

# 10 tips for more effective marketing communications

A guide for marketers



**“Good marketing makes  
the company look smart.  
Great marketing makes  
the customer feel smart.”**

Joe Chernov



Throughout many years of running creative studios of all sizes, I've seen a lot of different marketing communications. Some were incredibly customer-focused and powerful. Others needed a little help, either with the message or polishing the visuals.

Sometimes a quick tweak was all that was needed to bring it into line. Other times a wider creative concept was required.

Throughout all of this it was clear that for some businesses, a little external perspective was useful in making the most of their marketing activity.

This guide is intended to share some of my knowledge and experience via a few quick tips to help marketing teams deliver better communications to their customers.

I hope it's useful!

**Ian Woodley**  
Director, Astound Studio

# 1

## Consistency

Brands have to work across lots of different channels and customer touchpoints: websites, social media, video, expo displays, sales presentations and so on.

Consistency is one of the keys to building brand awareness.

From the obvious areas such as logos, fonts and colours (more on this later) to deeper considerations such as the tone of voice used in your messaging, it's important to have a clear idea of how you want your audience to see your brand.

We've all experienced a presentation where the position of a logo jumps around from slide to slide, or when lots of different fonts are used without consideration. This all builds a picture of a confusing brand, which is harder to trust.

Simple brand guidelines can help. Even a PDF detailing some basic rules can be a handy guide for your team and external partners to follow.

The result is a degree of uniformity across your marketing activity which strengthens the brand and helps position you as an authority.



# 2

## Less is more

We consume a huge amount of content every day.

It's easy to try and put too much information into those slidedecks, leaflets or display panels. Resisting this temptation and cutting down the volume will make your messaging clearer, simpler and more easily digested.

Keeping things visual is a good option: the human brain processes images 60,000 times faster than text, and 80% of people remember what they see but only 20% of what they read.

As an example, we recently transformed a cluttered slidedeck into a narrated video sequence – removing around 75% of the content in the process. The result was much clearer message delivery with an improved attention span.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, one of the most influential architects of the 20th Century and a pioneer of the Modern minimalist style, coined the phrase 'less is more' – an approach which was evident through all his work.

It's a personal mantra which flows through my work every day.



# 3

## Consider colour spaces

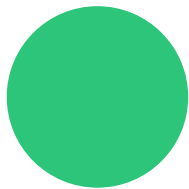
It's important to have consistent brand colours across all your communications, in both print (e.g. leaflets, pull-up banners) and digital spaces (e.g. website, social media, video).

The way you specify colours is different for print and digital. That's because print is a subtractive process (getting darker as we add ink), and digital is an additive process (getting lighter as we add light wavelengths).

The print process specifies colours in a CMYK format (referencing the Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black ink sequence), whereas digital uses an RGB (Red, Green, Blue) format or a shorthand Hex code.

Be aware that some colours (such as certain blues or reds) can vary dramatically between print and digital colour spaces, so it's important to have appropriate master colour values to ensure brand consistency.

As an example here's a colour from our own brand palette, and the colour breakdowns we use for both print (CMYK) and digital (RGB or Hex) use.



Astound Green

C:	70	R:	44
M:	0	G:	197
Y:	75	B:	122
K:	0	Hex:	2cc57a

# 4

## Stage the delivery

How many times have you sat in a presentation, only to see a slide full of bullet points, images and text – all on the screen at the same time?

It's hard to digest multiple messages all at once – the brain (well, mine at least) can't handle it.

Your audience has to work a lot harder to read the content, and link the different messages together. Plus, you have no control on the order in which they read everything.

I recommend thinking about the order you present your content, and delivering it in phases so each part is understood in isolation before moving onto the next.

Even subtle pauses in delivery can make a big difference.

For a presentation this can be easily done in PowerPoint by setting up simple animations to control content through a series of clicks. That way, your audience will have the headspace to actually listen to what you are saying, rather than work through all the content on screen.

Your audience will thank you for it.

# 5

## Go with the flow

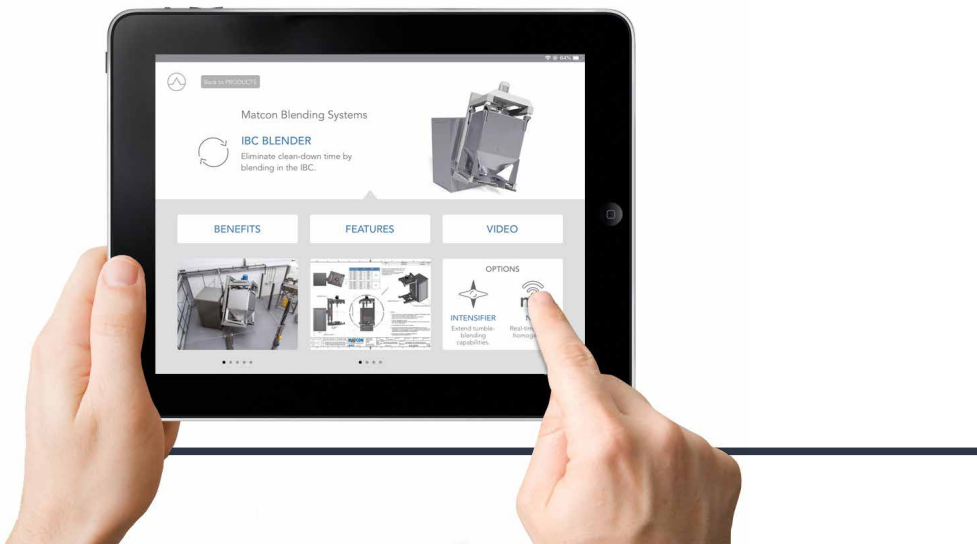
An extension to the concept of staging the delivery is to structure your presentation so you can move easily between sections instead of just in a linear movement.

This enables you to be agile in a meeting, flexing the direction of the presentation according to the conversation – reacting to their needs and delivering bespoke content as required.

Buttons in your documents can link to different sections, so you can group Company, Products or Case Study content together for ease of navigation.

Or go a step further with a truly interactive experience where a simplified layout hides a wealth of content ‘behind the scenes’, using tap-points to deliver media such as animated graphics and video.

It’s a powerful option which delivers a really engaging and memorable customer experience.



# 6

## Ditch the defaults

File > New Document.

You start typing. It's in Calibri. Or Arial.

Have you stopped to think how this font aligns with your brand personality?

There are some simple things you can do to make your communications a little more unique to your business: choosing the right font, thinking about the size and layout of the type (maybe even have some text on a angle, or vertical), or whether you can crop an image in a different way?

Minor tweaks such as these help define your brand and how it is presented, helping you to stand out and be recognisable.

Because you don't want to look the same as everyone else, do you?



# 7

## What's the outcome?

Writing good marketing copy is hard.

It's easy to focus on listing features and benefits, but what are the outcomes for the customer? Key messaging should be focused around outcomes, not features.

Customers want to buy the outcome of your product or service, not anything else.

There are three different types of outcome:

What do your customers want? (the emotional need)

What do they need? (the end result)

What does your solution deliver? (how it achieves the result)

If you can build a solution around their wants and needs, then the selling process becomes much easier.

Keep it simple. The easier it is to understand, the more effective it will be.

Remember, it's not about you. It's all about them.

# 8

## Animation grabs attention

As an audience we are increasingly demanding on the slickness of content we want to digest.

Relying on static imagery risks not fully communicating the value you deliver.

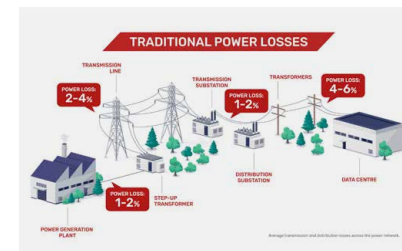
Adding animation to your communications brings them to life, delivers real visual impact and increases customer understanding.

This is where no.2 (Less is more) and no.4 (Stage the delivery) come together: simplifying complex information into easily-digested content.

Processes come alive with animated infographics. Motion graphics can show technical product operation, or highlight internal technology with exploded views.

On a simpler level, an animated gif is easy to produce and provides a powerful way of linking multiple messages together in a dynamic way for social media or websites.

Think about putting some motion into your messaging!



# 9

## It's showtime!

Exhibiting at an expo event can be a high-profile way to establish your industry credibility and engage directly with a relevant (and interested) audience.

It can be expensive though, so do your research to understand which events are best for you to be seen at.

Once committed, ensure all your communications and stand graphics are consistent, and explore different ways of grabbing the attention of passers-by.

Wall-mounted screens provide a cost-effective medium for video or animated presentations – but do simplify any content so it's easily and quickly understood.

Don't underestimate the power of traditional printed literature. In a digital world, a cleverly-designed hand-out finds its place on a desk long after a website bookmark has been lost.



# 10

## Think different

It was a great campaign for Apple, and it can work well for you too.

Sometimes we get so channeled in everyday activity that it's helpful to pause and explore other options.

Fresh ways of thinking. Areas you might not have thought about before. Ideas that have worked for other businesses that could help you.

Where could that take you?

Getting some external perspective or involving wider team members can quickly provide plenty of inspiration and ideas to take forward in your future marketing comms activity.

You may have an event coming up which requires a fresh approach, or a product launch which needs impact.

Time to maximise those opportunities.

So put the kettle on, round up some colleagues or trusted advisors, and brainstorm a few ideas.

**#BeBusinessBold**



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