

# 13 MARKETING WITH NO MONEY STRATEGIES

WITH KATRINA MCCARTER

**KATRINA**   
**MCCARTER**

# HELLO

As a Business Wingwoman, author, speaker and Australia's leading marketing and partnerships strategist, I love sharing my secrets to creating a profitable business.

My point of difference to other coaches? I teach people to do it with a zero marketing budget.

In 2022 I launched the **Marketing With No Money podcast**. Each episode covered a different strategy where small business owners and entrepreneurs could learn to generate leads and open up big opportunities without spending a cent.

The series shared tips, how to's and stories about how the marketing with no money strategy plays out in business. The aim was to appeal to those thinking about launching a business as well as cater for those who already had a successful six or seven figure business but needed fresh ideas.

## What prompted me to launch the podcast?

Okay. After coaching hundreds of small business owners and entrepreneurs, I noticed a common classic mistake. They were often paying for a stack of marketing and advertising activities before exploring all the relevant unpaid options available to them. I wanted to help them understand the array of unpaid strategies to try first.

Marketing has changed. Things have become highly specialised. At the same time there's a growing swell of owners who are increasingly unhappy with the rate of return on things like Facebook ads. They had an appetite for doing something different which I decided to respond to.

All the strategies I share are proven. They're the ones I used when building my three businesses and global reputation, or are ones I'm working with in clients' businesses. They apply across all industries.

The podcast episodes have been turned into 13 articles to provide inspiration, guidance and spark creativity when it comes to marketing with no money. You'll find them below, or you can listen to the original Marketing With No Money podcast here: <https://www.katrinamccarter.com/podcast/marketingwithnomoney/>

**I hope you get great value out of these strategies.**



# WELCOME!

Here are 13 marketing strategies you can implement into your business which won't cost a cent. I encourage you to focus on one strategy at a time rather than attempting to do all at once.

## My big tip?

Start with Niching, then move to Brand Story and then Customer Experience. From here, choose whichever strategy feels right for your business and target audience.

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# SHORT ON TIME?

Pick your priority strategies from below and start with those. Come back to the others when you're ready.

Prefer to listen on the go? **The podcast episodes are linked below.**



**STRATEGY #1**

**BE DIFFERENT**

## STRATEGY #1

# BE DIFFERENT

Growing up, I had a very 'different' family. We never did the mainstream, from mum and dad divorcing (not usual in the '70s) to them still being close and holidaying together with us kids decades on. Sounds great now, but at the time—oh, how I longed to be like everyone else.

So, my single mum. Helen. She was determined that her only daughter understood the value of money. What was important to her in mothering me was that she raise a financially independent young woman. As with everything she did, Helen had an unorthodox approach. She had me working from the age of 12. Each day after school I would walk up to the local golf course and pick up all the balls off the fairway - every day - for \$2!

Hours and hours were spent hunched over picking up balls, and I risked all sorts of injury as golfers were often still teeing off while I was on the fairways. I remember it felt endless, the sea of golf balls ahead of me each day.

When I started high school, Helen ratcheted being different up to a whole new level. She decided it was time I was educated about money management, forecasting and cashflows. Each term during high school I had to submit a detailed report with all my projected expenses including uniforms, school books, excursions, pocket money - even if I wanted to catch up with my friends at the local shops and have an ice cream.

Everything was projected and put into my budget. Helen would review my budget submission and quiz me on a few items, and when she accepted my figures I'd be given all the money in cash. Until the end of term, I was then solely responsible for managing all my expenses. If I ran out of money? Bad luck. I had to suck it up and learn the lesson from optimistic projections.

Meanwhile, while I was stressing out about cashflow and whether I'd have enough money to pay the school camp deposit, my girlfriends were worried about what to do on the weekends. It wasn't cool. The upside? Mum's very different style of parenting meant I knew the value of money - how to make it and how to manage it.

I share this story with you because as a kid, I longed to be the same, to act and behave just like everyone else. But as I've grown older, I can see there is enormous benefit in being different and doing things differently.

Perhaps it was my upbringing that created my ability to see gaps and opportunities in businesses where others do not. I'm now frequently engaged by solopreneurs, national businesses and councils because I see things differently. I do things differently. And this difference sets me apart from others in the industry and it puts me in a fortunate position where I can charge accordingly.

## STRATEGY #1

# BE DIFFERENT

Why would a business want to amplify their differences?

Because in a sea of 'same-same', it's very hard to be discovered by prospective clients and customers. You don't stand out. And when prospective clients do see your advertising or promotional material, you're perceived as delivering the same as everyone else.

Your service becomes commoditised and distinguishing between two different brands comes down to price. If you're going to be the most expensive in your industry, then you must find and highlight your difference. Find your 'Helen', your difference, and position your business on it.

So, it's one thing to hear me talk about it and another for you to do it. Starting is easier than you think if you're prepared to take my challenge.

### TAKE THESE STEPS:

Grab some paper and write down all the things which make you special. What makes your business unique or different from others. Consider the methodology you use, the skill set of your team, the way you approach a client's problem, the time it takes you to get the desired result.

If you can't come up with absolutely anything that makes your company different, then great, you know your most pressing task is to create some difference. For anyone who can not only identify their differences but confirm that their clients value these things, this is wonderful. Your most pressing issue is to actively communicate your differences to the market.

Coming back to my story of childhood, Helen taught me that our differences make us special. She showed me that there is little value in being like everybody else if we wish to stand out. In business, customers choose us for our differences. It is our job as business owners to uncover these differences, ensure they are valued by our client base and then amplify them.

**Only then can we realise our true value and become the most expensive business in our industry.**

**STRATEGY #2**

# **CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**



## STRATEGY #2

# CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

When I took my kids to America in 2017, the place everyone loved most was the Magic Castle Hotel in Los Angeles. It's a mid-range motel which has been gussied up with paint and lobby mirrors. Not fancy. Yet it's the most highly-desired hotel for families in LA and is consistently sold out even at nearly \$500 a night.

What was their secret? I was super curious. And ... turned out the hotel is so good because it focuses all its marketing efforts on delivering an extraordinary customer experience by doing three things.

- 1) Installing a Popsicle Hotline - a red phone by their pool which anyone can pick up to have hotel staff deliver icy poles poolside. The Popsicle Hotline is legendary. Everyone loves it..
- 2) No minibars. Instead, there are free full size snacks (chocolates, chips, popcorn) in the lobby which you can take as often as you like. Parents love it.
- 3) Free laundry - which comes back gift wrapped with a sprig of lavender and a handwritten message from your personal launderer. Guess who loves that?

This trio of magic marketing ideas have transformed the Magic Castle Hotel and got everyone talking and referring friends. Now when I'm working with a client on their business, I ask one question: What's your Popsicle Hotline?

The key message is the more work you do to double down on improving your customer experience, the less you need to rely on advertising. Why? You'll activate word of mouth marketing where your existing clients rave about you, and drive leads and acquisition on your behalf.

According to a 2021 CommBank Retail Insights report, 83% of business owners believe 'customer experience' is very important to their strategy, yet only 30% rate their customer service as being greater than 9/10.

That tells me that a great customer experience can turn a client into a raving fan who actively advocates for your business.

### READY?

Here's three ways you can deliver an awesome customer experience:

#### 1. BE ENGAGED

Your customers want to interact with you. Provide opportunities through social media channels, a chat line on your website and blog comments.

All small business owners should invest regular time every week, if not daily, into interacting with their customers or clients. It not only drives engagement but allows you to develop a relationship and gather great insights into your target market.

Being engaged means you help prospective clients on the path to purchase. And after they buy, you keep them engaged and—trust me— they will either recommend your business to someone else or come back and buy from you again.

# CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

## 2. BE RESPONSIVE

We all know problems can crop up within a business. Mistakes happen. It makes us real. It's how we deal with mistakes that sets us apart from competitors.

Most problems can be solved easily and without damage to a relationship by admitting the mistake and taking immediate steps to resolve it. Your job is to make sure you have a process to support this, then take the lead.

I recommend leaving a negative comment up on your Facebook page rather than deleting it. This provides an excellent opportunity for prospective clients to see how you handle issues. It gives a more balanced assessment of your business and, arguably, makes your positive reviews and feedback stand out even more.

## 3. BE EXTRAORDINARY

The fastest way to build your army of raving fans is to exceed expectations. Mums in particular demand a high level of customer service as they are time poor, juggling multiple commitments and well researched.

Delight Mum by exceeding her expectations and you have a powerful competitive advantage.

Early on in my entrepreneurial journey, I made an awful decision and represented a client who didn't share my business ethics. My customers started complaining. I immediately admitted my error of judgement, apologised to my customers and issued a refund to all 120 of them within 48 hours.

My proactive approach was rewarded. Owning my mistake and refunding their money was unexpected, particularly for those who hadn't complained.

It told them I understood and heard their concerns and had their best interests at heart. Doing the unexpected turned a disaster into a PR success story.

Sometimes the unexpected is simply a handwritten note inside your orders, a card sent out to your top clients letting them know how much you enjoy working with them or a bonus service offering.

**My challenge to you:** work out what extraordinary measure you can take in your business to delight your customers. Deliver a consistent, awesome customer experience and you are likely to create an army of fans who will act as your most cost-effective marketing tool.

And look up the Magic Castle Hotel. You'll see why I admire their marketing - a few cost-effective measures have turned an ordinary property into an extraordinary success.

**STRATEGY #3**

**NICHE**

# NICHE

When I do media interviews, I'm often asked what is the biggest mistake I see in business. And the first thing that usually comes to mind isn't something that gets a lot of press. It might surprise you too.

**One of the biggest mistakes is people target too broadly.**

They aim to target all mums instead of Millennial mums or Gen X mums because they fear that by niching they'll miss out.

They couldn't be more wrong. Niching means you get laser focused on who you want to attract to your business. It means you're more likely to speak their language—connect and really engage them.

Glen Carlson, founder of training organisation Dent, puts it like this: you need to understand your ideal customer like your best friend because by having knowledge around her problems, motivations, desires and needs you'll form a better relationship and create better solutions for them.

After working with hundreds of small businesses, I've seen niching delivers greater sales and loyal customers. Don't worry if you feel too niched—the more focused the niche, the greater the impact.

**One fantastic example** is Prana Chai, an artisan chai company in Melbourne with an extensive wholesale business and seven figure turnover. I consulted with them with a view to accelerating their direct sales in Australia. They wanted to drive their online direct sales channel via a new segment niche targeting mums.

For eight months I embedded myself in the business and ran an independent survey of 150,000 mums to gain more understanding about their chai drinking habits. What I found was that Prana Chai's ideal mum for their online sales channel was likely to be older than those who drank it in cafes.

It was a critical finding. It told us not to chase the 'café mum'. Long story short, but by niching and focusing on women aged over 40, Prana Chai got a 655% increase in their online sales. That's huge.

The key action here was to do a market research project to actually identify the core consumer and niche. I recommend every business does this and it's one area where I believe most businesses should call in the experts. Trial and error with niching can be a waste of time and money.

Getting in someone like me to do what I did with Prana Chai ensures you create the right strategy for the right audience.

# NICHE

When I work on nicheing with clients, my market research means I look to not only get a profile of the most profitable customer for the business but I also identify the 3 or 4 reasons why they choose the business over everyone else.

I also gather hundreds of written testimonials which they can use in their marketing materials.

One big word of caution: make sure you don't niche across generations, for example targeting a segment of consumers aged 25-44 years. This covers Gen X and Millennials and they have very different communication preferences, behaviours and messaging requirements.

If you're not ready to ask someone like me for help, here's my trusty blueprint for getting started on knowing your niche and building a depth of knowledge around the person you want to attract.

## MY BLUEPRINT

First up, create an avatar that represents your ideal customer. Give her a name and start to describe her. You want to know the lifestyle factors which attract her, why she comes to your website, what are her values. Work out what age she is, whether she has dependent children living at home, if she has a partner, what her household income is, where she lives. Decide where she goes in a typical day, what her shopping habits are, what social media platforms she prefers, what she values, what she worries about, where she goes on holiday.

Once you've worked out those details, look for a photo that visually represents your ideal customer. I pin my ideal avatar—whose name is Julie—up in my office and encourage you to do the same. Any decisions made in your business needs to consider her so it makes sense to have her top of mind visually where you work.

Put aside time every day to talk to your ideal customer. You'll stay focused on her, and will get greater insights into her problems and any subtle changes in her life. Social media is a great place to do this check in.

Essentially, you're looking for what makes her act the way she does. What motivates her.

Okay. That was a lot! It's why clients call on me to do the niche work for them, because it takes a lot of specialised research and insights to get it right. But I promise you, any investment you make in finding your niche - be it time or money or both - will pay off in spades.

**STRATEGY #4**

# **PODCAST GUESTING**

# PODCAST GUESTING

**There's no question audio is making waves. People love the intimacy of podcasts.**

Podcasting has seen more growth than any other form of media in the last three years. In April 2018, Variety said there were over 500,000 podcasts in the world. That's now grown to between three and four million according to ListenNotes, with over 80 million people in the US alone being weekly listeners. As of April 2021, over 48 million episodes had gone to air.

Mums in business are huge fans of podcasts. As experienced multitaskers, they listen in the car, while exercising, doing the laundry, on the train to work. In 2019, my Marketing to Mums business researched Australian mothers and found 40 per cent had listened to a podcast in the last month.

Loren Bartley is the co-host and producer of the #BusinessAddicts podcast and believes podcasts have cut through because they give people quick, actionable tips on their chosen topics on demand. They give people access to advisers or experts that they otherwise might not have had.

In late 2018 I launched the world's first podcast for marketing professionals wanting to better understand how to improve their marketing to mothers, the Marketing to Mums podcast. And I've appeared on more than 30 podcasts as a guest, some involving Marketing to Mums themed interviews and others around partnerships, personal branding or marketing with no money themes.

## MY TIPS

If you've been invited to be a podcast guest, here's my tips on what to do before the interview kicks off:

1: Listen to at least two full episodes. This will give you a feel for the host's style - you want to know if they prefer to ask direct questions or have a more conversational approach. Then you can match their rhythm. Note if the show uses any consistent segments or asks every guest one question each week, something like the desert island records question or three people you'd invite to dinner. You want to be able to play along.

2. Prepare three evergreen stories you can tell at any time. Make them personal and with a point that supports what you're talking about on the podcast. Good guests have anecdotes, not answers. And you don't need to blow your own horn too much - if you've been asked on as a guest it's because the host knows your value.

# PODCAST GUESTING

3. Read any reviews of the podcast so you know what the audience likes or doesn't like about the show.
4. Work out who the typical listener is. If you can understand the audience's motivations for listening to this show as opposed to others, you'll be a more relevant guest.
5. Provide the host with your Podcast Flyer - a one page document containing your bio, links and suggested questions. This means you are likely to know how the conversation will go and you won't be blindsided.
6. Think about making yourself available for a pre-interview so you're not meeting for the first time when the record button is about to be pressed. This could be as simple as a 15 minute virtual catch up where you break the ice and can raise any topics that you do or don't want to talk about.

My own preparation also includes sending potential podcast hosts my four podcast flyers. They include my proposed theme, bio, links and suggested questions against each theme.

The benefit of a podcast flyer is that it allows you to control the conversation. Podcast hosts love it as it saves them valuable research time. It can mean selecting you over someone else.

For me, the added benefit is that I can prepare my answers to each question and set it on rinse and repeat. It takes one hour max of my time and means I go into the conversation feeling confident that I have the basics right. I can then put my creative energies on the day into tailoring what I say according to the host's specific style.

I'm such a fan of podcast flyers that I recommend you have one in your business toolbox. It's a modern version of a business card, very handy to whip out at any time to showcase your credentials.

These days I work with many clients to create their podcast flyers. I also research and select the best podcasts to get them in front of their ideal clients and customers so their message lands where it should.

Podcasts present a fantastic opportunity to build relationships with an engaged audience. Brands can connect with potential or existing customers in an uncluttered and uninterrupted way without any of the distractions of other advertising mediums.

**Start thinking today about what you could share with the world. Use your voice!**



**STRATEGY #5**

# **SURPRISE AND DELIGHT**

# SURPRISE AND DELIGHT

A couple of years ago I was invited to the opening of FRANKIE4 Footwear's first standalone Melbourne store. Friends had raved about the brand being a great partnership - always gets my interest - of style and comfort, and in 2021 I was saying yes to as many new opportunities as I could. So there I was.

The event turned out to be one of my favourite examples of one of the best strategies you can use to build rapport very quickly - providing surprise and delight.

The footwear brand did that in spades. It was the lead up to Mother's Day, and to celebrate that and the move into the Melbourne market, the team invited every guest to choose some shoes. No limit on budget. Whatever you wanted.

It was a genius PR move - letting a mum loose in a shoe store is the equivalent of a kid in a candy shop. What did I end up with? A fabulous pair of sparkly green boots.

We felt like we were in the Oprah audience. And to top things off each mum was gifted the most beautiful bunch of flowers.

I was a newbie to this brand although I was aware of their reputation and community of loyal devotees. The event was a fantastic opportunity for FRANKIE4 to introduce their brand to a new audience in a fun environment.

In this world, it feels there are few surprises. We find out the sex of babies. We tell our partners what to get for our birthdays. We plan our own holidays down the very last detail. We work out grocery lists for meals a week ahead. So giving a customer or client a surprise is a great way to let them know how important and special they are.

**My consumer research reveals it's the little personalised touches that can influence people to choose one brand over another.**

Amy Henry, president of FlashLight Insights in Philadelphia, says when brands engage in surprise and delight they do far more than catch attention. She told me that what separates a surprise and delight strategy from a gimmick is that essential insight that says, 'I've anticipated what you want because I'm really paying attention.'

It tells a customer that a business sees their relationship as more than just transactional. It says that the business doesn't take you for granted and believes you are a person deserving of joy.

## STRATEGY #5

# SURPRISE AND DELIGHT

ALDI Australia is a specialist in giving customers surprise and delight: ski gear one week, copper frypans and caravan covers and pet beds and gourmet nougat the next. I'm semi-addicted to it. Each Wednesday and Saturday brings new discovery opportunities to make the grocery shopping experience less boring. Long queues outside stores on special 'special buys' week are common, especially for outdoor furniture.

One of my clients runs a very successful gourmet meal kit delivery business called Dinner Twist. Every delivery is a surprise in what the family will eat that week - everyone crowds around to see what's in the box and recipe book.

Still on a high from my new boots, I was surprised and delighted when a client sent me a copy of Women and Leadership by Julia Gillard and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. It had a beautiful personalised note to me and was signed by former PM Julia Gillard herself! I felt special - marketing mission accomplished.

Tina Tower is the founder of the Begin Bright tutoring franchise business. She would ask each parent (normally mum) what their favourite magazine was and when their birthday is. They (not the child) received a birthday card each year and Tina always made sure Begin Bright had the mother's favourite magazine in every week so they could have a guilty pleasure while their child was being tutored.

The Magic Castle Hotel in LA sends back your laundry free of charge, gift wrapped with a sprig of lavender and a handwritten message. All it costs the hotel is labour, soap powder and electricity but it adds so much more value. Such a surprise and such a delight!

One of my clients is a swim school. I've been working with them for five years. During lockdown they put a coffee shop in their facility and surprised their 1800 families on re-opening. Their customers absolutely love it. They always comment about their business goes above and beyond and is always thinking about them. Their customers are incredibly loyal and refer in new customers to their business all the time.

In my consumer research, women always tell me that it's the little personalised touches that lead them to choose one product or service over another. It's definitely not always a price game. People value more than that.

**Be surprising. Delight people. See what a difference it makes.**

**STRATEGY #6**

**USE A QUIZ OR  
SCORECARD**

## STRATEGY #6

# USE A QUIZ OR SCORECARD

At school, I was one of those kids who liked being quizzed. I know. I think it was something about knowing I was well-prepared—even today I still love doing quizzes. One of my kids loves to do the newspaper quiz every Saturday and I have friends who take a geography quiz to bed every Wednesday. True story. And sexy in its own unique way.

While you might not be as into quizzes as me - although who doesn't love the competition and nostalgia of a rocking trivia night? - I recommend you investigate them as a marketing with no money strategy. In 2022, one of the biggest changes I made to all my businesses was the introduction of quizzes. They were having a moment then globally, and their worth has been proved over and over.

**How does it work?** I use lead generation technology to develop questionnaires which will let me capture lots of data and email addresses of people taking the quiz. More importantly, it lets me give them valuable data at no charge.

There's a lovely trade off and the feedback from my quiz takers has been that they're exceptionally happy with the report they receive. The exchange of value is fantastic and I believe quizzes are the next frontier in building your email list and creating relationships with prospective clients.

Quizzes are fun, shareable and convert really well. So, how do they work? This is the short version but essentially they help you overcome what is one of the greatest challenges for any business that wants to scale up: identifying potentially valuable clients and approaching them with a relevant, meaningful offering.

In the last five years, the way a business generates interest and leads has changed radically. Traditional methods like cold calling don't work anymore. Even the digital marketplace is crowded now so it's getting more and more difficult to stand out.

Quizzes give businesses a new way to cut through the online noise and get the attention of a target audience by giving them something relevant and interesting. They engage with your business, which starts a conversation and automatically qualifies prospects for you.

Before you speak with someone, you know their value, meaning you can focus your time on those who are high value to you. Smart.

# USE A QUIZ OR SCORECARD

With lead generation technology from companies like ScoreApp and Interact, you create your own scorecard. It's an online quiz that gives advice and recommendations. Prospective clients answer a set of questions that you write, and an automated report is generated based on how they answered. You can give advice and recommendations to them in an automated way.

People love taking the quizzes because they get to learn something of value about themselves or their business. If it's done well, the scorecard is the lead magnet.

In return, you get to learn all about them. A wonderful innovation.

Where and how do you use them? Quizzes are a great hook at the end or in the middle of content to get your audience to take action. You can direct your readers, watchers or listeners to your scorecard.

So at the end of one of my podcasts I say, 'For more information that's personalised to you, take my Scorecard.' If you do, it signals your interest in working with me. I've appealed to your desire to know more about how the topic relates to you.

It's a win-win. The audience gets something valuable and personalised. As the podcast host, I turn an anonymous audience into personal data which lets me start a conversation.

**Why are quizzes so good at capturing leads?** The 'two-way street' nature is interactive and gratifies the respondent. That means they're more likely to share their result, which defines them, projects a certain image and establishes connections.

You've probably answered a quiz yourself on social media: which Sex and the City character you are, maybe. It's silly stuff, but that's why people react fast to this type of content.

Quizzes have the potential to go viral and if you know how to build them and tap into their power, you can rocket your business' visibility. This stat still blows my mind, but according to BuzzSumo, the average quiz is shared 1900 times.

So how do you build them? The advice from experts is to make them narrow and relevant. Have your target audience front of mind and make sure the content responds to their needs. Make them evergreen. Avoid content which relates to trending or viral topics. The rule of thumb is to come up with a question which will still be relevant in two years.

For instance, if I was collecting information about mothers' spending habits, I could ask: what is the best baby product you ever bought? Simple. And everyone has an opinion. As I said, win win.

**STRATEGY #7**

**AWARDS**

# AWARDS

Bear with me here, any trumpet blowing is being done for a sound business reason! For the last five years, I've been a finalist in B&T's Women in Media Awards in the categories of Marketing and Entrepreneur. I've been up against senior representatives like the Coles CMO Lisa Ronson and senior executives from the ABC, Spotify and even my old employer, MARS - great company to be in.

The reason I'm sharing that is that the difference between me and my fabulous peers is I'm a one woman show, not a leader at a national brand or a Fortune 100 company.

It proves to me that even microbusinesses can make a real impact in the media and marketing world.

Being a finalist in such esteemed company demonstrates that I'm a strong performer.

It validates my work in marketing and partnerships and acts as an important third-party endorsement for my businesses.

It shows that my business is reputable.

It's a marketing with no money strategy which reaps rewards time and again.

Quick rewind of the videotape: the most exciting award I won was the M2Moms 'You Take the Cake' Award' in 2018. This is a special award given to whoever is voted Best Speaker at the M2Moms Conference in

New York. It was special because it was voted for by my peers in the US including very senior representatives from Google, Facebook, AARP among others.

Impressing them with my content and delivery meant everything to me. I'd made it my objective of my trip to finish in the Top 10. Never did I think I'd win. I actually burst into tears on being told via email on my return to Australia. It felt like my Oscars moment.

I've thought a lot about why it was so important to me. A nice ego boost, yes. Validation that I was on the right path as a speaker. And proof that my business and skills can hold their own among global household brands.

There's a stack of reasons why you should enter awards. First up, they can grow your profile, which leads to greater awareness of you and your business. You become more attractive to potential partners and are opened up to new opportunities.

You gain credibility. Like testimonials, awards are great third party endorsements which should be part of every small business' annual marketing activities. And they build trust and confidence in your business.



# AWARDS

If you have an emerging business or one that has repositioned itself in the market, entering awards will support your brand positioning. When I owned online shopping site, I wanted to let the market know I was a customer service focused business. So I sought and won a customer service award in the first year, which acted as proof of what I did.

I love the story of Nikki Parkinson, a journalist who founded lifestyle and beauty blog Styling You. It has a monthly readership of over 100,000 and attracts sponsorship from many national brands.

One of Nikki's strategies? In 2015, she was the first blogger to win a Telstra Business Award. She feels it's given her greater credibility when negotiating with brands and brought attention to influencer marketing as a viable marketing strategy to grow sales.

Awards act as opportunity generators. They can unlock new opportunities for your business including high level networking opportunities, collaborating with other award recipients and generating new media channels.

## TAKE THESE STEPS:

Of course, you have to enter to win. There are two steps you need to take.

1: The first step is to work out the key differences that make your business special. These are what you'll amplify with awards. They act as an endorsement that your business is valued and recognised.

2. Look at what's available in your industry sector but don't stick to awards only in your sphere. Look outside your industry too for bigger awards.

Customer Experience awards are always a category worth considering. Winning a customer experience award makes potential customers/clients feel a greater degree of comfort in choosing you—it can influence their decision significantly.

The most recognised and well-respected business awards in Australia are the Telstra Business Awards. They are supported with great media exposure. Be prepared to spend around 40 hours on the application process, with entries usually opening in February each year.

The Telstra Business Women's Awards are also highly respected and have been around for over 25 years. The Australian Small Business Champion Awards have around 48 categories on offer, and are open to small businesses in retail, service and manufacturing.

Do your own research and remember that it's not blowing your own trumpet to enter awards. It's about recognising you have valuable skills and your business is outstanding and can hold its own in any company.

**Be bold! You'll be a winner just by entering.**

**STRATEGY #8**

**GET MORE MEDIA**

# GET MORE MEDIA

**Getting more media exposure is an important part of marketing a small business. But attracting it is an art in itself.**

I'm such a fan of getting more media that I have a strategy to keep up my profile among my ideal audience all year round.

I always aim to have one piece of media every two weeks: maybe a podcast interview, being a content source, writing articles and pitching them to business media. I do collaborations with other business experts where I appear in their program content. I seek promotional exchanges with another expert who has the same audience as me but isn't a competitor.

And I never underestimate traditional non-media too, including Facebook groups. Social media has massive power now in influencing how people recognise and react to brands and businesses.

Before we get to the specific steps and strategies to take, let's talk about the benefits of getting more media so you understand why it's worth pursuing as a marketing strategy.

Whether you're writing stories for media, hosting your own podcast or sharing something on LinkedIn, media exposure positions you as a reliable, relatable expert. And once you prove yourself as a good talking head with one outlet, chances are others will reach out too.

It's a snowball effect. Being thought of by the media as someone who knows their stuff gives you a higher profile and clients see that as meaning you're the best at what you do—fantastic, because then you can charge more.

Awareness of your business or brand will grow, your SEO will improve, leads will be generated and sales boosted. In that way, being in the public eye is a great third-party endorsement that rockets your visibility while increasing website traffic and building trust.

You'll appear more attractive to partners. Having media appeal and journalists you have a relationship with are strong cards in your hand when you're negotiating a collaboration deal. Being in the media also leads to new opportunities, overcomes ad-blocking issues and can help with capital raising.

And, of course, being in the media is the perfect opportunity to communicate your brand story instead of relying on paid advertising. It highlights your point of difference and gives you control over your messaging.

Getting more media is the best type of PR - organic, unpaid and positive.

The only cost is your time and ability to identify and pitch to the right journalist and media outlet. That takes a little confidence but media outlets are always keen for content because they need to feed the 24/7 news cycle of websites and EDMs on tightened budgets.

## STRATEGY #8

# GET MORE MEDIA

If you can provide ideas, comments and stories at no cost to the media outlet - bingo. You can make an impact faster than you might think.

So that's why a media footprint is important. Now here's my tips on the steps to take to make it happen.

### MY TIPS

Start with a mind map identifying as many media outlets as you can who talk to your ideal client. If you're unsure, ask a couple of clients where they get their news. Again, it could be on Facebook.

Consider using any media plan you already have. If you have a podcast flyer, for example, you might want to look at a strategy which focuses on this medium.

Next, do your homework on the journalist and their audience. Follow them on Twitter and read other stories or interviews they've done.

When you're ready to pitch, email the media outlet rather than phone—and send it to the journalist rather than the news desk. Have an email subject line which is clicky but still professional. Pitch in the morning before newsroom conferences.

Be prepared to follow up—persistence is often rewarded and sometimes your first email might have just been lost in an inbox deluge.

Consider supplementing your efforts by using global publicity platforms like Source Bottle and HARO. Remember hi-res images are important, particularly if you sell a product. That also means having a recent professional headshot.

The exciting part is developing story angles that will resonate with media. My way of working out what to pitch is to read newspapers daily to see what people are talking about. I read the publications where I want to appear and work out where my story might fit.

I use surveys with a minimum sample of 300 to produce new research and I identify common questions from clients or prospects. If they're talking about a particular issue, maybe everyone else is too.

The media loves a listicle: Five best ways to collaborate next year, seven things every CEO needs to know now.

**Okay, go and get your name up in lights, or at least in print. You'll get not just a buzz but some great rewards and open doors to walk through.**

**STRATEGY #9**

# **PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS**

## STRATEGY #9

# PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

At age 39, with three small kids, I launched my first business. I'd always wanted to be an entrepreneur but worried I couldn't match my corporate income. Then in 2011, I decided it was now or never and launched Australia's first group buying site which catered for mums and families.

I raised some capital from local investors but I wasn't paying myself and really struggled to grow the member base. I reached out to another woman with an online parenting platform and asked if she'd run a joint competition where entrants signed up to both our websites. She came onboard, as did an even bigger market player.

I secured two Thermomixes as prizes and the competition kicked off. In 10 days I added over 7000 new members to my list. The only cost was \$50 in graphics and my time negotiating the prize sponsor. It would have cost \$10K to achieve that result from paid advertising.

I knew the value of selling my business was in the size of my community so to build it at such a low cost blew my mind.

I repeated that same partnership format with different businesses and in five years had a community of more than 150K mums. I never spent more than \$300 a month on marketing, and in the last 18 months of owning the business spent nothing at all while building a powerful asset attractive to big brand advertisers.

Since then, partnerships have become my obsession. I've used them to position my business, drive my profits by reducing my operating expenses, position myself as a global expert, improve customer experience. Partnerships funded an editor for my first bestseller and have even dressed me at international speaking events. Now I even teach how to identify and secure meaningful partnerships to other small business owners!

One of the world's biggest analyst firms agrees partnership marketing is not just the fastest, lowest-cost way to grow a business, it's an integral part of any serious business' DNA and future-proofing.

As advertising budgets shrank during the pandemic, partnerships flourished, according to Deloitte's 2021 Marketing Trends report. Some were prompted by necessity—think Uber teaming up with Pet Barn to deliver pet food—because customer behaviour changed so fast.

In Australia, fast fashion business The Iconic and streaming platform Binge collaborated on 'inactive wear' for customers to watch TV in. Talk about catching a moment in time!

According to the Deloitte report, 80 per cent of its C-suite survey respondents who introduced new pandemic partnerships see them as critical to their future plans.

Partnerships - when two or more parties come together for mutual gain - should be top of the list for any business owner.

# PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

**There are three principles of a successful partnership:**

- 1) Same audience but not in direct competition with each other
- 2) There is an equal exchange of value taking place
- 3) The parties share the same business ethics and values.

One thing I really notice is most small business owners see the value in partnerships and recognise how valuable they could be but are held back by three things.

## **1. They don't know where to start**

Many business owners are stumped when it comes to their first partnerships move. What should they ask for? How should they reach out? Overwhelmed, they continue to invest in other marketing activities.

I love taking these people through my partnership framework. They gain confidence in how to identify, approach and negotiate with a potential marketing partner. Then they see their business in a whole new light. Opportunities abound.

## **2. They don't know who to approach**

The key is to partner with someone who has the same clients or audience but isn't in direct competition. Think Doritos and Taco Bell. Lego and Stranger Things. And always do your due diligence: if your new partner doesn't share your values, your own clients could be put off and desert you.

It's a total misnomer that you should approach a business of similar size.

When I launched my second business, I approached a big brand to collaborate with me. I didn't know anybody at the company but did my research and knew what would be attractive to them. Without ever meeting them in person, we negotiated a deal that paid for more than half of my expenses related to producing and printing my first book.

Big brands are looking for innovative, low-cost ways to grow their brands. Your business has never looked so good. Be bold and aim high.

## **3. They aren't sure what they can offer and what to ask for in return**

Many small-business owners fail to understand how valuable they are. Because something comes easily to them, they discount its value to others.

When this happens in marketing partnerships, the business owner gives away huge amounts of value and gets very little in return.

Small-business owners should get clear about their value before making any approaches to a potential partner. Investing the time to unpack all your skills and expertise and understanding what's important to a potential partner will go a long way in negotiating an equal exchange of value.

**STRATEGY #10**

# **TESTIMONIALS**



# TESTIMONIALS

**Do you want to attract new customers to your business? A well-planned testimonial strategy is one of the best ways to do it.**

Testimonials are so important because customers are increasingly rejecting corporate sales messages in favour of third-party endorsements. As they hunt for the perfect product or service, they love using testimonials to refine their search and minimise the chance of making the wrong decision.

I bet you do this all the time. I do. Last year I became obsessed with celebrating my kids growing up by ditching the giant family car and buying something a bit more prestige and snazzy. I hung out a lot in closed Facebook groups which asked the car questions I wanted answered. The unsought testimonials from real people felt more authentic.

I do it all the time when booking a haircut, a holiday, a lunch—and my Marketing to Mums research tells me I'm hardly alone.

The research was done for the first time in 2016 then again in 2019. And we found that when mums are buying something, testimonials had the greatest influence over their decision making. Yep, even outperforming the holy grail of a direct mum-to-mum recommendation.

Here's what some of the mums who were surveyed said about the power of testimonials:

"Testimonials are big for me, especially when the content isn't edited, with the good and perhaps not-so-good included. I would happily spend more on an item if I can read an honest review."

"Hearing the pros and cons from people in the same position as me is a big influence for us."

"They provide all feedback from previous buyers, not just positive five-star reviews. That way I don't have to search Google for hours to feel comfortable with the information. More often than not I'll still purchase the product and won't be surprised by the item having flaws."

"Mothers understand not everything is perfect all the time. They spend their days problem solving. And a bad review provides a great opportunity for brands to demonstrate how they handle a problem. Mums watch closely when this occurs. Use **a less than glowing review to amplify your superior customer service.**"

**The big takeaway?** An honest review means mums are prepared to spend more on something and don't demand perfection if they know potential pitfalls first. Testimonials work, people.

# TESTIMONIALS

**I've experienced the power of testimonials firsthand as a business owner.** A woman who owns a party supplies business read my first book *Marketing to Mums: How to sell more to Australia's most powerful consumer* and posted this review in a closed Facebook group for mothers in business:

'I finished reading this book this weekend and highly recommend it for businesses targeting Aussie Mums. Really great ideas and I've written myself a list of about 40 things to action from it!

The post got a lot of attention because of the practical steps I gave. Within 48 hours my book had gone to number one on Booktopia's Business Bestseller list. It stayed in the top 10 for four weeks. This started a chain reaction of events with an urgent call from my distributor seeking more copies of my books to keep up with the growing demand across Australia. This book is now in its fifth reprint.

So, if you're ready to create your testimonial strategy, here's my five top tips:

## MY TIPS

1. Turn on Recommendations on your business Facebook page. Get people talking honestly about what you do and how you do it.
2. Regularly encourage your community to share their experience working with you. Make sure you take the time to thank those who have invested their time in writing a review for you.
3. Set up a system so that you automatically ask for feedback or a review after delivery of the product or service. Once it's part of your customer process it becomes easier to ask, trust me. Remember to thank them for sharing their feedback.
4. If you run events consider filming testimonials from participants straight after each event. These can be candid and done on your phone.
5. Show that you value testimonials in your business. Make sure you promote all third-party endorsements including awards, testimonials, reviews by including them on all your marketing materials including website, social media, brochures and posters.

I've enjoyed great success for clients by including testimonials as part of a wider market research project to identify their most profitable segment of the mum market. It generally yields at least one hundred testimonials, which means they can amplify two testimonials a week for two years without repeating one.

If you want to be included in the consideration set of consumers, it's critical they can find endorsements for your product or service. That's why testimonials are so powerful.

**STRATEGY #11**

# **STORYSELLING**

# STORYSELLING

**It's absolutely a thing that corporate sales messages are being rejected by consumers, especially women.** Instead of being barraged by bells and whistles, they want their respect and attention earned with a 'softly, softly' approach. One of my favourite marketing with no money strategies is to share a story of a client and their experience working with you.

Savvy marketers recognise consumers are emotive and connect with stories. So they use storytelling to humanise their brands and drive significant sales growth.

The benefit of this strategy is it satisfies the desire of your market to feel they know you before they transact with you. It lets you build rapport and strengthen the relationship between customers and your brand. By sharing stories of other customers, you can bring to life any pain points and how your brand solves them.

There are many different stories a brand can share. The most powerful and influential is your brand story. You can tell what your brand stands for, your vision for your brand and how you want to make customers feel. Most importantly, it humanises your brand. And that means in a world where consumers feel many big brands are out of touch, storytelling says, "Hey, we get you."

At the M2Moms conference in New York a couple of years back, I heard from Kate Spade New York and Essie at L'Oréal about how they use data, creativity and gut insight to develop meaningful stories to convey brand attributes and marketing messages. This has led to significant sales growth for both businesses.

Essie at L'Oréal has used storytelling to answer questions from its community about how they come up with nail polish names. It emphasises one of the brand's core attributes of 'fun' that they want to get across. Each of these short videos is a highly engaging mini story about how the name was created. Interactive and effective.

We heard from Kate Spade's Head of Brand Creative who took storytelling to a whole new level by launching a TV show. Called #missadventure, it showcases a series of interesting women having mild inconveniences. These mini-stories are designed "To really continue on with showing the camaraderie, friendship and the sense of community we see mirrored in our community of customers." Essentially, it's about engagement. These are not advertorials. They're to deepen the good feelings Kate Spade customers have for their brand.

# STORYSELLING

Storytelling can be used to share important information in meaningful ways. I've seen a moving presentation by Google about how a support service for expectant parents of newly diagnosed Down syndrome babies used storytelling to optimum effect. They collated data around the most frequently asked questions pregnant parents of Down syndrome babies ask, and then they filmed Down syndrome kids answering these questions in a series of short videos. Most information online is cold and clinical. These videos provided a human element showing everything people with Down syndrome can do, in their own words.

**A great example** of a business which uses a lot of story selling is Melbourne dog walkers Captain & Tom. I came across them on my daily walks by the Yarra. One day about 50 dogs were having a dog party, in and out of the river, all off lead running around having a great time. I'd never seen anything like it. Not a dog fight in sight.

All Captain & Tom's images and copy are about telling stories which highlight their key differences—dogs having amazing off lead, all terrain adventures together. They use daily social media to reinforce the sense of fun and adventure.

It completely sets them apart from anyone in the industry and doesn't feel salesy. Being able to communicate such a strong point of difference using a marketing without money strategy, they can charge a premium—they're not seen in the same league as dog walkers.

Many years ago I worked in my first business with a client called Sipaah which sold those milk flavouring straws.

They trusted me to try something different with their marketing. Instead of featuring their Sipaah milk crate we looked to reinforce the brand values of fun and healthy by me sharing the story of having an afterschool home disco with the kids and celebrating with our favourite Sipaah straws with a link to purchase.

The post was so successful in driving traffic to their newly launched online shop—40 per cent higher than my sales post with a strong call to action—that the next week we featured my son and I having afternoon tea in the tree.

**So, work out what stories you could be sharing. Start with you. Tell the world about your passion for what you do. Use free social media and you're using storytelling and story selling to market without money.**

**STRATEGY #12**

# **BRAND STORY**

# BRAND STORY

**I'm a big believer that your story is influential. As a business owner, you should use it.**

We know consumers increasingly want to connect with the person behind the business. In fact, after the home page the About page is the second most visited page on most websites.

Your own brand story is a powerful and influential way to market with no money. It's one of the most compelling pieces you can share with your ideal customer. Authentically describing what drove you to start your business, what you're trying to achieve and how you want to make the life of your customer easier will speak volumes.

Often I come across brands led by amazing people who are trying to display their business as being much bigger than it is, thinking their ideal customer will have greater confidence in buying from them. They use words like 'we' and 'us' rather than 'I' and 'me'. Don't underestimate the power of being yourself and sharing your story.

Women business owners, please take note because you're so often the ones content to be behind the scenes. You're doing a great disservice to your business. Your customers want to know about you, what motivated you to start your business, and they want to share your ups and downs too.

Your 'why' is so important for them to understand. Let them be part of your journey so they feel part of your community.

## **OKAY, WHAT DEFINES A GREAT BRAND STORY?**

Okay. What defines a great brand story? When a compelling narrative is created, it should do the following:

Show how the product or service can improve the consumer's life. It doesn't have to be a massive change, just show that whatever they buy from you will take things up a notch.

Pack an emotional punch. Humans are driven by emotion. Tap into that with your brand story because people buy things based on the emotional impact or advantage they offer.

Connect with the audience. Work out which parts of your brand story are relatable and will resonate with your audience. It could be as simple as where you grew up, the games you loved that turned into a career.

Tell the truth. The best brand stories make you believe the story they are telling is truly the brand's mission, not just sales spin.

# BRAND STORY

Done well, your brand story will build a bond with your market, deepen the relationship and help you sell more of your product or service.

Brands which have an authentic story are in the box seat to pull off marketing with no money. Consumers love brands they perceive as artisan, with a local story, rather than soulless global behemoths. They want to buy pasta from the brand started in the 1950s by an Italian immigrant with five daughters (Ill Nonno Foods.) They want to know the brand story behind their favourite self-tanner (Bali Body founder Laura Foley has a fantastic one.)

**So you need yours to tick off at least two of the boxes that make up all good: educate, inform, entertain, inspire.**

Your brand story is a fabulous asset because nobody else owns it. It's unique to you and tapping into that authenticity will cut through. I came across a brand the other day - a funeral service business - that struck me as not using its own story enough. The fact that the business was founded and run by a mother and her two daughters was downplayed in the about section and should be a major selling point.

If that company rang and asked me what to include in their brand story, I'd say:

It should say who you are and what you do.

It should highlight your passion for what you do.

It should say why you're different.

It should feature a testimonial somewhere underneath or embedded within your story.

It should be amplified across all your marketing materials.

Before you write it, remember customers love a hero - tap into that by becoming the main character. Then think about a goal or desire you have as that main character, and how you can weave that. Maybe you can add a source of conflict, something that threatened your dreams early on that you've overcome. Then wrap it up by tracing a pathway to triumph over adversity that shows you achieved your goal in an interesting way.

Leave out unnecessary details - our brains usually only retain three pieces of information at a time - and know a good narrative can take years to build so it's fine to refine over and over again.

One tip: consider having a short form and long form Brand Story. The short version should go on the home page with the detailed one on the About Us page.

**Consider recording your Brand Story as a video too. Consumers are digesting video content more readily than written text.**



**STRATEGY #13**

**BE BOLD**

# BE BOLD

When I was 12, I was so tall I had specialist hospital appointments. I towered over other kids like Lurch on *The Addams Family*. So when my mum chose a maroon pantsuit with pink and white bowtie for my first communion, you might say I stood out in the sea of white princess dresses.

At the time, I wished I looked like all the other girls but now I know it's the very first time I realised the power of standing out.

**I realised being different is more than okay - it's a huge asset.** Now, 'Be Bold' is one of the top marketing with no money strategies I've used to build three businesses and a global reputation. It's a belief shift that transformed my business.

Being bold means backing yourself. It allows us to create incredible opportunities from dreams. It gets us out of ruts. Being bold builds resilience and confidence and stretches capabilities.

Boldness has led me to found three businesses and become a marketing and partnerships strategist and coach as well as a two-time bestselling author and international award-winning speaker.

Being Bold is my mantra. I desperately want it to be yours too. Maybe it already is - if you're here, I'm guessing you're extraordinary and committed to your businesses and life.

But I know that like anything, it can be easier to say than do. Coaching clients ask me a lot how to do it, and the key is that Being Bold requires a new mindset. Here's my top two ways you can Be Bold as of right now.

## TAKE THESE STEPS:

### Step 1 Rock a big Vision

I was lucky to have a Mum who constantly told me I was capable of anything I put my mind to. More, she showed me how to do it.

Helen was a single mum who taught high school typing in the Perth suburbs. Despite her modest life, she decided to build an authentic Italian villa in our backyard.

She had two obstacles: no money, and she wanted the leading architect who designed mega budget homes for Perth's elite.

No problem. Mum invited the architect over for champagne to pitch her idea. Within an hour, Louise Kennedy agreed to build a small budget property and Helen worked out she could get finance by subdividing her land.

# BE BOLD

We had no blinds for six months or carpet for 12, but the villa featured in many home magazines and Helen still lives there. Seeing a dream become reality had a big impact on my 12-year-old thinking.

At 14, I was desperate to go to New York. My aunt had moved there at 21 and had a fabulous career running the ABC's North American operations. I got a job at Kentucky Fried Chicken and for two years worked every shift I could for \$3.28 per hour. At 16, I was in New York for the first time.

I know as we get older dreaming big can get more difficult. We have mortgages and financial commitments. We are the primary carers for our kids. Our dreams seem to get diluted.

**I want you to consider reclaiming that big vision.**

**Step 2** Get Comfortable with being uncomfortable

Being Bold won't happen without you getting out of your comfort zone.

In 2015 my mentor, a well-known international author, told me it was time I wrote a book about my passion for marketing to mums.

I felt super uncomfortable and like a complete imposter. I didn't see myself as a writer. But I stepped outside those limiting beliefs and wrote that book. It became #1 on Booktopia's Business Best Seller list. It generated tons of client referrals and press in Australia, and still does.

Because of the book, I was invited to speak at the world's leading learning event for people who market to mothers, first in Paris and then in New York, where I shared a stage with Google, Johnson & Johnson and Kate Spade.

Since then I've been asked to speak again at the New York M2Moms conference. In 2018 I took out their Best Speaker Award and in 2019 gave the opening keynote address and launched my second book. For years I had a monthly communicating with senior marketers across the US.

The magic happens when we're challenged to find new ways to get something done.

My challenge to you today is to commit to Being Bold over the next 12 months by rocking a big vision and leaving your comfort zone.

You don't have to build a backyard villa. You don't have to wear a weird outfit to your next occasion. You don't have to dish up fried chicken to earn an airfare.

But you do need to know the responsibility to build success lies with you.

**So, shake things up. Stop playing a quiet game. Start Being Bold.**

# NEED MORE HELP?

If you want some help with your business and marketing strategy I suggest getting in touch to explore private one on one coaching with me. You can explore more about this on my website – [www.katrinamccarter.com](http://www.katrinamccarter.com) – or send me an email at [katrina@katrinamccarter.com](mailto:katrina@katrinamccarter.com).

**“With just one strategy Katrina helped me implement (and took me only 15 minutes to pitch) I secured a \$25,000 contract”**

Kate Christie, Founder, Time Stylers

**“I had the pleasure of working with Katrina during 2021 to fine tune my partnership pitch. I had been working on partnerships prior to engaging Katrina but her expertise in this space opened my eyes to opportunities with partners and brands that I would never before have considered. One pitch alone that Katrina helped me build resulted in a \$50,000 increase in revenue to my business.**

**The financial results speak for themselves but what I found more valuable was having Katrina’s knowledge that has given me a new confidence to build partnership assets and pitch for opportunities that I would never have previously thought possible.”**

Clarissa Rayward, Director, Brisbane Family Law Centre

**‘The most powerful 60 minutes of my life! I left feeling completely energized and empowered about my business and clear in the future direction I need to take. Katrina was able to simply and effectively get to the core my business and recommend simply and highly effective strategies for growth. Katrina has a unique ability to identify areas of work all within building a positive quality relationship with the business. ’**

Krista Watkins, Co-founder, Natural Evolution Foods



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## **Connect with Katrina McCarter**

0427 161 677

[katrina@katrinamccarter.com](mailto:katrina@katrinamccarter.com)

[www.katrinamccarter.com](http://www.katrinamccarter.com)

[www.instagram.com/katrina.mccarter](https://www.instagram.com/katrina.mccarter)

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/katrina-mccarter/>