



**Q: How do you spot poor strategy and is that a people problem or a system problem?**

**A:** Poor strategy is usually overcomplicated.

If you can't explain the strategic idea clearly in a handful of slides or a simple conversation, there's a good chance it's not fully resolved yet. You don't need a 20+ page deck full of jargon and mindmaps to communicate something meaningful.

The best strategy often feels obvious in hindsight because it's grounded in something deeply human and true.

That said, I think poor strategy can be both a people problem and a systems problem. Sometimes strategists overcomplicate things to prove value or intelligence. Other times, systems reward complexity over clarity because bigger decks feel safer or more "premium."

But clarity is the real flex.

A good strategy should create momentum, alignment, and excitement. Not confusion.

**Q: What indicates that a team is not working well? And what would you change if you saw that happening?**

**A:** A team usually isn't working well when people stop believing in the idea together.

Selling a strategic idea is really about getting people excited enough to want to make it real. Whether it's creatives, clients, or stakeholders, the goal is alignment and momentum.

If people are confused, disconnected, defensive, or constantly debating the basics, it's usually a sign the thinking either hasn't been simplified enough or hasn't been emotionally landed.

The fix is almost never "more slides." It's usually clearer storytelling.

The best teams know how to explain ideas in a way that's grounded in something true, easy to understand, and easy to rally behind. No jargon. No overcomplicating. Just making the value obvious enough that people genuinely want to run with it.

**Q: What is the weirdest or most controversial perception of strategists?**

**A:** Probably the idea that strategists aren't creative.

That perception has always been strange to me because strategy is deeply creative work. We're shaping narratives, uncovering insights, finding tension, spotting patterns, reframing problems, and helping create the conditions for breakthrough ideas to happen.

There's also a misconception that strategy is just research and data. Data matters, but data without interpretation, instinct, perspective, and cultural understanding is just information.

And another big one: the idea that cutting down strategy time creates more room for creativity. In reality, strong strategy often creates better creative opportunities and can actually save time by giving clearer direction upfront.

**Q: To what extent do you think the pursuit of awards influences the products and services agencies create and is there a risk it sometimes outweighs real client or consumer value?**

**A:** The pursuit of awards can be a really positive thing because ultimately all work should strive for greatness.

Sometimes a brief starts as something highly tactical, but ambition, passion, and strong thinking can push it into something much more impactful. That's part of what makes this industry exciting.

Where it becomes dangerous is when the work starts serving the award case more than the actual audience or business problem. Great work should never come at the expense of the job to be done.

The best award-winning work usually succeeds because it solved something real in a genuinely interesting way. Not because it was trying too hard to look award-worthy.

The goal should always be both: culturally meaningful and effective for the business.

**Q: With all the change happening (especially around AI) what is one thing you want to protect?**

**A:** Critical thinking.

That's our superpower.

Creativity is one of the most valuable things we offer clients, and creativity doesn't exist without human perspective, taste, instinct, lived experience, imagination, discernment, and gut feeling.

AI can support creativity, but it cannot replace human perspective.

I see AI as a tool to augment, not replace. It can help with speed, efficiency, synthesis, and processing massive amounts of information, which gives us more time to focus on the high-impact work only humans can do:

- Discernment
- Perspective
- Insight recognition
- Storytelling
- Trend spotting
- Cultural intuition
- Taste and refinement

You can't fully understand culture by just reading about it. You have to experience it. Your weirdness, your point of view, your lived experience — that's the real value.

We're still the stewards of the human touch and the decision-making.

**Q: How screwed are we from 1 to 10 with AI in the creative industry?**

**A:** Honestly? I don't think we are.

If anything, AI is making human creativity even more valuable. We're already seeing a shift toward brands wanting to feel more human, more emotional, more culturally connected.

Technology should help us work better and shine brighter. It should support the work, not replace the people behind it.

Strategy, especially, is an irreplaceably human discipline. We're not trying to replace strategic thinking with AI. We're trying to remove friction from mundane tasks and unlock efficiencies that give us more space for deeper thinking and creativity.

I also think transparency matters. We shouldn't be trying to "pass" AI-generated work as invisible or undetectable. We should be open about how we're using these tools with clients, colleagues, vendors, and the industry overall.

AI is a tool. The thinking is still ours.