



## **Kevin Rogers And The Truth About Comedy, Memory And Marketing (Transcript)**

Download the audio interview here:

<http://www.magneticmemorymethod.com/kevin-rogers-copychief/>

Have you ever thought about getting into marketing?

Or perhaps you've just wondered ... what on earth makes the people who write all those ads tick?

If so, then today's your lucky day, because on this episode of the Magnetic Memory Method Podcast, the remarkable comic turned Kevin Rogers of [Copy Chief](#) holds the truth about ...

## **How To Be Memorable On The Stage And On The Page**

So go ahead click on the play button above, download the transcript for this interview or read Kevin's many words of wisdom right here below.

**Anthony:** Kevin, I'm really excited to have you on the podcast today. There are a number of reasons why I wanted to speak with you in particular. Maybe you could tell everybody listening to this a little bit about who you are and what you do.

**Kevin:** Sure, thanks Anthony for having me. I'm really glad to be here. An interesting, I guess, resume, I am now a freelance direct response copywriter, which means I write the ads that force people to make a decision. Essentially, direct response compared to more sort of traditional advertising means that there's always a call to action at the end of it. An extreme version would be an infomercial – buy now, buy now and you'll get an extra set of knives and all that good stuff. We certainly have much more subtle ways to do all that, but that would be the one big distinction between what we do and other types of marketing.

My story is that I was a stand-up comedian. I actually left high school a little early because I was restless and after doing some labor jobs that I didn't feel were a perfect fit, I was dared by friends to do an open mic night at local comedy club. It turned out that was a better fit for me. I was fortunate to excel pretty quickly at that and actually won a contest to take over as the house MC at this club here in Clearwater, Florida. It was a really great opportunity because it meant that I was doing eight shows a week and stage time is everything to a comic.

For instance, in New York City, there are so many comics there, and they will club hop. They might be taking cabs from club to

club from 5:00 in the afternoon to 2:00 in the morning just trying to get on everywhere. It was a big deal to get that much stage time at a popular club here in town. Then I went on the road at about 19 and stayed on the road for almost 7 years as a comic. That was an incredible adventure.

## **How To Turn Your Hair Into A Calling Card**

I knew at some point that I didn't have any control over whether I succeeded or not in that business. Show business is one of those things where it takes a little bit of luck and some knowing the right people. For me, I had no business sense whatsoever. I do know a few comics who had marketing backgrounds and certainly used that to their advantage, [Carrot Top](#) being one really good example. Carrot Top was having stickers made of his image when he was still just a road comic. He really understood that his shock of orange hair was his calling card. I had none of that. I had no business sense.

I just kind of knew that at some point I would need to make a decision that if I wasn't getting signs from the business that this was going to pay off for me, somewhere around the age of 30 maybe, I did not want to risk becoming some of the older very

bitter comics that I worked with. Because they were amazingly funny and talented, and, they were also really tortured. It was clear to me, and to them, that they had no alternatives. When you spend most of your life as an entertainer and that does not manifest into a big win, then what do you do? It's a really sad state of affairs for a lot of people I have a lot of respect for.

**Anthony:** We know the image of the tortured comic, or many of us do anyway because we see it again and again. What do you think it is that tortures them? Is it something that links to memories that they're trying to deal with? What would it be maybe from your own experience?

**Kevin:** Yeah, it's absolutely that. I think there is an incredibly thin line between pleasure and pain when it comes to how we express ourselves. You know funny comes from pain, period. We laugh as a healing device. Comics – I can't tell you about a stable person I've ever met who is like gut-busting funny. It just doesn't equate. Not everybody grew up in some terrible condition, although that's often the case.

A very true statement is comedy is therapy for the comic. Very often, these people would be in dire straits mentally without that outlet. It's funny because hanging out with them or being around them offstage is very often not what you would expect. People just assume a comedian is funny all the time and loving life and it's nothing but laughter. There are parts of that which are true. For the most part, it's a bit of – I don't want to call it miserable – but....

## **How To Hold The Most Depressing Dinner Party In The World**

I'll never forget a story a screenwriting teacher told about his wife wanting to liven up a dinner party so she invited comedy writers. It turned out to be the most morose dinner party she had ever thrown. It made perfect sense to me.

**Anthony:** I'm curious, how do you remember sets and when you're doing eight sets like that back to back, are you doing the same thing? Are you embedding it into memory as you go along? What is the artistry there in terms of your own delivery and the role of how you prepared and how you performed?

**Kevin:** That's a great question. I think what I did, and what I saw, is very typical among comics. There wasn't a lot of strategy to it other than you always wanted to be coming up with new material.

We would start with what we call a premise. A comic would say to another comic, "Do me a favor and watch my set because I'm trying out a new premise." They wouldn't really say I'm trying out a joke. Sometimes jokes come to you just done out of the ether. The first thing you do when that happens is you call four other comics, and you go have you heard this before? Because you are afraid that your memory is playing tricks on you and telling you it's got something new when it's actually something you heard somewhere else. The worst think you can encounter

as a comic is being labeled a thief. We are all very careful that we're not accidentally repeating someone else's bit.

You bring up the premise, you have some idea of what the punchline will be and you work it into a place in your set where it feels safe because you've got momentum and then you know that you've got some great jokes after that. You slide it into sort of a safe place in your set and you just work it out.

I think most comics prefer to have the magic happen live. It's almost more about how you introduce the premise than how you execute the punchline when you're developing a joke. Because at its best, the process is letting the audience sort of dictate live which way the joke should go. Very often things happen in the moment that you couldn't sit with a pad and pencil and create.

## **Notebooks ... The 51st Shade Of Grey?**

As far as memory, people would say all the time, "How do you memorize all that?" I guess it just starts with five minutes. You memorize it enough to –

The first time I went on stage that was my biggest challenge. I got on stage. And it felt nothing like I could have imagined. I was very nervous. I couldn't see. I didn't expect that. I've got these lights in my face. I was just trying to remember the jokes and listen for something that sounded like good news coming

back from the crowd. Then you just remember that and then you add on bit after bit, and guys could have hours of material.

George Carlin famously would do a new HBO special every year. He would build up new material for that year, and then he would throw it away after the special was recorded. That was done. That was part of the magic of George Carlin. He was dedicated to the craft and to developing and evolving new material. He would take about the best 10 percent of the previous special, use that as the foundation, sort of the safety net to give audiences their money's worth.

Other than that, he'd bring up a notebook and basically just be working out new material in front of a crowd of hundreds or thousands sometimes.

**Anthony:** I was going to ask you about that. Because there are some comics that have trademarks like Carrot Head. There are very few comics that have actually made a bit of a trademark of actually having lines written on a notepad or whatever that they bring up. I wonder if you ever did that too, or had any sort of visible triggers, notes written on your hand or anything like that to prompt yourself?

**Kevin:** It's a good question. There was like a phase – a thing in the 1990s all of a sudden called [alternative comedy](#). It was the early days of [Patton Oswalt](#) and [Marc Maron](#) and these San Francisco comics. [Janeane Garofalo](#) was a big alternative comic.

They would all bring their notebooks up. That was their thing. It was like we are so cool we are not pretending to perform. We

don't care. There is no formality here. Honestly, it was a bit like torture a lot of times. It was just very self-indulgent. It's not that there should be some hard rule that you can't bring up a notebook and refer to it if you're working out new stuff. No problem with that, but it almost became a cliché. You know, like this is all so fresh that I have to look at my notebook to even remember it. With some people, it was BS. They knew the bits. They were just using the notebook as a prop.

For me personally, I did later start recording my sets. To be honest, I don't know how often I actually listened back to them. If I was trying to work out a new joke, I would record and at least listen to that part. Then I might go I forgot the funniest line I had or whatever. It would have benefited me to formalize that a little bit more. For the most part, again like I said, for me and a lot of comics it was about creating a moment.

Believe me, when you do create a moment with a new premise and it hits, you will not forget what made it work. It just becomes a part of you because that's your lifeblood. It wasn't too formal.

## **How To Build An Empire Without Wearing Any Pants**

**Anthony:** As a way of seguing from comedy into copywriting and Copy Chief, there is a real funny and compelling marketing video that you put out at one point recently for the Copy Chief



community. You were apparently wearing no pants. Maybe by way of saying a little bit about how you went from comedy into marketing you could also talk about, "What is it about comedy that helps persuade people to buy?" and, "Have you ever really left comedy?"

**Kevin:** Great question. So I'll try to really give the condensed version of this. I did leave comedy and that was a painful exit for a couple of reasons. One, I was really done with touring clubs. That part wasn't hard. My heart I knew would always be in it and there would be potential jealousy to see friends make it when I had kind of thrown in the towel. I had convictions about it, and I knew it was the thing to do.

The other part that was difficult was logistically trying to go get work. That same problem I talked about wanting to avoid. The good news was I was only about 30 so I had plenty of energy and some time.

I knew I liked to write and so I would take classes at the local university, University of South Florida here in St. Pete after moved to Florida from Chicago, my wife and I. I would just take all the writing courses I could before I had to actually choose a major and go to real college.

Writing was always there for me, and I just had no idea there was this thing called copywriting. I always said I wanted to be a writer. I had no idea outside of comedy writing, which I had decided probably wasn't for me just because of what I had seen of it in Hollywood and how it worked. It really turned me off. I was doing like these no resume jobs. I bellman, I was a

bartender and then I just got really lucky and got into a situation where I met a guy who was a direct response marketing junkie and he introduced me to copywriting. He knew I liked to write and he said I think you'd be a good copywriter. You should check it out.

## **Here's Why Comedians Might One Day Rule The World**

I slowly became indoctrinated and learned and was able to make a career of it. What is interesting is in trying to sort of transition and "go legit" from an entertainer to a guy who you should hire to push people's luggage around at your hotel, I realized that bringing up comedy was bad news. People don't want to hire somebody who wants to talk about how great it was to be a comic. They assume that's still what you want to do.

I was finding other things to put on my resume and really kind of burying that story. When I got into copywriting, I still had that mindset. It just wasn't on my radar anymore at that point. It was my friend and mentor John Carlton, the legendary copywriter, who, when we began in the early moments of our friendship, said to me – that was sort of what bonded us. He was really fascinated by the idea of standup comedy and that I had actually made a career of this. He had a lot of questions about it.

Then he said to me at one point, "Why aren't you talking about

this?" He said right now you are just another copywriter but if you were the standup comic turned copywriter, that's a much more interesting conversation. He said, "Do you realize how few people in the world have had the experience you've had and how many would love to?" I didn't. I just knew most of the people I knew were comics. It was normal to me. That was a huge revelation to me. It still took years.

Then what I began doing was teaching copywriting through the lens of comedy. Then I wrote the book *The 60 Second Sales Hook* where I took a joke formula and I showed people how to just change the last part of it and it becomes a perfect condensed marketing story. That was very popular.

## **To Be Memorable, You Gotta Make A Commitment**

It wasn't until recently, Anthony, where I realized it was kind of my duty to strive to be funny again with marketing. Part of it was me just getting comfortable enough in the market to feel like it wouldn't hurt me to do that. Then it became about, "Well how do I do it? What approach do I take?" I started to just post up videos on Facebook and sometimes they would just be tactical giving copy tips and other times it would just be me doing something stupid like lip sinking to *Sympathy For The Devil* in my car. It's funny because I never stop. I commit to the entire song, right. I realize that it's not funny if I show 20

seconds of it, but the fact that I did the entire song and never broke character for a second. That resonated with people.

I slowly started learning what's funny. How do I merge into now this new technology, this new ability to reach people? That's when I started having fun with video. It's interesting that you bring up the no pants video, because that is the result of me spending two days in this very office that I'm talking to you from right now with a camera set up, the lights just right and trying to do a straight pitch for my copywriting course. I was feeling incredibly frustrated and it just not feeling right. I finally got just annoyed enough to go, "You know what dude, just like relax. Go sit at the desk and just look into the camera even if it is babble for a minute."

You know what it was? It was like just going right back to that idea of just take the premise and go with it and see what happens. I literally sat down, turned on the camera, and for whatever reason, I guess because I was sitting at a desk, that's the line that came out of my mouth. I said, "Hi, I'm Kevin Rogers, the founder of Copy Chief, and I may or may not be wearing pants right now." Then I kind of ran through some stuff.

I literally wrote that video which is about four minutes long in a minute. I jotted down. I came up with the premise of I want to teach something. To me that is the most important thing we can do to brand ourselves is to deliver value. Always be teaching is my motto.

I thought, "What can I teach?" Well, I will teach the difference

between good copy and bad copy. I just wrote down real quick good copy means this and bad copy means that. I went into these characters. Then I realized at some point well I have to at least tape the part where I don't have pants. The punch line has to be here that I'm actually not wearing pants.

So I sat there pantless in my office making this video and then of course the joke was that I cut away for a second and then I stand up and I'm not wearing pants. I actually didn't know which part I would actually show. It just seemed obvious to me that it's not nearly as funny if I don't end up pantless.

So that's kind of how that evolved. It is interesting you ask that because I did leave comedy. It wasn't until smarter people than me made it painfully obvious that I needed to be using that and then putting in action and effort. If that's my brand, if I'm the former standup comic turned copywriter, I've got to deliver some funny once in a while.

**Anthony:** I mean it stuck in my mind in such a way that I came back to it and it was an interesting moment for me as someone who is interested in copywriting and in marketing as such because I had first encountered as a voice only on the [Gary Halbert All-Stars Audio](#).

**Kevin:** Oh, interesting.

**Anthony:** I had always noted a sense of irony in your voice. I've listened to that thing probably four times, the Part 1 and Part 2. There is always this kind of flavor of irony especially because of a particular part that you narrate. Getting to actually

then see you and know you through video made it, I guess, exceptionally interesting, but what I really am wondering is, is there something about the comedy that you find that persuades people to ultimately buy?

**Kevin:** That's a good question. I don't know. I don't know about buy, but I do know about that "know, like and trust" are major factors in why we buy from one person over another. I do know that if you can get a laugh from somebody, and, in particular a couple of laughs in one sitting – two or three laughs – that is a real bond. People did share that video quite a bit.

I had one woman tell me she loved it so much and thought so much of it that when she shared it outside of the marketing community on her personal Facebook wall and nobody liked it, she was angry. She felt like you people don't get it. That was really interesting to me.

I don't know if that makes somebody a "buyer." It's interesting because I'm in direct response. Like I said, our job is to get a reaction whether it is sign up, give us your email and let us give you more value and let's have a conversation and ultimately of course you would like that to lead to that person being a customer or it is buy right now.

**"Look Like You're Having A Good Time Being Yourself"**

It may not be an immediate thing but yeah, if you can show some personality and really look like you're having a good time being yourself people find value in that. They go I want more of that. I'd love to be that comfortable in my skin. I'd love to wake up happy to be me, and be able to turn on my iPhone and make people laugh or share these bizarre thoughts I have.

I think it does make people buy, but not immediately and certainly not in every market. When you're talking about healthcare or health supplements or things like that, outside of male enhancement products that have been able to use humor occasionally, there's not a lot of funny going on in those subjects. If you're marketing and you're teaching people how to do what is ultimately at least a 50 percent creative endeavor, which is like write better sales copy, guys like me, Frank Kern and others have a pretty good license to let loose and have some fun.

**Anthony:** I'm really glad you made this distinction between buying and knowing and liking and trusting and then deepening a relationship towards having a financial transaction because this to me has a lot to do with making yourself memorable with many touches over the long haul and in a way that hopefully to basically quote Frank Kern that's "always cool," but still moving towards the sale.

You know, so many people complain about sleazy marketers and all the sales tactics that assault us thousands of times a day. There certainly are those kinds of people in that world. How do we make that many touches that are sometimes necessary to

move towards the financial traction of the "know, like and trust?" Knowing that we cannot 100 percent not insult some people or offend some people or annoy some people, but what is the fine line there so that we're remembered but not rejected so that when that moment comes when the person is readily to buy that they think of you.

## **Do You Know What You Stand For?**

**Kevin:** Another great question. I think part of it is what you just said in that we can't please everybody. Some people are going to reject us. I would take that further and say decide up front who you would want to be rejected by. Because if you are, as the great [Gary Bencivenga](#) said, (I don't know if it was his quote but he emphasized the quote), "If you are not against something, what are you for?" I am actually totally screwing that up. I don't remember how he said it. Basically, you have to have a rally cry.

You have to let people know this is the enemy. This is who this is not for. You look at a copywriting colleague of mine, [Colin Theriot](#), who has a thing called the *Cult of Copy*, 14,000 members in a closed group. Now not all loyal followers but 14,000 people requesting to join a group about copywriting. Pretty amazing feat, right?

**Anthony:** Right.



**Kevin:** Colin is constantly reminding people who that group is not for. It's not for the timid. There's going to be a lot of language and there's going to be things that make people uncomfortable, and if it's not for you, no problem but never, never tell me not to do these things, because you just don't get it. So he's against are the people who don't get it or feel so righteous and indignant that they need to scold him or recommend to him that he should tone it down or these things. Those are the opportunities he sees to attack. It only strengthens his bond with his followers.

That's probably an extreme case of a guy who like honestly not only doesn't care if you are not interested but goes after people who raise their hand that explain why they're not. That doesn't work in every market, but if you just allow yourself the freedom to be yourself and not hold back, and that doesn't mean you have to swear.

## **Why Are Some Words Offensive?**

I don't swear much. I don't know why, Anthony, I as I mature, because I'll be honest with you, around the house I swear a lot. I'm sure I'm looser with language with my children than most other parents would be, but to me, I take sort of the George Carlin approach because we talk about why are some words dirty. Why are some words offensive? We don't get it. At the same time, something in me, there is a filter like in my

podcasts, one of guests on podcasts my default is to not swear for whatever reason. I don't know why, but I point that out to say that it doesn't mean that you have to swear or go out of your way to be edgy or annoying.

Take a minute, I would say to anybody with a product, anybody who wants to build a following, take a minute and open up a notebook and say who am I for and who am I for not. Who does not qualify to be in this group, this tribe I'm building and go out of your way to point those people out? Not in a judgmental way, but in a way that the people who do belong will feel strengthened to identify that with you.

**Anthony:** It's a good life principal for sure in in many areas. I wonder, you know, speaking about I think what is sometimes called repulsion marketing so that you're attracting the people that you want, I want to mention your podcast, [The Truth About Marketing](#) so people can look it up and it seems like a good example. There is an [episode that you recorded with Ben Settle](#) who sort of has that kind of down pat, you know, defining who is with him and who isn't with him.

**Kevin:** Yes, a big part of his marketing. Almost every email has some shade of that. It's very strong to him.

**Anthony:** So I just mention that to people listening that your podcast is called the [Truth About Marketing](#) and that would be a great example of that to listen to and remember some principals from.

Speaking of podcasts, you're also involved with in Psych

Insights with John Carlton who you already mentioned. There is one particular episode on that podcast called [How to be a Damned Good Road Dog & Sneak Into "Insider" Status](#) and it connects to something that you've talked about on The Truth About Marketing when you were discussing how to impress Michael Jordan.

What I like about all these episodes combined, and that really switches certain things on in my mind, is that you're teaching through examples about getting it wrong when you're trying to connect with influencers and that is the opposite of repulsion marketing.

That's where you're repulsing people with, you know, not being consciously aware of mistakes that you are making, or just being kind of awkward. I know I'm often an awkward person. I wonder, first, what do you think if you could define them or list them some of the wrong ways that rookies try to get the attention of a influencer and wind up making themselves forgettable by that person or disregarded and maybe not forgotten but put on the "black list."

## **How To Be Socially Awkward And An Epic Failure ... Guaranteed!**

**Kevin:** Wow, I'm loving these questions man. I have a great example of this. What is interesting is this is sitting on my desk now for months because I've been waiting to teach this. One

classic way of doing a poor job of getting the attention of an influencer is to kick the door in. I always coach people to be confident and sort of take the reigns of their business and all that and not wait for permission to go forth and be an expert, because there is always somebody who needs to learn what they know.

Being cocky – John Carlton has told this story a few times on our podcast. It is a great example. When Gary Halbert was his mentor and they were very close friends and when they would do live events they would have a lot of fun with each other and they would bust each other's balls and do a lot of that from the stage.

He said, "Once an event there would be that guy who thought the way to come bond with them would be to walk up to them and the bust Gary's balls." It was an epic fail every time. That's a sure sign of showing that you just don't get the joke. You don't recognize and appreciate that that's a bond that only happens after a certain comfort level between two people has been achieved. That's a classic.

Then I received a letter from somebody in three different ways: it was emailed to me, it was hard mailed to my house, and it was hard mailed to my office. This is somebody who clearly believes that they've figured it out, they've really nailed it, and all they need to do is get this in front of me. I've never responded to this person because of the first line of the letter.

It says, "Dear Kevin, I need your help. Now I know that sounds selfish so I'm going to offer to help you." Now that's probably

supposed to be what Frank Kern would call a pattern interrupt because maybe he would think most people who would write to me would start by gloating or trying to flatter me or something.

It doesn't work for a few reasons. Of course, it did get me to read it. If somebody sends you a letter, you know, that is usually enough to get you to read it. He was just so cocksure in how he was offering to help me, and he made so many different assumptions about whether that would actually be valuable to me or not without ever asking, "Hey, would this be valuable to you?" It made me instantly discount him as somebody I would ever want to invest time in or reply to. I think the worst thing you can do is (a) ever make assumptions, or (b) try to open with the joke that can only exist after you've been friends for a while.

I'll tell you another great story based on this. Do you know who [Mark Ford](#) is? He's one of the great copywriters. He doesn't get credit for it. He's also known as Michael Masterson and he wrote a course called the [Accelerated Guide to Six-Figure Copywriting](#) and when I started it was the only course out there really on copywriting. The guy is amazingly brilliant. He runs a thing now called the *Palm Beach Letter* and he was a big player in [Agora Publishing](#).

Anyway, the first time I met Mark Ford it was outside of a conference and every time the guy would stop and talk to one person a group would quickly form around him because he's a very magnetic person. In such a group, a guy came up to him and he said, "Mr. Ford, I have a question if you don't mind."

He said, "Sure, what's up?"

The guy said, "You know, I've always heard that the best way to connect with an influencer is to offer to help them, but I've been walking up to some of the influencers and saying hi, I'm Larry, how can I help you, and they just look at me funny and it doesn't go anywhere. It feels awkward."

Mark said, "Well, what is it you do and how could you help somebody like Clayton Makepeace that you've just had this encounter with?"

He goes, "Yeah, that's the thing. I'm not really sure. I'm just starting out in the business. In fact, that's what he asked me and I didn't have a good answer for him."

Mark said, "Well that's the problem. You don't even know what you do yet."

The point of going up and offering to help somebody is to know that (a) you really can help them and (b) first make sure that it's something they need or have interest in. I always remember that story and I thought it was really funny that people just take the really core meaning of the device and then go out and try to implement it and are shocked when it doesn't work.

## **How To *Really* Get The Attention Of An Influencer**

I will give you just as an alternative what I think is a great way to get in front of an influencer and what I teach the freelancers that I coach. I say, "Look, if you have somebody who is an active marketer, just do a case study on a piece of their advertising and teach other people what you see going on in the piece. Show what you know. Showcase your own expertise through the lens of what you admire about their copy and make sure that gets in front of them."

When they see that, it's kind of like hearing your name – you can't not listen. If somebody says, "Hey, you know, this copywriter did a breakdown of one of your ads." Of course, they are going to go look at it and if they're impressed, they're going to call you. I promise you because they are always looking for copywriters.

That's a really great way to get results in advance and display only your value and sort of generously give to somebody. Even though they never asked, but you also never asked them for anything. You don't send it to them and go, "Hey I did this breakdown of one your ads. Hopefully you'll learn something from it! You idiot. You were missing these four key factors that I call dah, dah, dah."

Just teach generously to other people using their stuff and they'll think wow this person is cool man. All they want to do is teach and I happen to agree with what they're teaching so why I don't I get on the phone with this person. Suddenly you're equals instead of some guy hanging out by their doorstep.

**Anthony:** With this alternative example that you gave, what is

an example whether you either have personally or through the mechanisms of the Internet created results in advance for people as part of making yourself memorable and moving forward towards goals that you have for yourself?

**Kevin:** Probably the best example would be the book, *The 60 Second Sales Hook*. Because the whole point of the book, like I mentioned earlier, is I took a joke formula which is relevant to my story. Then I show people in a very short (it's only a 50-page book that sort of gets right to the point and talks about story) and I give them the device to write their story and use this formula to make it really effective.

That was a big turning point in my career because anyone who read that book and did the exercise was instantly compelled to share it with me sort of as a thank you and because it really did create a special moment for them. A lot of times, it was the first time anybody ever wrote anything that actually looked like copy and worked like copy. People who just thought they couldn't write their own copy. They would of course naturally also want my feed back and see if – or maybe they would be stuck and say here's what I've got but I feel like it's missing something. I was giving them results in advance but I was also opening the door for them to want more from me.

I found that was a great opportunity because with that opportunity I could kind of do whatever I wanted. I did everything from offer 20-minute what I would call sales hook perfection sessions for like \$350.00. I realized that was unscalable and then that evolved into what is now Copy Chief



because it was the simple premise of I'm teaching the same things over and over to people one-on-one, what if I could just let a bunch of other people watch that lesson and learn from it and implement it in their own stuff. It would very often solve their problem for a lot less money and deliver similar value. That is how Copy Chief was born and that's sort of the premise of any effective membership community I think.

**Anthony:** Would you think it's fair to say that an effectively memorable marketing campaign essentially creates a kind of ecosystem?

## **Always Be Teaching**

**Kevin:** Yeah, that's a good way to put it. I guess so, yeah. I'd say that's a fair thing to say, if the campaign is teaching along the way. This is why I say, "always be teaching." Teaching is everything. If one of your top priorities for your marketing campaign is to deliver actionable value to anybody who comes into the funnel, the campaign, then you absolutely are creating an ecosystem because especially on Facebook and anywhere if you have a site dedicated to it, people are naturally going to share something cool that they're value from.

**Anthony:** Well, one thing that I wanted to talk to you a little about is the actual use of words. We've already been touching upon it with comedy and it's come up a few times the idea of

having structures and formulas and sort of setting something up so that it almost falls into place later when you come to the punch line. People listening to this may not be familiar with copywriting but we know that there are some particular structures like AIDA and related acronyms. How could you describe those kind of structures even if it is just one or two of them and how a person absorbs them into their memory so they can sort of use it on autopilot or using a crib sheet or something like that but still have an authentic ability to write according to structure?

**Kevin:** I sure you can educate me a lot more on this in regards to how memory works, but I think the best way to do it is not to just recognize a formula but to immerse yourself in the formula. Sort of like what I mentioned about the book being so effective for people because it gives them a very simple formula and then they're inclined to do it, to use it. It's sort of fun to use and everybody has a story so they are instantly qualified to use this. They don't need to go do research or anything like that first. Then they immerse in it.

## **The Insider's Guide To Sales Hooks**

Part of why that took off for me was that people began to take ownership of the formula. It's the ISDR (identity, struggle, discovery, result). People would call it that ISDR or the KLT formula (know, like, and trust formula). Because they immersed

in it, they knew it and they took ownership of it.

What else was cool, what I never would have expected, was people started to recognize it out in the wild. They would be watching a TV commercial and they would go that was *The 60 Second Sales Hook*. They would send me a clip of the TV commercial or they would take a photo of an ad in a magazine and they go look at this. It's *The 60 Second Sales Hook*. It was super cool. I think if it had not been for the fact that it was so easy to immerse yourself in that formula that never would have happened because like most things people would have nodded at it and said that makes sense and then just moved on to the next shiny object.

**Anthony:** I mean it is such a fascinating world and there is so much depth to it all. You mentioned Gary Halbert before, and speaking of depth, he had this idea of neurological imprinting which is something you could perhaps explain better in terms of actually writing out either headlines again and again or entire sales letters. Is that something that you've ever done or what do you think is the logic behind that.

**Kevin:** Yeah, it is something I did early on. It was one of the exercises in that course I mentioned, the Michael Masterson course. I found it useful but I also personally kind of got bored with it quick. Other people I know it's actually become a bit of a cottage industry. There's a service that does only that. I don't know if there's a fee for it or not. But essentially they send out a letter, a sales letter every day and then your job is to write it out by hand. They have kind of built a community around it. It's a

very popular thing to do. Occasionally, I question if that becomes for people, you know, they feel like okay I did my copywriting today but all they're really doing is copying other people's copy and I think there is value in that but it also could be a trap.

What I recommend to people and it was recommended to me as rote learning. As I understand it, it sort goes back to like a Greek philosophy of how to learn just by doing something over and over and over and does sort of imprint it on your brain and become an instinct. Famously other writers have done this. Hunter S. Thompson handwrote Hemingway he said just because he didn't want to write like Hemingway. He just wanted to feel viscerally what it was it like to write on that level. I think there's definitely value in that.

Again, I mention Gary Bencivenga, who is pretty commonly regarded as the best ever direct response copywriter. He gives a great piece of advice about a similar thing. His advice is to read a great ad every day, and not just read it, but as you are reading it, ask yourself, "Okay, what's one thing I would change about this ad that I think would make it convert even better than it did?" To me that's the real power. So I recommend to people if you're going to hand copy great sales letters, headlines, stuff and bullets, add that to it. Every time you write a headline, go, "Is there a word I could change here? Is there a line I could add to this that I think would actually make it better?" You'll begin to recognize that some things are super perfect the way they are.

## The #1 Question You Need To Ask Your DNA

John Carlton famously wrote long headlines but you could not replace a single word in them. That's something to study.

I think it is very effective. I don't know the exact science as to why it works. I guess, again, immersing in something that is quality, it forces you to recognize what is good about it. I think the real power is in asking yourself, "How can I, personally, me with my unique DNA, what would I change about this that I think might make it even better."

**Anthony:** I think that's a great way of approaching it. Maybe if I can offer something to you to take back to Copy Chief. There's a real interesting guy named Kenneth Goldsmith and he runs something called "Uncreativity Courses." There's actually a YouTube video, I can send you a link later and maybe you can share it around where he talks about how he gets his students to pick something to rewrite, to retype essentially. He says the surprise assignment behind the assignment is for them to write an essay about why they chose that particular thing to torture themselves to type through. That's where the insight is. It is in the reflection of the repetitive action. That's kind of the connection to Greek philosophy that you were mentioning. How do we derive insight from what it is that we chose to repeat? The same thing with Zen archery and so forth, it's not so much the repetition as such, but the reflection on the repetition.

**Kevin:** Wow, love that. That's great. What's the name?

**Anthony:** Kenneth Goldsmith. He gave a speech in the White House. It is the most hilarious thing in the world when you hear him saying to Ms. Obama that I think students should be retyping famous pieces of literature and in fact that's what they do and the look on their faces is completely, like all these old biddies that are in the White House for poetry day. I will send you a link.

**Kevin:** I'll definitely share that. I love it. That's great. Thank you.

**Anthony:** It's awesome. This has been really great. I wondered if I could pick your brain with a question for the people listening to this who aren't going to become copywriters, but they aspire to get great jobs and have amazing careers and they need to write compelling resumes. As someone who relies to a large extent on the written word, what advice would you give to someone sending out applications for jobs that strictly require their details in print. How can they not kick down the door but get remembered and ideally called in for an interview so that door is opened?

**Kevin:** I've got to be one of the least qualified person ever to talk about how to write a resume. I'm like proudly unhireable. I

will say, and I've heard that it's basically computers scanning resumes for certain keywords and that's how you ever make the pile. The only place I could offer advice is on a cover letter perhaps. The advice I would give for that is speak to the reader like the human being they are.

Cover letters that I've seen are either desperately boring because they are just trying so hard to sound professional. It's like mission statements. Companies' mission statements are typically – you are literally asleep by the fourth word.

Compare that to something like *Dollar Shave Club*. That famous video, eight million views on an ad. Why? Because the guy just kept it real and made it funny and told you everything you needed to know in a very transparent and entertaining way.

Humor doesn't belong everywhere. I wouldn't try to be funny, but if you could be real. You have got to figure these people are just scanning these cover letters over and over and over, and if you can be the one that makes them slow down their reading and go, "Huh, oh, that's interesting," and sound like somebody they can relate to or a niece or a nephew or a friend or someone they care about.

## The Human Elements You Should Never Forget

There's a reason C-level executives go to lunch with the people they go to lunch with by choice on Friday or whatever. It's not always business. People are drawn to other people. We're all human. I think that's one of the biggest mistakes we make saying like B2B copywriting, which essentially this is kind of what this would be. We are so bent on sounding professional, intelligent and qualified that we forget to be human. I would say that would be your one shining example. Take a chance and be human.

If you can make a connection that way, I bet you'll get an interview and if you do get an interview, it's going to be the one they look forward to that day because you've already raised their eyebrow with how you connected with them.

**Anthony:** I like that. That's powerful.

What is coming up next for you and how can people get in touch if they want to learn more about you, learn about *Copy Chief* and what you teach in terms of enabling people to write better and essentially make a career for themselves as a writer if they wanted to go down that route. How do people find you?

**Kevin:** Yeah, *Copy Chief* is pretty much where you'll find everything. A copy chief in our business is the person who oversees the ad campaign, the copywriting and my premise for the community is that we all need chiefs. We all chief each other and help each other write better and more effectively. There is a



membership community with a monthly fee but there's also tons of great helpful stuff you can get for free at *Copy Chief*. You'll see the blog. You'll see The Truth About Marketing Podcast and lots of fun little formulas.

You can also download [\*The 60 Second Sales Hook\*](#) book. I would love for anybody – I think anybody no matter what their goal is would find a lot of value in that book if nothing else. I would certainly love to have anybody take advantage of that.

**Anthony:** Well to end on the note of "the truth about marketing," if - heaven forbid - some nuclear disaster were to wipe away your entire memory, what would be the one truth about marketing that you would want to hold in your mind and never forget?

**Kevin:** Wow, that's a big question. The one thing? That when all else fails, just be honest. When every other framework feels insufficient, try bold honesty. If there's a flaw, point it out. If there are people who something is not for, point them out. Help them identify themselves. Again, by doing so you'll strengthen the bond with people who it is for. I guess that would be the big one. Know who you're talking to and speak to them like you would a friend.