

Missed marketing opportunities



By [Ann Druce](#)

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I hate it when my car needs a service. It's always a hassle. Do I do without a car for a day, or do I hire one? And funny how the only time I manage to get a loan car from the dealership is when it has really let me down. And a standard service hardly qualifies, does it?



But my car has been out of action for four days now, so I stamped my feet and suddenly, in the middle of the afternoon, a spare loan car materialised. What a revelation!

My car is almost five years old, which isn't exactly ancient, but while the engine capacity of the loan car is a lot less than my own, this new model has serious voomah. I love it! And am secretly rather pleased that the dealership needs to keep mine for another three or four days.

Seriously missing

Now I have to point out that it seems to me that the dealership is seriously missing a marketing opportunity! Driving this new model has made me rethink things. I mean, I wasn't considering replacing my car. But now... hey, maybe it's time?

Okay, I'll grant you that the fact my car has had a problem might be an additional factor. But what if it hadn't? I wouldn't have given a second thought to replacing it. It goes like a bomb, still looks great and you'd never know the age if a new shape hadn't been introduced recently.

Surely every car dealership should keep a record of the age of the cars they service. And as soon as they might conceivably be up for replacement, they should be dangling the new model under their customers' noses? By offering us loan cars every time we book a service.

Why wait?

Every time I've been actively looking for a car, the salesman has been only too keen to lend me a car to drive for a day or so, so I can see for myself how great it is. But why wait for the customer to come to you? Why not (particularly right now as selling cars isn't the easiest task in the world) go out and find customers? If I drive a relatively good car, and your records show I maintain it well, and replaced my last one when it was this age, isn't it likely that I might be open to some gentle persuasion about a newer model?

And what about the finance company? I have paid my monthly installments without a hiccup and it is about to be paid off any minute. But I haven't heard a word from it. Now it seems to me that it should have written to me to point out that it was almost paid for, telling me that if I traded in my current model, I could anticipate a deposit of as much as X. And if I replaced it with the new version, paying it off over the same period, my monthly payment would only go from Y to Z, costing me a only a little extra per month.

Signed another deal

Who knows? I might have thought of replacing my car sooner and signed another deal with the company, too.

How many opportunities are you missing every single day?

ABOUT ANN DRUCE

Ann Druce spent 15 years on the client side of the business, marketing major FMCG brands for big name companies, including Unilever and Adcock Ingram, before moving to the other side of the desk and joining an ad agency. Today she heads up Octarine Communications www.octarine.co.za, an advertising and design agency based in Durban, with national clients in the industrial, professional and consumer sectors. Contact Ann on tel +27 (0)31 564 6921 or email ann@octarine.co.za. Read the Octarine blog at <http://octarineopinions.blogspot.com>

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