

Translating 'Bla Bla Bla' Into FAB

The Cure For Fee Madness

Dear Friend,

Ever tried to play a game where you tap a well known song to another person and ask them to guess what song you are tapping?

The tune belts out in your head, loud and clear, while you tap away your obvious song, yet the listener usually cannot pick up the song no matter how loud you tap and no matter how obvious you tell them that it is. That song plays only in your head.

Justifying fees may just be the #1 problem faced by architects and designers. Let me explain why. I am going to translate what you say into what the client hears.

You: *Okay, your fee for my work is \$X.*

Client (they may not say this, they may just think it – but let's assume in this case, they do say it out loud): *Okay, that's a big number. Why should I choose you over the other options?*

You: *Because bla bla*

Client (thinking to himself): *I didn't really understand all that. Because I am not clear on the difference, I might as well pick the cheaper guy who seems just as good.*

That is your problem.

Your bla bla bla is either confusing or unconvincing. This is NOT your client's fault. You know they are not discerning when it comes to your sophisticated services. Your job is to communicate your value into a language they understand and want to believe.

You can use the Million Dollar Message (in the SIX+MAPs training) for your global positioning or the very versatile FAB Formula.

Remember the FAB Formula?

F stands for FEATURES and a feature is about what the service or product is.

A stands for ADVANTAGES and this is what a service does.

B stands for BENEFITS and this is how your service can emotionally impact your client's life.

Either a Million Dollar Message or the FAB Formula will work better than the bla bla bla you are doing now. Today, you will learn how to replace the bla bla bla with the FAB.

You need your FAB to communicate your value, for example to answer questions like, "Why should I choose you?" Good architects and designers all over the world fall victim to the tactics of desperate design professionals who use lower fees or no fees to win a deal.

How can you compete against this fee madness?

Let's start with a few catchy lines to warm you up:

People buy on emotion and justify with logic.

Price is only an issue when value is a mystery.

Price is what you pay, value is what you get.

"People buy on emotion and justify with logic."

My wife Julia wants a new Toyota Highlander 4WD. Julia gives her requirements to Andy, a friend who knows a lot about cars. Here are the features she wants: 4-wheel drive ... less than 3 years old ... under \$40,000 ... seven seats. Andy finds a car that meets ALL of the feature requirements. In fact, what Andy found was better than Julia wanted. However, and please read the next line carefully ... and remember it, too.

Julia looks at the supposed perfect match and says, "*No ... this car is maroon.*"

Maroon does not make Julia feel good. Andy met all the logical criteria given, but failed on the emotional criteria (not given).

Price is only an issue when value is a mystery.

If you think that hiring an architect is different, then know it is not. Consider the number of times you've used architect-speak. "*I have 25 years of experience ... XYZ qualifications in BIM,*

ZIM and WIM ... 15 projects similar to yours ... concept drawings, working drawings, construction documentation."

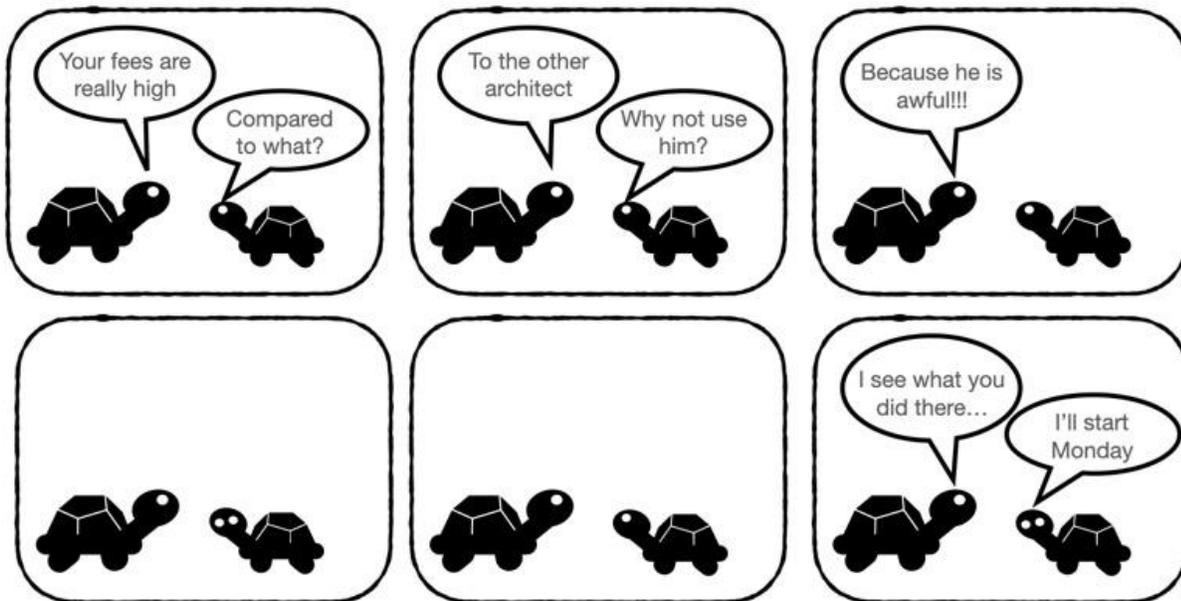
The client should be impressed right?

No. Here is what goes through the client's mind:

"They seem very serious and might get angry with me if I don't understand what I am doing ... I don't like his shirt, not very stylish for a designer ... I'll bet her fees are expensive, look at her leather bag ... I wonder what she charges per hour."

You think they are judging you on logic, when they really decide on emotions.

Life, on Sunshine Island...



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Fee objections

Speak the client's language

When I first explained this concept to the group of architects who joined us in Las Vegas at the live Petrie Method training, they were skeptical; however, with just half an hour of trying it out, they were converted into fluent speakers of FAB. That's because they could feel the power of communicating in a way that is aligned with how clients think.

Architect-speak, often logical, has its place ... but we put it in the BACK seat where it belongs.

In the FRONT seat is the same language used by the most powerful influencers in history, including John F. Kennedy and Winston Churchill, Martin Luther King and Muhammad Ali.

“Price is what you pay, value is what you get”

It is so simple when you know how. This FAB secret has three parts:

F stands for FEATURES: What a thing IS.

A stands for ADVANTAGES: What a feature or your service DOES.

B stands for BENEFITS: How your feature can potentially change someone’s life.

For example:

[FEATURE] This car has an airbag safety system.

[ADVANTAGE] That means that, in the event of a severe accident, the system will automatically deploy a cushioning airbag system for the occupant .

[BENEFIT] You won’t die.

Which statement is the money shot, “airbag safety system” or “you won't die”? Obviously the “save your life” means something quite big.

You think that it's obvious that airbags save lives, so why say it? Because it is not obvious, especially when you are talking in a foreign language like construction to people who might do one or two projects in their lifetime. Even professionals need the FAB spelled out to them.

Let me give you more examples using a different context so you can feel what it's like to be on the receiving end.

[FEATURE] The FAB Formula.

[ADVANTAGE] A 3-step formula for communicating your value.

[BENEFIT] You can suddenly win the better projects.

Is that true? Of course. To get the high fees and high design focused clients you need to be able to communicate a unique high value so these people want you.

We could use this format for each step in SIX+MAPS:

[FEATURE] SIX+MAPS

[ADVANTAGE] A set of 9 steps that allows you to define, attract and win your ideal clients.

[BENEFIT] You can suddenly win better projects.

Let's go again but take a different angle.

[FEATURE] SIX+MAPS

[ADVANTAGE] A set of 9 steps that allows you to define, attract and win your ideal clients.

[BENEFIT] "Would someone just tell me what to do?" Simple, MAPs gets you from point A to point B. Each MAP is a stand-alone mini victory stacking the odds in your favour. When you have all 9 mini victories on your side, you become irresistible.

Or we could use the FAB formula for one of the individual steps within the SIX+MAPS, like the Million Dollar Message:

[FEATURE] The Million Dollar Message MAP.

[ADVANTAGE] A process that gets you to define your unique value to your ideal clients.

[BENEFIT] Your ideal client comes to you, pre-sold, pre-educated, pre-disposed to doing business with you and aware of the dangers of hiring someone who is not a specialist like you.

How can we FAB the LCC?

[FEATURE] The LCC process.

[ADVANTAGE] Allows you to sell pre-design work.

[BENEFIT] Get paid for the research work you used to do for free.

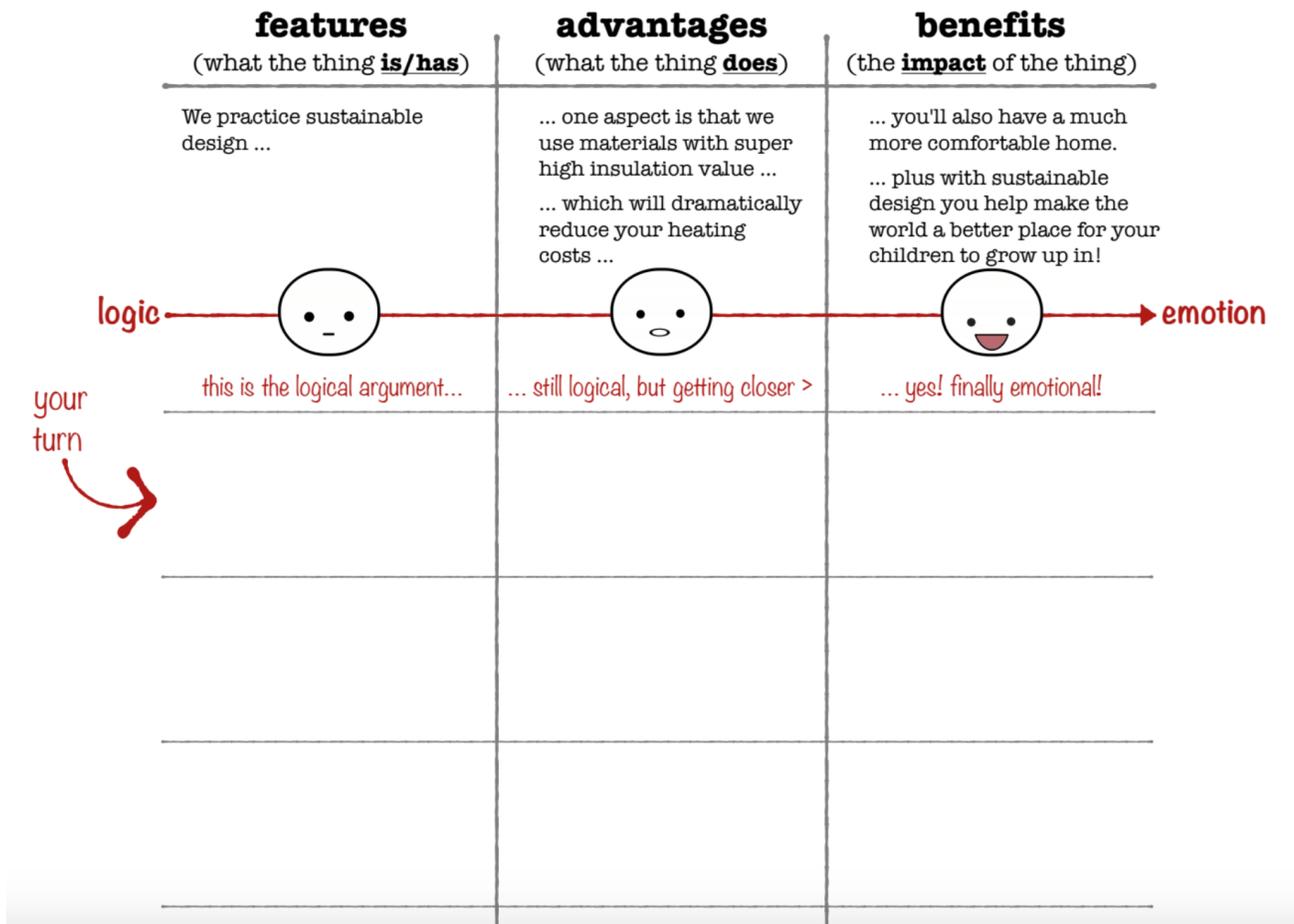
Ok, shall we FAB the "Done For You Funnels" members get in SIX+MAPS?

[FEATURE] The 4 automated marketing funnels.

[ADVANTAGE] AMI builds the marketing systems for members that capture leads and attracts their ideal clients.

[BENEFIT] Prospective clients get nurtured, educated and pre sold on the advantages of working with you and then, when they are ready, book appointments in your calendar each month, without you having to lift a finger.

Here is the simple FAB Formula I want you to use on your services and features:



The **BENEFIT** is the magnetic emotive words that explain someone's personal transformation.

Winston Churchill did not say, "We will use 30,000 soldiers, 1,000 aircraft and 123 ships to fight the Germans until we win or lose and at that point we will reassess the situation." That is far too logical and factual.

Churchill said, [**BENEFIT**] "We shall fight them on the beaches, we shall fight them on the landing grounds, we shall fight them in the air ... and in a thousand years from now they will look back and say ... this was their finest hour." Now that may not be 100% true, but doesn't it raise the hair on the back of your neck.

Kevin Roberts, the former global head of Saatchi and Saatchi advertising, put it like this:

“The whole of advertising has got it wrong ... they are asking ‘What do you want?’ instead of asking ‘How do you want to feel?’”

One final example.

Architect A walks into an office meeting with potential clients – a husband and wife – and outlines his training, experience and work samples, hoping to win the job.

[FEATURES-FEATURES-FEATURES]. The meeting finishes after 60 minutes.

The husband and wife agree, Architect A, is surely a logical person for the job.

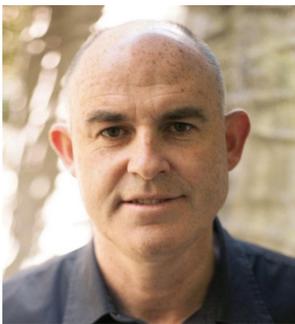
Architect B arrives to meet with the same couple, looks the wife in the eye and says, *“Have you ever walked into a home and had your heart go, ‘WOW, this place makes me feel amazing, I wish I could live in a place like this?’”*

He pauses, waits, he watches while the wife is searching for a memory ... and then she finally smiles and says, “Yes.”

Everyone can see her face light up.

The architect looks her in the eye and says, **[BENEFIT]** *“I want to design a house for you that makes you feel THAT WAY, every day you wake up ... for the rest of your life.”*

The battle between Architect A and B is over in nine seconds, because Architect B understood how to FAB.



Richard Petrie

P.S. When you're ready to win better projects like our members, then you'll need a PROVEN step-by-step roadmap. Want to know more about our SIX+MAPS system? Talk to our onboarding team.

Book your one-on-one strategy session call here:

archmarketing.org/1on1

Fab Four of the Month



Inspired by the name of our highly successful FAB Formula, we have started a series called Fab Four of the Month. We will ask one AMI member four questions about marketing and mindset. This month, our writing wizard Annette Mashi speaks with Mastermind member Michael Roosevelt.

1. What area of sales or marketing needs improving this month?

I'm trying to get the right people through the pipeline. I'm working on my Dirty 30 list, outreaching to people and improving pieces to attract more customers. I'm going to focus on my nurturing email campaign.

2. What do you want to be known for in your work?

I want my clients to have moments of discovery throughout their life in the homes that I build. I want them to take time and enjoy the surprises – the sun entering at just the right angle, the breezes blowing through the spaces, the smells of nature drifting inside.

3. Why did you become an architect?

I was always interested in materials and assembling – the parts becoming the whole. I'm fascinated by why some buildings inspire creativity and others don't. In architecture school, I learned "the why" behind the designs. I like connecting spaces, with nature, the sun and all the elements of biophilic design. It's a challenge to find the right recipe, orientation and proportions for each client.

4. What would you say is your greatest superpower?

I provide calm to otherwise stressful and difficult situations. This is important in design and construction and other situations too. My wife called once when she was home with an infant and there was an electrical fire. I calmly walked her through to avoid an emergency.

When I was a teen, I was lost in the woods with some other teenagers. One kid broke down, stating that we were so lost they would find our bodies. Or worse – they would never find our bones. This was creating an awful effect on the other kids. I turned to him and said, "No that's not going to happen. Yes, this sucks, but get up and come with me. We are not dying, just follow me." We were from different backgrounds, and I was comfortable outdoors. I didn't intimidate or berate him; I just provided a sense of calm.

I do the same for my clients. Sure, it's hard to rip apart the kitchen, bathroom and spend money to afford the vision that you want. But stay calm and trust me. We are in it together.