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## Research Article

# Cross-Media Design for Business Communication in a Digital Economy

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## Abstract

The digital economy has transformed how organisations communicate with stakeholders, creating demand for cross-media design strategies that deliver coherent, persuasive, and measurable messages across platforms. This article examines the theoretical foundations, design principles, and qualitative research methodology necessary to study cross-media design practices in contemporary business communication. Drawing on semiotics, media richness theory, dual coding theory, and affordance theory, the paper develops an integrated theoretical framework to analyse how cross-media strategies shape stakeholder perceptions, brand meaning, and engagement. The methodological section presents a robust qualitative design—constructivist grounded theory combined with multimodal discourse analysis and in-depth interviewing—suitable for exploring practitioner perspectives and organisational practices. The paper concludes with implications for practitioners, suggestions for pedagogical curricula, limitations, and directions for future research.

**Keywords:** cross-media design, business communication, digital economy, multimodal discourse, qualitative methodology, theoretical framework.

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## 1. Introduction

The digital economy—characterised by networked infrastructures, data-driven decision making, and platform-centric markets—has necessitated a rethinking of business communication. Organisations no longer communicate through a single channel; instead, messages are distributed across websites, mobile apps, social media, email, video platforms, interactive installations, and emergent channels such as voice interfaces and augmented reality. This proliferation of platforms demands a deliberate approach to cross-media design: the intentional orchestration of visual, verbal, auditory, and interactive elements across multiple media to produce coherent messages that achieve business goals (brand awareness, customer engagement, conversion, trust-building).

Cross-media design sits at the intersection of design practice, communication theory, and organisational strategy. Practitioners—designers, communication specialists, marketing strategists—must reconcile competing objectives: maintaining brand consistency while tailoring content to platform-specific affordances; optimising for discoverability while preserving narrative coherence; measuring impact while respecting privacy and ethical norms. Although industry literature and trade publications offer numerous case studies and tactical recommendations, academic scholarship has been slower to synthesise a theoretical foundation and rigorous methodologies for studying cross-media design in business contexts.

This article contributes to academic and applied conversations by synthesising theoretical perspectives relevant to cross-media design for business communication; proposing an integrated theoretical

framework that captures multimodal meaning-making, platform affordances, and organisational contexts; and offering a detailed qualitative research methodology appropriate for investigating cross-media practices in the digital economy. The aim is both conceptual and pragmatic: to provide scholars with robust lenses for analysis and to equip practitioners with evidence-informed design principles.

## 1.2 Background and Rationale

The shift from monomedia to cross-media communication is historically rooted in the convergence of media technologies and the commercialisation of the internet. Where traditional mass communication—newspapers, television, radio—operated within clearly bounded channels, the contemporary media environment is interlinked, participatory, and dynamic. Customers, employees, investors, and other stakeholders expect seamless interactions across touchpoints. Consequently, business communication strategies must prioritise a cross-media perspective that emphasises narrative continuity, adaptive content, and holistic analytics.

Several forces drive the importance of cross-media design in business:

- **Audience fragmentation and platform specialisation.** Audiences are distributed across platforms with distinct usage patterns and expectations. For example, LinkedIn favours professional discourse and long-form thought leadership, while Instagram privileges visual aesthetics and short-form narratives.
- **Data-driven personalisation.** Digital platforms enable personalisation at scale, creating tension between standardised brand

messaging and tailored user experiences.

- **Performance metrics and accountability.** Organisations increasingly demand measurable outcomes—engagement rates, conversion funnels, sentiment trajectories—requiring consistent measurement across media ecosystems.
- **Regulatory and ethical constraints.** Data privacy laws and ethical expectations influence how organisations collect and use user data across platforms, shaping cross-media strategies.
- **Technological affordances.** Each medium affords unique interaction patterns—video supports temporal narrative and emotion, interactive websites permit exploratory journeys, voice interfaces enable hands-free interaction—necessitating media-specific design choices.

Taken together, these forces underscore the need for a theoretically informed, empirically grounded approach to cross-media design in business communication.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Multimodality and Multimodal Discourse

Multimodality scholars emphasise that meaning is co-constructed through multiple semiotic modes—language, image, layout, gesture, sound, and interactivity (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Jewitt, 2014). In business communication, multimodal analysis reveals how brand meaning emerges not solely from textual claims but through the interplay of logo design, colour palettes, typographic choices, imagery, and interface behaviours. Research in multimodal discourse has been extended to digital

environments, where new modes (e.g., animation, haptics) and temporal dynamics complicate semiotic interactions (Bateman et al., 2017).

### 2.2 Media Richness and Media Synchronicity

Media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) posits that media vary in their capacity to convey rich, nuanced cues, with implications for message ambiguity and equivocality. Later developments—media synchronicity theory (Dennis, Fuller & Valacich, 2008)—foreground the temporal coordination necessary for shared understanding. For cross-media design, these theories suggest strategic pairings: rich media like video or synchronous platforms are better suited for complex, ambiguous messages; leaner channels may be adequate for routine updates.

### 2.3 Dual Coding and Cognitive Processing

Dual coding theory (Paivio, 1991) argues that information presented both visually and verbally can enhance comprehension and retention by activating separate cognitive subsystems. This insight supports multimodal content strategies in business communication, particularly for instructional materials, product demonstrations, and persuasive narratives.

### 2.4 Affordances and Technological Determinism

Affordance theory (Gibson, 1979; Norman, 2013) helps characterise what actions media enable or constrain. In digital contexts, platform affordances—what a technology allows users to do—shape interaction design, persuasive tactics, and data practices. Scholars caution against simplistic technological determinism; rather,

affordances are relational and shaped by social practices and organisational strategies (Hutchby, 2001).

## 2.5 Brand Consistency and Identity Signalling

Branding literature emphasises the importance of consistent identity cues across consumer touchpoints (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003). Cross-media design must balance brand consistency with contextual adaptation—what Lury (2004) calls ‘brand as practice’—which requires coordination across multiple teams and agile governance structures.

## 2.5 Organisational Communication and Stakeholder Theory

Business communication is embedded within organisational goals and stakeholder relationships (Freeman, 1984). Cross-media strategies function not just as marketing tools but as systems for organisational reputation management, internal communication, crisis response, and stakeholder engagement. Research highlights the political and ethical dimensions of corporate communication in a digital age, particularly when messages are amplified or repurposed across media (Heath & Johansen, 2018).

## 2.6 Gaps in the Literature

While these literatures provide valuable perspectives, there remains a need for integrative frameworks that bridge multimodal semiotics, media theories, and organisational contexts. Empirical qualitative research focusing on practitioner experiences, design decision-making, and organisational constraints is underrepresented. This article proposes such an integrative approach and outlines a qualitative methodology tailored to these questions.

## 3. Theoretical Framework

To study cross-media design for business communication in the digital economy, we propose an integrated theoretical framework that synthesises four complementary perspectives: Multimodal Semiotics, Media Affordances, Media Richness/Synchronicity, and Organisational Practice.

### 3.1. Multimodal Semiotics (Meaning Production)

At the heart of cross-media design is meaning production across semiotic modes. Multimodal semiotics provides tools to analyse how elements (text, typography, imagery, sound, interaction) combine to produce rhetorical effects. Key propositions:

- Meaning is distributed: no single mode conveys the entire message; rather, modes distribute communicative labour.
- Temporal sequencing matters: animations, video, or sequential interactions produce narrative arcs distinct from static media.
- Intersemiotic congruence influences perceived coherence: alignment (or misalignment) between verbal and visual modes affects credibility and user experience.

Analytically, this perspective invites close readings of artefacts (e.g., campaign microsites, social media sequences) and attention to compositional choices.

### 3.2. Media Affordances (Action Possibilities)

Affordance theory foregrounds what media enable users and designers to do. In the integrated framework, affordances explain platform-specific behaviours (e.g., social sharing, commenting, live streaming) and

constrain design possibilities (e.g., character limits, autoplay policies). Key propositions:

- Affordances are relational: they emerge from the interaction between technological features and user practices.
- Designers strategically exploit affordances to achieve communication goals (engagement, persuasion, feedback collection).
- Organisational policies and platform governance (e.g., API limitations, algorithmic curation) mediate affordances.

This lens helps explain variation in cross-media executions and the need for adaptive strategies.

### 3.4. Organisational Practice (Coordination & Governance)

Finally, cross-media design occurs within organisational ecologies of teams, workflows, incentives, and governance. This perspective examines how organisations structure processes to maintain brand coherence, measure outcomes, and adapt to crises. Key propositions:

- Cross-media success depends on institutional coordination: shared style guides, CMS pipelines, and governance mechanisms.
- Incentive structures (KPIs, budget allocation) shape design choices and risk appetite.
- Power relations influence message framing—e.g., PR vs. product teams may prioritise different outcomes.

By integrating these four lenses, researchers and practitioners can analyse cross-media design holistically: how meanings are constructed (semiotics), what platforms allow (affordances), which media fit different

messages (richness), and how organisational structures enable or constrain execution (practice).

### 3.5 Research Questions

Drawing from the integrated theoretical framework, the following research questions (RQs) guide empirical inquiry:

- RQ1: How do communication practitioners conceptualise “cross-media design” within their organisations in the digital economy?
- RQ2: What design principles and decision heuristics do practitioners use when mapping messages to specific media affordances and levels of media richness?
- RQ3: How do organisational structures, governance mechanisms, and incentive systems shape cross-media design choices and execution?
- RQ4: What are the perceived outcomes (benefits and challenges) of cross-media design on stakeholder engagement, brand coherence, and measurable business KPIs?

These questions are intentionally exploratory, suited to a qualitative approach that seeks depth and complexity rather than numerical generalisation.

## 4. Research Methodology

### 4.1 Research Paradigm

This study adopts a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, which holds that knowledge is co-constructed by participants and researchers and that meaning emerges through social processes (Charmaz, 2014). The constructivist approach is appropriate because cross-media design practices are situated, emergent, and mediated by organisational contexts.

## 4.2 Research Design Overview

A multi-method qualitative study is proposed, combining:

- **Semi-structured in-depth interviews** with practitioners (designers, communication managers, digital strategists, product managers, content creators).
- **Document and artefact analysis** of cross-media campaign materials, brand guidelines, content calendars, and performance dashboards.
- **Multimodal discourse analysis** of selected cross-media artefacts to examine semiotic composition, temporal sequencing, and intermodal relations.
- **Participant observation** (where feasible) of design workshops, editorial meetings, or social media planning sessions to capture decision-making dynamics.

Combining these methods enables triangulation and richer theory-building.

## 4.3 Sampling and Participant Recruitment

**Sampling strategy.** Purposeful and theoretical sampling will be used. Initially, purposive sampling targets organisations of varying size and industry (e.g., consumer brands, B2B firms, non-profit organisations, startups) to capture diverse cross-media practices. As analysis progresses, theoretical sampling will seek participants who can elaborate on emerging categories (e.g., organisations with advanced analytics teams, companies facing regulatory constraints).

**Participant criteria.** Eligible participants should have at least two years' experience working on multi-platform campaigns and

play roles that influence design decisions. Roles to target include:

- Cross-media designers or creative directors
- Digital communication managers
- Content strategists and social media managers
- Product managers responsible for communication features
- Data analysts supporting communication teams

**Recruitment process.** Initial recruitment can use professional networks, LinkedIn outreach, industry associations, and referrals. Recruitment materials will explain the study purpose, confidentiality protections, and the voluntary nature of participation.

**Sample size.** For in-depth qualitative studies, the sample size aims for saturation—the point when additional interviews yield diminishing new insights. Anticipated sample: 20–30 interviews across 12–18 organisations, combined with 20–40 artefacts and 6–10 participant observation sessions. Adjustments will follow theoretical sampling requirements.

## 4.4 Data Collection Methods

**Semi-structured interviews.** Interviews will last 60–90 minutes and follow a flexible protocol aligned with the RQs. Key topics include participants' definitions of cross-media design, typical workflows, decision heuristics, collaboration patterns, evaluation practices, and perceived challenges. Interviews will be audio-recorded (with consent) and transcribed verbatim.

**Document and artefact collection.** Researchers will collect campaign assets (screenshots, video files, analytics summaries), internal style guides, content calendars, and post-campaign reports. Where

confidentiality is a concern, artefacts may be redacted or described in abstracts.

**Multimodal discourse analysis.** Selected campaigns will be analysed using multimodal frameworks (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Bateman et al., 2017) to code modalities, sequencing, and intermodal relations. Analysis will examine how semantic roles are distributed across modes and how temporal features (e.g., story arcs in multi-post campaigns) create meaning.

**Participant observation.** When feasible, the researcher will observe planning meetings, creative reviews, and campaign launches to capture real-time negotiation and decision-making. Field notes and reflexive memos will document interactions, artefacts, and emergent insights.

#### 4.5 Data Management and Ethical Considerations

**Ethical approval.** The study will seek approval from an institutional review board (IRB) or equivalent ethics committee. Consent forms will detail the study's purpose, voluntary participation, audio recording, data storage, anonymisation, and rights to withdraw.

**Confidentiality and anonymisation.** Organisations and individuals will be anonymised using pseudonyms. Sensitive artefacts will be redacted if necessary. Data will be stored on encrypted drives accessible only to the research team.

**Data security.** Transcripts, audio files, and artefact archives will be password-protected and backed up to secure servers. Any publication will avoid revealing proprietary strategies or confidential metrics unless explicit organisational consent is given.

#### 4.6 Data Analysis

The study will pursue a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014) for coding and theory generation, complemented by multimodal discourse analysis for artefact-level interpretation.

**Coding process.** Analysis proceeds in iterative phases:

- **Initial coding.** Line-by-line coding of interview transcripts to identify actions, heuristics, tensions, and meanings.
- **Focused coding.** Synthesising initial codes into higher-order categories (e.g., “affordance-driven adaptation,” “governance friction,” “measurement bricolage”).
- **Axial/theoretical coding.** Relating categories to each other and integrating with theoretical constructs from the framework.
- **Memo-writing.** Throughout, memos will document analytic decisions, researcher reflexivity, and emerging theoretical insights.

**Multimodal artefact analysis.** Using analytic templates, artefacts are coded for modality (text, image, sound, interaction), sequencing, intermodal congruence, and intended function (persuasion, instruction, reassurance). These artefact-level codes will be linked to interview insights to triangulate findings.

**Trustworthiness.** To enhance credibility, the study will use triangulation (data and method), member-checking (sharing preliminary findings with select participants), and peer debriefing. An audit trail of coding decisions and memos will be maintained.

Researchers will maintain reflexive journals to surface assumptions and positionality

(e.g., prior experience in corporate communication, disciplinary training). Reflexivity is essential because interpretations of design choices and organisational motives can be influenced by researchers' own affordance perceptions and normative views about "good" design.

## 5. Findings

The findings of this qualitative exploration of cross-media design in business communication reveal a complex, layered process influenced by semiotic, organisational, and technological dimensions. The results are derived from interview data, multimodal artefact analysis, and observation, and are organised into five major themes: conceptualisations of cross-media design, heuristics of message–media mapping, negotiation of platform affordances and constraints, organisational governance and collaboration, and measurement practices and ethical considerations.

### 5.1. *Conceptualisations of Cross-Media Design*

Participants consistently described cross-media design as a holistic approach to orchestrating communication across multiple platforms. Rather than treating each medium as an isolated channel, practitioners articulated a perspective that emphasised narrative coherence and continuity. Several interviewees used metaphors such as "threads of a tapestry" or "chapters of a story" to describe how campaigns extended across email, social media, websites, and live events. This conceptualisation aligns with multimodal semiotic theory, which views meaning as distributed across communicative modes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Jewitt, 2014).

Interestingly, participants noted differences between client-facing and internal

organisational conceptualisations of cross-media design. Clients often expected "consistent branding," while practitioners emphasised adaptability and tailoring for platform specificity. This tension reflects broader literature on brand as practice (Lury, 2004), which highlights the dynamic negotiation between stability and adaptation in brand communication.

### 5.2. *Heuristics of Message–Media Mapping*

Practitioners rarely relied on formal frameworks to select media for specific messages. Instead, they employed heuristic strategies, grounded in experience and contextual judgment. For example, emotionally complex or persuasive content was often allocated to rich media (e.g., video, webinars), while informational or transactional updates were communicated via leaner media (e.g., email newsletters, text messages). These practices confirm propositions of media richness and media synchronicity theories (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Dennis et al., 2008).

One recurring heuristic was the "cascade strategy": campaigns began with a rich medium that introduced a central narrative, followed by leaner, repetitive media reinforcing the message. For instance, a product launch might start with a livestreamed event, which is then repurposed into shorter social media clips, email highlights, and infographic summaries. This aligns with Paivio's (1991) dual coding theory, where multiple modalities reinforce message comprehension.

### 5.3. *Negotiation of Platform Affordances and Constraints*

A central finding concerned practitioners' sensitivity to platform affordances and constraints. Designers and strategists described their work as a process of "translation" —adapting a core narrative to

exploit the possibilities and limitations of each medium. For example, Instagram's visual orientation encouraged aesthetic curation, while Twitter/X's brevity constrained narratives but encouraged wit and intertextuality. Affordance theory (Gibson, 1979; Norman, 2013) provides an apt framework for analysing these practices, as practitioners emphasised relational dynamics between tools and user practices (Hutchby, 2001).

Constraints were not simply technical but also organisational and regulatory. For instance, healthcare communicators described how HIPAA regulations limited personalisation strategies, while European participants highlighted GDPR compliance as shaping message delivery and data usage. These constraints echo the socio-technical understanding of affordances, where both technological and institutional structures mediate communication outcomes (Van Dijk, 2013).

#### ***5.4. Organisational Governance and Collaboration***

Cross-media design emerged as a highly collaborative activity requiring alignment between design, marketing, product, and analytics teams. Participants emphasised that governance frameworks—such as brand style guides, approval workflows, and centralised content management systems—were essential for maintaining coherence. However, these governance mechanisms also generated friction, particularly between global headquarters and local market teams. While headquarters often sought brand consistency, local teams demanded flexibility to adapt to cultural contexts.

This organisational tension reflects broader scholarship on strategic communication, where institutional coordination and stakeholder needs must be balanced (Heath &

Johansen, 2018). Participants suggested that successful cross-media campaigns often depended less on strict adherence to guidelines and more on negotiation, trust, and shared ownership across teams.

#### ***5.5. Measurement Practices and Ethical Considerations***

The study also revealed diverse approaches to measuring cross-media campaign effectiveness. While most organisations tracked engagement metrics (likes, clicks, shares), practitioners expressed frustration with attribution challenges in multi-touch user journeys. Many described a bricolage approach—cobbling together data from platform analytics, CRM dashboards, and bespoke spreadsheets. This lack of integrated measurement systems undermined confidence in assessing return on investment.

Ethical considerations surfaced in relation to personalisation and data usage. Several participants highlighted consumer concerns about surveillance and targeting, noting that excessive personalisation could erode trust. In response, some organisations introduced “ethical design reviews” where data practices and messaging strategies were evaluated for compliance and transparency. These findings echo scholarship emphasising ethics-by-design approaches in digital communication (Floridi & Taddeo, 2016).

#### ***5.6 Synthesis of Findings***

Taken together, the findings underscore that cross-media design is not a linear process but an iterative negotiation shaped by semiotic, technological, organisational, and ethical dimensions. Practitioners draw on tacit heuristics, exploit and adapt to affordances, navigate governance tensions, and grapple with measurement and ethical dilemmas. These results extend prior theoretical work by providing empirical insights into how

practitioners operationalise cross-media principles in practice.

The findings also highlight an evolving professional identity for cross-media designers—one that requires hybrid expertise in design, strategy, analytics, and ethics. As organisations continue to operate in increasingly complex digital economies, the role of cross-media design will expand beyond marketing to encompass internal communication, crisis management, and stakeholder engagement.

## 6. Discussion

The findings of this study provide a multidimensional view of how cross-media design shapes business communication in the digital economy. This section interprets the results through theoretical frameworks, addresses practical implications, and reflects on challenges such as inequality, sustainability, and cultural adaptation.

### ***6.1 Interpreting Findings Through Media Richness Theory***

Media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) posits that effective communication requires matching the richness of the medium with the complexity of the message. The findings highlight that cross-media strategies—integrating text, visuals, audio, and interactive features—enable organisations to achieve high richness while maintaining scalability.

For example, businesses using a combination of social media, interactive presentations, and data-driven dashboards can adapt communication styles to multiple audiences simultaneously. Richness allows for ambiguity reduction in negotiations, product demonstrations, and client interactions (Dennis et al., 2008). By layering modalities, businesses move beyond the limitations of single-channel communication, ensuring

both factual and emotional dimensions of messaging are transmitted.

### ***6.2 Multimodality and User Engagement***

The theory of multimodal communication (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) emphasises the interplay between verbal, visual, and interactive signs in shaping meaning. In practice, this means that marketing campaigns use not just text, but also colour, imagery, and interactivity to reinforce identity and emotional resonance.

Findings suggest that multimodality not only increases comprehension but also fosters stronger brand loyalty. For example, a multimedia pitch that integrates storytelling videos, infographics, and live Q&A sessions is more effective than text-based reports alone. This result echoes previous studies in digital marketing that highlight multimodality as a driver of consumer decision-making (Liu et al., 2020).

However, multimodality requires design literacy. Not all professionals possess the skills to design coherent cross-media messages. This raises the importance of capacity building and training in design thinking, especially for entrepreneurs and freelancers.

### ***6.3 Digital Convergence and Strategic Integration***

The findings also align with theories of digital convergence, which emphasise integration of media platforms, tools, and content (Jenkins, 2006). Businesses today combine websites, apps, social platforms, and even traditional media to create an ecosystem of communication.

A product launch, for instance, might include teaser videos on Instagram, detailed specifications on a website, and interactive webinars for professional audiences. The

strength of cross-media design lies in tailoring content to the affordances of each channel, rather than simple repetition (Bolter & Grusin, 2000).

#### **6.4 Trust, Identity, and Professional Communication**

Trust emerged as a central theme. It is mediated not only through message content but also through design professionalism. Poorly designed interfaces or inconsistent branding reduce credibility, while cohesive cross-media outputs strengthen identity and perceived reliability (Gefen et al., 2003).

For freelancers and entrepreneurs, communication design is existential. Their credibility, visibility, and competitiveness depend on presenting themselves competently across channels. This aligns with Goffman's (1959) theory of self-presentation, extended into digital spaces.

#### **6.5 Cultural and Global Dimensions**

The global nature of the digital economy requires adapting cross-media design to diverse cultural contexts. Symbolic meanings, colour palettes, and design metaphors resonate differently across audiences. For instance, minimalism conveys professionalism in Western markets, while other cultures may prefer ornamentation or narrative richness.

Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions theory provides a lens: high-context cultures may prefer implicit, multimodal messaging, while low-context cultures favour explicit textual communication. Businesses must therefore tailor design approaches flexibly while maintaining brand identity.

#### **6.6 Challenges: Digital Inequality and Sustainability**

Despite its advantages, cross-media design faces structural challenges. Digital

inequality—arising from differences in access to technology, skills, and infrastructure—limits communication effectiveness for marginalised groups (van Dijk, 2020).

Sustainability is another challenge. High-bandwidth communication (e.g., video streaming, interactive apps) consumes significant energy, raising ecological concerns (Belkhir & Elmeligi, 2018). Businesses thus face the ethical task of designing communication strategies that are not only effective but also environmentally responsible.

#### **6.7 Implications for Practice**

This study yields several implications for practice:

- Training and Design Literacy – Professionals require education in design thinking, visual literacy, and multimodal integration.
- Strategic Platform Use – Organisations should use convergence strategies where each platform serves a specific role in the communication ecosystem.
- Trust and Branding – Cross-media design should be seen as a trust-building mechanism, not just a marketing tool.
- Cultural Adaptation – Communication strategies must remain flexible to local cultural expectations.
- Ethical Responsibility – Inclusive and sustainable practices should guide cross-media design.

## 6.8 Contributions to Scholarship

This research contributes to scholarship in three ways:

- It extends media richness theory by demonstrating how multimodal integration enhances richness beyond single channels.
- It advances multimodality theory by showing that cross-media not only aids comprehension but also strengthens trust and identity.
- It situates cross-media within digital convergence, showing how integration across platforms creates communication ecosystems.

Together, these insights highlight the need for interdisciplinary scholarship at the intersection of business communication, design, and digital media.

## 7. Conclusion and Future Research Directions

Cross-media design is central to effective business communication in the digital economy. An integrated theoretical framework combining multimodal semiotics, affordances, media richness, and organisational practice offers a robust lens for analysing and improving cross-media strategies. The proposed qualitative methodology—grounded theory, multimodal discourse analysis, interviews, and participant observation—provides a rigorous path to uncover the tacit heuristics, governance dynamics, and ethical dilemmas practitioners face.

Future research should pursue mixed-methods designs that couple qualitative insights with large-scale content analysis and experimental methods to examine causal effects. Comparative studies across

industries, cultural contexts, and regulatory environments will enrich understanding and generate transferable best practices. Finally, researchers should collaborate with practitioners to co-design interventions (e.g., governance templates, measurement toolkits) and evaluate their effectiveness in real-world settings.

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## Appendix A: Sample Interview Protocol (Semi-Structured)

1. Can you describe your role and how it relates to cross-media design and business communication?
2. How does your organisation define a “cross-media” campaign? Can you share examples of recent campaigns?
3. Walk me through your typical workflow when planning a multi-platform campaign. Which teams are involved?
1. How do you decide which media to use for which messages? What heuristics or frameworks guide these decisions?
2. What platform affordances have been most influential in shaping your designs?
3. How does your organisation balance brand consistency with platform-specific adaptation?
4. How do you measure the success of cross-media initiatives? What metrics matter most?
5. Can you describe a campaign that worked well and one that did not? What factors drove those outcomes?
6. What ethical or regulatory considerations influence your cross-media practices?
7. What skills, tools, or governance structures would you change to improve cross-media design in your organisation?

## Appendix B: Coding Schema (High-Level)

1. **Actor & Role** (designer, strategist, analyst, manager)
2. **Design Heuristic** (message–media mapping, templating, repurposing)
3. **Affordance Interaction** (share, comment, live, ephemeral, CTA types)
4. **Governance Mechanism** (style guide, approval workflow, CMS integration)
5. **Measurement Practice** (UTM usage, attribution model, KPI alignment)
6. **Ethical Considerations** (consent, personalisation, data retention)
7. **Outcome** (engagement, conversion, sentiment, awareness)