the four Ps

or how to follow an outdated marketing concept that will ruin your organisation

the Cilla Black of marketing strategy
The "marketing mix" as coined by Neil Borden in 1949:

“When building a marketing program to fit the needs of his firm, the marketing manager has to weigh the behavioral forces and then juggle marketing elements in his mix with a keen eye on the resources with which he has to work."

The most common variables used in constructing a marketing mix were outlined by Jerome McCarthy:

**Product** - Product range, mix, features, quality  
**Price** - Discounts, pricing strategies, credit policy  
**Promotion** - Advertising, public relations, sales promotion, personal selling, publicity  
**Place** – Distribution channels, stock levels, delivery
According to Kotler and others the mix is a set of:

"controllable tactical marketing tools... that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market."

product – the top banana?
Kotler and McCarthy argued that product was the starting point for developing and implementing marketing strategy:

"Anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that might satisfy a want or need. It includes physical objects, services, persons, places, organisations and ideas."
price – the Madonna principle
promotion – does push work anymore?
place – what does this mean?
insight – a job for nosey parkers

- **INSIGHT** is the power to discern the true nature of your existing or future customers
- A profile of your customers including their economic, social, demographic and psychological characteristics and their behaviours, whims and preferences
- Response to a variety of media – magazines, tv, radio, posters, text messaging etc.
- Develop groupings (or segments) of types of customers who have common needs and will respond similarly to marketing messages
- Insight gives strong clues to the motives behind their actions, the best media to choose and helps predict reactions to marketing activity

insight – options

**Minted** - full segmentation analysis performed by a marketing research agency

**Skinted** – in-house research of your own customers and staff
solution development – more
Eureka moments please

• SOLUTION DEVELOPMENT is the act of revising existing, or creating new, products, services or experiences that solve customer problems
• Solution development falls into two distinct halves
• First, is the scientific analytical ability to recognise and carefully define gaps, problems and difficulties for potential and existing business customers, using strongly evidenced based observations, market trends and part of the insight research
• The second is to be outrageously creative to develop innovative service and product solutions to problems
• The two approaches must go hand-in-hand if innovation is to be commercially successful

solution development – options

Minted – extreme user and trends reporting performed by an external agency

Skinted – in-house research into each using your own customers and staff
awareness – sorting the men from the boys

- AWARENESS is raising the profile of the organisation as a whole, through advertising and promotional activity, or by highlighting expertise in key areas in which you are confident enough to commentate.

- Awareness is primarily a mass marketing activity which traditionally uses multi-million pound marketing budgets particularly in fast moving consumer goods.

- But it can be achieved through viral marketing or smart media relations activity in the public, charity, business to business or service arena . . .

. . . through the utilisation of internal expert commentators.

awareness – options

Minted – fully co-ordinated advertising and PR campaign using blanket mass media.

Skinted – PR or viral campaign only, done in-house or using a small/medium sized agency.
information gathering – fishing not hunting

- INFORMATION GATHERING is providing honest information in the right format, language and terms for them, so they can seek it out when they're ready.
- Expert mining of the insight research and a true understanding of the customer, are the foundations of getting in front of them without being intrusive.
- Creating messages that capitalise on that knowledge, and choosing media channels to achieve stand out with subtlety and authority, is a critical marketing skill.
- The conclusion of the information gathering stage, should allow the potential customer, to begin the process of assessment of your offer compared to others.

Information gathering – options

**Minted** – all singing and dancing website backed up by glossy literature

**Skinted** – the same as above, but really examining cost-effective options
assessment – baaa is humbug

- **ASSESSMENT** is where the potential customer works out the value of the product or service proposition put to them.
- Peripheral offerings (add-ons, the sales person, the surroundings) are a key factor in the assessment decision.
- Potential customers work out the value of a product or service based on worth, usefulness, desirability, suitability and importance.
- They want to compare and differentiate it from similar offerings and work out the total sacrifice they will need to make in order to acquire it.
- They want reassurance they're making the right choice, and could be looking for an opportunity for individualisation, or at least the recognition that they are an individual.

assessment – options

**Minted** – use an agency to mystery shop all the areas that a customer will interact with – what they see, what they hear.

**Skinted** – as above but use staff or friends instead.
handover – do what it says on the tin

• **HANDOVER** is when the potential customer has become a firm buyer, and takes possession of what you do
• Great handover leads to the most persuasive form of marketing – word of mouth
• Yet despite this nirvana of marketing success, handover is the most neglected part of the marketing process
• It’s hard to get right because it involves convenient access, ready availability, customer service and complaint resolution
• The most important people in your business are those that directly interface with the customer
• If this part of the process is ignored the marketing budget, research, solution development and brand building are completely wasted and your reputation is in tatters.

handover – options

**Minted** – pay for a specialist to run customer service training throughout the company

**Skinted** – get all your customer facing teams together, and work out how you will jointly improve customer service
isaiah

a quick review

isaiah logic

• You need to ensure your marketing ‘function’ doesn’t fob you off by pretending marketing is an inscrutable ‘art, delivered by PR luvvies or fluffy creatives who have brainstorming sessions
• Never be duped into believing that the success of marketing is measured by ‘awareness’ alone
• If anyone describes marketing campaigns as being divided into “sizzle and sausage”, they should be beaten with a stick
• It is everyone’s responsibility to deliver on marketing, including the finance department, because it isn’t a stand alone function it’s about customers – which is why we have our jobs in the first place
• You should be examining in detail what your organisation is doing about the following . . .
isaiah logic

- **Insight** - do you understand everything about your competitors, your target market and your customers?
- **Solution development** – are you sure you have the right products, services or programmes that solve your customers problems, now and in the future?
- **Awareness** – do you ‘stand out’ against the competition and the white noise of general advertising and publicity?
- **Information gathering** – do you provide potential customers with the information they want, in the format and style they want, using permission marketing?
- **Assessment** – how do your customers really perceive your organisation, not just your product or offering?
- **Handover** – do you deliver great customer service which ensures repeat business and a wonderful reputation?