

CREATIVES ON  
STRATEGISTS

CREATIVES ON  
STRATEGISTS

CREATIVES ON  
STRATEGISTS

CREATIVES ON  
STRATEGISTS

# RESPOINSES UPDATED

LOOKING OUTSIDE OURSELVES TO DEFINE WHAT STRATEGY OFFERS.



the author:

# ALEX MORRIS

I'm a freelance strategy consultant  
focused on brand and product strategy and  
creative communications.

[alex@stratscraps.com](mailto:alex@stratscraps.com)

[alexmorris.co](http://alexmorris.co)

# Author's note:

For how many passionate, dedicated Planners there are out there publishing their hot take on how to be better at our job, you see very few asking the people who we are meant to serve.

Properly done, our work makes creative work better. Shouldn't we have a better sense of what industry Creatives think? A better sense of our effectiveness in their eyes?

Why aren't we asking Creative Directors more questions? Why do their negative responses and complaints come as a shock?

Our shortcomings, quantified.

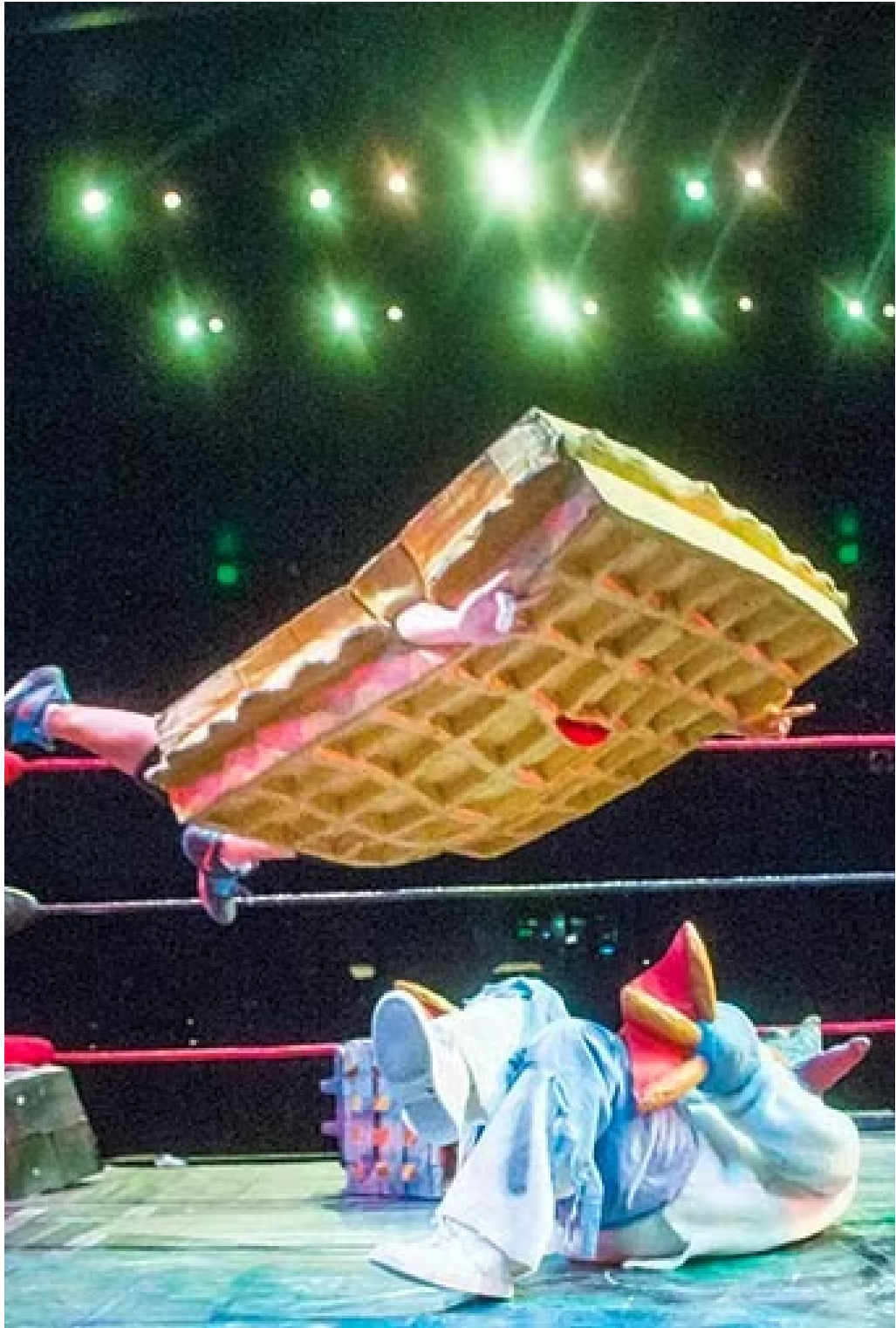


01

# INTRODUCTION

**There is often tension  
between Strategy &  
creative**





**As there should be.**

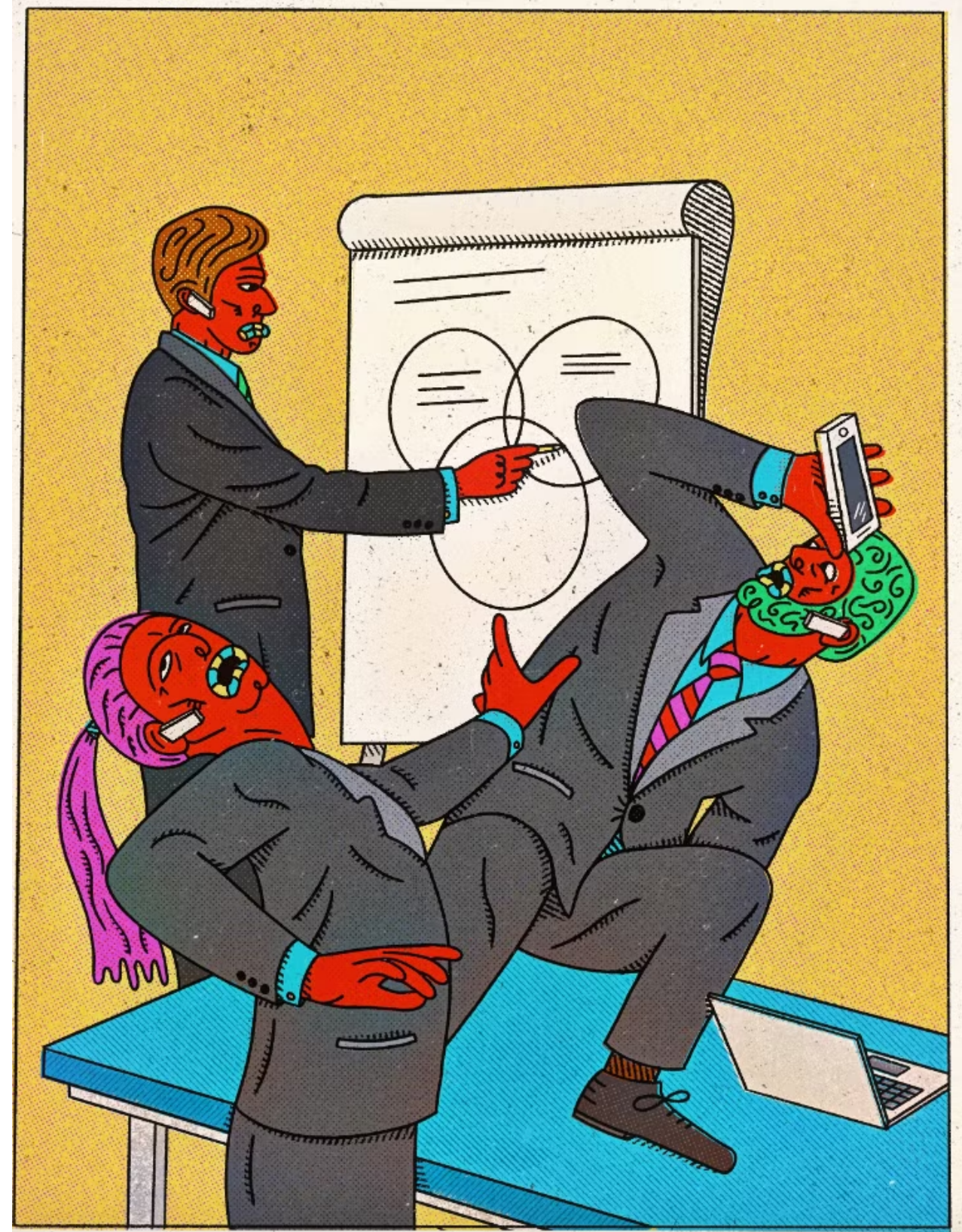
Tension can be productive.

What we want to avoid is resentment.



We like to talk a lot about how to be a good strategist.

But we don't seem to ask the people whose opinion matters the most.

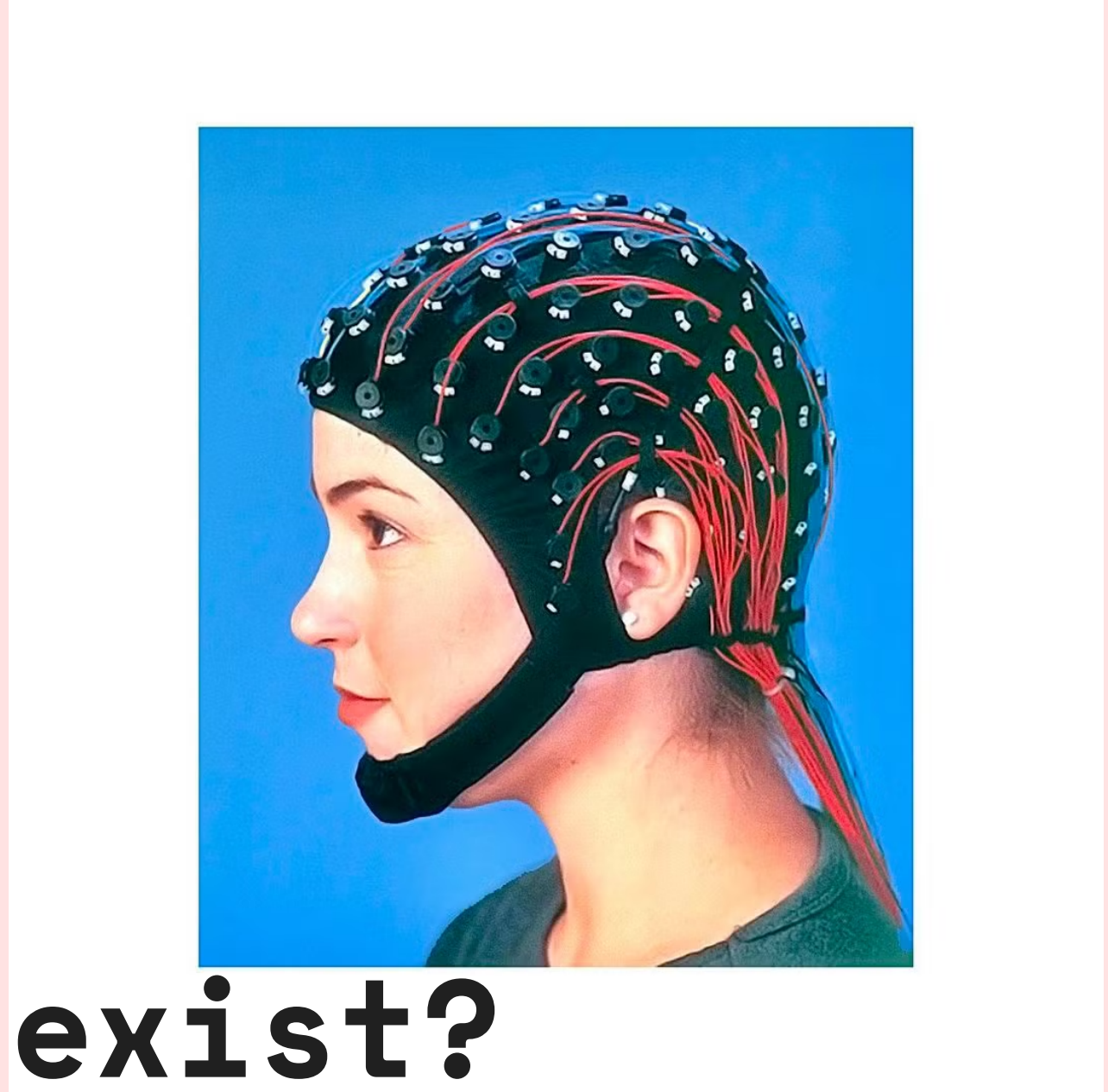


What if we asked what they thought?



02

# SURVEY RESULTS



# why do we exist?

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**To help rationale the work creative does.**

To provide insights and opportunities for the brand to insert themselves in.

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**To provide meaningful insight that will guide the creative work to the best place possible.**

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**Making sure the creative is grounded in truth and going in the right direction.**

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**Help unlock the key territory,  
idea, insight or angle to  
create from.**

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**articulate an ask for creative,  
find insights**

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**To strategically plan and  
research campaign comms**

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**ground the mission in a rich  
jump off point**

formulation and implementation of a strategy, navigate the brand's place in culture, unlock the best possible creative thinking, make brand owner look at their brand differently, set the base before the creative begins

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**Interpret a clients brief, that  
positions the creative team to  
develop big ideas that solve  
the need**

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**To find core of the problem and  
open the opportunity. Building  
a base for creative.**

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**To uncover the deep-down human need the product benefit helps satisfy. Or, to tell us what motivates our audience and the way the product can be a component of that motivation.**

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**Someone who tees up creative.**

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**To look at research, data and cultural insights to find new ways to position and answer the ask from the client – in a way that is synthesis to the rest of the team as a brief with insight to paint a creative world to play with in.**

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**Turning the client's business  
problem into a simple and clear  
creative brief**

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**Provide the truth / insight  
that's the backbone of the  
creative work**

Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**Planning, testing & execution  
of ideas.**

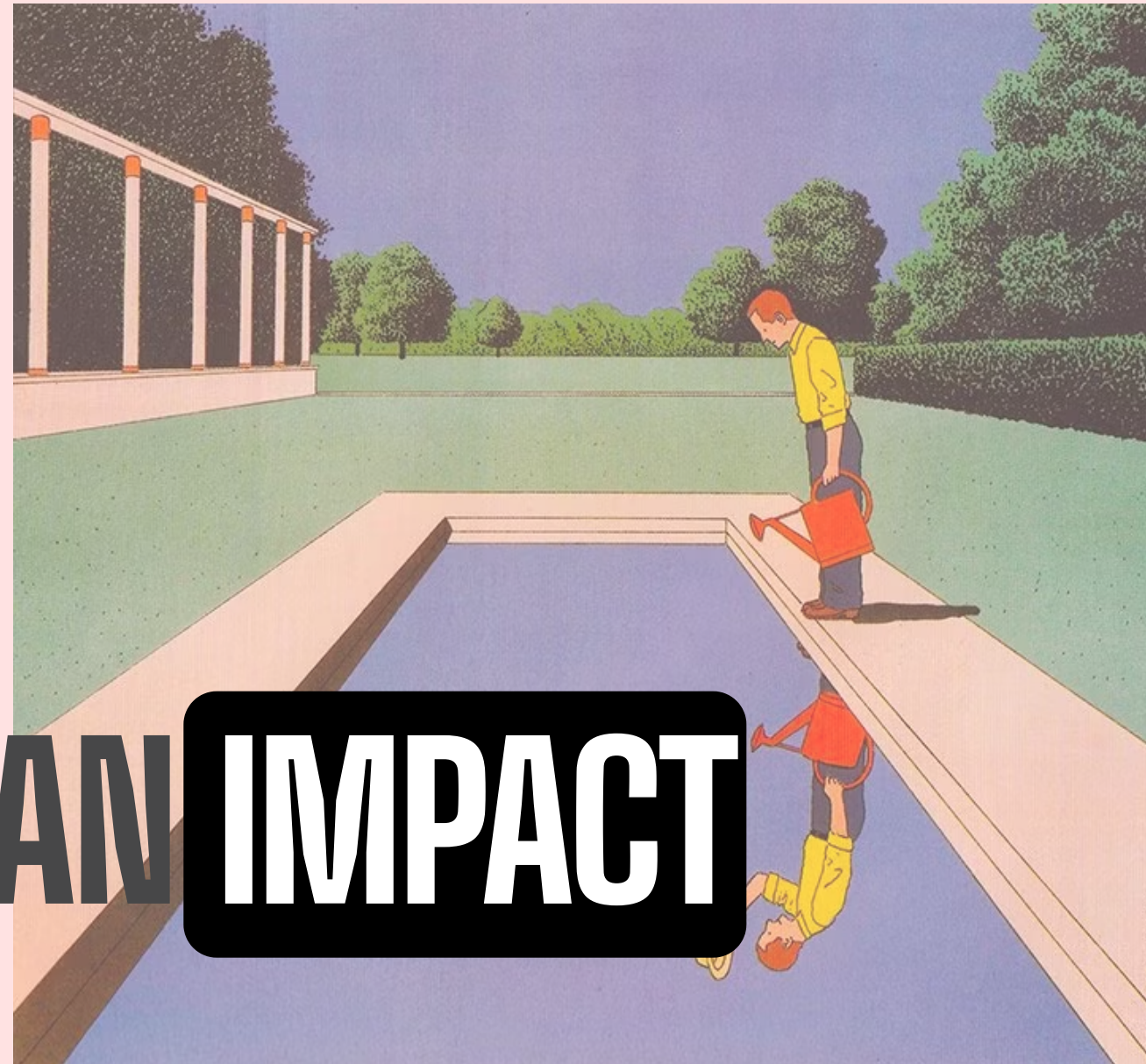
Summed up in a few words, what is the role of a strategist?

**often responsible for setting  
the top line goal**

**(usually in my experience  
commercial outcomes) and  
briefing channels, touch  
points, budget etc**

# HOW TO HAVE AN **IMPACT**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?



Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Have meaningful, valuable insights.**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Help clients keep their promises, keep them honest and true to the brief we all agreed to.**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**More specific briefs  
that aren't about just  
being cool.**

Better backup to ideas. Cultural examples,  
references that help us prove out a theory.

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Don't let me know more than you!**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Help uncover the key insight that shows a unique way in, a fertile place to play, a new way to think about the problem.**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Act as a gut check for  
creative ideas,  
provide unique  
insights/data points to  
spark thoughts**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**sell the strategy into  
the client before having  
it inform a new version  
of a brief**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Do research, do listening, bring insights not hunches, partner with creative.**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Have clearly defined deliverables and single minded or unexpected insights**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Give tangible ideas and thinking to bounce off creatively.**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Help me feel like the audience.**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Learn a thing or two about hierarchy. We need to do our homework, but we of all people should know not to create walls of words.**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**To outline areas,  
platforms, subjects,  
avenues to explore with  
data to support why. IE -  
Client is asking for  
this, but what if we  
explored using social in  
this way because we could  
reach XYZ in a more  
useful way....**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Tell me 1 communication goal that's critical, then 3 other things that are nice to have.**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Collaborate with creative  
throughout concepting**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Communicate effectively  
with focus on priorities**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Hmmm understanding that  
it's a lot harder to do  
something than say  
something.**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Help connect the dots so  
that others can logically  
buy in to what they  
emotionally do**

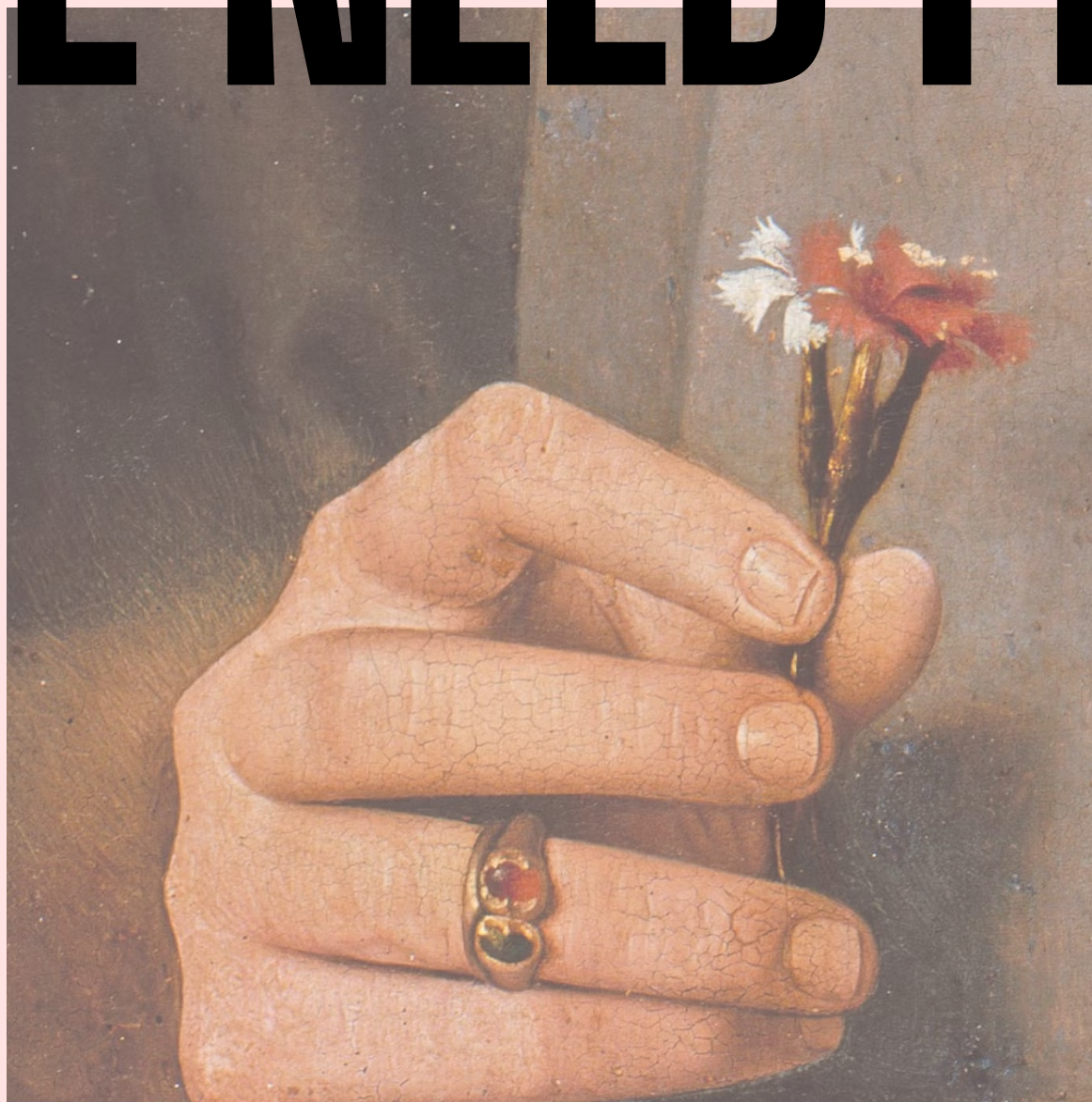
Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Be humble. Creative guys think we are proud and arrogant with our knowledge. Be humble and teachable.**

Overall, what is the biggest thing a strategist can do that would improve your work?

**Share knowledge**

# WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU



What do you wish strategists  
would do more of?

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

**Edit their work.**

Wasting words, tautology, or saying a lot without saying much is a quick way to boredom and disinterest from the person on the receiving end.

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

**Be collaborative, and additive**

Help us rationalize our work so it  
is incredibly tight.

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

**Our strategists could stand to have better brand strategy knowledge;**

social strategy knowledge is not really sufficient for what we're doing now as an agency.

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

**Defend creative work with  
bullet-proof rationale**

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

**Tell me something I, a  
twenty something with an  
instagram account who works  
at an ad agency, don't  
already know.**

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

**I wish they were better at  
creative insights.**

I think most strategists here don't know or care much about creative. They should be in love with advertising/creativity and have great taste in what makes good advertising.

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

**go beyond insights and audience,  
find a cultural white space, a  
bigger purpose for a brand**

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

**Write the strategy (from ask, insight to comms plan) before the creative is flushed out.**

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

**Do research,  
do listening**

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

# Simplify.

Simplify. Not because ideas and people aren't complicated, but because creative output can so rarely capture complexity. We're so often operating within this world of quick reaction and activated intuition, and we need strategy that has been boiled down to its bare essence so we can use that as our bullseye.

Said another way, make decks shorter, maybe just one page, and appendixes longer.

What do you wish strategists would  
do more of?

**Get to the problem and point  
quicker in slide decks.**

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

**Nourish the line between  
setting up an idea, and  
actually thinking of one.**

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

**Feedback with creative and as things evolve continue to tweak strategy to support creative.**

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

**Say which parts of creatives  
are working well (rather than  
say which parts aren't)**

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

**Collaborate with creative  
throughout concepting**

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

**Stop it will all the jargon and  
speak plainly .**

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

# Collaboration

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

Speak up

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

# Stop sweating the words

What do you wish strategists would do more of?

Tbh, maybe try to STFU  
sometimes and not bore everyone  
with something you've read.

# YOU MEAN WELL, BUT...



What well-meaning practice or habit is  
in fact frustrating?

What well-meaning practice or habit is in fact frustrating?

when an insight is vague,  
boring, meaningless or just  
about being "cool" that's  
ultimately unhelpful.

What well-meaning practice or habit is in fact frustrating?

overly clever "Ways In" or "Thought Starters" in briefs that clients will never let go of.

Don't write copy for us.

What well-meaning practice or habit is in fact frustrating?

Overthinking or playing  
devils advocate

...let Account do that. Just keep us on strategy.

What well-meaning practice or habit is in fact frustrating?

Providing a "soft brief" that isn't finished so that creative can "participate" in the process.

What well-meaning practice or habit is in fact  
frustrating?

Thinking strategy can only  
contribute within a very small  
part of the process.

What well-meaning practice or habit is in fact frustrating?

Trying to fit too much  
into a strategy.

If the overall thought can't be  
distilled down into a few sentences,  
it's not a good strategy, in my opinion.

What well-meaning practice or habit is in fact

frustrating?

Disagreeing with off-brief but  
awesome creative ideas

What well-meaning practice or habit is in fact frustrating?

rewriting the client's brief

What well-meaning practice or habit is in fact  
frustrating?

Overstepping their bounds where  
they think they  
are a creative

What well-meaning practice or habit is in fact frustrating?

Kicking off creative development before the strategy is defined and agreed by the client.

What well-meaning practice or habit is in fact frustrating?

I like big background decks,  
but sometimes they can feel  
overwhelming to creatives.

What creatives are really looking for is a solid one pager that crystallizes the main points of the ask, the research, the insights, etc. Sometimes I feel like in building out a compelling background deck and story, we give less love to the one pager and strategy line / one true thing, which is EVERYTHING to creatives - our north star. To me, the one pager should be getting all the love and the background deck is a nice to have, not the other way around. Sometimes we confuse the two.

What well-meaning practice or habit is in fact frustrating?

Explaining things clearly that sometimes can feel like we are treating clients like dummies.

What well-meaning practice or habit is in fact frustrating?

Telling us a strategy story in the same, drawn-out or narrative way you'd tell a client. We get it. You don't have to convince us. Short and sweet.

# TO KEEP IN MIND



What is one thing about working with a creative team that strategists should always keep in mind?

What is one thing about working with a creative team that strategists should always keep in mind?

I want you on my side the way  
I'm on your side.

Staying on strategy is important, at least to me. But sometimes it feels like the strategists aren't supporting the creatives the way we try to support the brief.

What is one thing about working with a creative team that strategists should always keep in mind?

When it comes to a strategic point of view or a brief, it's better to be tighter and more specific, than to be broad and generic.

What is one thing about working with a creative team that strategists should always keep in mind?

There's a reason ideas exist,  
find out the meaning.

Nothing was brought out of thin air. Maybe it's tie in to the strategy isn't being articulated. Sometimes creative and strategy work in different worlds, so when it comes time to build a cohesive deck both pov's get watered down.

What is one thing about working with a creative team that strategists should always keep in mind?

We can come up with the ideas, what we really need are great insights we could never uncover.

What is one thing about working with a creative team that strategists should always keep in mind?

The best campaigns are very specific. Taking a specific insight, a problem and making it into something. Attacking it.

What is one thing about working with a  
creative team that strategists should always  
keep in mind?

Strategists are not creative  
directors

What is one thing about working with a creative team that strategists should always keep in mind?

We are always looking to find the best idea

even when an idea or strategy has already been set.

What is one thing about working with a creative team that strategists should always keep in mind?

we think in stories, so strategy should start that story

What is one thing about working with a creative team that strategists should always keep in mind?

Support, build, and align and defending the strategic and creative vision.

What is one thing about working with a creative team that strategists should always keep in mind?

Inspiring us with big open strategic platforms sets creative free.

What is one thing about working with a creative team that strategists should always keep in mind?

# The design of slides

What is one thing about working with a creative team that strategists should always keep in mind?

(I haven't seen much consistency here, but if I had to pick one thing.) How do I filter and distill all I've learned in a way that aims to help the creative empathize deeply with the audience?

# THE PURPOSE OF A BRIEF



To you, what is the true purpose of a creative brief?

To you, what is the true purpose of a creative brief?

**It's a contract.**

To you, what is the true purpose of a creative brief?

To be a launching pad for  
creative ideas, but also hold us  
accountable to what the brand  
wants.

To you, what is the true purpose of a creative brief?

To guide the creative into a compelling direction and provide sufficient input for a clever output.

To you, what is the true purpose of a creative brief?

define the space creative  
should play in.

Give me specific guardrails,  
insights and deliverables.

To you, what is the true purpose of a creative brief?

dimensionalizing the key  
insight.

How that insights is derived from  
the client challenge, why that  
insight is significant, ways that  
insight could be explored.

To you, what is the true purpose of a creative brief?

**Distill the client ask into an actionable creative assignment**

that includes deliverables and a realistic understanding of the client's expectations. Provide a hook or insight to kick-start creative development.

To you, what is the true purpose of a creative brief?

unlock the best possible creative,  
point in right direction

To you, what is the true purpose of a creative brief?

To create a fun sandbox  
with lots of toys and  
jumping off points

To you, what is the true purpose of a creative brief?

To inspire big ideas that change  
the way people think about a  
brand/product

To you, what is the true purpose of a creative brief?

To give the creative team a  
strategic north star to measure  
all work against

and to provide meaningful insights  
that guide and focus our creative  
thinking, and lead us down  
unexpected paths of thinking we may  
not have known to go down.

To you, what is the true purpose of a creative brief?

Clarity and inspiration

To you, what is the true purpose of a creative brief?

To tell me what is motivating to the audience relative to what we're selling and what we need to get them to do. And to tell me what my constraints are.

# CRITICAL INFORMATION



When being briefed by a strategist, what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always included?

what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always

<sup>included?</sup>  
we skip on audience quite a bit.

We tend to paint a very rose colored picture of who we're trying to reach vs. a real human portrait - warts & all.

what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always included?

Unknown insights. We know millennials are mindful..

we know millennials crave experiences. Give us the numbers, 42% of millennials in urban areas do xyz. Those nuggets are the ripest, and lead to the most thought out creative.

what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always included?

What information came from the client vs internal strategy

what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always included?

Depends on the brief.  
Usually the insight is missing.

what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always included?

A 'real talk' section.

What the client actually wants, and how much wiggle room there is.

what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always included?

a strategy

what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always included?

The deliverables. The insight.

what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always included?

Research, listening, detailed audience data

what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always included?

A clear space to play

what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always included?

Usually, it's too much information, some of which either seems irrelevant or too correlative.

what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always

# Defined Deliverables

From territories to concepts to ideas, to  
actual executional elements, budget constraints

what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always included?

Creative mandates and consumer profiling / target audience insights.

what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always included?

Deliverables.

Client Expectations.

What NOT to do.

Examples of work within the same realm.

# ANONYMOUS TIP LINE



If you could tell strategists one thing anonymously, what would it be?

If you could tell strategists one thing anonymously, what would it be?

Sometimes, it's not that deep.

If you could tell strategists one thing anonymously, what would it be?

Be collaborative,  
and most importantly be honest.

Show us the WIP for the strategic  
upfront during the brief.

If you could tell strategists one thing anonymously, what would it be?

Give things **REAL**  
insights

insights that we wouldn't have known. That is where the best ideas come from.

If you could tell strategists one thing anonymously, what would it be?

Please work as hard on the brief and strategy as the creatives work on the ideas.

I can't tell you how many times I've heard a strategist here, when their brief is interrogated by creative, give an excuse about how they hadn't spent much time on it or hadn't been able to dedicate themselves to it or complains that they're stretched too thin to really do the work.

If you could tell strategists one thing anonymously, what would it be?

Know your role within the  
creative team dynamic you are  
working with

how to best work with each team.

Act as a partner, not an authority.

If you could tell strategists one thing anonymously, what would it be?

You are usually chasing  
creative, not leading it.

And this is because you haven't put us in a path to make something specific.

You've left us open to anything and therefore, you have to create a strategy off the back of creative, instead of the other way around. This shouldn't be the case but you put yourself in this situation when you don't give us better guidelines.

If you could tell strategists one thing anonymously, what would it be?

an insight is not a  
strategy

If you could tell strategists one thing anonymously, what would it be?

Developing great creative is not  
linear path

If you could tell strategists one thing anonymously, what would it be?

Do research, do  
listening, then we can  
talk

If you could tell strategists one thing anonymously, what would it be?

Be mindful of not acting like a  
creative director.

It's a fine line, but the minute we  
feel like you go from helping push  
work in the right strategic  
direction to deciding what the work  
should be, our defenses go up.

If you could tell strategists one thing anonymously, what would it be?

Your job is as important to the output of the work as the creative team's.

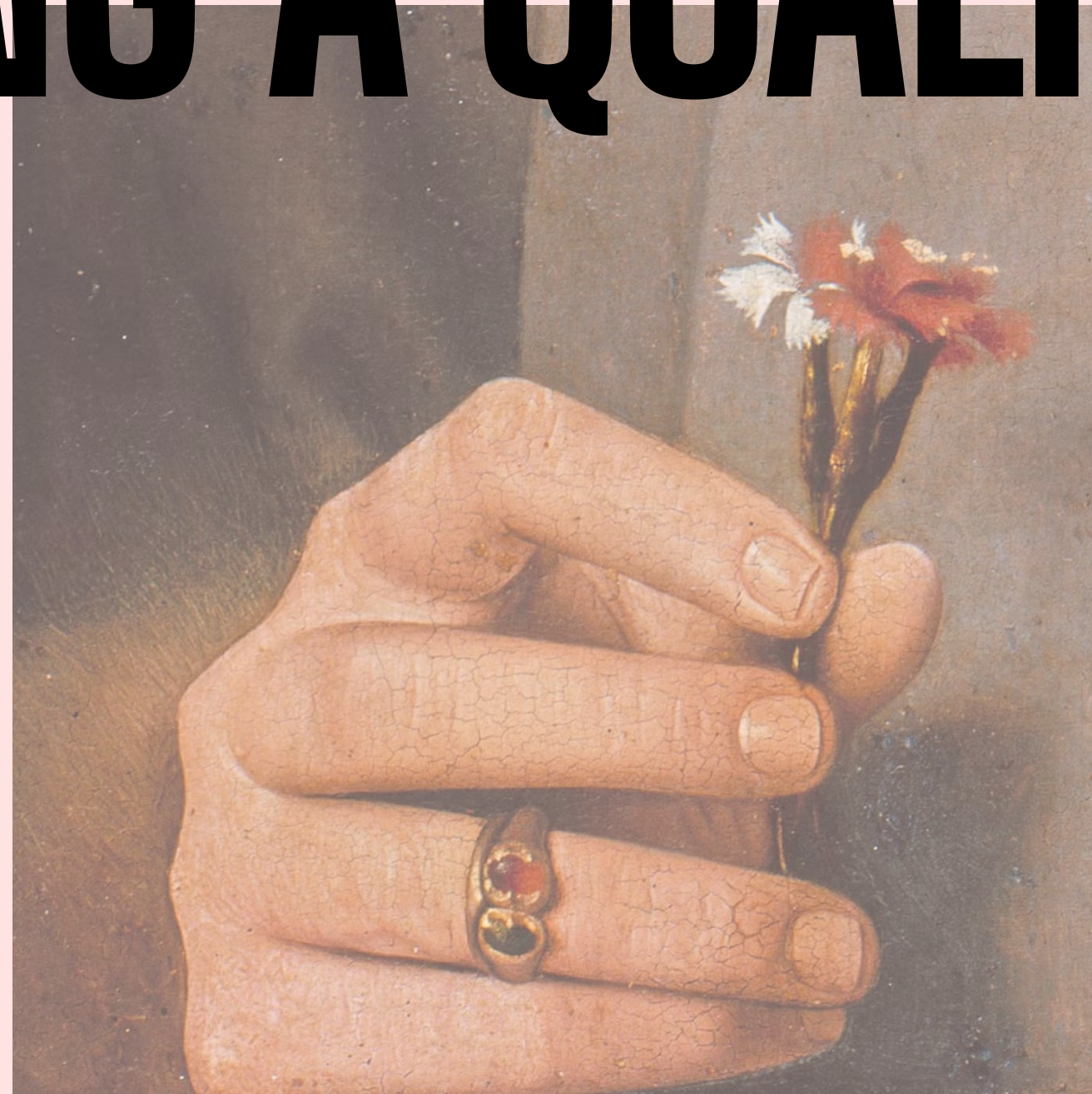
Without a differentiated or breakthrough insight, there is often no breakthrough or differentiated idea.

If you could tell strategists one thing anonymously, what would it be?

Know that we  
value you!

That can sometimes get lost when  
the heat is on and everyone's  
stressed out.

# DEFINING A QUALITY BRIEF



How do you judge a creative brief  
to be good or not to be good?

How do you judge a creative brief to be good or not to be

good?  
1 RTB good.

6 RTBs bad.

How do you judge a creative brief to be good or not to be good?

# Clarity, Brevity, Fertility.

Is the brief specific and unambiguous without being constraining? Is it said succinctly, sharply, without digression or pointless points? Can you shake a lot of ideas out of it vs. just being a one trick pony? But ultimately, if the work is

How do you judge a creative brief to be good or not to be

<sup>good?</sup>  
Whether or not the strategist  
did their homework.

Come in buttoned up. Answer the questions, if you don't know them go back and find them. The more insights the creatives know, the better the work will be.

How do you judge a creative brief to be good or not to be

good?  
**Whether its open ended or  
not.**

How do you judge a creative brief to be good or not to be

<sup>good?</sup>  
Through the lens of the audience  
first. The client/product  
second. Advertising things third.

How do you judge a creative brief to be good or not to be

<sup>good?</sup>  
The brief itself should be  
massively inspiring

in terms of sharing new and  
unexpected information that  
creative can build good work around.

How do you judge a creative brief to be good or not to be

good?

If my gears start turning or  
I'm excited, it's probably good.

If I think "where do I possibly go  
from here?", it's probably bad.

How do you judge a creative brief to be good or not to be

<sup>good?</sup>  
If it leads to world changing  
creative.

No pressure.

How do you judge a creative brief to be good or not to be

good?

It's not good when the brief is too open ended, its not clear what ROI is for the brand or exactly what we are being measured on.

(i.e. what does success look like for both brand and agency, why are we doing this?)

How do you judge a creative brief to be good or not to be

good?  
Whether its just a  
translation from a client  
meeting or actually has  
thought and new ideas put  
into it.

How do you judge a creative brief to be good or not to be

<sup>good?</sup>  
If I can walk away and dive  
straight into a brainstorm

A clear understanding of the task at hand.

what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always included?

if there is a distinct strategy  
in there

How do you judge a creative brief to be good or not to be

good?  
**All about the  
one pager.**

Is it clear? Succinct? Does the strategy have a unique and strong POV? Is it grounded in rich non-client insights? Does it feel sticky? Those are the things I evaluate first and care about the most.

what are the most important pieces of information that aren't always included?

If I'm scribbling all over the page while it is being presented.

# THINGS WE OVERLOOK



What's the one thing a strategist almost never thinks about that they should?

What's the one thing a strategist almost never thinks about that they should?

How real people talk.

What's the one thing a strategist almost never thinks about that they should?

# How do your clients actually make money?

What is their business model? What does the supply chain look like? We often have a very cursory understanding of our clients actual business and how it operates.

What's the one thing a strategist almost never thinks about that they should?

How strategy layers that they add on top of the client brief may shift or impact the creative work in far-reaching ways.

What's the one thing a strategist almost never thinks about that they

<sup>should</sup>  
**I think they don't often  
think about the steps after  
the brief.**

When a creative thinks on an idea, the good ones at least, think about how that idea affects production, how it affects budget, how it works in print, in tv, in cut downs, on the slide at the very end of the wrap deck. I think if strategy gamed out their own strategy briefs and insights, they would be much better at finding the right place to create within.

What's the one thing a strategist almost never thinks about that they should?

How each creative works differently.

Briefs should/can be adjusted depending on the team at hand. For example: some creatives prefer guardrails, others don't (I do!)

What's the one thing a strategist almost never thinks about that they should?

# Production

What's the one thing a strategist almost never thinks about that they should?

Staying late and bringing your laptop next to a creative even if to work on something else always helps.

It's the team mentality, the "We're all in this together"

What's the one thing a strategist almost never thinks about that they should?

Whether they are telling me  
something I don't know.

What's the one thing a strategist almost never thinks about that they should?

that creative Doesn't  
see the client brief and  
the client brief has a  
lot of important clues  
in them

What's the one thing a strategist almost never thinks about that they should?

Here, bring examples of others in Cat, help vet what's been done.

What's the one thing a strategist almost never thinks about that they should?

Ideas that are great because they  
make you feel something

(ideas that can't be rationalized).

# HOW TO BEST GIVE CRITIQUE



When in a creative review, what is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

When in a creative review, what is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

Earnestly. Rip the bandaid, but don't try to sugarcoat it if we are off-brief.

Tell us and make sure we understand why it isn't working as is.

When in a creative review, what is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

Be direct.  
Tie your feedback back  
to the brief.

It's the contract you and the  
creatives signed, and needs to  
be upheld by you.

Give feedback on executional  
elements when / if it has an  
effect on the strategy.

When in a creative review, what is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

Don't wear your 'client hat',  
wear your strategy hat

that means looking at the work  
through the lens of the human beings  
who will be exposed to it, through  
the lens of the brief you've created  
and through the lens of the problem  
we've defined.

When in a creative review, what is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

# Pose questions.

Specific questions, how do you think this solves for x? don't focus so much on the creative execution as the backbone of the idea.

When in a creative review, what is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

Clearly, explicitly,  
constructively,  
non-combatively.

A couple of the strategists on our team here are excessively combative or defensive when discussing work.

When in a creative review, what is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

The big stuff -- talk about  
together, in the room.

Small minor things -- blow through  
them, send them in a doc, etc.

When in a creative review, what is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

Concise notes sent after a meeting

unless there are specific, actionable thoughts in the meeting.

When in a creative review, what is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

Should only be related to the strategy.

Should not include new cultural insights that have not been outlined in the brief.

When in a creative review, what is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

Everyone can have an opinion about everything, but it's most helpful when the leads of each dept. "stay in their lane."

Strategists mostly speak to whether or not the work is on strategy, delivers on the main points in the brief, speaks to the consumer in a meaningful authentic way, achieves the objective, etc." Not as interested to know if a strategist cares for a color choice or likes a word choice.

When in a creative review, what is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

Collaboratively build off the ideas, and feed in after creative has presented.

To not interject till it is all presented.

When in a creative review, what is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

Gut reactions and written notes  
within 24 hours.

Immediate call outs of major  
disconnects between client  
understanding and our interpretation.  
(ie language they use to describe  
what we are showing)

When in a creative review, what is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

productive, build, contribute,  
make it collaborative, dont call  
it a review

When in a creative review, what is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

Verbal with a bullet pointed list followed up.

# WHAT'S NOT HELPFUL



What's the least helpful thing a strategist could tell you about the creative?

What's the least helpful thing a strategist could tell you about the creative?

their creative  
opinion

(not helpful - give me a strategic  
reason why)

What's the least helpful thing a strategist could tell you about the creative?

Least helpful thing is keeping your mouth shut when you have something to say.

Creatives need feedback. They want to make the ideas better.

What's the least helpful thing a strategist could tell you about the creative?

To be uninvolved, or to simply say  
I prefer the other one.

Give us reason and rationale,  
suggestions. What if you tied it  
back to the insight?

What's the least helpful thing a strategist could tell you about the creative?

"I don't like something about it but I'm not sure how to articulate what that is."

What is the least helpful way for feedback to be provided?

That the client will love  
it.

What is the least helpful way for feedback to be provided?

The visuals or designs  
aren't right early on in  
the process

What's the least helpful thing a strategist could tell you about the creative?

Things that are subjective (not 100% rooted in strategy), or things that are vague, or both.

Ex: "It's just not there yet".

What's the least helpful thing a strategist could tell you about the creative?

If a strategists says "i don't care, i'm just the strategist".

I think strategists don't often think they are accountable for creative, which is a bad way to think about it. The strategist is accountable for creative in many respects.

What's the least helpful thing a strategist could tell you about the creative?

**They love it.**

Why, because we need them to challenge it, pick it apart make sure it's bullet proof.

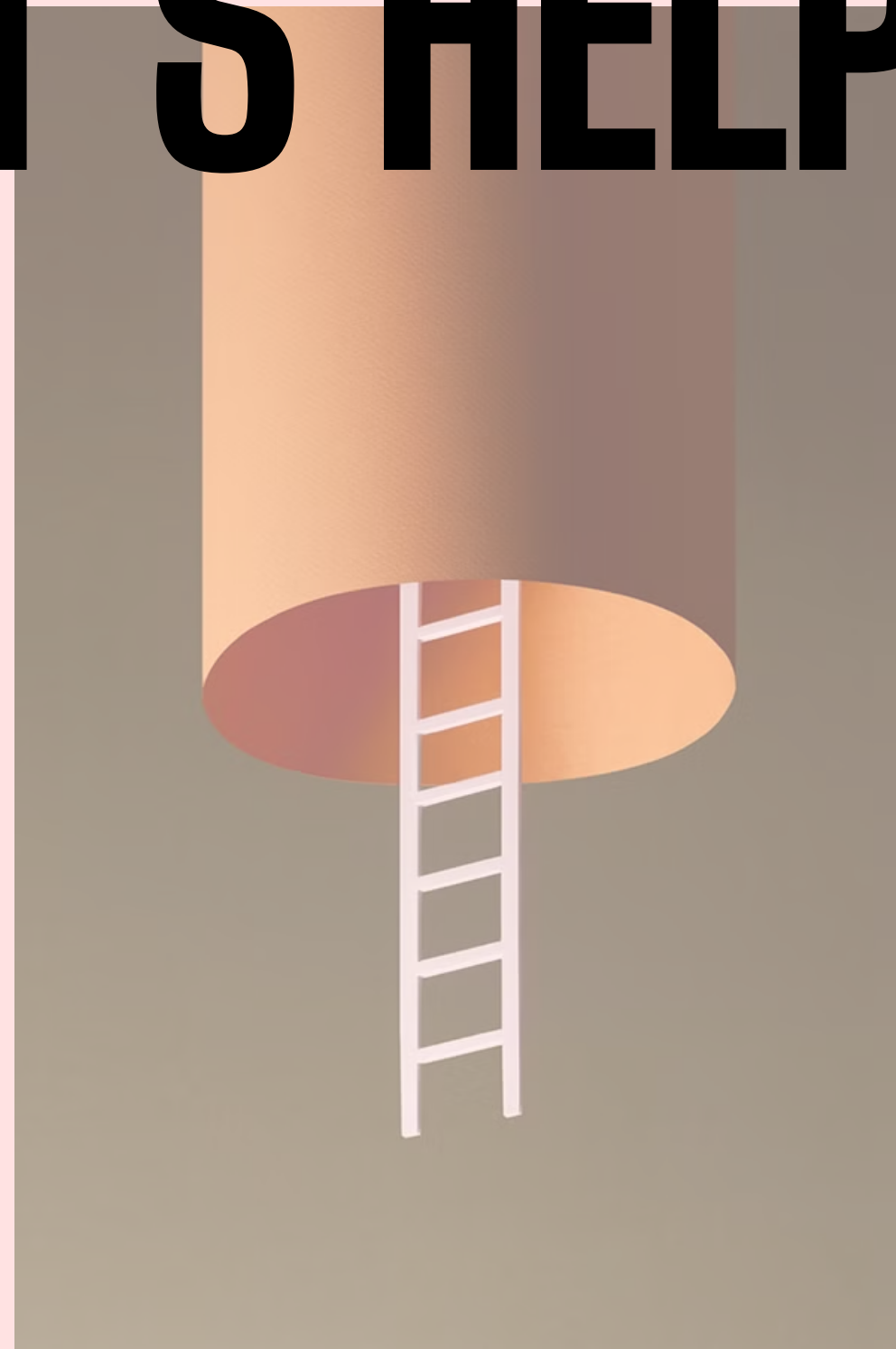
What is the least helpful way for feedback to be provided?

retrofitting a strategy  
that doesn't exist

What is the least helpful way for feedback to be provided?

It's off brief, but have  
no real rational why it  
is off brief.

# WHAT'S HELPFUL?



What is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

What is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

If it's on / off brief.

What is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

Help in tying it  
back to the insight,  
so the work is  
incredibly tight.

Also, the how can I help you sell this in.

What is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

“Here is a way to sharpen where you are going based on additional insights that I have based on past experience or general knowledge.”

What is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

Ways that we can adjust to better hit on an insight.

What is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

It's all helpful, but I value feedback coming from the context of customer or client much more than feedback that feels like it's just coming from the strategist's personal experience/reaction/preference.

What is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

Suggested solutions are always nice.

I understand they're not always possible, though.

What is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

If a strategist can recognize that the proposed creative idea is great and worth fighting for, even if it is a bit off brief/strategy,

then they can help orient the clients thinking to help get the best work out into the world.

What is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

Strategy behind why  
creative works (or  
doesn't) and how it  
could be stronger or  
better framed.

Help us seal the deal!

What is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

**build**

What is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

Yes, that's great "and..."

What is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

That the consumer won't get the idea or see/experience in the way we are imagining.

What is the most helpful way for feedback to be provided?

How to make an idea stronger by making it more single-minded/focused...

...more in sync with the consumer's voice or mindset or better suited to the medium or the platform. They could also help frame the creative with the right set up strategy slides, ie. help with the deck storytelling

# SCREAM INTO THE VOID



Anything else you want to bring up, get off your chest, suggest, or tell us?

Anything else you want to bring up, get off your chest, suggest, or tell us?

It's important that we work together. Everyone knows it.

There's been a turn in the last month or so as we've worked together more, but grabbing a coffee, helping each other, meeting at each others desk. Collaborating from the get go will improve team dynamic and the work. If a strategy is tight, and the brief is rich, the creative work will be expected, and answer those territories.

Anything else you want to bring up, get off your chest, suggest, or tell us?

Work with us not against us.  
Be collaborative. Be additive.  
Help us build on ideas and  
whats work.

Don't be cold and robotic, translate the data you have into something human. Think like people, not like a data catalog. Give us something to work with, not a tiny box to play in. But give us a real differentiator. "More" is not a differentiator. Help us craft something good, and give us the tools and support we need to make something good. Help us keep it good when the client tries to ruin it.

Anything else you want to bring up, get off your chest, suggest, or tell us?

To me, there's basically two kinds of strategists - channel/media and creative strategists.

I don't think channel/media strategists should be put in place to do creative strategy. And probably vice versa.

Anything else you want to bring up, get off your chest, suggest, or tell us?

We should probably get  
better at dictating media  
strategy earlier on in the  
process.

Anything else you want to bring up, get off your chest, suggest, or tell us?

Do what you can to get  
your hands on some weiden  
and kennedy or droga 5  
strategy decks.

Their strategic thinking is top notch.

Anything else you want to bring up, get off your chest, suggest, or tell us?

think in culture, not  
audiences

Anything else you want to bring up, get off your chest, suggest, or tell us?

# Say more with less words

Anything else you want to bring up, get off your chest, suggest, or tell us?

Strategists tend to be smart and creative and curious and well versed in synthesizing information from lots and lots of sources.

This is a great strength, but it must be tempered by an equally sharp ability to edit.

Anything else you want to bring up, get off your chest, suggest, or tell us?

My favorite strategists are those that can distill what they need to tell me down to a couple of sentences that contain multitudes. And then, when I dig in on the implications of what they've told me, they have all the answers because they've done the work.

Being a pretty writer helps this, for sure, but substance over style all day. A turn of phrase is more likely to fool a client than a creative.

Anything else you want to bring up, get off your chest, suggest, or tell us?

We should not start any project  
ever again, till strategy is  
approved.

We should be paid first for that.

Anything else you want to bring up, get off your chest, suggest, or tell us?

We need strategic thinkers who specialize in different parts of strategy

it's not one strategist fits all. Comms strat, brand strat, social/digital strat these are all separate roles that require different minds.



# Want to make a presentation like this one?

Start with a fully customizable template, create a beautiful deck in minutes, then easily share it with anyone.

[Create a presentation \(It's free\)](#)