



COUNO®

BRAND DOCUMENT

Couno is one of the leading systems integrators to the world's finance sector, with more than 40 years' experience working with the highest-profile financial organisations to build a solid foundation for mutual growth.



COUNO IS COMMITTED TO CUSTOMERS

Our integration mean they are the centre of everything we do. Our success relies on providing the customer with everything they need to grow their business and this is achieved by giving them our focused attention at all times.

WHO IS COUNO?

Couno is one of the leading systems integrators to the world's finance sector, with more than 40 years' experience working with the highest-profile financial organisations to build a solid foundation for mutual growth.

Our objective is to deliver and maintain high-value technology solutions using our extensive knowledge and planning, then implementing and supporting business critical systems, allowing our clients' business to prosper.

We earn our customers' trust by recommending the products and services they need to make their business grow. Our extensive industry insight means we understand the economic impact any minute of downtime can have, which is why we must be proactive rather than reactive, forward-thinking and innovative in everything we do. Our carefully selected and presented communications with customers,

whether through marketing collateral, advertising or website content, means we become a trusted partner for life. Couno's brand identity sits at the centre of everything it does, whether through the Couno logo, brand values, tone of voice or via the medium that message is delivered through.

It is vital our brand values and professionalism is communicated clearly and transparently to all levels of customer, with one single voice to address the scope of our business, while maintaining our promises and delivering the highest level of customer satisfaction possible.

COUNO'S BRAND VALUES

Couno is committed, dynamic and agile and all communications we have with our customers must express these values.

1

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2

COUNO IS DYNAMIC

We think laterally, inventively and cohesively. We are not afraid to go searching for the answer that integrates with the customer's needs and we are passionate about finding a solution to a challenge.

3

COUNO IS AGILE

Couno is flexible and because we are vendor agnostic, we can switch our approach quickly if the situation requires it. If the customer's needs change, we are able to find them something new and better suited quickly to prevent a gap in service or any disruption to daily workflows.

THE COUNO KEY PILLARS

Couno's brand model is built around key pillars to illustrate commitment to the industry and all those communicating the brand must put these pillars at the core of all brand messages. If what you are saying doesn't fit into one of the pillars, the message should not be expressed.

The five pillars are:

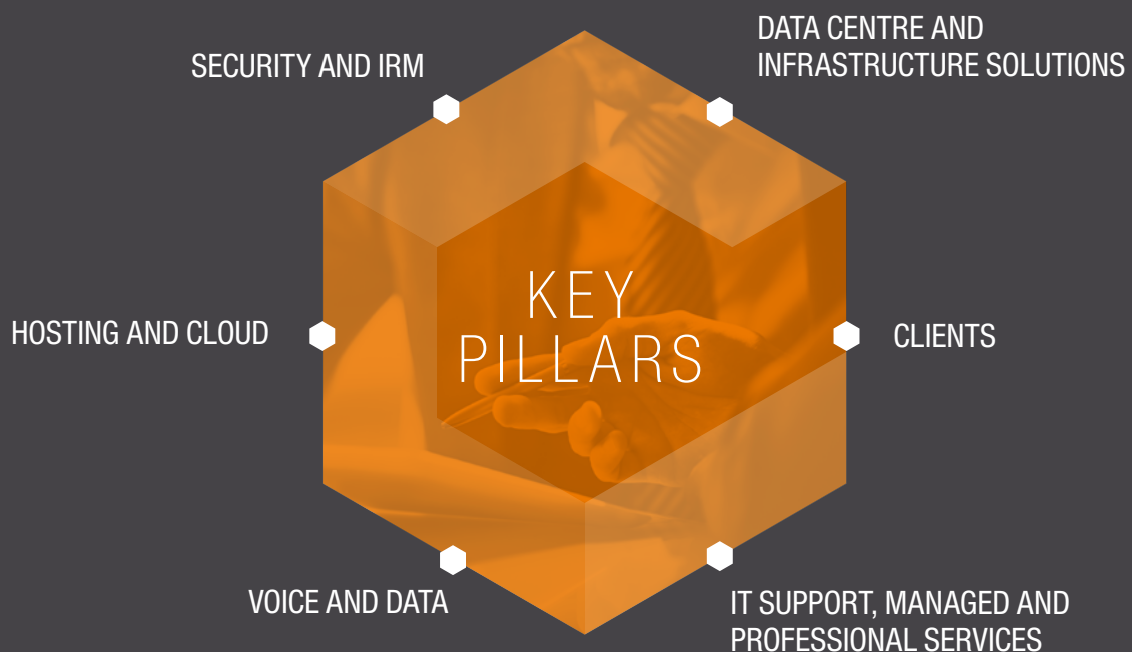
- Data centre and infrastructure solutions
- IT support, managed and professional services
- Voice and data
- Hosting and cloud
- Security and IRM (Information Risk Management)

We are one of the leading systems integrators in the world and as such, we have wide expertise in the technology market, with no sector left unexplored. Marketing materials must communicate innately the solutions Couno is selling and how to explain them in a clear and concise way, leaving no gap left unfilled.

Anyone creating content or materials for Couno should ensure they put the customer as the centre of the message, making them feel confident we provide an indispensable service in these five areas.

These pillars are represented in Couno's logo, which forms the five sides of an incomplete hexagon, with the only break at the front representing the prospect. It is your job to communicate the values and service breadth of our company to help the customer complete their journey and integrate them into the Couno business. At this point, the Couno logo can be transformed into a closed hexagon, representing the fully integrated partnership.

It is essential to communicate that these five key pillars are visible across the vendors that Couno converses with, the distributors the company aligns to and the customer that it is dealing with.



CHOOSING A TARGET

Sales targets can be split into four 'personas'. Each has different needs and anyone creating marketing or advertising collateral representing the Couno brand must consider to whom they are presenting the brand before they create the messaging and adjust their language and tone accordingly.

It is vital the Couno values and professionalism resonates in every conversation with every employee of the client's company, whether producing a corporate communications brochure for a board member, a blog post targeted at a junior member of staff at a commercial bank or a job advert for an administrator position at Couno.

SENIOR HEDGE FUND PARTNER/CEO

Who is he/she? The senior hedge fund partner or CEO is likely to be the person who is solely responsible for expenditure in smaller companies that don't have a CFO, for example. They are the most senior decision maker and understanding of technology may be lower than others in the company. The focus for the senior hedge fund partner or CEO is to make the most revenue or profit as possible and grow their business exponentially.

What are his/her main concerns? Questions such levels of management are likely to ask include; How will it boost efficiency? How can it help us prove we are compliant? How is my company and client's data protected? How will my staff be able to boost revenues? How will it provide more opportunities for expansion?

How should they be communicated with? Messaging targeted at the senior partner or CEO should be explanatory and focussed at the financial industry and benefits rather than focussing on the technology. It is likely he/she will know the finance industry assiduously, so any information regarding the industry should be accurate and copywriters should not assume anything. Additionally, they must tailor their approach towards the benefits to the customer's company, not to the individual.

CFO

Who is he/she? The CFO's responsibility is to ensure they are getting the maximum ROI from products and services. They understand investment opportunities, as long as they will provide higher efficiencies in terms of increasing revenues. They are concerned with long-term spending versus short-term, how they can get the most value out of a proposition and this should define any message's approach.

What are his/her main concerns? What does it do to boost revenues? What is the return on investment? How will it benefit my accounts? Are there options to bill against cap-ex or op-ex? How will it save money against other options (for example cloud storage versus physical servers)?

How should they be communicated with? It is likely a CFO is not interested in the technicalities of the technology itself, like the hedge fund partner or CEO, but they want to know how it is going to make them present an impervious financial case to the board. Couno's wide support network can ensure the customer can maximise their return on investment and this message should be communicated. We represent great value for money thanks to our commitment and integrated approach.

IT MANAGER

Who is he/she? The IT manager or director will know about the latest technologies being used in-house and those available outside of their institution. The messaging should be technical and there should be no gaps in knowledge when creating messaging targeted at this particular prospect. Information should include, where possible, what will arrive on the market in the future to further strengthen the pitch and demonstrate our agility. IT staff will have the company's technology roadmap in mind, so it's important to communicate how our solutions can integrate with future plans.

What are his/her main concerns? How does it work and integrate with what the company is already using? How will it integrate in future? What are the benefits? Why should the company change from something that works well? How secure is the data? What level of encryption does it boast?

How should they be communicated with? Our language should be technical and never be presumptuous when creating collateral for this target. Messaging should demonstrate an open mind, providing a range of different options, suited to various different scenarios.

EMPLOYEE

Who is he/she? Those in lower levels of management and juniors wish to do their job to the best of their ability with the tools that are most effective for them. They don't want to be considering technology, because in an ideal scenario, any equipment or platform should 'just work' and be unnoticeable.

What are his/her main concerns? How can my life be made easier? How can I be more efficient? How can I do my job without being frustrated about the equipment or system?

How should they be communicated with? Messaging for this group should be a little more personal, yet maintaining that professionalism Couno is built around. The materials aimed at employees should demonstrate an understanding of a customer's qualms in an empathetic way and propose solutions with them at the heart of the message, rather than benefits to the company.



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We think laterally, inventively and cohesively. We are not afraid to go searching for the answer that integrates with the customer's needs and we are passionate about finding a solution to a challenge.

IDENTIFYING COMPLEXITY

When you have identified who your target is and where they are in the decision and awareness stage, you can start tailoring your message, ensuring you always communicate in an advisory and professional way.

It is our responsibility to identify the target's knowledge of the technology industry and ensure the way we are explaining the technology identifies with their expertise. If we are communicating to an IT manager, the materials will need to be technical in their approach.

A CFO may not be able to understand technological terms, so marketing or advertising materials will need to explain what it means and how it works. Also, we should ensure acronyms are spelt out and language is simplified if the situation requires it.

IDENTIFYING AUDIENCE KNOWLEDGE

It is important for all those creating collateral to adapt their message to customers through their tone of voice and content of conversation to ensure the customer is moving through the stages of purchase efficiently.

For example, are they a CFO who has no idea about cloud services? It may be he or she has not used even a personal cloud storage service before and does not understand the technology.

However, that same CFO may know the company's expenditure is too high when it comes to hardware storage solutions but the company is not using it to full capacity, because he has been told so by the IT director. Therefore, he has identified his problem but needs to be educated about the technological solutions to help recognise how to solve the problem and reduce costs. He will therefore enter the decision cycle at stage two.

STAGE 1: IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

At this stage, Couno employees may come across a client or potential customer who is completely oblivious to any problems he/she might have. For example, an employee might not realise the reason they are getting a headache every afternoon is because their monitor is too far away or not fit for purpose so they are squinting to see the text on the screen.

Engineers will need to use their observation skills and listen to what they are saying in order to connect them with a solution slowly. The marketing material's role is to help them realise they have a problem and reassure that they can solve it for the troubled customer.

STAGE 2: THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED, BUT THEY DO NOT SEE TECHNOLOGY AS THE SOLUTION

Once their lead has identified the problem, Couno can begin to suggest a solution. Using the first scenario as an example again, once a member of field staff has identified the problem is the monitor, they need to convince them that the solution to their problem is the technology rather than being an external factor, such as an eye complaint. This will lead on to decision stage three.

STAGE 3: SOLD ON TECH, BUT WHAT IS THE RIGHT SOLUTION?

At this point, the lead knows they need to adapt their technology to solve their problem, but Couno needs to guide them in order to help them make the right decision about what product or service to buy to solve the problem. Would a customer be more efficient with a larger screen, two screens or a different-shaped desk that allows for them to sit closer to the screen?

STAGE 4: CONVERSION TO COUNO

It is now our job to explain why the client should buy through Couno rather than going with another provider. This is where we need to explain the value of the solution to their business and why Couno is different from its competitors. Couno's approach is different to an MSP's because it provides long-term support, matches products and services to the customer and does not pressure-sell, ensuring it is fully integrated for the best customer support possible.



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Marketers and content creators should always understand the terminology they are using and if they do not understand something they are trying to communicate to a customer, they should always ask someone who does know. It could be an engineer, it could be a vendor or partner or a colleague. All staff should let others help them and in turn, help the customer. They should always be open to learning new processes and taking advice onboard.

VOICE & TONE

The target should feel Couno cares about them and their goals as an individual.

All Couno members of staff should:

- **Avoid colloquialisms and slang**
- **Speak to people in a familiar way, but treat them with respect and professionalism**
- **Be courteous and treat all as equals**
- **Be inclusive and advisory**
- **Use a voice that is engaging, honest, intelligent and confident**
- **Adhere to the Financial Times style guide in all copy**

VOICE VERSUS TONE

Voice is a constant, tone changes according to the message.

If a target is annoyed that something is not working, the voice used should be reassuring and supportive. The materials should help the customer explore the problem and find a solution in an advisory and calming way.

Alternatively, if the customer is relieved that a problem has been solved, a motivational and empathetic tone is required. We should demonstrate to customers they can keep building the client's business effectively and can solve problems repeatedly.

Is the customer excited to be using software or equipment that will improve their life? Then staff should be excited too and express this by making the tone more upbeat.

DOS AND DO NOTS

Do think carefully who the conversation is with - is it a founding partner? An IT manager? A junior member of staff? Ensure the message is adapted accordingly - is the customer technical or do they need to know how the service Couno provides will revolutionise their working day?

Do explain Couno's values and why the company can seamlessly integrate into a business. It is the best way for us to work, with our ears to the ground, experiencing the day-to-day running of the company so we are able to effectively suggest solutions to match the customer's needs.

Do listen. Listening is a key part to Couno's business, because a customer with a problem will be happy to share the pitfalls of their issue. They will open up with very little prompt and this approach to listening will ensure the response can be tailored perfectly with tone, context and expertise.

Do not describe Couno's field staff as 'salespeople'. Our people identify the needs of the client and advise the best equipment for the client. They offer prolonged support. Describing them as a salesperson is doing them and us a disservice.

Do not describe the company as a pure-play MSP. Couno is more than that - it provides consultancy, solutions and products the customer needs on an on-going basis, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Do not be patronising. Treat everyone with respect and use your listening skills to identify their challenges without assuming their knowledge or expertise. Apply this to the conversation and adjust your approach if the language seems too technical or not technical enough.

MEDIUMS TO PROMOTE A MESSAGE

Whether a Couno representative or external party is writing a blog, producing marketing materials, writing an email campaign or a job advert, it is important they adapt their style and messaging according to the purpose of the communication.

A blog can be a little more light-hearted, offering customers a moment of respite to read about something interesting. However all communications must remain professional, with a lighter style comparable to a column on the Financial Times if it is an opinion-based piece or more formal if it is a news article or industry analysis.

Website messaging (such as error messages) or support materials would be authoritative and directive, while email tone will vary according to the group the email campaign is being sent to - are they existing customers or cold leads?



COUNO®

INTEGRATED PARTNERSHIPS

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