

Hey there, THANK YOU ***for joining our Brand Strategy Roundtable.***

This DOCUMENT is a quick reference guide for when you're starting a Strategy assignment, job, project, or trying to sort through a problem.

We know you are curious, thoughtful, a relentless researcher, creative, fantastic communicator regardless of platform, which is why you **LOVE** Strategy.

Let's say your work, project or day job asks you to help launch a product, create a communications plan, develop a content strategy, save a brand, create something viral, or understand why people do what they do—you can start the process in the same place. Research, gathering information, background homework, whatever you call it, it's the understanding the task, the product, the landscape that you need to develop thinking for (Strategy).

Great Strategy is sharing your thoughts on how to create a certain outcome (sell something, get people talking, have them engage, etc.).

Your toolbox includes:

- Hardcore curiosity that comes with the confidence to ask questions, again and again
- Linking ideas that might not be super obvious but could create big change
- **An ability to filter out, “ scan” and utilize the power of elimination to edit what you bring forward, and be ok with letting things go**
- **Enjoying talking to people, especially strangers, being in the world experiencing things and asking why**
- **Believing in seeing the world with new ideas—using curiosity and discovery to create change, develop an outcome**

The brief is simply the assignment in its truest form, clearly stated and can function as the reference for the challenge for everyone involved. As the Strategist, your job is to develop and write the brief, present it, and make sure the team stays focused and clear on what the assignment is all about.

Getting to the true challenge or problem ie. “*The Brief*”

Four steps to get to the core brief: how to get into the work, figure out what needs to be done, and lead the team forward.

This starts with getting to the real problem, being courageous enough to ask questions, and doing the work to bring it to life.

1. Clear your mind of past experiences, exposures and beliefs

- a. Once you clear assumptions you can start listening to what really needs to be done
 - b. Put that ego aside!
 - i. Remember there are no dumb questions, be inquisitive
 - ii. Look at the challenge with fresh eyes
2. Making time and space to have clients start at the beginning
- a. Everyone wants to get to the work, but you have to stop and ask questions, understand what motivated the ask, get the background and find out what have they tried already that didn't work
 - i. "what's your biggest fear about this project?"
 - ii. "What have you tried that didn't work as expected"
 - b. Start the relationship with collaboration versus "solve it like Don Draper"
 - i. It's not a realistic process to try to drop the perfect idea and solve the problem like Draper; it's much more effective to ask questions, build partnerships, then work together as one dream team towards the win
 - c. Favorite questions: Curiosity leads to greatness—keep asking, don't accept the one word answer, curiosity makes things powerful
 - d. Ex. If your client says, "make something viral", ask them, "when you say viral, tell me more about what you'd like to see--conversation, press, etc." then you can ID the real goal behind "make something viral"
 - e. Ask follow up questions
3. After asking the tough questions, be honest about what judgements you and the team might have--recognize your responsibility to say "wait a minute"
- a. Challenge the idea of the "perfect consumer"
 - b. Challenge prejudices, racism, sexism and classism

- c. Call out stereotypes like, “poor, dumb, don’t get it”
 - d. Bring respect to our audiences and create dynamic creative that reflects the world outside the industry--the real world
4. Protect the creative process and remind people what was agreed upon
- a. Keep people honest as the work starts and keep the train on the track
 - i. Keep creatives confident about their ideas as things move forward so ideas don’t fall apart
 - b. Keep bullshit out of the process
 - c. Hold the truth all the way through; keep people honest about the problem and keep them from becoming obsessed with their own ideas
 - i. The work must respect the audience
 - d. Keep everyone honest, respect the audience and be of service to great creative ideas that serve the goal or the business.
 - e. Create an expectation of results: use case studies and post-mortems to own the successes as well as bring forward learnings of how things could have been better so that you can use your experience to optimize the next project

You are amazing, and the most important thing when beginning any project, your job is to develop, implement and show your thinking on the project.

What the problem is, how things work, and how the team can use creativity, media and great thinking to create the work.

If you're willing to do this work, you are a Strategist regardless of what your task is or your current job title!

Strategy (content, brand, digital) is strong, informed thinking, and the confidence to lead the team with collaboration, creativity and positivity.

You are incredible!

ilovecreatives



the projects*
presents

Creative Juices