

## You Never Write, You Never Phone !



### Why regular communication is the key to successful marketing



I hope you enjoyed this morning's presentation and have a number of useful ideas and tips to try for your own business as a result of coming along today.

Please use this handout as an "aide-mémoire" to jog your memory when needed. I've also added some additional "thought nuggets" and guidance to help you raise your marketing communications to a more productive level.

### I WISH WE'D STAYED IN TOUCH

How many times have you heard yourself or someone else express regret at not staying in touch with a relative or friend?



You may remember this photo being used to highlight what can happen when poor levels of communication result in relationship disharmony at a personal level. A colourful argument or just venting in the short-term isn't necessarily going to damage a relationship, BUT...

...a lack of communication over a sustained period of time can often result in losing contact with family members and friends.

The daft part is it doesn't take that much effort to stay in touch these days.

In our everyday lives social media, emails and texting have become the new norm for staying connected. But there's often so much traffic passing through these channels that it's easy to get lost in the melée (especially as people migrate to what's emerged as the latest "next best thing", as each new social media tool becomes fashionable).

Think about your own experiences and how you react to receiving a handwritten card or letter from a friend or relative, or the enjoyment of just having a good 'ole chin-wag with a close friend, during a long overdue phone conversation. Are these more meaningful? Do these engage you more than reading something from a friend on Facebook?

You may recall that I highlighted the reasons why people typically lose contact:

- No time to do it
- Too busy to do it
- Family or other commitments
- Building new social circles
- I can't be bothered

And how the same model of poor communication applies to businesses. It's not that dissimilar but the damage can have far reaching consequences, with customers, clients and suppliers.

### WHY BUSINESSES FAIL TO COMMUNICATE

- No time / too busy to do it
- No resource to do it
- Busy chasing new clients / customers
- Not sure what to use
- We can't be bothered

**Regular, considered communication means your business is always visible to clients, customers and new prospects. And there are plenty of good reasons for staying in contact:**

### **1. It keeps your name in front of clients / customers**

Current thinking in marketing circles suggests businesses need to issue at least 6 contacts a year for their audience to retain awareness of the company contacting them. That can vary to some degree of course, depending on the type of relationship each business has with its clients or customers.

In some cases, the frequency of contact is naturally higher because customers are purchasing from the supplier on a regular basis. In others, the customer may only purchase or use a service once or twice a year...but there are no excuses for exercising apathy or being laid back about the need to stay in touch in either scenario. Complacency soon allows competitors to gain ground.

If your business doesn't remain at the front of customers' minds, it doesn't take long for them to be influenced by marketing communications, advertising and social media output, hitting them from all sides, from your competitors. 6 contacts a year is just one contact every 8 weeks; hardly hard work, but it could make the difference between retaining or losing a customer.

### **2. Reminds them to use you again**

Research shows that customers who have been happy with their original purchase are 70% to 85% more likely to buy from the same supplier again. Reminding customers to do so should be a no-brainer from a strategic standpoint.

Planning how to do so is an entirely different matter and requires balancing the desire to be in front of customers all the time, with not being considered a nuisance (and potentially losing their interest altogether).

Using a "What's in it For Me" approach is generally successful, so long as the benefit has merit for the customer (and doesn't expose the business concerned to financial risk by customer overuse).

An example is the use of offers or vouchers. Major supermarkets excel with this approach, using them to entice customers back time after time. The importance of this as a marketing tool is demonstrated by the sophistication of the software that Sainsbury's, et al, use to identify customers' buying patterns...before issuing vouchers related to the items they regularly buy.

There is an important caveat with these: always make sure there is an expiry date for the offer concerned. It's the best "call to action" any business can impose (and reduces the risk of overuse).

### **3. Cost !**

The most recent marketing research available suggests that the cost of attracting a new customer is now 12 times as much as the cost of retaining an existing customer.

6 years ago that differential was around 8 times, but social media, digital marketing, and the use of online research by consumers (esp. online reviews) has influenced consumer buying patterns to a significant degree (and drastically increased the cost of winning new clients / customers).

So, now more than ever, it pays to stay in touch if you value your customer base and want to avoid paying a lot more to replace customers who have gone elsewhere (through a lack of contact on your part).

#### 4. Goodwill = free sales force for you

I mentioned above that customers who have been happy with their original purchase are 70% to 85% more likely to buy from the same supplier again. A positive marketing by-product is utilising satisfied customers to provide testimonials for use on websites/in marketing collateral, post positive reviews online (including LinkedIn if you're a B2B business), or become word-of-mouth referral suppliers.

This needs to be nurtured by sending regular communications to obtain feedback or encourage customers to take the action required. And, to an extent, you can influence this by providing marketing literature, implementing referral reward schemes, or simply giving customers a discount (on future products or services) for referrals that result in a sale. But the upside shouldn't be ignored because positive reviews matter (because they reassure existing customers and attract new prospects).

Here are some statistics from a 2016 consumer survey that make for interesting reading:

- 84% of people trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation
- 7 out of 10 consumers will leave a review for a business if they're asked to
- 74% of consumers say that positive reviews make them trust a local business more

#### 5. Receptive market for new product launches

We've already established happy customers are more willing to buy from a supplier again. An additional benefit is they're also more likely to be interested in any new products being launched by the same supplier.

An obvious example is Apple: every time they launch a new product they create massive pre-launch interest by contacting their customer base and combine this with a huge PR and advertising push.



In my presentation I referred to Olay and how they used a similar approach to launch the Olay Professional product range. This was the first major launch by Olay after several years of relying on older products, and not a regular "next generation" launch in the way Apple sell into their audience. It certainly proved the benefit of building up a loyal customer base over many years, keeping in touch with them, and utilising the loyalty angle to introduce a new product to them.

Selling into a warm audience is far easier than selling to a cold one. It can also generate vital feedback before a full-blown launch is considered, lets you build up momentum, and provides opportunities to use early positive reviews to create "white noise" and useful PR output.

If you haven't tried this tactic before it's worth considering next time you launch a new product or introduce a new (or enhanced) service.

## CLIENT MANAGEMENT & PLAYING THE LONG GAME



You may remember this photo being used to highlight the importance of face-to-face meetings and not just relying on “distanced” communication.

This section also covered why perseverance pays, highlighting a case which took 7 years to come to fruition.

“Cup of tea and stroke the cat” meetings simply break down to be a higher level of client management. Face-to-face contact can be vital for cementing and nurturing business relationships and may expose new opportunities for cross-selling, that simply wouldn’t be uncovered through other communication channels. They also tend to be the best way to obtain referrals.

Perseverance also pays when it comes to marketing communications too. I highlighted the situation of a gentleman who had been on the database of a financial adviser company I worked for, for over 7 years. The contact strategy we employed: staying in touch via regular marketing communications and gradually increasing this as he got closer to his retirement age, proved to be decisive in his choice of a provider.

A successful marketing model for many businesses is to develop a series of contact points with their audience using a combination of raising awareness, providing different pathways to validate knowledge, and gradually introduce product/service offerings. Here’s a typical model for you to try:

### PRE CUSTOMER STAGE

**Know** - awareness through advertising, social media, direct marketing, networking

**Like** - visiting website, checking You Tube/Vimeo videos, reading articles/blogs, checking profiles for the business, reading reviews

**Trust** - opting-in to receive emails/newsletters/direct mail, downloading White Papers, registering for webinars, linking via social media

**Try** - attending sales presentations/educational events, signing-up for trial offers

**Buy** - committing to longer term contracts at full price, buying at full price

### POST CUSTOMER STAGE

**Repeat** - instigating client /customer management practices, sending regular communications and offers, inviting to new product / service launches

**Refer** - encouraging referrals from client / customer contacts

I hope this handout encourages you to try new ideas. Clearly, it only covers some of the marketing ground needed to find a complete solution for your business, so if you have any questions or would like to discuss the marketing of your business in more detail, please get in touch.

©ActivateMarketingLimited2017



**Steve Manning** - Managing Director  
**Email:** [steve.manning@activatemarketing.co.uk](mailto:steve.manning@activatemarketing.co.uk)  
**Mobile:** 07854 350266

143 Aldershot Road, Church Crookham, Hampshire GU52 8JS  
**Office:** 01252 627085 **Website:** [www.activatemarketing.co.uk](http://www.activatemarketing.co.uk)

**FROM GUIDANCE AND ADVICE TO ROLLING UP OUR SLEEVES AND MAKING YOUR MARKETING HAPPEN**  
*Interim Marketing Department, On Demand Marketing & Marketing Mentoring*