

Diamonds are a marketer's best friend

Managing your Ambassadors, mixing them with your Prizes and keeping an eye on those Eager Beavers, **Liz Whitaker** introduces characters designed to accelerate your marketing and your career.

Avatars, archetypes, personas and personality types help us make sense of the world and ourselves. By using ten characters, marketing professionals and their internal clients can navigate their way through any volume of client data and identify priority stakeholders (the 20% delivering the 80%).

Re-creating partner success

The approach is based on deconstructing, then reconstructing, the marketing behaviours of the most successful partners I've worked with over 30 years. You'll know these partners – over-subscribed, paid top rates, a devoted client following and always in the champions league on profit share. These are professionals who enjoy 'trusted advisor' status without ever having to seek it or say it. They live and breathe the 'people buy from people' mantra and are naturals at wowing and wooing clients and targets. They phone important clients, targets and contacts with tailored updates and advice before anyone else, go the extra mile, know the right people, and spot future winners. These stars are rare but it is absolutely possible to create more of them in your firm. As a marketer, this is within your skill set (although often written in invisible ink on your job description).

How it works

First, work with the partner to agree a picture of success that references numbers – turnover, profit, income per client, target per fee-earner (and reputation – top ten/five/three/number one etc). Successful partners and teams are driven by a compelling vision of their future that they are publically measured



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on. You've now established your shared ROI goal. Second, use the Propella Grid opposite to plot groups, organisations and people to reveal priorities. You choose the plotting criteria. Popular for the 'Royalty' axis are size of stakeholder, capacity to buy a 1) particular service 2) other services, status in market and future growth potential (this is very important right now as firms work to identify organisations set for rapid growth). On the 'Loyalty' axis, popular criteria is current market share or share of spend. Now the characters emerge. Third, introduce a level of personalisation for priority characters, to win more work.

The characters: Who can they be?

You will recognise all the characters opposite and some will resonate (as in ah-ha, I know you) according to your challenge. Characters can be organisations or people within an organisation, external or internal (sometimes the person who can unlock an opportunity is top left on that Zoom call). They can be clients, targets, contacts, multipliers, media, associations, colleagues, community or suppliers. Here's a speed dating introduction starting with the most important one, **the Ambassador** – the best friend, a marketing department

personified, without you having to ask. Others need converting and some can be ignored. See the grid for all the characters, their starting points and ideal trajectory.

The Ambassador – Your best friend

Always top right on Propella's VIP quadrant, these organisations and people are significant contributors to turnover, profit and reputation. This character is represented by a diamond – precious, rare, valuable, inimitable, hard-earned and easily lost through carelessness. Our most popular workshop is 'Finding the Diamonds in the Data' and this is why. You don't need many diamonds to dazzle. Everyone has at least one, most have far more once they look.

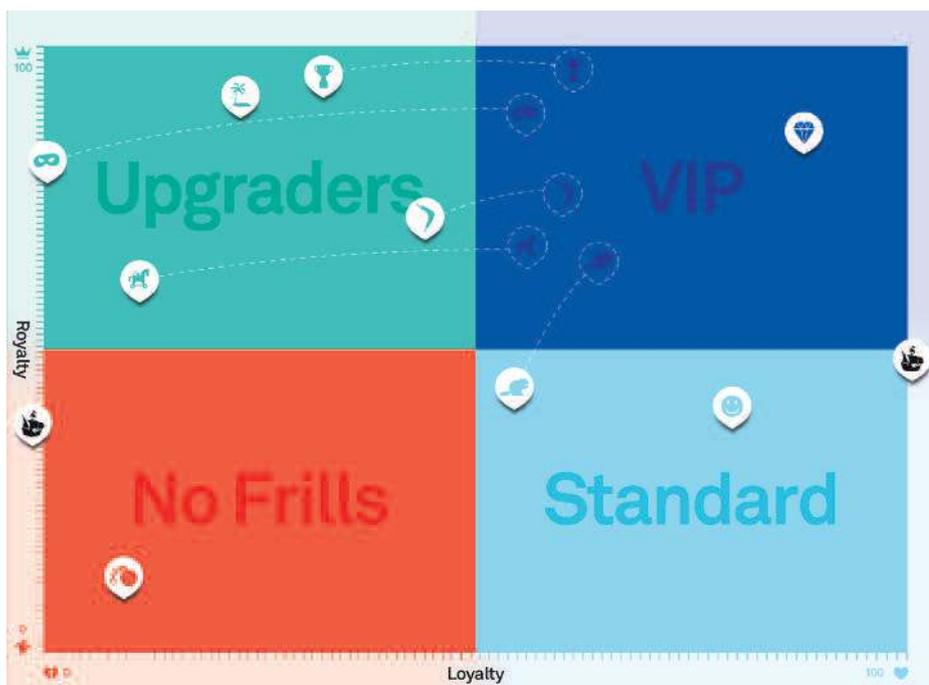
Characters to convert

The aim is to create multiple **Ambassadors** from the following characters, all organisations and people in the Upgraders quadrant.

The Prize (aka The Big Daddy) is a target that others will follow. Winning them is an aspirational but realistic stretch that will bring out the best BD behaviour from your partners.

The Trojan Horse is a target where you have someone on the inside (always a popular character). If not immediately obvious, then using LinkedIn for about 10 revealing seconds will realise one. To create a Trojan Horse, think secondments. The massive value of the Trojan Horse is another reason why marketing should be in charge of Alumni.

The Boomerang is a newly lost pitch opportunity or a significant client who has just moved all, or some, of their business elsewhere. Guess when the work



The Propella Grid

begins to win them back? Yes, today.

The Eager Beaver moves around in the middle of the grid, an ambitious organisation or person on the way up (see my BrewDog LinkedIn post, the ultimate example of an Eager Beaver). Covid has triggered a whole new colony of Eager Beavers in your client database and target list.

The Assassin. A rare but dangerous character. The most common is a high profile person within an organisation who, for a variety of reasons, actively damages your firm/client relationship.

Your personalisation kit works really hard for you with all these characters.

Characters to ignore

Knowing where you need to focus your

best marketing effort means working out where not to. As Susan Dunn, head of litigation funding at Harbour Litigation Funding, said: “By having the structure, tools, and discipline to focus on the people who will make a difference to your business, you stop chasing those who won’t.”

The Mirage is that target that invites your firm to pitch but is never going to give you the work. Explaining this character’s reality often supports marketing professionals talking partners out of pitching for that work.

The Smiley is very interested in your firm but unlikely, ever, to buy or recommend. Great to spend time with, indeed they make you happy, but acknowledge the reality.

The Deadweight is the only character in the No Frills quadrant – neither important or loyal – but takes up marketing time and money (often receiving the same marketing collateral as your Ambassadors).

The Pirate character was created to pacify any unhealthy obsession with the ‘competition’. The most successful partners are not driven by the competition (and certainly never copy them) but instead monitor and mine them for opportunities.

Top five character uses right now

Lockdown winners and losers: Covid 19 has upended the client world. Applying future growth potential on the ‘Royalty’ Axis, you can name your brand new Prizes, Trojan Horses and Eager Beavers – the high growth organisations and people who can pay for your time and attention in this new world.

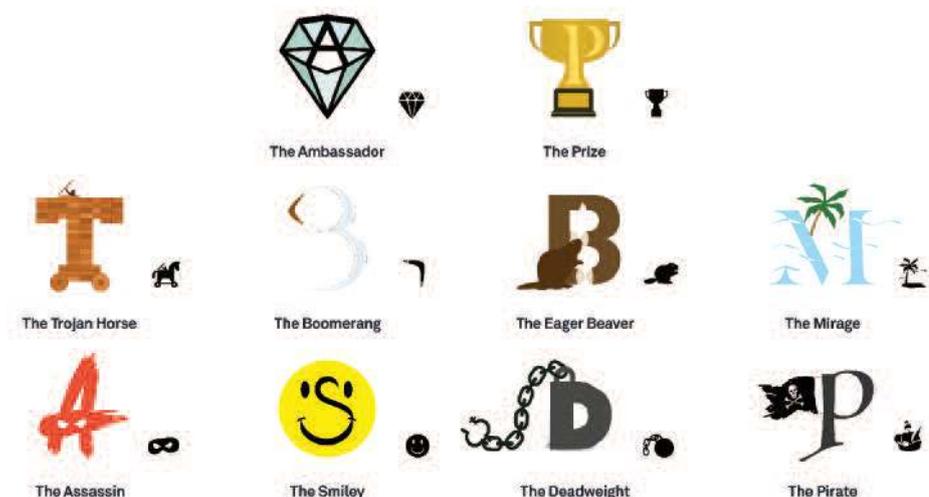
Career development: Working with these characters provides a common language for marketing professionals and their internal clients. It’s intellectually interesting, provides a collaboration tool, and generates quick, even easy results. Marketing professionals, you are in control. Adding tangible value means improved promotion prospect and rewards.

Client relationship management: Under pressure to reduce spend, clients are constantly being courted by competitors (Pirates). Identifying and working on the characters within a client business will raise the barrier to entry by improving overall stakeholder management and can accelerate cross-selling.

Maximising budget: Cost v benefit ratio is favourable as some power of personal techniques are no-cost but deliver massive impact.

Word of mouth: Activating the characters, say smart mixing of your Ambassadors with Prizes, means you manage word-of-mouth marketing rather than leave it to chance.

Find more about each character in *The Power of Personal* – including missions, game plans, how to spot them and health warnings. Contact: liz.whitaker@propella.global



The Ten Propella Characters



Liz Whitaker is the founder of Propella Global, creator of the business intelligence tool Propella and author of *The Power of Personal*. Visit: www.propella.global