

GreySky

What are you selling?

The Four Cs of Marketing

What are you selling?

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How many telephone calls have you received that started “this isn’t a sales call”? It’s always perfectly clear from the start that it is a sales call, and the longer this goes on, the clearer it is that you don’t want whatever it is they’re not trying to sell you.

These cold calls are annoying, but the habit of hiding what you’re selling is far more common than you’d think. We all seem to do it every day. This painful realisation has led to the development of the **Four Cs** of marketing – the *real* basics of how to promote your products and your business.

The Four Cs of Marketing

The **Four Cs** are all about avoiding the most annoying habits of not selling. The aim is to help direct your marketing effort in a way that will actually win customers and sales.

Clarity : Be clear about what you *are* actually selling.

Customer Focus : Think about your customers, not yourself.

Companion Selling : What else do they need?

Comfort : Make them happy about the purchase.

When you see the **Four Cs** like this, of course they look perfectly obvious – old stuff that everyone knows. But take a look at them in the actual context of the way major companies undertake their marketing...

Clarity

Don't "Errm..!"

When you ask someone what they do, or what their company does, how many start with "Errm..."? Even when it's their own company, launched to do something they are passionate about! Of course a lot of this is to do with personal confidence and spoken fluency – that needs hard work to develop.

But the same thing comes across in a huge range of marketing material that has probably taken months of careful thought to prepare. There are loads of examples of websites and marketing literature – where you can't see what they're selling, and what's more you don't care. I can't show them all here (I'd get in far too much trouble) but here are some thoughts.

The good, the bad...

Take a look at a good example first. The Land Rover website www.landrover.co.uk is one of the best. It contains a huge amount of product information, but simple access to the critical detail that potential customers need – such as *"does it come in a colour I like?"*.

It's not hard!

www.cakecakecakes.co.uk is a website selling cakes. The home page is clear, simple and makes you want to buy!

Think...

- What are you selling?
- What does a customer most want to know?



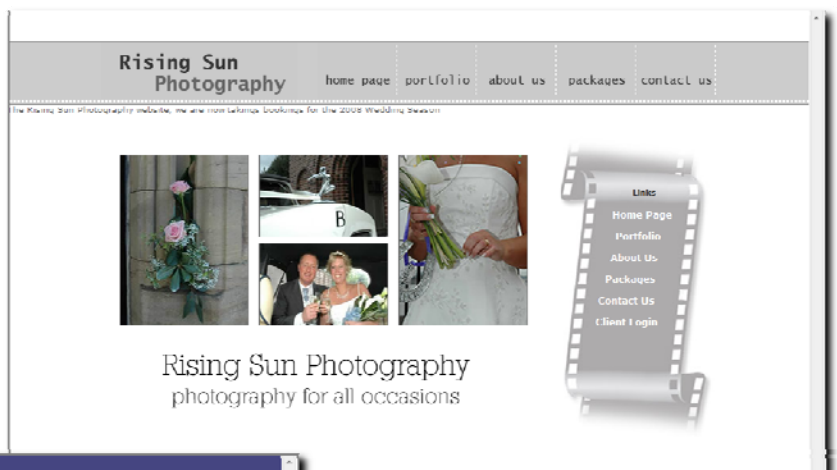
Customer Focus

Do I look like I care..?

Why do so many businesses expect customers to care about them? They so patently don't care about their customers! Again, there are countless examples of poor practice and people can get really upset when you point it out.

Which would you choose?

Two websites for photographers. Both do wedding photos; which would you choose for your wedding?



Rising Sun Photography is an established wedding photographer based in Newcastle – they can be contacted at www.risingsunphotography.co.uk or telephone 0191 262 4488. GreySky Photography is a fictitious company and is not meant to represent any actual business – it is provided for comparison only.

It's not hard to think about customers – what are they looking for, how will they know they've found it. It's just that so few businesses actually do it.

Think...

- How do your *customers* think about your products and services?

Companion Selling

Is that everything..?

How many times have you bought items from a shop counter and been asked *“is that everything”* just as the assistant was ringing the sale through? It’s the sort of question that immediately makes you feel you’re interrupting their lunch-break (or a more important conversation). The MacDonalds *“would you like fries with that”* is perhaps the other extreme, and more decisive customers probably find it equally annoying, but you see the point.

www.amazon.co.uk is probably the most sophisticated *“would you like fries with that”* available. A while ago I was considering buying a CD – it’s not something I do a lot of, and there was only one other CD I bought that year. Amazingly, it was the one that Amazon picked as the *Perfect Partner* to my original choice.

Not as technically advanced, but just as effective was www.easyjet.com. The old UK home page had a simple link to the place to book your ticket, but also had links to car rental, airport parking and hotel booking. OK, everyone does this now, but when this page was first used, it was a revelation, and the page was unchanged for many years. By linking to all the other things customers need when they’re booking a cheap flight they added to the customer experience AND increased sales!

Think...

- What does their choice say – what else might they need?

Comfort

How do you want to pay..?

Too many closing statements seem to be trying to force money out of clients. OK, clients who decide the invoice is optional do exist, but the priority must be in making the customer feel they have made a good purchase, not simply getting the cash. The rewards for this are significant. Volvo go to considerable lengths after they sell a car to make sure the new owner is happy with their purchase. Volvo have one of the highest brand loyalties there is.

But this is now affecting behaviour even before the first purchase. The customer reviews on sites like www.amazon.co.uk don't just affect purchase through Amazon, they are a valuable source of product information.

Exactly what you want

Of course, we need different types of comfort for different purchases. If you're buying a cheap plane ticket, you probably don't want a review, but is it really the cheapest? Ryan Air's *"cheaper than any other airline – guaranteed"* statement at the centre of their website gives just the right assurance.

Think...

- Does your product deliver its promise?
- What assurance does a customer need to make the sale?

Conclusion

So what..?

Clarity

People like to buy from experts. Make sure it's obvious you really understand what you're doing and the products you're selling.

Customer Focus

Customers shouldn't need to understand your business to be able to get what they want. Make sure you understand their needs and the way they think.

Companion Selling

Get to know your customer – think about what their choices mean, and what they might need.

Comfort

Are your customers going to be happy – will their purchase do what they want, how can you let them understand they've made a good choice.

