

YOUR

INSURANCE

MARKETING

WAKE-UP

CALL



cata*sult*[®]

INTRODUCTION

What follows in this booklet should provide a wake-up call for insurers, insurance providers and brokers, with regard to their approach to insurance marketing.

In the midst of the cost of living crisis and in a time of soaring insurance premiums, the team here at Catapult PR - an insurance PR and content specialist - commissioned independent consumer research to discover what consumers really think.

As a result, we have discovered a significant communications gap between the insurance sector and its customers. We can go so far as to say that this is potentially damaging the insurance industry.

At a time when consumers are feeling less in love with their insurers and brokers than ever, the sector is doing little to engage them, talk to them and increase their understanding of the products they are, or should be, buying.

Having handled insurance PR both in-house and in previous agencies, as well as for 25 years at Catapult PR, we are somewhat shocked to see what appears to be insurance marketing going backwards. 25 years ago, we were producing strategies to communicate both directly with the consumer and with media titles that they read. Such approaches seem to have been completely dropped or ignored in the digital age. The consumer is noticing.

Our message to those who are providing insurance products or services - personal lines or commercial - is to up your game with your B2C communications, or risk alienating your target audiences completely, as times get tougher.

Even if your audience is primarily B2B, you need to communicate in a more vibrant style, to get your message across, if you wish to differentiate

your brand and be heard and noticed. Business contacts should actually be viewed as your 'consumers'.

Stop looking inwards and start reaching outwards. Banish the grey and get creative! Be personable and talk in a language that everyone understands. The opportunity to steal a march on your competitors is there, if you get it right.

THE BACKDROP

Our survey, conducted through Censuswide, firstly examined the consumer mood with regard to insurance. Bearing in mind the hard market and the cost of living crisis, not to mention inflationary pressures on insurance premiums, this seemed the right place to start.

We firstly asked consumers whether premium increases were making them feel less positive towards their insurer this year. Less than one-in-five (**just 17%**) said 'no'.

Contrast this to more than **four-in-ten** consumers (**41%**) who say they do feel less positive towards insurers now than they did a year ago. Note also that **14%** are most definitely less enamoured than they were 12 months ago. There is also a floating **42%** for whom the jury is currently out – worrying if you are in this sector.

More men (**44%**) than women (**38%**) feel this way. The viewpoint of certain age groups also needs to be considered, to ensure that accurate communications can be constructed. Nearly half (**47%**) of 18-24s and 25-34-year-olds view their insurer less positively than was the case 12 months ago and the percentage is only slightly less in the 46-54-year age group (**46%**).

The region that has become most negative is Northern Ireland (**57%** of people feel less positive towards their insurers). This is followed by the North East (**47%**).

INSURANCE PREMIUM

BROKER BEWARE

The consumers who have had a positivity drop-off with regard to how they view their insurance provider, were shown to be in the following city locations:

Belfast (57%)
Bristol (52%)
Manchester (50%)

Here, brokers may need to work harder to keep customers on-side.

MARKETING TIPS

Put together a marketing strategy that will allow you to communicate with customers and ensure they understand why premiums have risen.

Make sure your communications – as well as your service proposition – add value, so that consumers do not merely view you as providers of premiums. If they do, you will be solely judged on the premium you quote.

CUTTING BACK



BROKER BEWARE

The following city locations have higher than average numbers of consumers who are planning to cancel insurances this year:

Southampton (36%)
Cardiff (33%)
Liverpool (30%)
London (30%)

We also wanted to examine what the impacts of insurers not delivering the right communication to customers at this vital time might be. Would many consumers be tempted to cut back on their insurance, to save money?

More than a quarter (26%) told us that they will be cancelling some insurance policies this year, to save money. Of these, 9% strongly agreed that this would be the case. Only 37% said they would not be cutting back, leaving another 37% undecided.

Most likely to be making cuts are men (32%), people aged 25-34 (41%) and 18-24 (40%) and people living in Greater London (34%) and Wales (31%).

Only a fifth of women (20%) said they would definitely be cancelling policies, along with just 15% of over-55s and 12% of those in Yorkshire and Humberside. However, it is probably the large number of those who have not yet decided one way or another that insurers need to have on their radar.

The communication here needs to be high impact and understandable. Consumers need to recognise the risks of under-insurance, or relinquishing insurances which are in place for a reason. They should also be made fully aware of legal obligations with regard to compulsory insurances.

MARKETING TIPS

There is a strong education piece to be done here but do ensure you carry this out in the right way. Simply assuming the persona of a headteacher within your communications is not going to win people over or persuade them to stick with their insurance.

Get creative in how you explain the need for insurance, so it becomes a more engaging process for the consumer, with messaging that sticks.



SERVICE

DISENGAGEMENT

Four-in-ten consumers (40%) say they are “sick” of the service provided by remote insurance call centres – a strong statement that should set alarm bells ringing. Of these, 16% strongly agree that this is the case.

This powerful rejection of faceless service is something that the insurance sector needs to tackle, particularly as another **41%** of consumers cannot definitely say they disagree with this sentiment. **Only 15%** are apparently happy with the service being provided.

Men (**43%**) are less happy with the service being provided than women (**37%**). Surprisingly, perhaps, the 18-24 age group tolerates remote call centre service least of all, with **49%** ‘sick’ of it.

Alarmingly, the figures rise to **60%** of consumers in the North East. In Wales, **46%** are tired of call centre service and it’s a **third** of those in the South East (**33%**).

This should put brokers on alert, as it’s a real opportunity. If you can deliver a better, more personable and local service than a call centre – and raise awareness of how you do that in a powerful and effective way - you could start to win disaffected consumers back. The insurance tide may well be turning back towards in-community delivery, so be ready to capitalise on that, by developing the right marketing strategies.

⚠️ BROKER ALERT

The following city locations have the greatest number of consumers who are sick of remote call centre service provision on the part of insurance providers:

- Newcastle (57%)**
- Belfast (54%)**
- Manchester (47%)**

This should be a real call to action for brokers in these areas in particular, but the general rejection of call centre service nationwide offers opportunities for all brokers, wherever you are based.

✅ MARKETING TIPS

Faceless call centres need to not only improve their call queueing times and service provision but also work on their communications. Not engaging consumers, by creating regular communication touchpoints, and merely hoping they will somehow want to follow you on social media, is leaving you judged solely on the touchpoints they have to create with you. This is at the times when they need help and just find themselves stuck in a queue, or sitting with an unanswered email on their desktop.

It should be a case of ‘carpe diem’ for brokers. Be bold in your marketing, create campaigns that will allow your brokerage to stand out in your local area or niche and ‘think’ CSR and community involvement. These strategies are what the consumer is crying out for.

MARKETING

TACTICS

1. Scaremongering and brand

43% of consumers feel that insurers and insurance providers are good at negative marketing based around scaremongering but not good at creating positive marketing initiatives that make their brand likeable. More men than women again agree with this and the age group that is most critical are younger people (18-24s), where 48% are of this opinion.

In the North East, this rises to 53%, whilst half of the people in Northern Ireland feel this way, along with 48% in Yorkshire and Humberside. The least critical region was the West Midlands (36%).

BROKER BEWARE

The following city locations are those in which consumers would particularly appreciate a warmer brand approach and less scaremongering, when it comes to insurance.

Leeds (51%)
Norwich (51%)
Newcastle (50%)

MARKETING TIPS

Use less scaremongering in your communications and engage the consumer with more positive insurance stories. Make your brand more likeable by adopting a good, positive tone of voice, across all of your communications. Present yourself as a company that cares and one with which people will want to do business.



MARKETING TACTICS

2. Getting the message across

Only **16%** of consumers said they felt insurance companies do enough to explain their policies in a way that they understand. **46%** said they definitely do not.

Interestingly, **50%** of women felt that not enough was being done to add clarity, as opposed to **41%** of men. Here, it was the older age groups that seemed most at sea with the way their insurance provider explained covers, with poor explanation being the gripe of **52%** of 45-54s and **48%** of over-55s.

There were big regional differences too. In Northern Ireland, **64%** of consumers do not feel insurers do enough to explain their policies. The same is true of **52%** of consumers in Wales, half (**50%**) in the North East and **49%** in the South East. The region in which there is the least criticism is Scotland, where the percentage wanting better explanations is **38%**.

BROKER BEWARE

The following city locations are those in which consumers are most critical of the clarity of insurance advice received:

- Belfast (64%)**
- Cardiff (58%)**
- Southampton (56%)**

Of course, if you can provide the clarity, it's a great way to attract and keep clients.

MARKETING TIPS

Adopt a very human approach to communication, making it relevant to everyday living and scenarios. Make sure you also tailor your messaging to different segments and demographics, rather than trying to push a one-size-fits-all, generic message to everyone you wish to speak to. Develop specific campaigns for the consumers most needing to be better informed, which address their specific lifestyle and wants and needs, and you should get much better results.

MARKETING

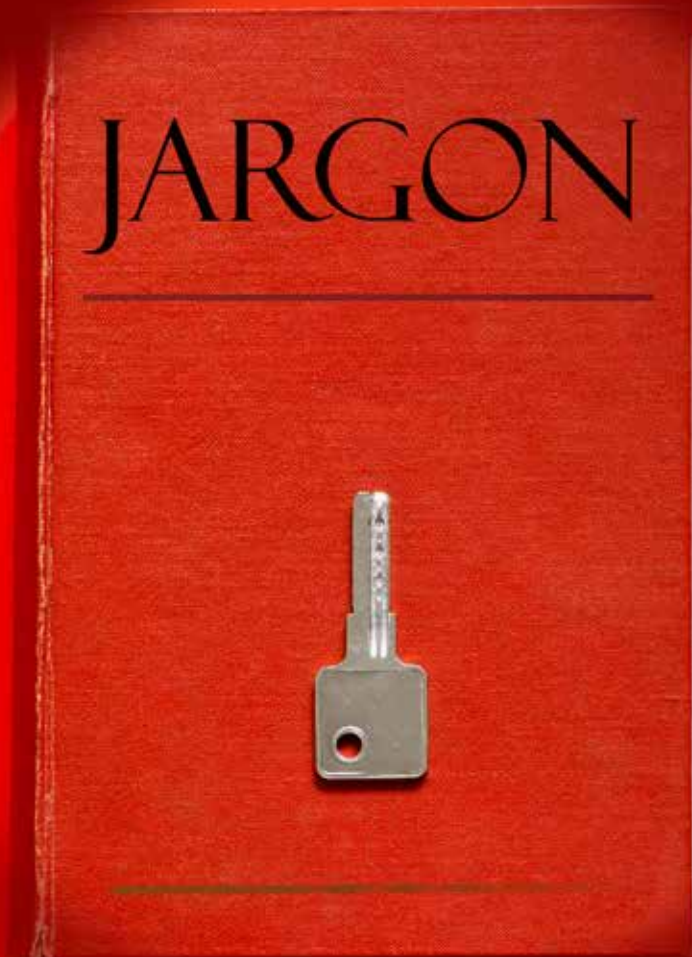
TACTICS

3. Too much jargon

Despite the many years of the Plain English campaign, it was somewhat depressing to learn that **55%** of consumers feel that insurance companies have too much jargon in their communications (even in online materials). Of these, more than **one-in-five (22%)**, firmly believes this is the case.

Women again were more forceful about this point, with **58%** calling out the jargon. **60%** of both 45-54-year-olds and the over-55s feel there it too much insurance terminology used.

Some regions also stand out in pushing against the jargon infusing insurer communications. In Northern Ireland, a whopping **75%** don't appreciate it. Other regions believing jargon infused too much communication are: North East (**67%**); Wales (**60%**), Scotland (**58%**) and Yorkshire and Humberside (**58%**). Greater London and the NW were the least critical about this but, even there, nearly half of consumers (**47%**) believe the words used in insurer communications are far too often 'industry speak'.



BROKER BEWARE

The following city locations are those in which consumers are most likely to push against insurance jargon and view it in a negative light.

Belfast (75%)
Cardiff (70%)
Norwich (66%)
Newcastle (64%)

MARKETING TIPS

Step into the shoes of your target consumers by creating distinct avatars of who they are, what they read and what they do. Make sure you communicate to each one in a language they understand, remembering that the golden rule is often said to be to talk to everyone as if they were readers of The Sun newspaper. Don't assume any knowledge. Ask yourself whether a layman could understand every term that you use in your communication, or whether you've actually written everything as if you were talking to an insurance colleague.

MARKETING

TACTICS

4. Out of sight and out of mind

Nearly half of consumers (46%) believe that insurance companies and providers make too little effort to engage with them all year round. Only 16% disagree with this, with another 38% undecided.

The figure reflects the opinion of both men and women. It is even more the belief of those aged 45 to 54, where 50% feel this way. That is also the percentage in Wales.

Most likely to feel the lack of engagement, however, are those in Northern Ireland (71%) and those in the North East and East of England (52%). Feeling most positive about insurer, insurance company and broker engagement strategies are those in Greater London (37%).

⚠️ BROKER BEWARE

The following city locations are those in which consumers feel that their insurance providers do not do enough to engage with them all year round.

Belfast (71%)
Bristol (56%)
Cardiff (55%)
Southampton (53%)

✓ MARKETING TIPS

In the days before digital, Catapult PR would regularly produce newsletters for its insurance clients, which were of general interest, featuring a broad range of topics and offering added value articles. Ask yourself what was wrong with this? Why have digital e-newsletters become all about the sell? Do they even get opened? Why can't customers be digitally provided with more than a sales script?

It's probably time for you to sit down with a year planner and plot when you will communicate with your existing and potential customers. Then decide how. Work hard on the content and reject the salesy approach.

Be critical about social media. It might be 'out there' but is it adding any value for your customers and targets? Is it resulting in any engagement or two-way communication? Probably not, because people don't go to social media to hear about insurance products or listen to insurance company shouting. They want added value and entertainment.

So, what can you do to shake up your communications strategy and what tactics might work? It's time to put a good plan together.

MARKETING

TACTICS

5. Communicating on a sales-only basis

If you are still mulling over the last point and wonder why you should bother to increase your communications output to customers and targets, take this on board. **60%** of British consumers (and **64%** of women) feel that insurance providers only bother to communicate with them when they want to sell something or get them to renew. Only **10%** disagree that this is the case. There's a bit of a sense of being 'used'.

All of the touchpoints that excellent non-digital comms strategies used to have embedded within a marketing plan, seem to have gone out of the window in many insurance businesses. External communication seems to have become the poor relation within marketing activity and yet consumers are the reason businesses exist! Something is very wrong.

Things seem even worse in some parts of the country, where the idea that communication only ever arrives when the insurance party wants something

is held by **73%** (nearly three-quarters) of those in the North East, **68%** of people in Northern Ireland, **66%** of those in the East of England, **64%** of people in Yorkshire and Humberside and **62%** of Welsh consumers.

65% of over-55s and **62%** of 45-54-year-olds feel the same way... but perhaps they remember an age in which insurance providers bothered to engage and even try to entertain and add value with their communications?

⚠️ BROKER BEWARE

The following city locations are those in which most consumers feel communications from insurance providers only ever arrive when they want something.

Cardiff (70%)
Newcastle (70%)
Belfast (68%)
Leeds (67%)

✓ MARKETING TIPS

Be more sharing and engaging with your communications. Don't just talk to customers when you want something; reach out and speak to them continually, trying to build two-way conversations or generate calls to action. Remember that you can also speak to them through an intermediary – like a journalist – so do not ignore your media relations work.

By allowing them to get to like and trust your brand, you are far more likely to bring them into the fold when they are ready to buy.

Stop being cynical and sales-led with your digital communications. It is not doing you any favours. If you want to stand apart, plan a communications strategy that will make sales comms just a small part of your output. Base the rest of your comms on educating, entertaining and building a sense of you being part of your target or customer's community. When it comes to sales communications, seek to inspire sales rather than push them.



I AM NOT A NUMBER

MARKETING TACTICS

6. Blogs and downloads

Only **12%** of consumers interviewed felt that insurance providers had no need to create more downloadable or online content which explains the need for policies and protection in the context of day-to-day situations. **46%** feel they do.

Here, at Catapult PR, we call this day-to-day context the 'human voice'. We are often regarded as experts in helping to make insurance real for people and, to be frank, far less boring. We have long projected the human voice into media communications. These days we often also allow it to infuse online news articles, blogs and content downloads.

48% of men believe insurance providers need to do more to make their online content relevant, as do **43%** of women. Doing this also ticks the box of **58%** of 18-24s and **55%** of those in the North East.

Our observation of the insurance sector is that too little attention seems to be paid to the news areas of insurance providers' websites, with

the power of blogs, which provide human interest rather than just talking about the company, being very underestimated. Their ability to also contribute to website rankings is greatly unappreciated.

Whilst we know that compliance departments can be strict, insurance providers need to break through this barrier and recognise they are a business and a business needs to talk to its customers in their language, not in legal speak or by filling every piece of comms with footnotes and provisos. Unless the insurance industry can get their head around this compromise, the danger is that consumers will become more and more alienated.

Completely ignoring the need for powerful online content is a way to shoot yourself in the foot, if you rely on a website to bring customers to your door, in part or in whole. Google wishes to see more, high-value online content, because it knows that this is what consumer want to consume. There's a big lesson to be learned there. It is now also penalising those who do not provide such content

or who stuff their online pages with keywords. Do you really want your site to be pushed down the rankings, simply because you do not have the right content available?

BROKER BEWARE

The following city locations are those in which consumers feel there is just too little effort put into digital content and downloads that could help them understand why insurance is key.

Norwich (58%)
Edinburgh (56%)
Bristol (56%)
Leeds (55%)

MARKETING TIPS

Stop making your marketing all about you and create the type of content that your customers and targets actually want. Banish the grey and do things differently.

Audit your communications and seriously ask yourself if they are really going to engage anyone. When did you last create an interesting article for your website? Did you actually just lift it from someone else? Why would you do that when your brand requires your voice behind it?

Put yourself in the customer's shoes and be honest. You probably need to shake things up and find yourself a content writer who doesn't just know about insurance but has some creative genius as well. The more interesting and consumer-focused your content, the more likely you are to be found. Make your voice behind the content unique and you can really start to power your brand.



MARKETING

TACTICS

7. Sense of community and CSR

Having worked on Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives for insurance and financial brands such as Britannia, CIS, Green Flag, Privilege and Yorkshire Bank, our team fully appreciates the power of community engagement for any insurance provider. Yet so few do it. Even fewer know how to maximise CSR programmes.

Here's the rub. **52%** of consumers surveyed said that insurance companies should definitely do more within local communities, to give something back. Only **9%** of those surveyed disagreed.

The strongest desire for this community involvement was shown in the North East, where **70%** want to see insurers and insurance providers doing more. It was **60%** of those in Wales and **55%** in Scotland.

Giving back is also a great way to engage younger consumers and bring them along with you on a brand journey. **56%** of 18-24s want to see insurers and insurance providers do more at a grassroots level, within local communities.

⚠️ BROKER ALERT

The following city locations are those in which consumers most want to see insurers getting involved with local causes and communities. It could be a real opportunity for you to differentiate yourself!

Newcastle (66%)

Bristol (65%)

Liverpool (64%)

Norwich (63%)

Remember, however, that the desire to see insurance providers involved in local communities is a nationwide one. Even where the fewest percentage of consumers wanted to see community involvement (Plymouth), the percentage of 32% constitutes nearly a third of consumers.

✅ MARKETING TIPS

Align yourself with your customers and targets by supporting what matters to them and show sincerity with regard to whatever it may be. This is often achieved by supporting what makes sense for your brand, or a cause that you know is held dear by your customers.

Giving back is very much what Millennials want to see and having an active CSR programme will enhance your brand credentials.

It is also a great means through which local brokers can forge tremendous bonds with their local community, in a way that is hard to match up to if you are a faceless call centre-based insurance provider.



MARKETING

TACTICS

8. Lack of awareness of CSR activity

Having worked in sponsorship and CSR maximisation since our founder was responsible for maximising all of British Gas's national and international sponsorships, we understand this point inside-out. We also know the golden rule – spend 3 times as much on promoting your sponsorship, as you do on the sponsorship itself. Very few businesses do.

Little surprise, therefore, that our survey found that **57%** of consumers are completely unaware of any support that their insurance provider/company/broker gives to their local community or to other charities and causes. This may well, of course, be due to the infrequent communication and obvious online content issues that we have already discussed. However, it could also be because not enough local or national PR is being built around the CSR activity, to generate media headlines about the community support or sponsorships. In a nutshell, there is too little storytelling.

When only **9%** of consumers feel they have an idea of what is going on in this regard, there's something awry.

The percentage in the dark increases to **62%** of over-55s and **59%** of 45-54-year-olds. It is also higher within certain regions: North East (**67%**), South East (**62%**), Northern Ireland (**62%**) and Scotland (**61%**). Even in the region technically most aware (Greater London), around half of consumers (**49%**) have no idea of any causes or community activities supported by their insurance providers.

This may be because no community support is actually taking place. If that's the case, you're really missing a trick, by not aligning yourself with what consumers want to see.

⚠️ BROKER ALERT

The following city locations are those in which most consumers have no idea what their insurance providers do to support their community. If you do get involved in CSR, regard this as something to quickly work on.

Brighton (71%)
Bristol (70%)
Newcastle (66%)
Norwich (63%)
Belfast (61%)
Southampton (60%)

✓ MARKETING TIPS

Don't just sponsor something; get expert help in promoting all that you do within your local community.

Catapult PR has tackled this sort of brief for companies large and small, with activity including devising a special CSR initiative for YBS that had international impacts.

Catapult PR's managing director has maximised some of the biggest arts, environmental and football sponsorships in Britain, so tap into our expertise and make sure your CSR programme is talked about and appreciated by your customers. Simply being a name on a shirt, or in a programme, is just not enough.



MARKETING

TACTICS

9. Deserving of an insurance medal

Insurance can be deemed to be dull subject matter. It's something consumers don't particularly want to think about and scaremongering in a blatant form, as we have seen, does not appeal.

It's more than just an issue of insurance often being a grudge purchase. **55%** of those who completed our survey said that anyone who can make insurance interesting "deserves a medal". The percentage rose to **58%** of women and **59%** of over-55s.

Regionally, this sentiment was held by a whopping **67%** in the North East, **65%** in Wales and **59%** in the South West. In fact, the lowest regional figure was Greater London, where it was still nearly half of people who felt this way (**48%**).

So, do you just throw in the towel? Our answer would be 'no'. There is another way. Turn to people deserving of that medal!

Catapult PR has won a fifth of its 61 PR and marketing awards (as of 3/11/23) for insurance-sector campaigns, with **12 awards** in the trophy cabinet, both national and regional, for insurance campaigns alone. It has also won **several more awards** for CSR campaigns. Add to this numerous runners-up accolades and there is plenty of third-party endorsement for our abilities in insurance promotion.

As well as winning numerous award of our own, our initiatives have catapulted clients such as Willis Towers Watson Networks, McCarron Coates and Gauntlet Group to national insurance awards' success. There is

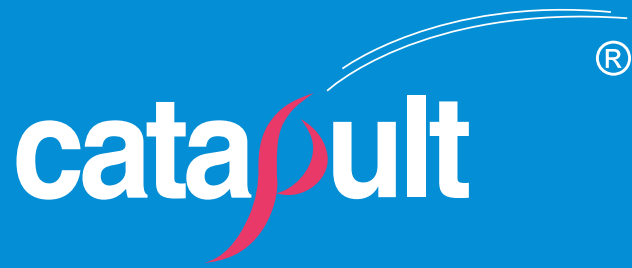
a clear indication that creativity and a dynamic and different approach to insurance marketing pays off.

We have a downloadable credentials leaflet – [Banishing the Grey](#) – that highlights the very many types of insurance product that we have promoted. We are renowned as a PR and content agency that can bring insurance – and other intangible products and services – to life, so why not take advantage of our skills?

One of our very first awards, back in 1999, was the Grand Prix Award for the best overall PR campaign conducted in the northwest region that year. The judge stood on the stage and said that the campaign had done a remarkable thing – making a very dull subject matter super-interesting. We instantly knew he was referencing our insurance campaign!

When that's the sort of impact we can deliver, what's stopping you from powering up your PR and content, engaging your customers and enhancing your communications? Probably just one phone call to Jane Hunt, on **0333 2424062** or **07711 628661** – or an email to jane@catapultpr.co.uk





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Insurance credentials booklet:

<https://www.catapultpr.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Insurance-Booklet-WEB.pdf>

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