

# *MARKETING*

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## MARKETING EXPLAINED TO MY GRANDMOTHER



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To my grandmother, Algisa

## The Fisherman Metaphor: “Marketing explained to my grandmother”

One day my 90 years old grandmother, Algisa, invited me her home for something important. Her most dear and old friend, Virginia, 96 years old, asked her what was my job and she could not answer. She knew that I finished my studies and I found a good job, well paid, but she did not know what I was doing and she had the feeling that my salary was too much for any “honest job”. So when I went to her, she asked point-blank: “nephew, what’s your job?”, I was about to answer proudly that I was involved in marketing in a Japanese company but before the words come out of my mouth I was surprised to think how a lady from Abruzzo, ninety, almost illiterate, she had (Lucky her!) always farm the land, waiting each day for her husband and six sons, all fishermen, would return with the boat in the harbor, she could understand what the word marketing meant. Then I told her that I was a fisherman. Her eyes lit up! But instead of catch fishes, I was in charge of finding

customers willing to buy my products. I said, “see Grandma, just as my grandfather did, my job is to figure out where the fish are and what they like, if they prefer worms or butterflies, and then give it to them hoping they like. The only difference is that instead of catch fish, I try to draw satisfied customers. I study their tastes, I go to visit them and try to offer them something they want to buy with joy because they sense that it can serve to improve their lives and be happier. My grandmother looked at me surprised and after a small silence told me: “Oh well, the important thing is that you do not sell drugs!”.

## Companies that increase revenue without marketing

At the beginning of my career, I was hired in the company of a family friend. Our parents were immigrants in Switzerland and his father, once returned to Italy, decided to put into practice what he had learned beyond the Alps and started a business in building iron tanks. The company had 150 employees and the business was very good, but, as in all the companies, the route had not been downhill. When, in the seventies, they began to produce tanks, The expenses were so many and more than often, after paying the salary of the only worker, nothing remains but the indispensable to arrive to the end of the month.

While my friend knew he could not afford to go on vacation, he still wanted to bring his wife to Milan, where every year there was a trade show in the field of thermo-technical. That year, he and his wife left with the counted money and in two days they visited the Milan Cathedral, via Montenapoleone, dined in a small restaurant on the suburbs and

visited the fair together.

When they came home, my friend contacted on the phone all the companies he visited at the fair and some of them, especially German, were interested in their tanks. From those contacts it came a small order that allowed him to move on for the next six months.

The following year he decided to invest their savings to rent a small space at the fair (a table, two chairs and company name on a banner attached to the wall) and print a few copies of a small catalog of their tanks. This time was a better time and my friend came home with two order that allowed him to hire also his younger brother in the company.

Since then, business has grown and today my friend has a 8,000 sqm shed with 200 workers, even though he prefers to say he has the responsibility of 200 families.

When he hired me he asked me to prepare a project to structure a marketing office in the company. I was at the beginning of my career. At that time, the presence on the internet was in the plans of every entrepreneur, everyone wanted an ecommerce site, socials were the future. I prepared a project that encompassed all my academic knowledge: I developed a very detailed SWOT analysis, identified the competitive advantage, found a differentiating placement that would have

pale both Ries and Trout, and I also added PNL based USP that would have made Bandler and Grinder proud of me. Cialdini himself would like to meet me if he would read my plan.

I was proud of my work: I spent so much time studying in University and finally someone had given me the opportunity to prove my worth.

On a Saturday morning we sat down to discuss all the points of my project. I had waited a week and could not wait to demonstrate what I had learned from books. I would never imagined what would happen there in a few hours.

My friend dismantled many of my theories. His password was: "Would you use the money of your salary to prove that this thing could work?" He repeated it as a jingle for each point of the project. Although I would have replied to him "yes", I sadly realized that all his remarks were correct and that my project, though beautiful and well done, would not have given him the assurance of a return on investment. He would not tolerate spending one penny if he was not sure he would have to bear fruit.

After lunch we sat down again to discuss my project and we rewrite it together based on both my ideas and his market experience. When we finished I noticed that that Saturday I learned a lot.

At the university there are 37 exams on marketing

but none on the sale, so I decided to use my free time to study the sales techniques. I read and studied the works of Carnegie, Clason, Covey, Bettger, Gitomer, Tracy, Og Mandino, Napoleon Hill and later enrolled at a course with an American University.

In the meantime, I continued working on my friend's company and learned how to concentrate my efforts and strategies on the real needs of the market. I began to visit customers in Germany and Switzerland, listened to their requests and made proposals based on their needs. The company grew further. Seeing that my ideas brought real profit to the company, besides filling me with joy, allowed me to scale the company's organizational chart.

Two years later I decided to accept the job offer of an important corporation. It was not easy for me to find the courage to say it to my friend. I feared he would hurt him but he said to me, "When you arrived in my company I never thought you gonna make it working with me but you have been armed yourself with humility and shown me your willingness to learn. I do not just say it, the results we have achieved together speak for you. I knew this day would come and I'm sorry you go away but I'm also happy for you. Now go there and do your best!".

Today, when I get an appreciation for my job, when



I feel that I'm bringing a real economic result to the company I work for, I stop for a moment and think to my friend, how much he would be proud of me and I smile.

## How to increase your sales with channel marketing

Time ago, the president of an important corporation sought to identify the causes of the sudden drop in sales. Over the years, the market become increasingly mature and competitive, rivals competing with the price and consequently margins narrowed. Working in this scenario become very difficult and his worries made him so stressed that he could compromise the relation with his sales network (authorized dealers).

To worsen the situation, the decision of the headquarter to establish a sales budget much higher than normal. No one in the company believed it was possible to reach it.

At the time I was the marketing manager of the company and the situation worried me a lot. I knew that one of the problems that retailers had always complained about in the past was the approach of our company (also favored by the non-ideal logistics location of the head office) so one day I set an appointment with the president

and proposed her to go to the dealers with the purpose of listening their problems and try to figure out what was a possible solution. With the support of the area managers, I began to visit all dealers to establish a direct relationship with them and, at my first visit, I set up regular appointments to coordinate the marketing activities supporting their business.

I was new to the industry so instead of proposing possible solutions, I just listened them to fully understand their needs and tried to find the way to offer them the best possible support for the issues highlighted during the talks.

At first there was much skepticism about me. I was not in the industry, the market from which I came had completely different dynamics, my appearance seemed like another nice attempt that would be lost in the bureaucracy of the corporation. But maintaining consistency and openness to their needs, my initiative quickly became a plus value and was perceived as a valuable support to give new impetus to sales. Thanks to these steady efforts, many dealers increased the open houses and activities to support our brand, hosting training courses for end customers and promoting our business values in their area.

Thanks to their feedback we realized a series of sales support tools. If I stayed behind my desk I would never thought they would work to increase

sales but these sales tools not only led to an increase in sales (+ 124% over the budget) but led the company to win the Sales Award for sales in both 2015 and 2016 and were then adopted in all EMEA (Europe Middle East Africa) to increase the market share.

The lions tamer metaphor:  
“5 + 1 skills of a good marketing manager”

In any company any manager would like to be (or feels able to) the marketing manager.

In my career I have seen in this role the most diverse professionalities: former musicians, former journalists, former graphic designers, former clerks, former technicians, former warehousemen and even sons and nephews of enlightened entrepreneurs. To think that anyone with a bit of creativity can get results in marketing is a bit like thinking that anyone who can shake a whip could be a good lions tamer. The result is that you are likely to be eaten by the lion.

In fact, the role of marketing manager is often seen as a creative role, but those who are most successful in the role are those who deeply sink their roots into the ground of numbers and into the ability to listen to the market.

1. Not everyone imagines that one of the most important responsibilities for a marketing manager is to be able to effectively manage (ie, successfully

and profitably) their own team of employees. To do this, they must have the leadership skills and the ability to organize and manage human resources. Only with these skills you could create a serene and productive working environment.

2. Another important skill is the capability to measure the results. Give space to your creativity is ok, putting this creativity at the service of a revenue goal is another story. Determining the objective parameters for calculating the ROI (Return of Investment) of a strategy is a feature of few.

3. Know how to co-ordinate partners and suppliers, measuring their performance, as well as the work of each element of your team is another discriminating factor if you have to choose a person instead of another.

4. Those who are very creative feel it difficult to work with organized dynamics. The ability to analyze, optimize and tune with the timing and marketing budgets is an aspect that should not be underestimated in choosing a good professional.

5. The ability to convince and participate the top management in the strategies agreed with the sales team is another key feature of the game and it also introduces the next one that in my opinion is the most important one.

6. Understand the needs of the commercial side of the company and realize marketing tools that help

the sales network reach the outcomes revenue. This aspect is fundamental and is what in my opinion makes the biggest difference between an efficient job and an effective job.

## Behind the scenes of a communications agency

Communication agencies are the heart of any marketing activity. Despite this, however, sometimes you may have doubts about the money spent on advertising does do not have the expected performance.

In the next lines I'll talk about a story who really happened to a small communications agency I worked for. The company was small but well-structured, the owners were industry professionals with years of experience behind and with a team of motivated young collaborators. I was one of these. Shortly after my entry into the structure an important corporation decided to entrust the small agency with its entire communication budget.

The new budget brought a lot of money to the small company's cashier and made it a step forward in terms of revenue. New people were hired, also competent and motivated.

Few years of hard work allowed the agency to make a further leap forward with the entry of new



and important customers who appreciated their creativity. At that time many newcomers could demonstrate their talent in marketing and business communications and the agency was becoming an important name in the regional and national landscape.

Bigger customers, for tax purposes, preferred to pay a monthly fee, instead of working by project and the small agency structured as a full-fledged communication agency. But keeping the costs of an apparatus that counted 10 people just in administration become very expensive. Soon, for budget reasons, it began to monetize the time to prepare print executives in the same way as the creative time and the demarcation line between creative work (which is known to be more expensive) and the hand work (cheaper) became a subtle, almost impalpable line.

I'm not saying that someone took advantage of the situation but it was a fact that in delineating how many hours they allocated to first and the second, accounts were so rough to embarrass the embarrassment. The funny thing is that in the marketing offices of large corporations, no one had the will, the time or the ability to take care of controlling it.

In all the companies I worked on, after this experience, I have taken special care of this and with great amazement I have found that in almost

all major marketing environments, outsourcing cost savings are still the highest among all the items related to the optimization of marketing activities. In one of my most recent work experience as marketing manager, this aspect represented 37% of the total marketing budget.

The good news is that in most cases, to solve the problem, it is enough to establish a new dialogue with the partners and to engage with them a more linear and productive path by establishing new rules that do not interfere with the quality of the service.

## How to avoid nasty surprises on the web

Unfortunately, most of the money companies invest on the internet are money thrown away, especially if people in the web do not know how to generate profits for the company.

Many people, even many professionals, think that the success of a web activity is linked to the number of fans who follow our social channels or are subscribed to our newsletter but in reality there is often no direct link between the number of like and the economic return that a company has. Sometimes companies that have the greatest difficulty in achieving their sales goals are just those that have a large number of “like” on their Facebook page. I invite you not to believe who (I hope for less and less) promises steeped in organic web traffic and record increases in the number of social fans.

In my career I worked closely with many web agencies and I discovered many tips & tricks that made me at least puzzled. Often, behind

great promises, there are techniques that are hardly questionable. Today, for \$50, you can buy thousands of endorsements in the most popular social and sketch statistics at unimaginable levels from the organic point of view. You do not have to be marketing expert to understand how these techniques do not bring any result in sales and damage any brand image or business reputation. But not all web agencies use controversial techniques. There are agencies that do a good job especially those that use inbound marketing to bring concrete results in terms of revenue and are able to plan ROI (return on investment) and timings in line with business goals. Of course, adopting an inbound marketing strategy means dedicating time and resources to creating “buyer personas”, developing effective content to feed the marketing funnel and investing the resources needed to shape and engage the pool of users. But this job pays both in the short and medium term and often makes the difference between companies that survive well in the long term and companies that will eventually disappear in the long run.

## How to improve the company's mood thanks to this simple stratagem

In any company it is usual to think that marketing is made of very creative people (and often not very concrete ones) while the administrative or financial department is made of very concrete (and by no means creative) people.

Of course this is not always true but if you ask in the administration the name of the marketing manager perhaps you will feel joking or quirky. The same if you ask the marketing the name of the financial manager.

This situation takes on more tones with the approximation of administrative deadlines or when the deadline regards the marketing budgets. Why? Everyone loves to work and is comfortable in their comfort zone. Do not ask someone in the administration department to be more creative, it would be bad for you, for the same reason you do not ask a marketer to be concrete, it would look you across.

Though this might sometimes be a value, it might

also be a big problem for the company. The lack of dialogue between colleagues and collaborators with so diverse culture and preparation can create discomfort throughout the structure and that is why in the corporate charts we see more and more the figure of the facilitator or the psychologist.

A large US listed stock company recently stated that the introduction of the corporate psychologist has led to an increase in employee performance by 34%. Today, the role of facilitator is also gaining ground in all the companies. Ignoring “clutches” among colleagues or dislikes and resistance to work with “certain” employees can, in the long term, undermine business performance from within and can compromise the company’s competitiveness in the market.

Losing excellent professionals for interpersonal reasons can happen, anyone could testify of having met a colleague who left the company because he or she did not agree with the boss. How many times does it happen? And above all, how to solve the problem?

During my work experience in Canada, I got to know and admire the work of a business facilitator who was building and improving the basics of business harmony. His techniques hit me a lot and I started to be interested in these techniques. I

approached Martin Seligman's work and studied his "Learned Optimism". I found that many of his techniques could in fact be easily adopted in any company. The StrenghtPower system, along with the renowned MyersBriggs and BigFive, can in fact be used profitably by any company and have increased talents retained in many companies around the world.

## The Phillips screwdriver metaphor “The secret of B2B marketing”

Every businessman have read or studied many marketing books or articles. Almost always, however, it comes to tips and strategies geared to B2C (business to consumer) market, that force B2B companies to adapt these strategies to their market. B2B market has its peculiarities and trying to adapt the B2C strategies to the B2B market is a bit like trying to unscrew a Phillips screw with a knife, you can get results even without stripping the screw (or break the knife!) but it would be much better to use a Phillips screwdriver.

So what are the marketing tools in the B2B market? Exactly like B2C customer, B2B clients do research on the internet before making a purchase. Search and find (often unknowingly) companies that disseminate culture in the sector, those with a solid online reputation and basing their strategies on user experience. Trust is a fundamental value to anyone. But if we analyze the curve of the values of B2B companies we realize that values such as



price, availability and discount are bypassed by usability, reliability and after-sales service. All B2B companies are very respectable in each of these parameters (or claim to be). Some companies focus their marketing strategy on one of these elements to differentiate itself: some claim after-sales service their strength-point or some others exploit the ease of use of their product in order to have a competitive advantage. These are all good strategies that differentiate them from the competition. But this is “normal marketing”. In the headline we were talking about the secret of the B2B marketing, the real leverage of B2B. Believe me or not, the biggest leverage of B2B is “making money”. If you are able to make it clear to the customer that the product will allow him to make more money, you probably will win all the deals. From my experience I can say that in the negotiation phase, an entrepreneur focused on making money, often stop talking about price and values and the words “ease of use” and “after-sales technical support” are substituted with “delivery time” and “installation specs”. When conducting a deal with your next customer, ask yourself, “How can I improve his/her ability to profit through my product or service? It could make a big difference.

## The unconfessable desire of every marketer

As the participants of Miss World contest, almost all marketers would like the world to be a better, fairer place where customers are respected and businesses efficiently use new and emerging tools to accomplish their jobs.

But what are the hidden desires that unite so many marketers from everywhere in the world?

Many would respond “Stop explaining why, when business goes slow, it should increase investment in marketing instead of reducing them.”

For somebody else it would be enough to “clarify once and for all, for example, why social media should be part of the marketing mix.”

Someone, however, would really be able to do miracles like “Yes, we can directly track exactly who bought your product based on which tweets they read and which things they liked on Facebook or Google Plus. Privacy concerns aside, we could know exactly which “fans” are the ones that purchase and influence others to purchase,

without any doubt. We'd be able to give you exact, to the dollar Return on Investment for your social campaigns”.

Someone else may wish that in B2B markets sales and marketing stop pointing at each other and developing good teamwork while respecting the roles and achievements of others.

This and other unconfessable desires usually remain in the hearts of marketers, just as the feelings of a lover often remain suspended in the thought of the loved one.

But the real inconceivable desire of most marketers in the world (here I am talking about true professionals, not those who bask in ignorance of believing that deceiving others is the purpose of their work) is to make everyone understand that their profession it's not fooling customers but creating opportunities to make them happy! More than making the world a better place, make customers happy is the only way to ensure to sell good in the present and allows them to buy back from us even in the future.

## Recommendations

*“Thanks to his extensive experience in marketing and communications, Antonello was able to return every cent of investment spent on advertising with effectively and control. In his first year of activity in our company we were able to optimize the 37% of the marketing budget without losing the quality of the performance of suppliers and partners. More than one word should be spending its attention to guide the marketing strategies to achieve business results.”*

— *Umberto Bracci, Service Department - Roland DG*



*“Antonello is a very skilled marketing manager. Although he came from a market with completely different mechanisms and dynamics, he has earned on the field the trust and respect of the whole team. He start to work with us on tiptoe, listening our needs and, based on our feedback, has developed action plans that have enabled us to achieve excellent sales results.”*

— *Vittorio Avezzano, Avezzano Sistemi Informatici*

*“Antonello, through his activity as Marketing Manager, has developed a number of commercial tools that allowed us to approach the market in a new and profitable way. Tools such the Competitors black book have allowed the sales team to have effective arguments to win customers’ objections and competitors. The UV kit helped us to increase the sale of UV printers across the whole South Europe regions.”*

*— Stevan Korac, Sales Manager - Roland DG*



*“Working with Antonello was a real pleasure to me. Besides taking care of the most canonical aspects of marketing, he has developed digital strategies that have brought us an increase in turnover of 42%. He is a marketing manager who understands and interprets your company’s needs with great effectiveness.”*

*— Emanuele Acciarri, Service Manager - Roland DG*



*“I met Antonello in 2015, when he came to visit us in our company presenting himself as the new Marketing Manager of Roland DG. We chatted, he listened to our needs and he developed strategies that have enabled us to improve sales and even the relationship with Roland DG.”*

*— Massimo Bertocci, ASI*

*“Sparkling, smart, enthusiastic, loyal, supportive. Antonello is a very talented team player! He can take and complete many tasks and lead the team to the final goal. He fluently speaks three languages thanks to his working experiences in Canada and Scotland and is always able to bring a different and interesting perspective on the projects.”*

— *Vittorio Neri, Digital Marketing - Roland DG EMEA*



*“Antonello is an experienced and full of talent marketing manager. I had the pleasure of working with him in my career at Roland DG and thanks to his extensive background and his skills in Marketing, I and my team were able to accomplish many goals and successful projects for our company, respecting any deadline and with maximum results. His charismatic character and his ability to plan effective marketing strategies, give him an edge in a world increasingly aware of the importance of the corporate image and digital technologies.”*

— *Fabio Rizzo, Graphic Designer - Bestway Europe*



*“Antonello combines leadership skills with financial management capacities, with special attention to risk management. His rational approach is results-oriented. Thanks to his work we have successfully passed the phase*

*of the spending review, optimizing marketing costs without losing revenue goals. More than one word should be spending to emphasize his organizational and human resource management skills, which have enabled the creation of a work environment peaceful and productive.*

*Rarely, during my previous experience in auditing firms in contact with different companies, I seen such capabilities.”*

*— Marta Spina, Chief Accountant - Roland DG*



*“Antonello is a rare example of how the Marketing Manager role can combine quality of communication and creativity with more pragmatic and practical features, such as human and financial resources management. This concept is reinforced by a daily work on cost management on the marketing budget, which made it possible to boost the competitiveness of external partners, suppliers and collaborators, without generating any loss in quality and timeliness of services offered.”*

*— Riccardo Farina, Chief Financial Officer - Roland*



*“I’ve worked alongside Antonello for close to two years and I’ve seen him not only excel at the core elements of his job, like marketing campaign development and event planning, but also managing new projects that are both difficult and critical to the company’s growth. His taking on internal*

*sales channel communication aligned with a sharp increase in dealers happiness. This rare mix of productivity and ambition sets a great example for the rest of the team, and explains why everyone loves working with Antonello, no matter where they fall on the org chart.”*

— Paolo Littamè, Sales Manager - Guandong Italia



*“Antonello is easily one of the most affable and capable people that I have had the pleasure to meet. I worked together with him for several years at the Italian company PROEL SpA where he worked as Marketing and Communication Specialist. What has always impressed me about Antonello is his ability to manage and to deliver excellent results - even under duress - and always with a smile on his face. Antonello would make an excellent addition to any team and I have no hesitation to recommend him most highly.”*

— Stephen G. D. Smith, Vice President APAC - Music Group



*“I’ve had the pleasure of knowing and working with Antonello for two years, at Roland DME as a Marketing Manager, collaborating on several projects together. He successfully runs multiple marketing projects such as organizing exhibitions & events, web and product launch management. He is extremely enthusiastic about his work, which is infectious to others and always creates positive*



*environment in a team as a successful manager. Above all, I am particularly impressed by Antonello's ability to build interpersonal relations with others, especially in international business environment, which I highly appreciate as being his international colleague. Antonello would be a true asset for any positions requiring successful marketing expertise in international business and comes with my heartfelt recommendation."*

— Yoshihiro Tate, Sales & Marketing - Roland DG



*"I had the chance to collaborate with Antonello preparing marketing activities and marketing exhibititons related with Textile Applications like ITMA Milano 2015 for example, and defining new tools to generate new leads and sales opportunities related with textile applications. Antonello's contribution was more than valuable to marketing's strategy and operations both locally and for the international marketing team."*

— Encarna Luque, Head of Textile - Roland DG



*"Antonello Cristofori has great human qualities: serious, ethical, with great enthusiasm, proactive, problem solving, flexible and visionary, but always with his feet well planted on the ground as well as being a bit 'workaholic' and always available (it never hurts). His technical and professional*

*skills are undeniable, the team management as well as all known operational marketing: marketing is like a piano and he play it good.”*

— *Daniele Faoro, Sales Director - Guandong Italia*



*“I have had the pleasure of working with Antonello as a co-member on the European Marketing Team for Roland DG. Aside from being a fantastic colleague Antonello is an astute and creative marketer and I will miss working with him.”*

— *Sarah Lions, Head of Marketing - Roland DG UK*



*“I have worked closely with Antonello for a long time and I can say that he is a great team player, expert and technically very prepared. It is also able to handle competently and creatively even the most complex workflows. More than two words should be spent to emphasize its great human qualities. It was a pleasure to work with him.”*

— *Sabrina Tarquini, Creative Director - Proel Spa*



*“Antonello is a sincere and loyal manager, inclined to teamwork and ready to make himself available to his colleagues. It has management capability and he is appreciated for the*

*ability to meet company deadlines and commitments. He has developed remarkable marketing experience and is always sensitive to the needs of the company. He integrates himself perfectly with the group of collaborators from which it is also appreciated for its sense of humor and sincere friendship!”*

— *Mauro Goia, Marketing Director - Proel Spa*



*“I have known Antonello for over two years during which time we worked in the Marketing Team for South Europe and EMEA . I have been consistently impressed with Antonello’s positive attitude during the time that we have worked together. Antonello is very bright and motivated. He is a quick learner and has shown the ability to digest large volumes of information. He has shown a great involvement in EMEA and international projects as ITMA Fespa or Drupa tradeshow. Antonello has been a key player in the european and local projects where we have collaborated.”*

— *Marta Fraile, Marketing Manager - Roland DG Iberia*



*“Antonello is a reliable, well-prepared, objective-oriented person able to work both autonomously and in a group. I must highlight also his excellent relationship skills and his dedication to work.”*

— *Mariella Liberati, Hammer*

*“Antonello was able to figure out exactly what my business needs, turning his thoughts into precise and effective marketing campaigns. Efficiency and attention, both personally and professionally, made him an important asset to my company.”*  
— Oreste Petricola, Sales Manager - Vodafone

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I was born in the hillside, with sea view, in a village without traffic lights but also without work. Sea and fishing were emotions more tenacious than sports. Then came the books, everything got caught, even the luck to be able to do a job that is at the crossroads of all my passions. I wrote a hasty and affectionate book about marketing, one more sentimental about fishing. I lived and worked in Canada and Scotland, in small companies as well as in corporations.

Selling through effective marketing is the goal of my work. For over fifteen years now, I helped companies grow through marketing strategies that lead the customer satisfaction.

To learn more about me you can visit:  
[www.antonellocristofori.com](http://www.antonellocristofori.com)