

THE BIG IDEA LETTER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ARCHITECT MARKETING INSTITUTE

ISSUE #061

34 Promotional Strategies For Architects And Designers That Work

Dear Friend,

A question I often get is: "Where is the best place to promote my offers?"

That question is a lot like: "How much will my project cost?"

It kind of depends.

I have seen some get great results from Facebook; others run successful speaking engagements or write articles that get people calling. Almost all architects get some results from referrals without doing anything, but A LOT more are successful when they deploy the Dirty 30 and Directory of Experts strategies.

If you want more project opportunities, start with the referral strategies, and only then, TEST other options. All of these strategies work to different degrees, depending on who you are, where you are, and how well you deploy them. Pick a few strategies that suit your style. For example, if you don't like speaking, then consider writing articles. If you do not have your own list, you might promote your offers to someone else's list or buy eyeballs with paid advertising.

There is no ONE way. Many ways work, but you will stack the odds in your favor if you have a strong offer and get that offer in front of the RIGHT people. If you have the RIGHT people endorsing you, then you can really come into your own power.

As you test different approaches, share your inputs and outputs with the SIX community on Slack and in the weekly Q&A calls. You'll get valuable feedback to improve. All boats are lifted by a rising tide. That's what we do together, we raise the tide.

Before setting sail, here is a quick review of some of the best strategies. Go to the video training for more detailed descriptions.

Let's start, quite rightly with referrals ...

1. Dirty 30 Referrals

You need one Dirty 30 for each niche. There are the people who could or should be referring people to you, if they wanted to. Architecture and design is a referral business. That means you need a network, so you are only as good as your network. Your job is to KNOW who can refer to you more business than you can handle. Then form a relationship with these people. You will put your Dirty 30 list on the wall and make sure to grow the relationships of that list EVERY month. Build a good referral network and you won't need any other marketing. You can thrive on a referral only business. BUT, you need to reward, nurture, help, add value to, connect with, meet for lunch, and refer to your Dirty 30. They are your unpaid salesforce. Get started today.

2. Directory of Experts

This is your "cartel" of trusted experts who, under your leadership, will form a team of specialists for a specific type of project. That is an ideal resource for your ideal client who wants that type of project. Simply ask each potential directory expert if they want more clients and therefore want to be on a list for possible clients. If so, let them know the rules of staying on that list. They need to recommend this directory and cross refer projects within the expert "cartel." Get rid of anyone who doesn't play the game. You are offering a free marketing and referral service, they should be biting your hand off to be on the list. If they are not, then dump them and find someone who appreciates the value of being on this team.

3. Ask for Referrals

Most people don't know you want more clients. They are NOT thinking about your business daily and think you are flat out busy. For those reasons, you need to ask. Let me demonstrate... When was the last time you thought of referring to me (Richard Petrie) to your fellow design professionals? Huh, I thought so, and yet I deliver the world's best marketing and sales training systems for architects. How rude of you. I rest my case. I'd wager to say you are happy with the program, but selling me to your friends is not on the top of your action list for the day. Now, if I met you or called you and asked, you'd probably be more than happy to refer people to me where you could. But, until that happens, you will enjoy the advantage offered in this program and keep your secret weapon to yourself. So I need to ask, follow up, reward you, and make it worth your while to introduce me to your friends so it benefits you. The key here is

that you need to be specific about who you want and who you don't want. The more specific you get, the more likely your clients can imagine the right person, and connect you.

4. Make referrals a condition of doing business

Okay, this is an advanced strategic position, but it doesn't hurt to sow the seed. Imagine I said, the only way to become a client of mine, is if you refer three people to me per year. After all, I am a referral business and if I have to advertise and do marketing, then I'd need to charge you more. Let's say you refer three people, and so do all my clients, because it's a condition of working with the best. Out of the three referrals, one becomes a client, then on that basis, my number of projects would double every year.

You can't beat the math. Business does not need to be hard! You need to be good enough that they want to refer you, but once you can tick that box, then do it.

Imagine to become a client of yours, the prospect has to meet your qualification standards. Those standards could relate to how they behave during the projects, how timely their payments are, and what they are expected to DO and NOT do. What a seriously valuable exercise this can be — even if you are not brave enough to deploy it yet.

But when you are, and if you have a enough lead flow coming in, it's amazing how brave architects can become, and then you can start to get a little bossy.

Try working this into the conversation:

'One of the conditions for me to accept you as a client is that you will refer me to one potential client who becomes a client by the time your project is complete. If I don't have to worry about marketing, then I can focus on doing a great job for you and can pass on the marketing savings to you. If you cannot refer me, then I will need to add back that discount to the end of your payment plan. Which do you prefer?'

Or: 'One of the conditions to me accepting you as a client is you will refer me to people who express to you that they are also considering a project. I only accept clients who intend to refer people to me when they see an opportunity'.

Why not? An in-demand architect makes the rules.

5. Referral Incentives

"Good news, you will LOVE this. In two months time I am going to have space available to take on a new project. So if you know anyone who is ready to start talking about a possible project, then please introduce them to me. Oh, and I don't want just any projects, I am specifically looking for someone with a budget of over \$500,000, who values great design, and is ready to start building within the next 12 months. Oh, and of course they have to be really good to work with, like you. I figured you'd know someone like you. And by the way, I know this won't sway you, but ... if anyone you introduce to me becomes a client, you will get my new 'romance pack' which includes meals, taxis, champagne and flowers as my way of saying thanks. If you can't find romance with this 'love in a box,' then no one can help you."

You get the idea. Incentives will get you a few referrals because it's like the ASK strategy above, but you can ASK people in bulk by sending emails and letters (yes letters—people read those things far more than emails).

6. Referral pricing

"Do you want the normal price or the referral price? If you plan on referring people, you get price A; if not, you get price B. Either way is fine with me."

7. Co-promotion of your Monkey's Fist

If you go to a McDonald's, you will be able to buy a Coke. In fact Coke doesn't have any shops, anywhere. They always sell through someone else. That doesn't mean they struggle to sell their product because Coke is hard wired into every else's product. Microsoft loaded their operating system onto all IBM computers to get started. Were they being generous, no, but if you ever needed applications that did the clever stuff, you could only buy applications from Microsoft. By integrating your product into someone else's, you have a ready made distribution channel and access to a lot more clients.

Making this real - could you provide a realtor with a voucher for a 30 minute 'Ask the Expert' session with an architect? Could you give a builder a 'Project Coaching Session,' that he can hand out to clients considering a build? What about co-branding your 'Project Planning Pack' with a builder or realtor so that they get to look good to clients. If the builder can put his brand on the front, it would probably be the best marketing pack he's ever done.

8. Newsletter

Now listen, if you don't send out a monthly newsletter, then you are not serious about building a Dirty 30. This is tough love time people. Remember what I said about an architect being only as good as your network, well the newsletter is for your network. You can't take 30 of them out to lunch each month, but you do need a leveraged way to stay in touch. [HINT >>>Newsletter]. For goodness sake, if you are a member of SIX+MAPS then we give you 12 you can personalize. There is NO valid excuse. You could pay a student \$80 a month to take our generic newsletter and add your name, logo, maybe a 100-word message, add your

Monkey's Fist and LCC offers, and mail it. Surely in four hours a month, they could download, adapt and send it to your Dirty 30. You don't even have to explain the concept, just give them access to the SIX training. And yes I said "MAIL." Like a "letter," remember those? Why? Think about it. Competition for attention in someone's email inbox is one of the hardest places on earth to get serious attention these days. Their delete button is not your friend. But in the mailbox ... Oh, now that is a different story. How many personally addressed letters do you read, show to others, leave on the desk, refer back to? Hard copy communication will destroy email, every time. If I was telling you to send a newsletter to 1,000 people, it would be a different story, but 30 —— 30—— come on, MAIL out a hardcopy. I PROMISE if you do that for six months (remember we have even written the darn newsletter for you), you will get more referrals, make money from projects, and you will never go back to lazy marketing ever again. And remember, a student would love \$80 a month, so you don't even have to do the work yourself.

9. Email Your List

If you are a member of SIX or SIX+MAPS, you have been given a CRM system. That means you can send an email to everyone on your list at the touch of just a few buttons. That is what we at AMI do, in case you didn't notice.

Once someone downloads a Monkey's Fist or comes into contact with you, they should be on your list. Your list could be your biggest asset if you milk it right. I would guess about 40% of AMI's revenue comes from buyers from our list. About 50% comes from Facebook advertising. That doesn't mean finding design contracts on Facebook would be effective for you. Some products are better suited to Facebook and others are not. The point is staying in touch with your list. Better still, building a relationship with them via email is a VERY important channel.

Now emails are free, but many will write boring emails and get little or no response. You've got to entertain, empower and educate. Of the three, entertainment is probably the most important. I suggest you run a "Circle of Love" campaign where you email a "Question of the Week" and then answer it. On video is best because you'll be able to share your personality and actually you can ask and answer it and be done in two to three minutes. Then upload it and send it to your list. Bingo, marketing done for the week. Always have a PS that says something like: "PS: If you have a question, email me by hitting reply" and "PPS: If you need to talk about your project, book a 20 minute chat by clicking HERE."

That's all you need. WHEN they are ready, they will reach out to you. And by having a Question of the Week, you are always top of mind and always easy to find.

Being a thought leader positions you as an expert ...

10. Articles

Sometimes they are called "content marketing" where you become the "thought leader for your market." Whoever educates the market, owns the market.

What you can do is map out your entire results-getting process and then define each step. For example in SIX+MAPS, there are nine steps to build our marketing system. Each step could be a stand-alone article. Each step should solve a major obstacle and therefore there is a story behind the step. In fact this month's Big Idea Letter about all the promotional strategies is step nine in the SIX+MAPS program. In this case, it's more of a list of different promotional strategies than an article, but it serves the same point. Actually in the last few months, the Big Idea Letter has been filling a couple of gaps. Now I have a chapter or article for each step in the SIX+MAPS book that accompanies the video course. Articles can be posted on your website, you could do a press release to local publications, you can post on social media channels, or you can offer your articles for someone else's publication as a guest writer.

The final point about writing is take a position, take an opinion, define what you are FOR and what you are AGAINST. That is what a thought leader does, they don't sit on the fence writing vanilla articles. It helps to have some debate about your opinions and even complaints about your position. That means people are reading and they care. If no one says anything, it is probably because they read the first few paragraphs and got bored. Take a stand. Be entertaining.

11. Press Releases

I love press releases. It's easy to get in many publications because they are always looking for new content. Either you pitch a story about something you are doing or you write a complete story for them.

There are some tips here.

Call the publications first and verbally pitch your story. They will probably respond. With, sure, sounds good, but send us a press release by email.

Don't send an attachment as many are wary of attachments that could be viruses. Write your press release in the email body. Remember you are pitching the story, you are not writing the story. Remember also that your story shouldn't be about you directly, but an angle that is relevant to their readers.

You will want to study each publication to understand the type of articles they like to run. No magazine or newspaper wants to give you free advertising, so adapt your story to be of value to their readers. For example, the fact you have finished a new house project and it looks great is not a story. But you look for an "angle."

Mastermind member Nick Peckham came up with "the world's greenest house." According to Nick, his house had a negative carbon footprint. The house probably wasn't the world's greenest house, but no one cared because everyone was benefiting from the label and picked up on the societal trend of sustainable living. Nick got his article published and the magazine got to talk about something that was maybe the world's greenest house. Who cares if it was a stretch. It was a good story and whoever tells the best story wins.

Old-school ...

12. Fliers or postcards in targeted neighborhoods

This is kind of old-school, but actually the more the world goes online the better the old-school stuff tends to work. Hard copy newsletters, fliers or postcards in mailboxes are a great idea. You can pick the houses or neighborhoods and hit them once a month for a year.

What do you say? No one is going to hire an architect from a postcard, but they will arrange a chat or request a Project Planning Pack, if one is on offer and they are thinking about planning a project.

There are services that print and deliver for you. You can hire a few students or you can do it yourself.

13. A Book

Well it takes a lot more effort, but a book, even if it's not a best seller, is the best business card you could have. The cache of being an author still exists: "If I am going to hire someone, why not hire the guy who wrote the book on our type of project?"

An easy way to write a book is map out 8-12 chapters and write one chapter (article) a month. Post the articles everywhere to get the monthly benefit of creating content. Once they are all done, you slap them all together, add an intro, and you have your book.

14. Social Media Posts

Your two choices here are public posts or private posts. AMI has a public page and a private page. People tend to prefer to be in a private group. They open up more and comment more. I put a lot of good content on the private page because the 2,000 people in our private

community are either existing clients bragging about their success (which I encourage) or potential clients noticing all the good ideas and results architects seem to be getting. Mixing your clients and prospects in a private group is a good idea. Your clients will say a lot of complimentary things you cannot. If they aren't, then prompt a few friends to start doing so.

We ran a #richardsays video competition where we gave away a few SIX memberships to the best videos and also did a #SIXMAPS asking for videos about members getting results. We upgraded SIX members into the new SIX+MAPS program for free in return for a video. I reuse the videos in marketing campaigns and of course all non-members see them. Social proof. Works great.

15. The nine-word win-back email to unconverted leads

Gather up all the people you had interactions with in the past about a possible project that did not proceed. Send them each the following email:

SUBJECT: Question

Hi (their name),

Are you still considering moving ahead with your project?

(your name)

That is it, shake the tree to see what drops out. Many people who were looking, never did anything and may be ready now, or maybe the whole thing stalled and this is a timely way for them to reignite the project.

16. Website Offers

People are going to browse your site so post your offers prominently there. Treat your invitations to get help (offers) as if they are the star of the show. Don't hide them in a back room or at the bottom. If you had Angelina Jolie in your movie, you'd have her front and center.

17. Advertising Online and Offline

The best thing to advertise is usually one of your offers.

Free Project Planning Pack (or some other Monkey's Fist)

Free Project Coaching Call to explore your project ideas.

Feasibility Study/Needs and Options Review.

Each of these things are a way to get help, you are not selling or bragging, simply offering some tools and services that help people in a real and relevant way.

18. Social Media Advertising

Same as above.

19. Offers on the Back of a Business Card

The front of the card has your details, the back is usually a waste of space so use it. Promote any of your offers, like your Monkey's Fist, Project Coaching Call or LCC. It's free space and these offers make it easier for people to justify reaching out to you.

20. Site Signage

Same as a business card, by all means show your business name, website and phone numbers, but include your best offer.

21. Mini Murdoch

This idea came to me in a flash of divine inspiration. I was talking to Jane about buying space in a school newsletter or local newspaper and then suddenly realized you can either use someone else's publication OR you can create <u>your own!</u>

Instead of paying the "Daily Bugle" newspaper \$500 for a measly bit of space to put your message, why not create your own media. Why not be Rupert Murdoch, who owns the paper.

Now get this, your publication can be the most modest, little, pathetic publication ever and it can still work. All you have to do is this ... I will make the next bit bold to make my point stronger.

Simply create a one-page sheet which is a bulletin board or notice board for the neighborhood or the industry you want to advertise in. On the back of this dirty,

little one-pager (or down below) have your own ad offering your thing and say 'Sponsored by [your name]'.

Now this is important. The bullet board only needs to contain a list of the relevant info for the target audience. If you are targeting a rich neighborhood, you might list 10 things that are happening in the area that month.

- School fair June 3rd from 12 noon till late.
- New movie at the Roxy cinema will be Hogan's Heroes starting June 1. Book your seats at roxymovie.com.
- June 12th local council will be doing road works on Poxy Street, call 333-848-3484 for more information.
- June 15-18 Trinity School will be performing Romeo and Juliet—tickets available at blablabla.com.

That sort of thing. Nothing too heavy, just useful dates and events that they want to save somewhere. Add to this sheet a directory of relevant phone numbers and websites ... and you have a two-cent sheet of paper that everyone wants and keeps.

Obviously if you are targeting universities then you'll do a bulletin board relevant to the universities.

You might need to make a few calls, google a few events or activities, find out what is happening and then dump the list on your handy little one-page bulletin/noticeboard. People will pin your info sheet to their notice board, copy it and hand out it to others. Now, since you own this nifty "publication" any ad or commentary you insert is 100% free and you can even sell some space to someone else (huh, how about that).

So cool, so easy and so cheap. Knew you'd like it!

22. Networking

The key thing here is make sure you are in the right place. Fishing from a pond sounds easy, but you can't catch anything if there are no fish in the pod. So be at the right networking events.

Assuming you have part one nailed, then it's a case of starting the right conversations with the right people. Have a couple of quick questions that qualify you are speaking with someone who could be a prospect such as: "When are you looking to have your project complete?" "How far along are you with this project?"

You need a "hook" that makes people want to talk to you. This is where your million dollar message statement can be handy. For example: "I help (ideal client) who are frustrated with (expensive problem), go from (bad situation) to (great situation) in (timeframe) using my (secret weapon/superpower/secret recipe)."

23. Meeting with your Dirty 30

You should have a monthly schedule of activities for communicating and adding value to your Dirty 30. Use the Dirty 30 schedule for this. Meeting people on this list should be a key part of the communication plan. Remember these are the people who could or should be referring people to you if they wanted to. Your job is to make them want to. Being top of mind is a start, knowing they are part of your inner circle and getting ongoing value from you is another.

24. Speaking

You can organize your own events or be a speaker at someone else's. Speaking could be on stage, at a workshop or a webinar. Speaking is great because it positions you as an expert and you get to speak to a lot of people at the same time (leverage). Your audience doesn't need to be large, just needs to be well qualified. I'd speak to three people if one of them was a genuine buyer. One way to gather an audience is to speak with two to three other speakers who are not in competition with you. Let's say, you, a realtor, an interior designer and a contractor all bring along six prospects; that's an audience of 24. Remember that when you do speak to an audience, record it and have it on your website or as an email to go to people prior to your first meeting. Footage of you speaking is good for positioning.

25. Competitions

Funny thing is: You can get people to do things that they never normally do if you run a competition. For example, you might want prospects and put out ads, but no one responds. Then you run a competition for the BEST project ideas and put up a prize. Because they are now entering a competition, their mindset is different. You may find a whole lot of people share their project ideas with you.

Can you get people to compete for a free LCC valued at \$2500 by saying the BEST project idea will win. Or what if people submit a photo of "Before" and sketch out their dream "After" and post it on your Facebook page to win a prize.

Once people are in competition mode, you wake them up, change their behaviors, get them active, and gather a whole lot of prospects along the way.

26. Workshop

You could help people think about design, get a permit, pick the right site, or understand the entire process. You might be better to run three different workshops on three different aspects of the project rather than fire all your shots in one go.

Many people might attend to try to move ahead themselves, but find that in the end they need an expert, like you. Once again, as an educator you are positioning yourself brilliantly.

Take photos and use them on your website, emails, social media posts and newsletters to show how smart people flock to get access to your superior intellect. Social proof.

27. Trade Shows

These can be great if you give people a reason to walk up to you and engage. If they can order a Project Planning Pack or book a Project Coaching Call, then you give them a reason. A business card draw is less qualified, you may give a prize away to an 18 year old with a \$60K student loan. If you run a competition make sure it is only for someone who could become a genuine prospect. For example, using the competition idea where they submit their ideas and the best project idea wins a prize. Make sure to get all their contact details so you can follow up with everyone.

28. Generous George

Schools and other institutions often will run fundraising events. This is where you put up your valuable LCC, valued at \$3,000 as an auction item. People can bid for it and anyone who donates real money to a school for an LCC is a good prospect for you. You might make a couple available. What a generous person you are.

29. Email Signature

If you are going to send out dozens of emails each day, then put them to work. This is free advertising space, use it.

You can choose your signature that automatically goes at the bottom of every email. Load images or links to your offer pages (Monkey's Fists, ATE, LCC). This makes your offers easy to find and easy to pass on to others.

30. Being Interviewed

People can't tell who is an expert, so they look for clues. The assumption is, if you are interviewed by anyone, then you must be "special." Here is the marketer's secret ... you can

interview yourself, get a friend to interview you, or you may have someone who genuinely wants to interview you for a magazine or article. Don't wait to be famous before you start this. Set up interviews and make sure your email list subscribers, website visitors and newsletter readers get to see you being interviewed.

31. Circle of Love

Once someone is on your subscriber list, let's say they downloaded a Monkey's Fist or requested something from you at a tradeshow, you now need a great follow-up process. Many will not want or need a chat with you, but that doesn't mean they won't need you later, like 6-12-24 months later. In fact MOST people might fall into this category. No problem. We just need to put them on your long-term nurture communication plan and stay in touch so that WHEN they are ready, you are the first name they think of and call. We call this the "Circle of Love" (dim the lights and start soft music).

We won't just stay in touch, we will actually help them while building your reputation as an expert.

How do we stay in touch without being annoying? You use an educational approach.

Here's what to do—simply answer a different question each week. If the questions and answers are relevant and slightly entertaining, then they will read them occasionally. The point is you get to stay in their inbox, build your brand, help shape their thinking and you stay top of mind and easy to reach WHEN they are ready. If you are camera shy, you could write your question and response in the email copy. But better, is a video. They get to see your personality and feel they know you long before they call you. Share the love ... with your own Circle of Love!

32. Houzz

I don't know too many architects who get leads from the paid options on Houzz, but at the very least, people will check out your portfolio there. My suggestion is: Use the free services, but don't spend money as there are better places to advertise.

33. Podcast

SIX Member Adrian Ramsay started Talkdesign with AMI and it gives us both a platform to have fun and build an audience. Doing it well is a lot of work, but if you are a show business personality like Adrian, it can be a great idea. Check out Adrian's podcast at www.talkdesign.show, become a subscriber and who knows, this may be a format that suits you too.

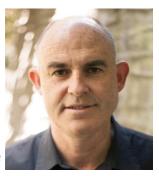
34. Offers to Someone Else's List

Other people have a relationship with their clients or subscribers. An endorsed email from them that introduces you or your helpful tools is more than useful. Airlines introduce rental car companies and hotels, visa card companies introduce wine and all manner of "trusted partners." They do this endorsed introduction because it works.



That is it. Probably the best list of real world marketing strategies specifically for architects, you could find anywhere.

- 1. Record what you do.
- 2. Measure your results.
- 3. Share and get feedback from the SIX community. Post in Slack or the AMI Facebook group at facebook.com/groups/archmarketing



Richard Petrie

PS: Want to make the world a better place? Of course you do.

Refer a designer friend who deserves to win better projects to our free marketing crash course, "How to Stand Out, Attract and Win More Architecture Projects by Applying Pareto's 80-20 Principle to Your Marketing Strategies."

Just give them this link: <u>archmarketing.org/pareto-webinar</u>

PPS: Fellow architects near you might be your competitors. The ones you'll meet in our private Architect Marketing Institute Facebook group are from across the U.S. and around the world. They can really have your back when it comes to making strategic decisions. Gather and get to Sunshine Island with me as your trusted guide. Join us on Facebook to watch the latest video on how to use your backstory to move up the power pyramid.

facebook.com/groups/archmarketing

Your Shortcut to Success

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

Fab Four of the Month

Inspired by the name of our highly successful FAB Formula, we are starting a new series called Fab Four of the Month. We will ask one AMI member four questions about marketing and mindset. This month, our content queen Sienna Mae Heath speaks with Masterminder Tim Alatorre.



What area of sales or marketing needs improving this month?

This month I'm working on my website. It's been a long neglected, but critical part of our marketing plan.

What's the biggest insight you received in the past month?

Work done once can have major payoffs. We're still seeing benefits from marketing materials we created months or years ago. Putting in a little time in your marketing system can reap lasting benefits.

What are you grateful for?

My fantastic team that is dedicated to what Domum stands for and gives their best every day.

What would you say is your greatest superpower?

My ability to connect with people and help them feel comfortable and that things will work out. Design and construction can be stressful, I'm good at reassuring my clients that there is a steady hand at the helm.