

# The Art Of Being Special Again

*Dear Friend,*

I just finished reading over last month's Big Idea letter to remind myself what I talked about before writing this one. Always a good idea to remember you promised a three-part Big Idea trilogy when you are only up to part 2.

Man, that was a good letter. Now, I know a writer is not supposed to pat himself on the back, but even I couldn't believe the golden wisdom flowing from the page. Lol. I must have been "in the zone." I actually feel intimidated trying to write this letter.

Now I know why The Beatles broke up after the Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album — it was always going to be downhill from there!

So this Big Idea Letter won't be as good and as you can tell I am not a perfectionist (or modest). Good is good enough. You'd implement YOUR marketing a LOT faster too if you stopped trying to make everything "perfect." Perfection is a big productivity hole for marketing architects.

Did you know the key reason for giving you a marketing letter each month (this letter) is as an

example, so you will also write a simple interesting and personal letter instead of an overly-designed newsletter that often never gets sent?

We now expect this letter won't be as good but who knows? I am still in France, still writing this letter from my "soft office" and still under the inspirational Mt. Blanc view (as seen from



where I am writing) I had last month so maybe, just maybe!

Onward ho!

Let's review.

- 1) If you are NOT different, then you are a commodity and you will suffer on fees.
- 2) If you are NOT different, it's just plain no fun.

In summary, be different somehow. Last month I gave you Differentiations 1 and 2: Be the **"specialist"** and be the **"educator."** You don't need any more, but I know you have an insatiable appetite to grow. Who knows? One of this month's differentiation strategies might be a perfect fit for you. Shall we continue?

### **DIFFERENTIATION #3: The Personality**

I said we would talk about the backstory last month as a differentiator, but I think we might go a little broader — you've been reading this letter for a while now, so you can handle it.

Here is the problem. If you do a really good job at what you do, you will be successful. Your success will become obvious to your clients, to your staff and to your competitors. Then those cheeky little competitors might even try to copy your success. We've seen it happen before.

Let's say you position yourself as the ONLY expert who specializes in integrating the words LEAN, GREEN and WELL into your spaces (what you brand as "LGW"). Yes, an unusual cocktail of design principles that no one else would ever try to recreate.

But then ... after two years of profitable naked swimming in the LGW ocean ... little "Copycat Kate" enters your pool and starts doing a backstroke beside you. What, *what*? Get out of my profitable little pool, Kate!

You were so successful that clients were starting to demand an LGW space from other architects and sooner or later, they started to oblige.

Next, imagine another and another and another "Copycat Kate" until ALL the architects in your area are claiming to be LGW specialists. Now I know this specific example might be a stretch in reality ... but stay with me on this. My point is that no matter what you come up with, if you are successful, they can and will eventually copy you.

## So is there an antidote?

I am glad you asked, and actually yes there is ... the cure for the “Copycat Kates.” You can do one thing, the ONLY thing “Copycat Kates” can never really copy. Sell on personality. They can copy almost everything else, but they cannot copy you.

Okay, so what is required here? Simple, you need to build your own personal brand. You do this by building your personality. Infusing yourself into your marketing, into your blogs, videos and articles — infusing yourself into your stories and your solutions. There are some businesses that are personality-based businesses. Think Richard Branson, think Steve Jobs, think Oprah, think Martha Stewart and obviously the Kardashians.

The Kardashians don’t actually have anything except their personality (even that is questionable).

Do you want a live example of infusing your personality into your marketing? You are **READING** it. Come on, surely it’s obvious by now. This newsletter is more than just content; it’s a demonstration of personality-infused writing.

The French Alps, the three-month holiday, the view of Mt. Blanc. The quirky conversational tone of writing. Welcome. You have entered my world and if you are still reading, then you must be somewhat mildly entertained.

Here is the deal. AMI has been pretty successful over the past five years and one of the strategies I have used when creating content is to create content that is proprietary and 100% unique to me and AMI. Things like the Dirty 30, the LCC, the Dream Team strategy are all original concepts but I know people can *and* will copy these concepts from us. It’s inevitable. We (Eric and I) do produce the best stuff in the world when it comes to marketing for architects, that’s my story anyway.

That’s enough.

So they might steal our concepts, but they cannot steal us. They cannot steal our larger-than-life personalities. Now, of course, personality is not enough in itself. You need a great product too. If you have one, using your personality can multiply your success and is actually the only real differentiator they cannot steal.

I know, many introverts won't want to touch this differentiator with a barge pole because you have to put yourself out there a bit. But if you are brave enough to try, it's a good strategy because little "Copycat Kate" can *never* be you.

## **Here is a checklist to build your personality:**

Who are you?

What is your superpower?

What do you stand for or against?

What is your mission?

What are your magic tools or tricks?

What is your weakness? *(This makes you real and personable, don't make it too bad of course. You don't want to admit that you are a closet hoarder.)*

What interesting places have you been to?

What are your common sayings?

What is the backstory that illustrates your values and strengths?

What are some interesting traits about you that you want people to know?

Strategically, work out your "official" personality IN ADVANCE because your personality gives something for people to remember you by. When people go to workshops I run, they don't remember the instructions but they always remember the stories *and* the people IN the stories.

**That's a big clue. People remember stories and characters.**

## **A private confession about using personality in your marketing.**

Most of us, don't like to admit this, but we are generally pretty boring in real life.

My wife actually calls me "boring," regularly. I don't drink, I don't smoke, I don't do drugs. But it's still a bit of an exaggeration because, in the last 18 months my "boringness" has taken us to Mexico, U.S., France, Switzerland, Italy and Australia. But I am still boring.

I spend a lot of time writing newsletters where I congratulate myself as to how good last month's edition was. That's about 2-3 hours hunched over a laptop smiling to myself. If you followed me around with a camera expecting a reality TV show, you'd be disappointed and switch off by 8 a.m.

So what we have to do is embellish ourselves a little ... not so much that your mother wouldn't recognize you ... but you can, and will, need to make yourself a little larger than life.

Let's look at an example:

**Who are you?** Richard Petrie, Obi-Wan Kenobi, marketing guide, saving the world one architect at a time.

**What is your superpower?** Arming architects with lightsabers to fight the dark forces. Ability to come up with "Big Ideas" and with my trusty companion, Eric, similar to James Bond's "Q" who creates the tools so architects can raise fees and win projects against all odds.

**What do you stand for or against?** Against the dark side, such as architects doing free work, against undercharging. I stand for architects charging high fees (and you should too). For architects saying "NO" to unsuitable clients. For architects understanding and communicating their value.

**What is your mission?** To get architects to Sunshine Island — high fees and fulfilling projects.

**What are your magic tools or tricks?** Monkey's Fist, LCC, Circle of Love, Dirty 30, Persuasion equation, ArchReach, etc.

**Common sayings?** "Good is good enough." "Put your fees up." "Whoever educates the market owns the market." "Sell the problem you solve not the service you offer."

**What is your weakness?** Lack of modesty. :-)

**What interesting places have you been to?** France, New Zealand, Mexico, Cuba, feels like just about everywhere.

**What is the backstory that illustrates your values and strengths?** The Mona Quinn story.

**What are some interesting facts about you that you want people to know?** Played professional cricket, travel a lot, married with 3 kids, living in France for 3 months. Kiwi.

Many of these personality builders have been "dropped" into the last two newsletters quite strategically to deliberately demonstrate what I have been doing for you, for years!

You get the idea, let's move on to Differentiator #4.

## **DIFFERENTIATION #4: Positioning yourself as #1 in your market**

The great diamond “invention” — that diamonds are rare and valuable — is a story crafted and polished for the past 85 years. Until 1870, diamonds were found only in a few riverbeds in India and in the jungles of Brazil, and the entire world production of gem diamonds amounted to a few pounds a year. That was until 1870, when huge diamond mines were discovered near the Orange River, in South Africa. So prolific was the find that diamonds were soon being scooped out by the ton.

Suddenly, diamonds were no longer hard to find and the British financiers who had organized the South African mines quickly realized that their investment was at risk, diamonds had little or no intrinsic value — because their price depended almost entirely on their scarcity.

The major investors decided to merge their interests into a single entity that would be powerful enough to control production and maintain the illusion of the scarcity of diamonds. The organization they created, in 1888, was De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd. By reducing supply, De Beers created scarcity again.

An architect cannot form a cartel but you can eliminate supply in the mind of your market. Here is what to do ...

Mary Monda (imaginary architect) was brainwashed into feeling like a commodity because she did not understand how to control supply and demand.

*“Unless I maintain low fees other architects will undercut me and I will lose projects.”*

Belief: Too many architects and not enough projects.

The problem is a classic oversupply. Remember the diamonds?

We needed to fix this problem for Mary like De Beers did for diamonds, so let’s eliminate supply and create scarcity for Mary’s type of service. How can this situation be created when so many architects are begging to give away their services?

There are 80,000 architects in the U.S. at the moment and many of them will work for lower fees than you. Just because your tax return says “architect” doesn’t mean you should promote yourself that way.

## **How To Reduce The Supply Of Architects**

What if YOU were to create a new category that sounds good but has no others in it? You'll instantly become #1.

Let's quickly talk about the power of being #1 in something. A friend of mine is the world Racketlon champion in the 45+ category. Now I had never heard of the sport and I can't imagine many play Racketlon, let alone compete to be the world champ, but nonetheless he assures me the sport does exist and he is #1 in his category. That is still impressive.

Attention is hypnotically attached to anything that is #1. Think Neil Armstrong, Barack Obama, Edmund Hillary, Roger Bannister who all owned #1 labels.

Mary needs power, she needs to be "special." Maybe she can #1 herself.

After a lot of questions on trying to find a niche, Mary decided to create a category as "Manchester's #1 Artist Architect." Obviously there is no such category as an "artist architect" ... until NOW. That is what makes it perfect.

Let's say an "artist architect" is one who is an expert in fine art and uses his or her skills to create "living masterpieces." Who says we cannot create our own category of design?

I just did, it was easy, you just saw me do it.

"Mary Mondo, the artist architect"

"Designing living masterpieces"

"You can live with art or you can live in it."

**Now, this may not be your niche, but take the concept and reapply it to play to your market and your strengths.**

Initially, Mary Mondo HATED the label because of what other architects might say. "All architects think they are artists," she protested. *Note to all: You should NEVER decide your marketing based on what people who are never going to buy from you, think.*

So I had to remind Mary (and you) that her clients were not architects but less sophisticated folk like me who would not question a title. Instead we say: "We want a way to differentiate our assisted living complex and instead of rotating art in the complex ... if the building were the art we might be onto something. Give Mary a call. After all she is the #1 artist architect."

This is IMPORTANT ...

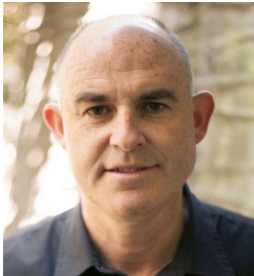
When you are the only known architect specializing in living masterpieces, then being crowned #1 is an easy coronation. So start implementing ...

Step 1: Create your own narrow category.

Step 2: Claim your title.

Step 3: Use it everywhere fearlessly.

Until next month, *"Vive la différence."*



Richard Petrie

## Your Shortcut to Success

Want help finding and claiming your niche? To see if your firm is a fit for working with us, apply for a complimentary One-on-One session: Text "1on1" (without the quotes) to 310-507-1905 or go here:

**[architectresources.org/1on1](http://architectresources.org/1on1)**