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**Climb that  
marketing  
mountain  
with ease!**

**commsPLUS**<sup>®</sup>  
Making complex information appear simple

# *Introduction*

Jackie Barrie founded Comms Plus in 2001. It's a writing and design business that specialises in making complex information appear simple.

A trained journalist, her marketing experience comes from over 20 years in the industry spanning copywriting, graphic design, print, web design, sales promotion, brand identity and much, much more!

Preparing your own marketing communications can be daunting, especially for new businesses, so we've prepared these few simple steps to get you started.

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"Sometimes a business is judged even more by what they do when things go wrong than by what they do when things go right. The first print of our newsletter had a problem with the logo, part of which was missing for a complicated technical reason. Jackie made sure we had logo labels in time for day one of the exhibition they were intended for, and had the job reprinted at no extra cost in time for day two."

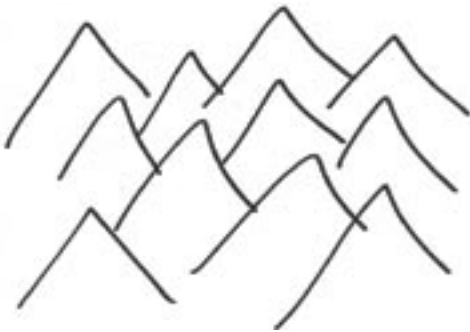
**Sally Hull, Croydon Contract Leasing**

# *A story*

I once heard of a man who was lucky enough to be able to travel the world and see everything he'd ever wanted to see. One of the places he'd always wanted to see was Mount Everest. So he made all the arrangements, flew out there, looked out of his hotel window, and what do you think he saw?

No. It was dark, he didn't see anything. So he went to bed, woke up in the morning, all excited, threw open the curtains and what do you think he saw?

It was something like this:



He wanted to see Mount Everest, but Mount Everest is in the Himalayas! It's a mountain range! Everest might be the biggest mountain in the world but it's surrounded by other mountains which all look the same!

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"The leaflet is proving its worth, generating quite a few enquiries. Put your advert in the Kingston Guardian. Response has been great. Very I really appreciate your prompt and efficient service.

**Lesley Milton, Dyslexia@Bay**

Was it that one, which may be nearer and smaller? Or that one, which may be further away but bigger?

He couldn't tell. And he came away disappointed by the experience.

Another place he'd always wanted to see was Ayers Rock, or Uluru, in Australia.

So he made the arrangements, flew out there, and what do you think he saw?

It was something like this:



You see, Uluru is one big rock in the middle of a flat desert! There is nothing around to distract from it! And he came away feeling much more impressed by the experience, even though Uluru is much, much smaller than Mount Everest.

So what's the moral of this story?

You have less than 15 seconds to grab someone's attention. So you want to stand out from the rest, like Uluru, not blend in with everyone else, like Everest.

**YOU HAVE TO BE DIFFERENT!**

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"This is FABULOUS! You couldn't have matched what I had in my mind more perfectly. Thank you so much for what you have done regarding the web-site. I have had such wonderful feedback from your wonderful creation."

**Sue Cook, Charlie's Nail Academy**

# Meet Aida

So how do you make your marketing communications stand out? There is a classic abbreviation, known as AIDA. It stands for:

**A**ttention

**I**nterest

**D**esire

**A**ction

Here's an example:



This leaflet came through my door along with a lot of other stuff, but it is a cut-out shape, not rectangular like all the rest. It caught my **attention**. I saw that it featured a black cab and a mobile phone. I sometimes use black cabs, and I have a mobile phone, so it captured my **interest**. Then I read on to find that if you phone Zingo from your mobile, they immediately send the nearest black cab to pick you up. That might actually be useful to me so it created **desire**. And finally it has a big phone number and two cut-out-and-keep business cards, so it prompts me to take **action**.

Think of it this way. You can grab **attention** by being **unique**. Create **interest** by highlighting the customer's **problem**. Generate **desire** by giving a **solution** to that problem. And then provide a **process** for the customer to take **action**.

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"The general 'feel' is terrific and the writing is, of course, great. Well done indeed. It's a great job and I really like it."

**Paul Bradforth, photographer and web designer**

# Brand identity

So what tools have you got already? Let's look at the customer's experience of your brand.



Among other things, customers judge you by your:

- Marketing material
- Web-site
- Corporate stationery
- Advertising
- PR
- Telephone experience
- Product/service experience
- Word of mouth
- History
- Exhibition stand

You probably use a combination of these and they all impact the way your customer sees you. It's best if all those elements are consistent for style, quality and tone of voice. If they are, that is your starting point for uniqueness.

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"Presentation is important even at this early stage. The headed notepaper compliments the mailshot perfectly. I would like to thank you for some excellent work and in covering it off before your vacation."

**Mike Hill, Business Development Rentals**

# USP

You need to stand out from your competitors so there is another classic marketing abbreviation, USP:

**Unique  
Selling  
Proposition**

Let's try an exercise to see if we can identify yours. Before you read the next page, write down the top three reasons why your customers buy from you instead of from your competitors.

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"You are absolutely AMAZING! I cannot believe it. I want to fly over now to give a big appreciative hug. You are simply the best. I will frame this letter as a great example of what's possible for all of us."

**Jazz Singh, Wings4U2fly**

Here are some of the reasons that people commonly choose:

- Affordable price
- High quality
- Excellent service
- Expert knowledge
- Convenient location
- Empowered staff
- Value for money
- Saves money
- Saves time
- Saves hassle

Now we probably all think we provide all of those things so they are not exactly unique! So now you have to choose the top three from this list or add your own ideas, and write one each on three separate pieces of paper.

Look at your three pieces of paper, choose one, screw the paper up and throw it away!

Bet you can guess what's coming next! Choose another one, screw the paper up and throw it away!

You're left with just one reason why your customers buy from you, which might just be your USP. If nothing else, you have at least a one-in-three chance that you've chosen something different from your competitors, and so your marketing can focus on just that one thing.

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"Damned you are good. Well done. It's when I see work like this that I know you are worth your weight in gold."

**Pankaj Patel, Croydon Zone**

# *Lateral thinking*

So how do you come up with an idea that lives up to your brand standard and promotes your USP?

You need to think creatively. Before you check out the answer on the next page, let me show you what I mean.

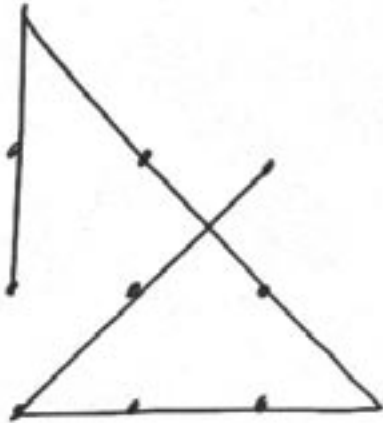
Draw three parallel rows of three dots. Your task is to join the dots together in four straight lines without taking your pen off the paper, going through each dot once and once only.



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"It looks quite simple and flows so a 4-year-old can read it and understand."

**Bridget Johnson-Mosanya, Go Global Healthcare**



This exercise is the origin of the expression 'to think outside the box', so don't give yourself imaginary constraints about what you can do with your marketing!

**Contact Comms Plus for help with your marketing communications and lots more creative ideas.**

*Good luck!*

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"We get a fantastic response to our newsletters and think they really stand out from others that we see. Customers and prospects love the look of them and we receive enquiries from both about the featured products and services."

**Ashley Blackmore, Sterling Syncordia**

**Newsletters  
Copywriting  
Web design  
Proof-reading  
Events**

**Other tips booklets include:**

- 10 top tips for effective networking
- Checklist for events that go with a bang!
  - 8 guaranteed ice-breakers
  - Ssh! Discover the secrets of successful communication

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