

STEP 5 — INTEREST

Remember your customer is already interested

For 12 years, drumming up what the agency world calls new business was a key part of my job. I kept a record of all the new clients who came my way. On analysis, an intriguing statistic emerged:

Only 5 percent of them could be classed as truly new. For 95 percent of new projects there was a previous, personal contact.

So-called “new” business in fact came from people who had worked with us before and had moved to another company or division or department; from people who knew me or one of my staff from earlier jobs; from people at firms with whom our clients co-promoted (and so had seen us in action); and from people who knew people who knew us!

They were already interested.

As I began to realize this phenomenon, I radically changed our new business strategy. We moved away from cold calling. We stopped pitching for projects unless we were paid a fee. We actively avoided pitches where we could not identify a contact (i.e. when we suspected we had been put on the pitch list to make up the numbers, just because someone had heard of us).

Instead, we focused our efforts on increasing the frequency and depth of communication with our existing clients and contacts, led by our intensive and interactive mailing program.

That we grew from zero to become one of the top 20 marketing communications agencies in seven years suggests our strategy was right.

“It costs five times as much to gain a new customer as it does to retain an existing one.”

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This is another maxim-cum-cliché that you can find in most books on business and sales. Its source is direct marketing, in which acquisition and retention costs can be calculated to the penny.

Indeed, I came across a fascinating case study in which a weekly business magazine began a mailing program to re-solicit lapsed subscribers¹ (i.e. people who had canceled their subscriptions). The publication created a separate database of former customers, and compared the re-acquisition costs of this list against the costs of gaining new customers from “cold” rented lists.

Remarkably, it took *five years* from the original expiry of a customer’s subscription before it became cheaper to ignore them and recruit a new subscriber from a cold list.

The equally ubiquitous 80:20 principle tends to bear out findings like these. Ask anybody who sells anything and they will tell you about their own 80:20 situation: 20 percent of their customers account for 80 percent of their sales. (Ask your local publican about his regulars.)

I can’t think of a brand, product, or service I’ve worked on where this rule of thumb doesn’t apply. Airlines, banks, cars, detergents, eyedrops, fish fingers... I could plow on through the alphabet. Often the ratio is more extreme than 80:20.

During the 2003 wildcat strike that stranded some 87,000 British Airways passengers at Heathrow airport (at a time when the airport was at its busiest with holiday traffic), 17,000 of them belonged to the company’s frequent flier program: a shade under 20 percent. No wonder the firm went to such lengths to apologize “in person” to this vital core of customers.²

A further perspective is provided by a phenomenon in direct marketing known as “merging and purging.” When you compile a master mailing list from several sources, one of the first things you do is “dedupe” it – you get rid of the nuisance names that appear twice or more. This makes sure individual customers only receive one copy of your mailing – it eliminates waste and annoyance for the customer.

MONEY OBSERVER

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Yours sincerely

Will Ricketts

Will Ricketts, Publisher

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Please extend my subscription by quarterly direct debit (tick one)

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Figure 54 It can take five years from the original expiry of a customer's subscription before it becomes cheaper to ignore them and recruit a new subscriber from a cold list. Reproduced by kind permission of Guardian Newspapers Ltd.

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In the early days of computerization the duplicate names were simply erased... until it was discovered that if a name appears as a duplicate across several lists, that person is *more likely* to respond to a mail offer than someone who appears as a purchaser on only one list.³ Duplicates, far from being a nuisance, should be gobbled up with glee. Non-buyers, in contrast, are tough nuts who might just ruin your teeth.

Old AIDA, new slant

By the time you gain your customer's *profitable* attention, you should have them in a vicelike grip. They know what you want them to do (or think about). They know how to do it (and that it's easy) and they feel you're bang on their wavelength. They've got the time and space to listen, and they like the sound of your offer.

Old AIDA makes the presumption that now it's the marketer's job to make the customer interested. NEW AIDA recognizes that the customer is already interested. This makes a big difference in what you should tell them.

And by "already interested" I don't even mean that you've made them interested. I mean that they always were going to be interested. They were interested *before* they met your marketing.

This comes down to a fundamental law of selling: The customer has needs, the marketer makes them aware of those needs. As Engel puts it:

"The need must already exist even though it may be dormant and largely unrecognised: it is not created by the marketer. It is true that marketing communication stimulates desire to buy a product or service to satisfy that need, but the need itself lies beyond the influence of the business firm."⁴

So you don't have to haul your disoriented customer across some artificial – and probably non-existent – chasm that lies between attention and

interest. At worst, think of it like leading them lightly over a crack in the pavement. And they should come willingly.

Instead, it's time to acknowledge that, when you analyze customers in any market, the overwhelming majority share this one pervasive characteristic: They're already interested. This might at first sound like it's from the school of chicken-and-egg logic, but the facts say ignore it at your peril. You don't need to *make* your customer interested, you need to speak *to* their already existing interest.

“Just looking, thanks”

Your customer may not know about your product, but they are certainly interested in the solution it provides. And, to repeat, statistically it's the “interested customer” to whom you're most likely to be able to sell. They're the one who's metaphorically come off the street to browse in your store (perhaps even literally so).

And you know yourself, when you're “just looking” you're secretly aching for a really good salesperson to make the right approach and help you reach that solution (even if the solution is to postpone the purchase). The idea that we go “just looking” without reference to some need (past, present, or future) is patent nonsense. We'd no more go “just looking” in complete isolation than we'd do “just cooking” and then shovel the hot food straight into the wastebin.

There's an elementary logic about this that is often overlooked. John Watson, a founder of direct marketing agency WWAV to whom I referred earlier, calls it the “magic margin” – the small percentage of people who can be persuaded to respond at any given time.⁵

And the operative word here is *persuaded*. Watson says the most effective mailings are written to the customer who is interested but wavering. He argues you *can't* persuade people who get your mailing by mistake or at the wrong time of year (they're just not in the market), and you don't *need* to persuade people who are going to buy anyway. (I say you can only *deter* the latter group through poor communication.) So it's the small margin in between that you should aim for.

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The mathematical precision of direct marketing makes Watson's magic margin a simple concept to grasp. But I believe it's a universal principle. It reinforces my entreaty that you shouldn't *play to the world* in your marketing communications.

Some might say the weakness of this theory is that it will lead you to ignore lots of *potential* customers: You'll exclude all those metaphorically walking past the door of your store. But that's missing the point: This is not about targeting, it's to do with how you address your interested customer in order to maximize the chances of a sale.

Latent interest

In any event, the knowledge that you will only sell to an interested customer doesn't mean you have to sit and wait for them to come "just looking."

I can sketch to a dangerously mediocre standard, and one hot summer in the 1970s I spent several weeks hawking watercolored line illustrations door to door. My bestseller was an idea I have to admit to pinching. It was a series of cartoon bulls that I could turn out quickly, and I framed and strung them so they were ready to hang.

I targeted new housing estates, where I figured there would be plenty of bare wall space. Then it was just a question of going from house to house with as big a stack as I could carry. Each picture was priced at £1.50 – or about £5 in today's value.

Almost exclusively the door would be answered by a woman, and I would say that about 50 percent of them purchased – usually just one picture, after looking through the range. I tried to be excruciatingly polite, simply explaining I was a student, so I don't think there was much of a pressure-selling factor (unless it was to get rid of the spectacle of my sail-like Oxford bags).

The watercolors were genuinely funny (I repeat, not my idea), and I could see my customer's eyes instantly light up. Basically they were the sort of informal thing you might put up in the kitchen or a bedroom or the loo, to take the mickey out of a lazy member of the household. Each had a

caption like “Insufferabull” and “Incorrigibull.” I think most of the women had their partners or offspring in mind as they considered the different versions.

Looking back, it was an enlightening exercise in interest. As I rang the doorbell I can’t imagine that every second housewife was thinking, “I need a picture.” Yet moments later I got an extraordinary response: a 50 percent strike rate.

Surely a case of interest created from nothing? Not really. When you think about it, several interest factors were actually at play.

First, imagine I was giving the watercolors away free. Most houses (though maybe not 100 percent) would surely have taken one. We all like amusing pictures, and you can usually find a space somewhere; failing that, they make handy presents.

Second, £1.50 (or £5 in today’s terms) is a good deal for a cute, framed “original.” And everyone’s interested in a good deal. So having butted in on my customer’s morning, I wasn’t exactly making difficult demands.

Third, you can bet that not far below the surface of most housewives’ thoughts was the notion of dishing out an ear-bending (good-natured or not) for some household misdemeanor or other. My watercolors fitted the bill as an indirect, tongue-in-cheek means of chastisement.

So when you think about it, my customer already was interested. She just didn’t know it when I pressed the doorbell. But a combination of my short sales spiel and sight of the clearly price-marked pictures soon did the trick – her ready interest became activated.

Interest equals *persuadability*

So the customer your marketing can have most impact on is the one who is “just looking.” They might be interested-but-wavering, or they might be interested-but-not-thinking-about-it-at-the-moment. And this poses a conundrum.

If you are marketing on a medium to large scale, you will be aware that your message is going to reach a much wider audience – people who are not “just looking.” People who are not even interested. They’re “just

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passing” (or rather, your marketing is just passing them) and they’re never going to buy from you. They’ll probably ignore your message.

There are obviously many options available for selective targeting, which is beyond the scope of this book. But targeting notwithstanding, marketers must accept that to reach customers en masse is inevitably akin to the proverbial blunderbuss: Collateral communication happens. So the trick is to aim for the bull’s-eye.

Indeed, think about this piece of logic. Since every product is mainly bought by an entrenched minority (the loyal 20 percent who account for 80 percent of your sales), if you go out to market looking for new customers you take on an entrenched majority (the sum of everybody else’s entrenched minorities). What looks like a seething mass of waving wallets is actually as impregnable, hard-nosed, thick-skinned, blinkered an audience as you’d have the misfortune to meet.

So don’t feel obliged to entertain them. Don’t play to the world. Stick to your guns: Write for your interested customer. To paraphrase Claude Hopkins: “It’s sales you want, not applause.”⁶

Steps you can take

Appeal to interest groups

“I could get more customers if only they’d give me a chance and listen to my message.” (We’ve all said it.) I think it applies to every firm, business, product, and service.

But customers are just too busy and overloaded to try new things all the time. And, as I noted earlier, many products are simply not important enough to warrant a significant investment of “cognitive resources.” If you work in fast-moving consumer goods (fmcg), you’ll know all about this.

Fmccg brand managers spend much of their time organizing sales promotions in an effort to break the habits of their (not-very-interested-but-persuadable) customers. Aside from price cutting (which has wide customer interest but is proven to have no effect on long-term brand

loyalty⁷), the main tactic used is what you might call an appeal to an interest group within the market.

When I was about 12 years old I won a bike in a competition. (It was one of those “chopper” contraptions – presented by Jimmy Hill, no less – which I confess I immediately swapped for a racer.) The promotion was organized by the Burton Stores Group, and my mum came home with the entry leaflet after buying me a new anorak or something. I had to select the “Best Current British Soccer Team” to match Jimmy Hill’s choice. (I remember there was Moore at the back, Best, Law, and Charlton up front... and of course Banks in goal.)

Football and anoraks, then – no connection. (Unless you count the times my anorak served as a goalpost.) Yet clear proof to me that an *unrelated* interest can play a role in the selling process. My mum thought (correctly) that I’d be interested in the soccer promotion.

Thus you will find all manner of ostensibly unconnected offers plastered across the packs of many products in the supermarket (and elsewhere). Win a sports car. Win a cruise. Win tickets to the World Cup. Free trips to a theme park. Free cinema tickets. Free compilation CDs. 2-for-1 flights. 2-for-1 hotel accommodation. 2-for-1 meals.

Do these “bolt-on” offers work?

Answer: They can do. I’ll talk more in Step 7 about what really makes an offer effective, but here I’d like to consider the interest factor.

Obviously, the idea of a bolt-on sales promotion is to get people who weren’t about to buy a product to do so (whether they have been previous purchasers or not). Otherwise, it would be a waste of money. The theory goes that if you choose a reward that interests a segment of potential customers, they’ll try your brand for the sake of the offer. If they like your product (or are reminded that it does a good job), hopefully they’ll stick with it.

For the launch of the *101 Dalmatians* movie featuring Glenn Close, we set up a cross-promotion between Disney and Andrex. If you bought a nine-pack of Andrex you could get a free kid’s ticket, no strings attached, no parent needed; just cut it out from the back of the pack and go straight to the cinema. (We heard of whole classes of kids going with their teacher

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for their Christmas outings.) This promotion won an Institute of Sales Promotion award. As the record shows, target household penetration of the nine-pack increased by a whopping 27 percent during the campaign period, and the movie took £5m more in the UK than expected.⁸

Was there an interest factor at work? I'm sure there was. While it's hard to tease out the effect of the value of the offer, there's no denying that you have to be in a special-interest group (i.e. roughly in possession of kids) to benefit from it.

Of course, the added beauty of a campaign like this one was that it effectively brought the brand's advertising into the grocery store and other environments. I'm sure you've made the connection between the two varieties of puppies – but you might be surprised to know that this was the first time (after 25 years) that the Andrex puppy had appeared on the packaging. Now it's a fixture. So it should be, when research has shown that even simple cues to advertising placed at the point of purchase can increase sales by as much as 15 percent.⁹

In my experience, a well-executed and properly funded bolt-on offer can pay for itself. Almost certainly it will have a greater marginal effect than spending the equivalent marketing budget on an extra sliver of advertising. For an extraordinary response, however, it helps if the offer refers back to the brand.

For instance, Reebok has been a long-term sponsor of soccer's flying winger Ryan Giggs. He has featured not only in television advertising, but also in a number of promotional offers (such as the chance to win Giggs-autographed Reebok merchandise).

Clearly, for the Reebok customer, ranking high among the benefits might be those qualities enhanced (e.g. product performance) or even endowed (e.g. peer-group status) by Ryan Giggs. Thus the promotional offer becomes virtually inseparable from the overall marketing proposition.

Effectiveness? We ran a retail campaign through JJB Sports stores called "Play Giggs in a Cage." Customers were invited to try out a pair of Reebok boots – actually kicking a football in a special protective cage – for the chance to play one-to-one with Giggs in the final. Stores sold out of Reeboks and the promotion won three ISP awards.¹⁰

PLAY
ONE TO ONE
with
Reebok
and
RYAN GIGGS
exclusively
at
JJB
SPORTS

Try on any Reebok product
and enter a draw to WIN
a training session with
Ryan Giggs.

CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES 31.03.06. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY.
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Figure 55 Appealing to an interest group. An award-winning campaign exploiting Reebok's long-term sponsorship of Ryan Giggs. Reproduced by kind permission of Reebok UK.

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Obviously, a celebrity's influence can only extend so far. Reebok sells to many people who wouldn't recognize Ryan Giggs, and it also sells lots of gear that has nothing to do with football. But for the soccer interest group, he plays a blinder.

Put the interest group first

The decision to target an interest group with a bolt-on offer raises an important question: How much message space should it get? My answer – if you're doing it properly – is the *max*.

If you believe in your offer, and have made a significant investment, you should treat it as the most important benefit. Thus your offer must be given primacy throughout your marketing communication. (If you pay lip service to an offer, why bother?)

This means building the offer into your thinking right from the moment you put pen to layout pad.

Navigation, ease, wording, and attention should all be focused on delivering communication of the offer: what it's about, how it's easy, why it's great.

From that reassuringly measurable world of direct marketing, John Watson is adamant that

Figure 56 Received wisdom says lead with your offer. You should expect at least to double your response rate. Reproduced by kind permission of Condé Nast Publications.

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the offer must take over from what he calls the “marketing proposition,” such is the power of a properly used incentive. This means in the headline, the copy, the art direction, and the format. In Watson’s experience, an incentive will commonly double response rates, and often achieve increases of 500 percent or more.¹¹

Real vs bolt-on

For every product there is a spectrum of customers who are already interested. Thankfully, for many, the real “marketing proposition” is sufficient. For some waverers, a brand-related theme like those I have described helps to secure the sale. And for others it’s all about getting a free gizmo or widget, and to hell with the brand. (Theirs is mercenary carrot interest only.)

As Hoover’s painful free-flights promotions demonstrated, customers are always interested if there’s a big enough carrot. But big carrots are rarely sustainable. Your decision is much more likely to be about the extent to which you employ the middle way, i.e. the brand-related offer.

My advice is don’t be shy of it. Sometimes you just know you should be communicating, but struggle to find something new to say. A well-thought-through promotional campaign may be the answer you seek.

It could even grow to into a significant branch of your communication strategy, like the Kleenex “survival” campaign we originated in 1990, which for well over a decade has been a biannual mainstay of news for the brand, targeting significant and relevant interest groups of hay-fever or cold and flu sufferers. Now it is a mature and valuable brand property.

Help interested customers in distress

You’re probably familiar with the expression “distress purchase.” Traditionally it’s associated with products like car tires, paracetamol, and condoms. But I think it goes much wider than that, and offers a valuable insight for the marketer seeking new customers.

Indeed, many products and services share the “distress” characteristics of *infrequent* and largely *reluctant* purchase. They also share the problem of

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getting their customers already interested, especially at the level of brand-name recognition.

If you're a plumber, roofer, insurer, lawyer, maker of cough mixture or shoelaces or umbrellas or newborn-baby products or half a hundred other things, you must be familiar with this dilemma. When "distress" flashes up in your customer's mind, how do you make them be specifically interested in you? (And *already* interested?)

The facts say you won't sell to someone who isn't interested, yet you can't find anyone who *is*! Beforehand, nobody wants to listen. Hm...

Should you devote resources to what big-budget advertisers call "maintaining brand awareness"? How much should you spend to implant your name (and benefits) into the mind of your customer? To what lengths should you go to insert practical reminders into their life, for that rainy day?

If you're a plumber, every house in your district is a potential customer. But apart from a general clue like cold weather, it's almost impossible to predict which ones will need you at any given time. And how will they know to call *you*?

In my street of old terraced houses we have a guy called Bob the Painter. He doesn't live here, but he works here (full time, it seems). And while decorating is not ostensibly a distress purchase, there's a lesson in his method.

Bob is a smoker and a chatterbox. He takes his regular coffee breaks sitting on the front wall of whichever property he's currently beautifying. Sooner or later you bump into Bob... and sooner or later you book him. (Feeling grateful that he's free in only 15 weeks' time.)

A subsequent word-of-mouth check will confirm that he's good value and top quality – if you haven't already employed him (as most locals, of course, already have).

In fact, booking Bob has close parallels to a distress purchase. One day you make up your mind a room is looking tired, or maybe you notice that the outside window frames are peeling alarmingly. Then what?

Your infrequency of purchase of decorators means there's no ready solution. So you put off taking action. But now you're aware of it, the prob-

lem grows – by the minute the decor seems more dingy and the paintwork more flaky.

Then you spot Bob’s car with his tell-tale ladders. “Ah,” you think, “I could ask Bob.” Next you spy him talking to a neighbor – aargh, *they* might be booking him! Off you sprint.

When it comes to distress purchase, your key role is to understand where your customer is, and what your customer does, when “distress” happens. Then you must adapt your marketing communications to match. In Bob’s case, all he has to do is literally sit on the fence, in a paint-spattered overall. (And he knows this, because I’ve asked him.)

The man in black

The lion’s share of Milk Tray sales take place in December. At the time I worked on the brand, it was big enough to merit substantial television advertising – I’m sure you’ll remember the “Man in Black,” a James Bond-like character who annually risked life and limb to deliver the chocolates to the boudoir of a mystery female.

Cadbury’s distress strategy was quite simple. In October amass stocks and displays in the retail trade. In November kick off the advertising. In December... sit back and wait.

It was rather like fishing for salmon. The salmon only appear at certain times of the year and in certain conditions. This customer “run” meant marketing resources could be synchronized to achieve a cost-effective outcome. And it was effective. While Milk Tray as a product was not specifically targeted at male buyers, unlike virtually all other boxed assortments at that time the majority of purchases were made by men, to give to women. Notorious last-minute shoppers, blokes found a perfect ally in the brand: a relatively inexpensive yet indulgent gift, which the advertising helpfully positioned as a symbol of love that the giver has gone to great lengths to impart.

So Cadbury’s solution was indeed to create an army of short-term but already-interested customers, through a focused mass-media message aimed at a distinct and distressed interest group.

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Smooth operators

A car is an infrequent and largely reluctant purchase. So how about motor dealers? No longer can they rely on the seasonality provided by the old August registration system. But even for the largest of dealerships, to maintain a high level of brand awareness throughout the year via television advertising is cost prohibitive.

Posters and press are more economical, but these obviously have a limited effect on the non-interested customer, who simply won't engage. Television is more effective at making people engage, but at risk of them enjoying the ad rather than absorbing anything useful about "future benefits." This is a further conundrum faced by marketers of many distress-purchase products and services: inherently, they tend to be uninteresting and often related to negative experiences.

So motor dealers have opted for a communication strategy with two main strands.

The first is to get in your face. Through sheer convenience and visibility, they improve their chances of capitalizing on distress interest. Notice they are rarely sited on quiet back streets, and are always very heavily branded, with plenty of flags and bunting and gleaming models on roadside display.

Secondly, they assume that every week, lots of customers pick up the local paper in problem-solving mode. So every week in the motor section you'll find a big ad directed at the interested customer – someone who needs a replacement car right now. That means full specifications, prices, offers, and guarantees.

Indeed, you won't find many ads for motor dealers that play to the world, trying to create a nice branded feel that anyone can enjoy. They rightly have little interest in the uninterested.

Act local

OK then, what if you're a plumber? What should you do if you can't afford to use the big boys' high-intensity, high-cost techniques? Answer: Copy their strategies on your own scale.

4 YEARS % FINANCE AND IT'S ONLY £100 DEPOSIT

W VW BORA 1.6 S

£38 PER WEEK



2 doors, power windows, electric side mirror, central door lock, ABS, power steering, alloy wheels, automatic gear, multi-point seatbelts, immobiliser, central locking, 50,000 miles, 3 year warranty.

95 VW POLO 1.6 GL 5 DR

£17 PER WEEK



5 door hatchback, power windows, electric side mirror, ABS, power steering, alloy wheels, automatic gear, multi-point seatbelts, immobiliser, central locking, 50,000 miles, 3 year warranty.

03 NISSAN MIRA 1.0 S

£23 PER WEEK



5 door hatchback, alloy wheels, power windows, electric side mirror, ABS, power steering, alloy wheels, automatic gear, multi-point seatbelts, immobiliser, central locking, 50,000 miles, 3 year warranty.

02/02 VW PASSAT 2.0 S

£15,170 PER WEEK

£9988



power steering, electric door windows, remote locking with alarm and immobiliser, climate control, ABS, multifunctional computer.

02 VW PASSAT 2.0 4/07/01 £10,130 AVAILABLE FROM £11,380

02/03 VOLKSWAGEN JETTA 1.8 CLTD

£9688



power steering, electric door windows, remote locking, ABS, alloy wheels.

02 FIVE STAR 1.2 16V ACTIVE 5 DR

£7488



ABS, electric door windows, remote locking, ABS, alloy wheels, remote locking, alloy wheels, 4 star rating, alloy wheels, alloy wheels.

03 FIAT TEMpra 1.1 COLOUR COLLECTION

£6888



abs, alloy wheels, 5 star rating, remote locking, alloy wheels, alloy wheels.

NEW ARRIVAL LIST

- 1. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
- 2. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
- 3. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
- 4. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
- 5. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
- 6. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
- 7. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
- 8. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
- 9. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
- 10. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
- 11. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
- 12. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
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- 15. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
- 16. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
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- 18. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
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- 25. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500
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- 60. Vauxhall Astra G 1.6i 16V... £4,500



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BRANCHES THROUGHOUT SCOTLAND



FINANCE AND IT'S ONLY £100 DEPOSIT. FINANCE AND IT'S ONLY £100 DEPOSIT. FINANCE AND IT'S ONLY £100 DEPOSIT.

Figure 57 Ready and waiting for the interested customer. Reproduced by kind permission of Arnold Clark Automobiles Ltd.

DOES YOUR MARKETING SELL?

If I were a plumber and had worked out my “patch,” I think I’d first try to get an idea of which were the more productive localities. For instance, this might be areas of large, old housing where people can afford to employ tradesmen and where decrepit systems are forever springing leaks. (If I were just starting out I’d spend time on the streets looking for the highest concentrations of fellow tradesmen’s vans.) Then I’d focus my marketing communications on these neighborhoods.

The Cadbury approach, fish when the salmon run, is perfectly valid given the seasonality of real emergency plumbing. Get some leaflets printed in advance and watch the weather forecast. The Met Office has a good record of forecasting cold spells, so you can time your deliveries to coincide with the flood of burst pipes and leaky radiators.

Then there’s the automotive “visibility” tactic. This is basically what Bob the Painter employs when he hangs out in the ‘hood with his Nescafé and Woodbines. His distinctive car does the same job in between times. A tidily liveried van is a good asset: I’d put my full marketing communication on mine – not just a phone number, but reasons why my customer should call too.

Next there’s the “80:20” phenomenon. Like Bob, you can build up a circle of “regulars” by making sure it’s you they’re interested in next time the need arises. Bob’s presence in the street serves as a timely aide memoire. This is more tricky if you’re a plumber – you need a larger number of customers, over a wider area. But you can legitimately place strategic reminders where you’ve done a good job: a guarantee sticker or tag on the boiler or pipes you’ve mended (with your contact details, and perhaps the offer of a free 12-monthly service check). How about a handy LCD thermometer for your customer’s noticeboard? At the very least a leaflet and business card in case your customer actually has a filing system, and perhaps a couple of stickers for their phone book.

Yellow Pages obviously plays a role here, too. But a first glance at Plumbers for my area reveals some 350 entries. It’s a jungle out there. This is where a relevant and memorable brand name and visual icon for your business will help.

This seems such common sense, yet in my *Yellow Pages* over 85 percent of all plumbing firms are called after a person’s name or a place, or are just

initials. For instance, in quick succession there's PG Plumbing, PK Plumbing, and P&W Plumbing. A year on, how would a customer possibly remember which one they'd used previously?

Your interested customer needs to be flooded with reminders, not left to flounder helplessly as their memory ebbs away. (Today's buzzphrase for this ancient and obvious sales principle is CRM, or customer relationship management.)

Fill memory gaps

Curiously maintaining the plumbing theme, I think the same marketing communications problem faces the makers of loo blocks. (I mean the giant tablets you drop into the cistern to make the water blue.) How does the customer know which one they're interested in when the color begins to fade?

If you shop for these things, you'll probably know what I'm on about. Some of them last for ages, others seem to dissolve in a few days. But once you've removed and binned the packaging (as you have to do, to use the product), which one was it? I counted more than 10 brands in my local Tesco. Most people can't name the Chancellor of the Exchequer, so surely it's naive to think they'll devote much memory capacity to something equally uninteresting. Worse still, the longer the loo block lasts, the less likely the customer is to remember which brand. How ironic.

If I had a superior-performing product in this market, I think I'd increase my price by a penny and include a modest coupon off next purchase within the wrapper (solely to act as a branded reminder).

On a similar note, why don't the makers of loo rolls and kitchen towels print their brand name or an image from their advertising on the "core" — the cardboard tube that's left at the end of the roll? We ran one promotional campaign that involved placing winning stickers on the cores; as well as a reminder, I think this would be an ideal couponing method to get customers to trade up from smaller pack sizes.

How many brands spend a fortune cultivating interested customers and then let them slip from their grasp before they buy again? A lot, I'm sure. One of the great irritations as a Milk Tray brand manager was reading

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research reports telling me that one in four viewers thought my television commercials were for arch-enemy Black Magic.

At the end of each Milk Tray ad, the Man in Black always left his calling card (with just his silhouette) on top of the box. I'd had some of these printed for a trade promotion, and they were great fun to give out with the product. With hindsight, I think we could have made much more use of them at the point of purchase.

Virgin shoppers

The saying goes you can always remember the first time. So do you remember the first time you went grocery shopping? I mean shopping for real: to stock up *your own* fridge and larder and cupboard under the sink?

Every year in Britain about 200,000 new homes are built and occupied, there are 300,000 marriages, 750,000 teenagers come of age, and over 3 million people move house. The government estimates that by 2010 40 percent of homes will have just one occupant, many of them novices in the supermarket and DIY store.¹²

I'm surprised more firms don't have a special subplan to target virgin shoppers. Every brand or product or service needs a healthy flow of new customers (the grim reaper alone removes 1 percent of the population each year, and it soon begins to add up). Why not address this issue as a key component of the marketing strategy?

Question: When is your product most interesting to your customer?

Answer: When it's new. And no matter how old your brand, it's always new to a first-time buyer.

Sure, there are some products — like Heinz Tomato Ketchup — your customer's grown up with, packaging and all. But most fall into the loo-block category. For the majority of things your customer first buys as an adult, their contact will have been minimal. At best they'll have seen some advertising, which they'll largely have watched for entertainment value. (And no harm done, in creating a positive predisposition in the minds of future customers.)



Figure 58 Bountiful: experts at targeting first-time buyers in the maternity and baby care market. Reproduced by kind permission of Bounty (UK) Ltd.

One of the few sectors that takes this opportunity really seriously is that for baby products. Mums-to-be are systematically bombarded with free samples and coupons and information. But in every market there must be a steady stream of first-time buyers, unprejudiced, inquisitive, welcoming, just waiting to be made already interested.

And first-timers can pop up in all sorts of unexpected ways. For instance, when I was a lowly salesman I was lucky enough to be allowed to handle one of the regional key accounts: Leicester Co-op. This sounds like a shop, but was in fact Leicestershire Co-operative Society head office, where the buying took place for the entire county, and sometimes for other affiliated societies too. They could order titanic quantities.

Calling there was rather like taking part in a Dickensian drama. The buying office was reached via echoing stone staircases. You had to wait

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your turn shivering in a marble anteroom. Finally, a barked order: “Come!”

The buyer – Mr Walker – eyes bulging at your impudence for entering, scowled Squeers-like across a desk akin to the great oak deck of a schooner, in a room the size of a small dancehall. By the time you’d traversed the vast floor, you were convinced you were about to get the cane.

I’m being serious!

Getting a proposition approved for a product to be featured on a special promotion was not easy. Mr Walker rejected proposals on principle. It was a case of “over my dead body.” Strictly speaking Leicester Co-op was my boss’s account, but you can see why he let me look after it. (His excuse was that it was good for my development.)

Then one day – unbeknown to me – Mr Walker retired. Instead of the usual gruff summons, a much younger man actually came and opened the door, and introduced himself as Trevor, the new buyer. He said it was his first day, and even held out my chair for me. In a bit of a daze, I blundered on with my planned presentation.

Of course, my “pitch” was designed for Mr Walker. I’d learned that the best technique was just to keep throwing mud at the wall, and hope that tiny blobs occasionally stuck. So I went through my welter of promotion proposals... and Trevor promptly accepted the lot! I got just about *every one* of my company’s key products featured during the next quarter.

When I phoned my boss that night (no mobiles in those days, remember) he did a lap of honor round his garden before coming back to the phone. I think we won every incentive going that quarter. And all because I found a virgin shopper.

I assume that morning Trevor had sat down to the realization that he needed a promotion program – and fast. Thanks to lucky timing, I managed to pile my goods into his hitherto empty shopping trolley. This is a business-to-business example, but I’d be willing to bet that whatever your line, there are first-time buyers to be found. And often, they’re more obvious than meets the eye.

A friend of mine runs a management consultancy that specializes in providing human resources training to the public sector. He meticulously

studies the job ads in the national press. When he comes across a vacancy for someone who would be his customer (for instance director of personnel), he dials to contact the organization in four months' time — when the new manager is likely to be taking up the position and looking to make their mark.

At a more parochial level, a similar opportunity exists to find first-time buyers (in some cases literally so): in the conspicuous form of the real-estate "For Sale" sign. What a boon to the painter and decorator, landscape gardener, electrician, or plumber. A readymade mailing list of eager newcomers looking for local suppliers of domestic services. All it takes is a small investment in time, touring the neighborhood once a month and noting down addresses. Within a few weeks, most homes will be reoccupied by people keen to start making improvements.

If you're in alcohol or soft-drinks marketing, the chances are your brand share will soon wilt without a flow of new customers. In my experience most companies focus their research and marketing efforts on non-buyers who match *current* buyers — I think this could be a mistake. I'd be monitoring prospective new entrants long before they reach my age band, to understand the impact of my communications on them in creating ready interest.

If you're a charity, you need to capture first-time customers before your competitors do. Why? Because there's no more virtuous way of turning down a request for another donation than when you know you're already doing your bit. A long-term commitment to a particular charity gives you an exemption from all others; it's like being able to say "Got one, thanks" to a *Big Issue* vendor.

If you work in local or regional tourism, think about virgin holiday-makers: they've never visited your area before, yet are keen to spend money if only they know what to do. Some of the hotels in your area know who they are and when they're coming. A simple promotional partnership could benefit both of your businesses.

If you're thinking of setting up a shirt-ironing enterprise, you could seek out single males. Target your leaflets at modern flats and bedsits where the newly divorced or newly fledged come to rest. (You may also locate girlfriends who don't want to iron.)

DOES YOUR MARKETING SELL?

Poke about in a store like Currys or Comet and you'll notice that sample packs of Ariel have been quietly placed inside many of the washing machines. It's an obvious tactic, but few firms have the tenacity to turn it into a strategy. Perhaps it's got something to do with the short spin cycle of the product manager's job.

Humush for gardens

If you receive an envelope with the message "Fantastic Offer Enclosed" or "Important News Inside" or – worse – no message at all, you'll know by now what to think. This mailing could be about anything, for anybody. Here's a marketer playing to the world.

That most mailing lists *mainly* consist of uninterested customers (whose attention you would classify as random and irrelevant) is not a reason to direct your message at them. Remember – collateral communication happens. It would be a case of the tail wagging the dog.

Admittedly, it's often a very large tail wagging a very small dog, but that is just a fact of life when you use mass-media techniques to reach your customer. The limitations of targeting methods should not divert you from addressing your customer in a focused manner. Which means – in direct mail – starting with the envelope.



Figure 59 Addressing the already-interested customer. (Note, no offer required.)
Reproduced by kind permission of Next Retail Ltd.

Drayton Bird cites an instance in which the simple addition of the product name and its function (“Humush for gardens”) caused a 32 percent uplift in sales, followed by a further 27 percent rise when the incentive copy was also printed on the envelope.¹³ When you think about it, mundane as “Humush for gardens” is, it immediately deals with navigation and flags up the subject matter for the interested customer. The incentive then begins to cultivate their active attention.

John Watson believes the most powerful way of using an envelope is to feature the incentive on it in full color. He says this consistently works best, whereas there have been cases of non-offer or non-incentive messages actually *decreasing* response.¹⁴ Clearly, a message for a message’s sake is not the answer — it must have the qualities of a good headline.

If you are a copywriter, or you are creating a mailing for your own business, spend half of your writing time on the overall proposition. Treat the envelope message like you would the headline in a press ad. Do it first, not last as an afterthought.

While there may be good reasons why you might on occasion have to send out a blank envelope, cost and time need not be among them. Why not? Because you can always use a window envelope.

As you must have noticed from your own correspondence, the modestly typed phrase Private & Confidential above your name and address is all it takes to make a significant impact. Even a standard-sized window in a stock C5 envelope (C5 fits an A4 page folded in half) allows plenty of extra space to laser in a message with your offer. We successfully used this unassuming technique for a year-long mailing program for Velvet bathroom tissue, and achieved a cumulative response of 41 percent. Content always beats form.

In business-to-business direct marketing, in particular, displaying your benefits upfront on the envelope is vital. Business people, by virtue of subscribing to trade publications, get lots of inappropriate mail. Binning becomes habitual. When in-tray and wastebasket are just a sweep of the arm apart, you can’t risk waiting until your mailing is opened for your message to strike home.

I once ran a split-test mailing for a fast-fit company. It was aimed at getting small and medium-sized firms to sign up for a business account for

DOES YOUR MARKETING SELL?

new tires and exhausts. We hired in lists and sent half of the mailings to named contacts (in most cases the managing director or owner), while the other half were simply addressed to “The Fleet Manager.”

The fleet-manager cell pulled more than *double* the response of the named-contact cell. (Explain that one!)

It’s easy when you think about it. A named contact was in fact a shot in the dark – a guess that they dealt with vehicles. But when an envelope arrived addressed to the fleet manager, the person who sorted the mail simply passed it on to the manager responsible for the firm’s cars and vans... an interested customer (and in most cases *not* the boss).

Apply this simple principle and you could save money. In many cases I believe it’s more cost-efficient to send a single mailshot to a job title (like “incentives buyer”) or to a section (like “promotions department”) than to try to chase after individuals who’ve often long changed their jobs. Out-of-date commercial mailings – particularly those addressed to several ex-employees in the same company – are en route to the recycling skip the moment they leave your postroom.

And on this note, a further thought about the gatekeeper. If you send business-to-business direct mail, do you know what percentage gets opened in advance by a secretary or PA? Do you know on an individual customer basis?

This is easy to find out, yet few marketers bother. An understanding of the mail-handling process is vital (we’re back to location dynamics). How can you construct an effective proposition without knowing which pieces of it will reach your customer, and in what order and condition?

Say your firm provides consultancy for managing directors in how to save money by cutting staff. Would you put this message on the envelope? Surely not without a clear idea of how the mail is handled. (What chance of it reaching your intended customer?)

And you should apply the same kind of thinking in a consumer context. Direct marketer George Smith reckons the average front door is 30 seconds from the bin. If your intended recipient doesn’t pick up the mail, what chance of it beating the gatekeeper?

The first job for your envelope is to break through and engage with your interested customer – or their proxy. Bland platitudes and blatant

hyperbole won't wash. For your mailing to avoid the wastebasket it must act like your best salesperson.

I just received a heavy, smart-looking letter with these words on the envelope: "Attractive benefits for busy directors." (I only retrieved it from the bin so I'd remember to mention it.)

Renowned copywriter Robert W Bly urges the marketer to start with "an irresistible message that compels the reader to open the envelope."¹⁵ I agree. However, he goes on to advocate a blank envelope if the former is not possible. The idea is to "resemble personal mail" that the recipient will open, just to be sure. I disagree. If you've got nothing to say on the outside, you've got nothing to sell on the inside. Instead, spend your marketing budget on improving your product.

When the editor of *Who's Mailing What* analysed the 100 most successful mailings in the US, over 70 percent of them had envelope messages.¹⁶

Spam¹⁷

What can we learn from spam? I'd say a simple and universal lesson. Spam emphasizes the link between navigation and the interested customer.

A recent report indicated that spam already accounts for a hefty 40 percent of all emails.¹⁸ Anti-spam groups claim that staff spend more than 10 percent of each working day dealing with junk emails. (Now there's a cost saving in waiting.) Apparently creatives in advertising agencies are the worst culprits.

A quick glance at my mailbox just now revealed a whole shelf of spam, including (verbatim): "ianmoore itis identical to the" from Evelina Morreale and "Get rid of it" (thanks, I shall) from Rachel. Typos and mumbo-jumbo from senders I've never heard of. When I last got back from a few days away I had 95 messages, of which 88 were spam. Why would I waste time on these? (Never mind the risk of viruses.)

If you think about an email that you would open, it will probably have one of two characteristics: either you recognize the sender, or you understand what it's about. Maybe both. (If neither, you'd probably just delete it.)

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I don't need to spell out the rules here for addressing emails effectively, but what strikes me is the parallel for other media. By the minute, the new media spammers are training your customer to be more ruthless with your old media marketing communications: with your mailings and door-drops, with your ads placed in their favorite magazine or television program, and with any other spam-alike messages you care to send him. (The latest Mori survey suggests about a third of direct mail is binned unopened.¹⁹)

Pure spam is a navigation anathema. Envisage how summarily your customer will dismiss it, and apply that same concern across all of your marketing outputs, virtual or actual.

Remember, you can only realistically sell to an interested customer. Tell them what to do or think about, or at least identify yourself to them. To avoid deletion, think navigation.

Beware of the newsletter

I have a folder bulging with first editions of company newsletters that I've received over the years. The *second* editions...? Many of them just never happened.

So if you get the urge to produce one, I'd advise you to think twice. Statistically, it may not be a good investment. And there's a lesson for websites in this regard, too.

In my experience, firms decide to publish a customer newsletter when certain events occur. These include: a new boss takes the helm (usually managing director or marketing director); there's a reorganization (or a merger or takeover); the firm has a rebranding exercise (whether or not related to the former); or several marketing initiatives coincide (and it feels like there are too many messages for the customer to absorb separately).

All of these events (and others like them) are short-term occurrences. There's the problem. A newsletter is a long-term commitment.

When the time comes for the unfortunate junior marketer to whom the project has been delegated to produce the second edition, there's precious little to say. The *news* is no more. The initial wave of enthusiasm was just that – a wave. (And now a wave goodbye would be the best tactic.)

STEP 5: INTEREST

But if you do carry on, there's an even more fundamental difficulty. Your customer isn't that interested. Fascinating as you think your story is, your customer is busy and your news is low down on their list of priorities.

I used to work with a guy who would insist on giving you uninvited lectures about how good his clothes were. It's not only rather bizarre, but also plain ignorant and, of course, you start taking evasive action when you spot people like this heading down the corridor toward you. As Claude Hopkins wrote, the two greatest faults in advertising lie in boasts and selfishness.²⁰ To my eyes, many company newsletters fall into this trap: "Look how wonderful our clothes are!" There's no reference to the poor customer; babble is thrust on them in a manner that will surely seem boring and rude.

However, unrequested newsletters *can* work. For over three years we published an internal newsletter for a division of Royal & SunAlliance. It was called *Centre Circle* and was the size of a tabloid newspaper, printed in black and white with the odd spot of blue. The "customer" was the employee, of which there were about 500 populating huge open-plan offices in Oldham.

I have to say, it was one of the more remarkable marketing communication experiences to stand on the buzzing and bustling office floor at the moment *Centre Circle* was distributed to everybody's desks. Suddenly... stillness. (It was like a scene from *The Office*.) For a few minutes the only sound was the gentle rustle of crisp, new pages being turned. Then gradually there would be the odd shriek of embarrassment or hoot of laughter. Next, phones would start ringing and little crowds would gather as people began to exchange their findings. Soon the whole place would be filled with lively banter. It was a great exercise in corporate-scale teambuilding.

Why did *Centre Circle* work when most unsolicited newsletters fail? I'm sure you know what I'm going to tell you. It was jam-packed to bursting with news about and (especially) photographs of the employees themselves. Yes, there was some company propaganda too, but it was couched in the same 'team-goes-forward' manner, and limited to about a quarter of the content.

The bulk of the publication was given over to reporting on company nights out (*especially* company nights out), sports teams (and their rather

DOES YOUR MARKETING SELL?

INSIDE
NAME THE BABY-FACE
WIN AN AUTOFOCUS CAMERA!



PLUS
KARTING: SPECIAL REPORT



PLUS
FIND THE CIRCLE!
WIN A KODAK PANORAMIC ONE-USE CAMERA

Simply find the circle (like this!) hidden in the next somewhere in this issue. First person to claim (call Linda Baker) will 100% win the camera!



MARCH 1991

Issue Price

The Journal for the Staff of Sun Alliance UK Member Division

A programme for continuous improvement

QUALITY INITIATIVE: FOUNDATIONS IN PLACE

"We will grow a distinctive business – the best in the market."

A major quality initiative is well under way at Sun Alliance, the UK member division of Sun Life of Canada. The initiative is a programme of continuous improvement.

The Sun Alliance Quality Initiative (SQI) is a programme of continuous improvement that will ensure that the company's products and services are of the highest quality. The programme is based on the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) and is designed to ensure that the company's products and services are of the highest quality.

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Xmas Party... the pictures!

Asian Affair

FINANCIAL in Singapore and Asia are growing fast. The region is attracting investment and business. The region is attracting investment and business. The region is attracting investment and business.

The region is attracting investment and business. The region is attracting investment and business. The region is attracting investment and business.

The region is attracting investment and business. The region is attracting investment and business. The region is attracting investment and business.

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5% off any brochure holiday booked by telephone
185
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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: LIFE OF THE ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE - CHRISTMAS WITH THE HOMELESS - PANTOMIME REPORT - DISNEY HOLIDAY - BOBBY TOUR



Figure 60 Centre Circle: a rare corporate newsletter that really worked, and made it past its first edition. Reproduced by kind permission of Royal & SunAlliance.

NOA Newsletter

Norfolk Ornithologists' Association
Spring 2003

Spring Roundup 2003

March proved interesting with an early spell of dry warm weather in the third week producing many early first dates for spring migrants. At Holme 11 Stonechat were along the track on the 8th and a Tree Sparrow on the 23rd was very unusual. Winter visitors were still present with Snow Bunting, Shorelark and Twite regular until mid-month at least. Black Redstart were noted on the 18th and 28th. A Ring Ouzel was the first for the year on the reserve on the 24th. Sea-watching produced 6 Long-tailed Duck (8th), 4 Red-throated Diver (5th), up to 20 Red-breasted Merganser (7th) and two Gannet (15th). At Redwell the long-staying American Wigeon continued to show well daily until the 12th, and a flock of up to 50 Twite were seen regularly until the 17th. White Wagtail and Garganey quickly followed, however, and a significant passage of Meadow Pipits took place throughout the month with over 150 on the 31st. Sand Martin was first recorded on the 24th, and an Avocet was feeding on the scrape on the 26th. Widesay was graced by a singing Cetti's Warbler from the 16th, a Red Kite which flew over on the 24th was a bonus. Waders included Spotted Redshank (8th), Little Ringed Plover (11th), and up to seven Ruff (11th).

continued on page 2

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Spring, as always, is a time of major change and excitement in the bird community – summer visitors arrive whilst the last of our winter visitors depart. This time of year also brings first young birds into view – Mallard, Moorhen and later Blackbird, Robin and Starling – all a little earlier this year. Thanks to the spell of warm dry weather, whilst many other species are busy establishing territories, nest building, laying and incubating. Hopefully, the damp and cold weather of the early summer last year will not be repeated this year and the birds will have a successful breeding season.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, our previous treasurer has resigned but, fortunately, we have been able to recruit a new treasurer who brings with him a long term professional background in accounting. The maintenance of the membership details is now being handled very successfully and efficiently in house.

The preliminary findings of the questionnaire sent to members in the last newsletter are briefly analysed on the back page. Please read these important results and any further comments would be most welcome. Please address these to the chairman. The council earnestly wishes to continue this critical two-way communication process with the membership.

I must mention the forthcoming cricket match – please attend if you can and support the NOA team in this major event in the sporting calendar. Any potential players please contact Jed at the Observatory. The association is holding another moth night this year – please see the article on page three for further information.

It would be very gratifying if members were able to support the sponsored birdwatch, either by running their own sponsored event or by subscribing to Chris Mills effort, and please consider contributing to our new adopt-a-net programme, more details of which can be found on page three. I would be totally failing in my duty as chairman if I did not trust that each and every member returned their raffle tickets (and asked for more) thus boosting the association's finances whilst standing a good chance of winning a very worthwhile prize!

Mike Reed
Chairman

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- 1 Chairman's report
- 2 Reserves roundup continued
- 2 What a Tangled Web
- 2 Hempton Progress Report
- 3 Charity Begins at Holme – Events & Fundraising news
- 4 Questionnaire Results

Figure 61 Content always beats form. In a 2003 survey of its members, The Norfolk Ornithologists' Association found that its modest quarterly newsletter was read in full by an impressive 86 percent of respondents. Reproduced by kind permission of The NOA.

DOES YOUR MARKETING SELL?

alarming tours), charity events, unusual hobbies and achievements, staff promotions and awards, and anything else that enabled us to cover as many people as possible and make them local heroes.

The budget didn't run to a full-time (or even part-time) photographer, so much of the visual content was supplied by the staff themselves. The quality of pictures was terrible! But that didn't matter: content always beats form.

Centre Circle worked because it was about its customers.

If my tale of the perils of the newsletter is ringing a few bells, what about your website? Is it little more than an unsolicited electronic newsletter, first edition? Is it about you, or your customer?

Always remember, marketing communications are something your customer routinely rejects, not seeks out. And if, on arrival, all they get is a lecture about *your* clothes, it should be no surprise when they sidle quietly away.

INTEREST — SEVEN TOP TIPS

- 1 Write for the interested customer.
- 2 Don't play to the world.
- 3 Appeal to interest groups.
- 4 Anticipate distress behavior patterns.
- 5 Plant reminders to activate interest.
- 6 Seek out first-time buyers.
- 7 Think navigation.

KEY QUESTION

"Am I treating my customer as if they're already interested?"