



## Podcast #042

### 7 C's of Customer Communications

Hi listeners and welcome to this week's episode of the Marketing Menu podcast with myself, Nicky.

And me, Liz! Before we get started on this week's subject, we thought we'd just describe why there's a new little jingle at the end of our podcast. Now if you've listened to right to the very end, you will notice that we are part of the You Are The Media network and we thought we would explain what exactly that meant. You Are The Media is a networking group that Nicky and I attend. It was set up by a rather dynamic gentleman called Mark Masters and it's aimed at bringing together people from digital agencies, marketing and PR, creative.

Anybody in the creative industry, really.

Exactly, which Bournemouth is becoming quite infamous for now and we've found it a really supportive group and they've been very encouraging of our podcasts, which we're very grateful for. So much so that we are now part of their podcasting network.

Now, Mark does his own podcast called You Are The Media which is broadcast every Thursday, so we'd encourage you to check that out. But we're also going to be attending the Dorset Business Awards because Mark and You Are The Media have been nominated for a Creative Impact award .

Drum roll please!

So, we're going to be getting spammed up and ready to celebrate.

Yes, we're wishing the best of luck with that.

So, back to this week's podcast, we're going to introduce you to a model we've developed called the 7 C's of Customer Communications and this is an integral part of our Signature Marketing Programme, which you can sign up for on our website, [www.themarketingmenu.com](http://www.themarketingmenu.com)

Yes, because the 7 C's of Customer Communication really underpins everything we do in marketing. Now, we've talked about a lot of these things in our podcasts, but basically all of our marketing communication objectives need to answer our customers' needs and wants. This is so we make the most of the existing customer opportunities that we have and also ensure that we're delivering on what we say we do. So before we tell you more about the 7 C's, let's just set the scene a bit.

To ensure we're over and not underdelivering, we need to identify our ideal customers by considering them

in relationship to age, gender, lifestyle, buying patterns, developing needs, location, attitude, leisure activities and interests to name but a few, Listen into our previous podcast. What makes your customer tick? to find out more about how you can find out how your customer behaves.

Yes, because this goes far deeper than just the demographics and of course we do offer our free Create a Customer Persona Identikit, which you can download and access from our website at [www.themarketingmenu.com](http://www.themarketingmenu.com), where you will learn about how to identify where your customer is and to consider how they think.

You also need to know why they're buying from you and what their primary motives are. Knowing this will help ensure your solution is better than your competitors and that your advertising is more cleverly targeted.

Yes, so let's take a look at Apple for a moment.

Now I'm a new convert. Nicky, thanks to you. I'm a bit late to the party on this one.

I knew you'd get there in the end, Liz! So, Apple is obviously a brand that's established a product line over many generations. It grows increasingly with demanding, cash-rich customers essentially aiming to retain them for life.

So, how can smaller businesses learn from Apple then?

Well, for example, you could consider dividing your audience into different groups based on different needs so that you interact with them in different ways. So grab a piece of paper and just think about how this could relate to your business, listeners, and think of these points.

Who are your primary customers? Who are your secondary and tertiary customers or audiences? What other constituents can you target? Do you have perhaps an audience of influential customers who could potentially share your message with other prospects? Also, think about who maybe your customer in 5, 10 or 15 years time. I think we often forget that, what's going to be the life cycle of a particular audience, and then you can start thinking about what key messages will best resonate with each of these, once you've identified them. You may also start thinking about different marketing techniques, but each time considering your customers potential problems, their needs, their hopes and their desires.

Then you need to write compelling copy for each that creates desire, provokes a reaction and reveals a benefit. Make sure each of your marketing messages achieves four primary responses. That's attention, interest, desire, and action. Now, this is a marketing principle that we've talked about before called AIDA. I always want to say Aida, but that's an opera! It's AIDA and it's what we've based our 7 C's of Customer Communication upon, but more of that shortly.

Yes, you need to use strong calls to action in your literature, on your website or in your advertising copy. Are you wanting your audience to sign up for your newsletter? Are you wanting them to call you maybe to book ahead or maybe to recommend you to others, for example? Many advertisers actually miss out on this point.

Any business shouldn't consider each customer in isolation. In other words, see your customer as a relationship built up over time and consider their net worth or lifetime value and reward their loyalty. We talked about this in the last podcast about "How to Measure your Marketing Effectiveness". It takes four times more effort and therefore resources to build new customers rather than service those already known to you. So use this knowledge wisely.

Yes, as Liz said, always consider the true worth of each customer or each product sale to ensure you're prioritising your most profitable lines or customers first. Then you can start asking the following questions. How do we exceed their expectations? What do customers value and how are we providing that value? Do

we have customer trends and how are we evolving to meet those trends? Those trends can be like industry trends, manufacturing trends or whatever market that's changing all the time.

And then look at your successes by asking these questions: Where did those successes come from? How did they come to us? What was the buying pattern? Would we make improvements and back to what we were saying before, are we over or under delivering?

I think it's important here too, I'm just thinking for a particular client at the moment I'm working with who sells quite high-end kit to consumers. Now, although their initial purchase might be quite low that the retention aspect is really quite long. They tend to buy into the service, I suppose in many respects, so over a period of time, maybe 10 to 15 years, that customer could generate in excess of several thousands or even hundreds of thousands of pounds of income. When you understand that you can start to think about what the marketing spend should be relevant to that and you therefore think when, okay, it cost me £5,000 for that thing and I only got one response from it, but if ultimately you are assured that that person may be spending several hundred thousand pounds with you over a period of years, that puts it into perspective. So overall then your communication aims should be clear, concise and consistent, but you could break them into three different categories. What are the learning objectives? So in other words, what do we want people to learn from our communications? What are the emotional objectives? How do we want people to feel and behavioural objectives, what do we actually want people to do? All advertising should really answer all three of those in some way, shape, or form. Often the biggest mistake a business can make perhaps with their website is talking, and we spoke about this before, all about themselves. It's not the place to be doing that. Your web presence is for your customers and you should make it all about them, and their needs.

I've just done this with a client, actually, the existing wording was talking all about the company and what they did. Now we've now reworded it and it talks about how the company solves the customer's problems.

A business website is a key tool in the marketing communication toolbox. So think for a moment, listeners, if a customer were to read your website, what impression do you think it would give about your overall business and your service, and would it actually inspire them to buy from you today?

So back to the 7 C's of Customer Communication. As we said before, the AIDA model is perhaps the best known marketing model amongst non marketers of old classic marketing models and it's based on ensuring our marketing messages capture attention, generate interest, create desire, and ultimately compel the customer to take action, for instance, to buy your product or service.

But listeners, taking it on several steps further in light of the wonderful opportunities now that digital channels and social media particularly present us with today and created, as Liz says, the 7 C's of Customer Communication. First of all, think about what marketing tools you should use to reach each audience that we've talked about previously. What is your offering that's relevant to them? You can see how it develops the AIDA model, but with our 7 C's, it comprises of the following. First of all, you're **Capturing** attention. Now, that will be either through advertising, through social media, or maybe it's just a roadside sign or a shopfront for example. Then you are **Connecting**, not by flogging things either, but by educating or creating engaging content, which is what we talked about when we're talking about people's needs, as Liz just pointed out. Therefore, you can then establish that **Credibility**, which is the third C by remembering that marketing is all about differentiating yourself from your competition.

Prospects reveal themselves so you can directly engage and talk to their needs and their view of the world so that you can increase their **Craving**, so desire in the AIDA model for your product or service, which will in turn lead to **Conversion** into sales and enquiries.

I think it's important here to point out that no sales are actually taking place.

No, this is all the hard work beforehand, but I think we've used the phrase before, it's marketing, but not in your face marketing. Getting to understand your customer. More importantly about showing your customer

that you understand them so that they trust you.

Self identifying is the word we use.

Now through social media, we can also do two other things which are all about Controlling the messages they receive in order that, ultimately, you can create a Community so that these all important customers are brand loyal and in turn do our marketing for us through referrals.

Yes, because importantly the AIDA model finishes as action, so they purchased and I think in traditional days that was where the transaction stopped, in many respects, unless you took their perhaps postal address, you might have sent them a brochure, but effectively here it's all about raising awareness and influence, but by creating more useful and interesting content you will actually gain more interest and retain them for longer. So do you remember that the old mantra of be everywhere should really be replaced with being where it counts.

Brilliant. Let's go into some more detail about how to remove conversion barriers which can make the difference between creating desire and taking action or in our 7 C's example, capturing attention then connecting. Here's the thing, if you spend quality time understanding your customer before they even visit your showroom, shop or website, you can target your activity more cleverly and remove those all important barriers. In many respects, you need to put yourself in their shoes so you can understand their thought processes even before they do

Yes. Because if you can appreciate the key worries and concerns your clients have when you're conversing with them, even if they haven't said anything to you at this point, but if you can do that over one supplier over another, then you can effectively weave that into your sales patter around their needs so that you answer their concerns even before they voiced them. So imagine if somebody identifies what's going on in your head even before you've raised your concern. Think for a moment of a shopping experience when this might happen. So you know, I'm thinking here of something that might be quite high ticket item and you say " well, I appreciate that it's probably quite expensive and you may be wondering why. Well, the reason is the actual workmanship, the longevity of the item, whatever it might be. So effectively as the sales person, you've answered their concerns, you've allayed their fears as to why the price is higher than your competitors and they're already trying to empathise with you. You've answered their thought.

And I think that highlights, which we've talked about loads of times before, about understanding the features, advantages and benefits of your product or service. When you know what your audience is, who your audience is, you know what to be talking to them about.

Absolutely, but make sure your team, if you have one, also know those features, advantages and benefits so you're all saying the same things. Now, this provides what we call universal experience and it puts us at the centre of the customer's problem or concern and helps them realise that we've truly identified with them. And that ultimately builds trust and loyalty because the customer feels that you really get them.

Absolutely. Well, listeners, we hope that you can see now how the extended 7 C's of Customer Communication can really help you build that trust and loyalty. So try taking a look at your current marketing messages and see whether they fit into our model. I think it'd be useful here if we pointed out that will have a free download for this. So if you want to go onto our website you can download a copy of the 7 C's of Customer Communications for your purposes if you want to do so.

Very kind of you! And we love feedback, especially if you've put anything of what we said into practice.

Great. So, until our next podcast which is on Wednesday 7th November, we're going to be taking some questions. As we said last time, we invite listeners if they have any questions whatsoever to please, please do get in touch and we may feature one of those and talk about that. It doesn't matter what your business size is or what the nature of your enquiry is and no matter how small or large, we will do our best at tackling it for you.

That's what we're here for!

So it's a goodbye from me, Nicky Matthews.

And me, Liz Gordon, goodbye.

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