, News, Product information, activities story
	<b>Mobile Marketing</b>	
	Application	Marketplace, product information
	<b>Direct and Database Marketing</b>	
Newsletter	Coupon, Specific news, Discount, Events	

Source: (Celestial Seasonings, 2020; East Bali Cashews, 2020; Havel Tea, 2020; Herbilogy, 2020; Sila Tea, 2020; Tea et al, 2020; Tema Tea, 2020; Traditional Medicinals, 2020; Twinings, 2020)

From the benchmark above, we can build an Integrated Marketing Communication model for herbal tea business. The important point of parity from their communication is:

Table 4. Herbal Tea Business IMC Model

<b>Herbal Tea Business Integrated Marketing Communication Model</b>	
<b>Meaningful Theme</b> benefit for consumer benefit for environment product story	
<b>Offline Channel</b>	
<b>Advertising</b>	<b>Content</b>
Packaging	Certification Product benefit Tea story Preferably biodegradable
<b>Both Channel</b>	
<b>Public Relation</b>	<b>Content</b>
Seminar/Workshop	About Tea

	About sustainable community/business
Community Relation	Herbal tea community Company campaign community
<b>Online Channel</b>	
<b>Social Media Marketing</b>	<b>Content</b>
Social media Ads	Product information Product benefit Campaign
Website	Product information Impact Story & Commitment Events/Impact report Events Story About the Company Company values FAQ
Facebook Instagram Twitter	Customer interaction Campaign News Tea review Events story Product information & benefit Tutorials News Sustainability and Ingredient sourcing IG live session with expert Quotes Giveaway
YouTube	Tea reviews Events story Product information Tutorials to make tea Sustainability and Ingredient sourcing Impact & Commitment Specific product for specific function for health Story about tea

### Discussion

The finding of this benchmark method is the companies use offline channels, online channels and both channels in their marketing communication strategy. They starts with a meaningful theme that supports the entire story for their marketing communications, it could be their product benefit for either the consumer or for the environment. The benchmarked strategies can be used generally for flower and herbal tea companies, especially if they are using sustainability as their part of marketing communication. Although, the limitation of this research is the number of benchmarked companies and the method only using online research, but this research can provide a general picture of marketing communication of flower and herbal tea companies. Therefore, for further research, more comprehensive research can be carried out using offline research and with a larger number of companies.

## Conclusion

In this research, the researcher benchmarked the marketing communication of flower and herbal tea companies. Researcher listed all their strategies in offline channels, online channels and both channels. After that, the researcher concludes all of the marketing communication strategy from all companies and the result is the general marketing communication strategy for flower and herbal tea companies. Based on the benchmarked flower and herbal tea companies, they start their strategy with a theme that supports the entire story for their marketing communications, could be their product benefit for consumer or for the environment. They use differentiate their communications between channels, there are offline channels, online channels and both channels. There is packaging that includes their product benefit, certification, and their tea story in offline channels. Online channels starts with social media advertisement, websites and social media to share their product information, product benefit, doing interaction, campaign, etc. Both channels can be used to create seminar/workshop and doing campaign and interact with the communities. Thus, this research result fulfill this research question to create IMC for flower and herbal tea companies.

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