

**Salon Leader Version:** Discussion questions in dark blue. My comments to you, the leader, are in *[italics]*.



## The Artist's Marketing Plan

# 4: DIFFERENTIATE YOURSELF FROM YOUR COMPETITION

*[To prepare for this meeting, remind everyone to come with their 10-second introduction and description of their competition.]*

### WELCOME!

I will remind everyone of our focus and then we'll go over the agenda for the day. Please help me keep us on schedule and adjourn by the time we agreed upon.

The tenets that will guide our discussions are that we should:

- Be serious about marketing our art. Everyone should come prepared to discuss the subject at hand, bring the materials requested, and share thoughts and ideas.
- Attend all nine sessions (three months of bi-weekly meetings, plus a follow-up meeting one month later). Irregularities in participation will create disharmony and some frustration from other members.
- Participate with positive feedback and support other group members in their endeavors.
- Commit to complete confidentiality when requested. The group must be a safe place for members to feel they can be open, honest, and trusting.

It is very important we're all on the same page here! That we all want the same thing from our experience.

As the salon leader, it is my job to lead and facilitate discussion in a democratic fashion, keeping the needs of every member in mind. That means I will try to keep us on task. If we have time, we can tackle other issues, but we must take care of business first and respect one another's schedules.

**Today's agenda is this:** *[Insert agenda here.]*

Then, at the end of the meeting, I'll have us go around and say one thing we'd like to accomplish before our next meeting. We do this to make a promise to ourselves and to have the support of the group.

The very nature of today's discussion could lead us down a path that could be negative and unproductive. I want to make sure that our discussion today is focused on positive, thoughtful feedback. We need to use people's names, but let's make sure we don't get into negative or nasty comments. I'll try to keep the conversation as positive and as on-track as possible. When we start straying, I'll bring us back to our focus.

Now you are going to describe your competition. Do not pretend they don't exist, because you would only be fooling yourself and cheating yourself of the entire picture.

We talked a little bit about this last time. It's so important to know what other artists are doing.

Stanfield Art Associates, Inc.

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***Know your competition and stay on top of the game!***

**In the venues or locales where you show your work, whose work is most similar to yours?**

Describe their work as you did your own above, including price range. What are the strengths of these locations? Weaknesses?

**How is your competition's work similar? How is it different? Examples:**

While our quilts are similar in style, I use only my own, hand-dyed fabrics from natural dyes and she leans toward commercial fabrics.

My paintings tend to be in series and stick to a neutral color scheme while he employs a wider selection of colors.

**What do they do better than you? (Consider price, quality, service, image, location, advertising, and other things.) Examples:**

Their matting and framing is done by a professional and looks to be of higher quality.

They are much better at talking to people and networking.

**Where do they leave room for opportunities for you? Examples:**

While he is much better at networking, I am a better writer and public speaker.

Because all of my dyes are natural, I can appeal to those who purchase eco-friendly products and participate in environmental activities, including gardeners.

*[I think the thing to do here is to have everyone go around and talk about what they found out while doing this exercise. If they have a lot, ask them to focus on just one person for this discussion.]*

Who do you consider to be your competition? *Where do you go to find your competition? Where are they showing their works? How do you know if they're competition?*

How are they similar? *Think subject matter, style, size, price, and venues.*

How are they different?

What do they do better than you? *Think technique, marketing, sales, meeting people, following-up, speaking, packaging (branding, promotional materials), self-promotion, framing, and display.*

Where do they leave opportunities for you?

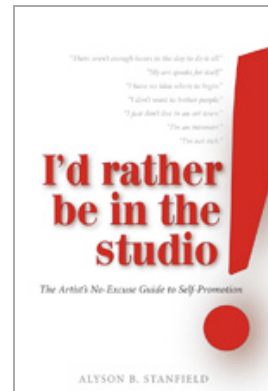
Or, fill out a table if you find it easier:

<b>Who is your competition?</b>	<b>How are they similar/different?</b>	<b>What do they do better than you? Where do they leave opportunities for you?</b>

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One of the best ways to differentiate yourself from other artists is with your artist statement. In fact, it's the backbone of all your marketing. See pages 35-52 in *I'd Rather Be in the Studio!* for guidelines for writing your artist statement.

<http://artbizcoach.com/resources/irbits.html>



**What one thing do you want to accomplish before the next meeting?**

**BEFORE WE GO**

I'd like to take the last 10 minutes and have each of us go around the room. What one marketing project do you want to accomplish before we see each other again?

Remember, it can be anything related to your marketing: checking out the competition at three new galleries; ordering a new batch of postcards; or sending out an email about an upcoming exhibit.

What's it going to be?

**next session: describe your collectors**

Be sure to download this section and go over it before our next meeting. Everyone should come prepared to discuss his or her buyers and collectors.