

How to be a Strategic Partner



Alliance of
Independent
Agencies

®



Brand/product truths



Audience insights

Context

Today – a discussion about

Partnership with your client

What is it, why it really matters

Foundations of partnership: expert views

Your partnership plan

What's the context?

Everything a brand does happens in a context

Collaborative methods

Frame the opportunity or challenge

Your homework task



Partnership with your client

Partnership: definition

Your are not just seen as a supplier

When there is *literally* shared risk and enterprise

Or *perceived* shared risk and enterprise

Or, in a word, **trust**

Breakout

Think about clients at your agency.

Do you have *partnership* with some of your clients

What are the foundations of it?

CEO's advice to "younger self"



Rania Robinson, Graham Kemp, Mike Walsh, Richard Pinder, Ian Milner, Dame Cilla Snowball

It's emotional

When you are in danger of losing a client, practical things are rarely the deep cause. Though they may be the given reasons

They feel that you are not listening or that you don't care or don't understand their pressures



Rania Robinson

You forgive people you like

If the client thinks you care they will forgive cockups and give you another chance.

Relationships can save a client

Rania Robinson



Trust, trust, trust

Respect and partnership will come from *acting like it's your money*.

When you come to sell something to the client, they will respect your recommendation all the more, if you are not trying to sell something when it's not needed.

Richard Pinder

Paranoia

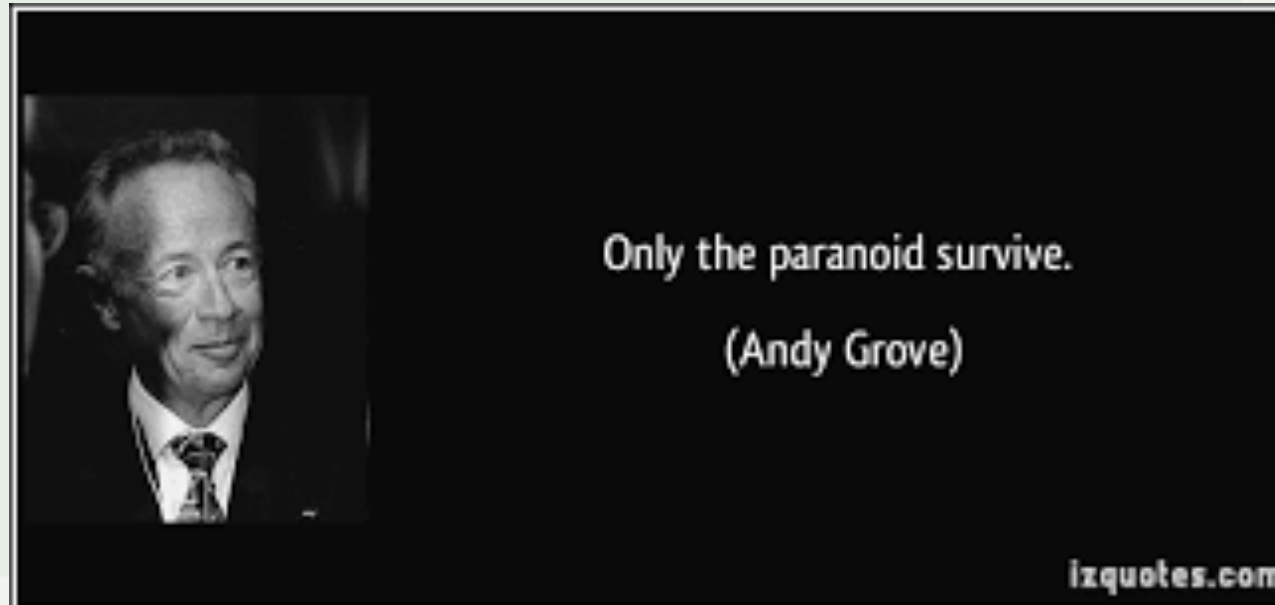
All your clients have the option to go elsewhere

You should assume they they are being approached

So try to anticipate their challenges

If you are off the pace (and somebody else is not) clients notice

Rania Robinson



Well founded confidence

Try to be really good at something.

I wish I had concentrated earlier on trying to be world class in something....rather than some kind of marketing 'decathlete'.

Voice coaching and confidence; Success in our business is some kind of combination of confidence and influence...the more you realise and understand this, the more you can harness your natural strengths and the more you can win the tight squeezes

Ian Milner



Dame Cilla Snowball

Empathy

X

Delivery

=

Good career for you

Profitable long term relationships



Benefits can be huge

To you

You will get promoted faster if clients value & trust you

You may avoid losing your job

You may build relationships that help you to start your own business

To your agency

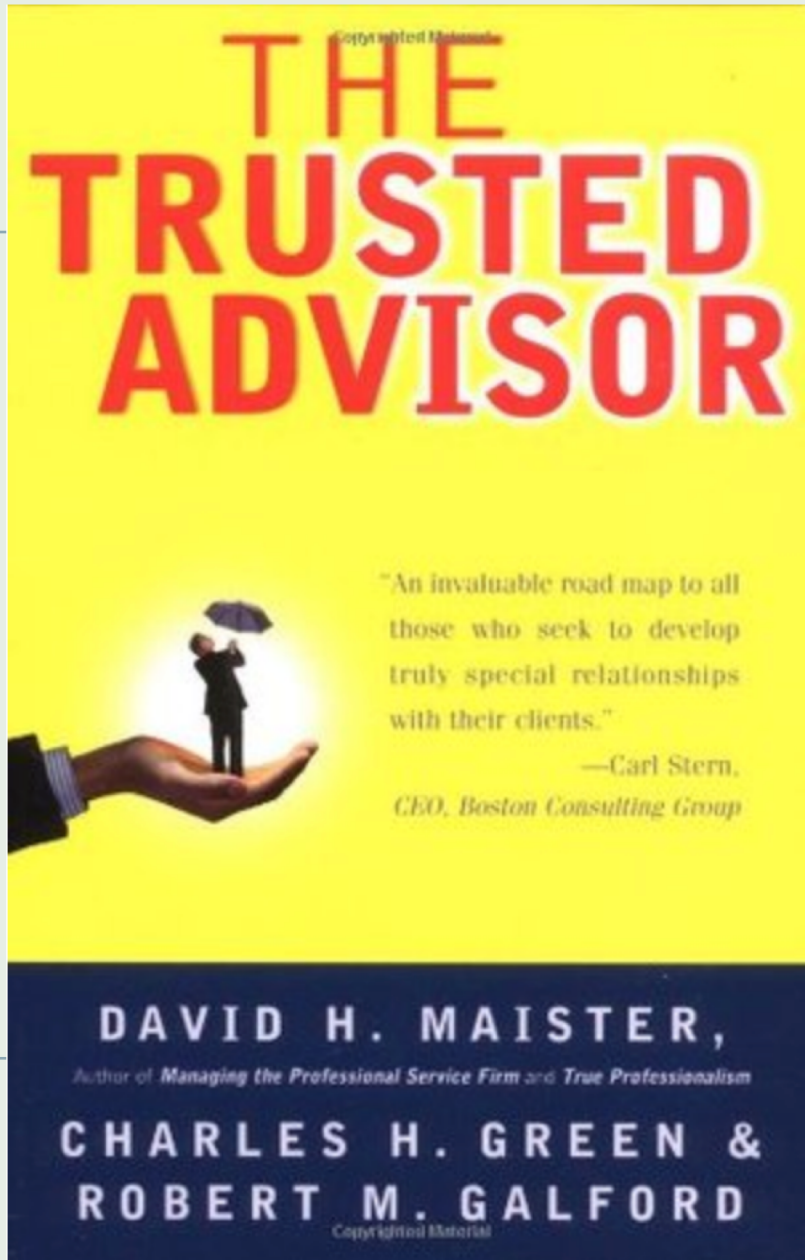
It will be entrusted with more work

Mostly likely be more profitable (less pitching/more recommendation)

Retain clients longer



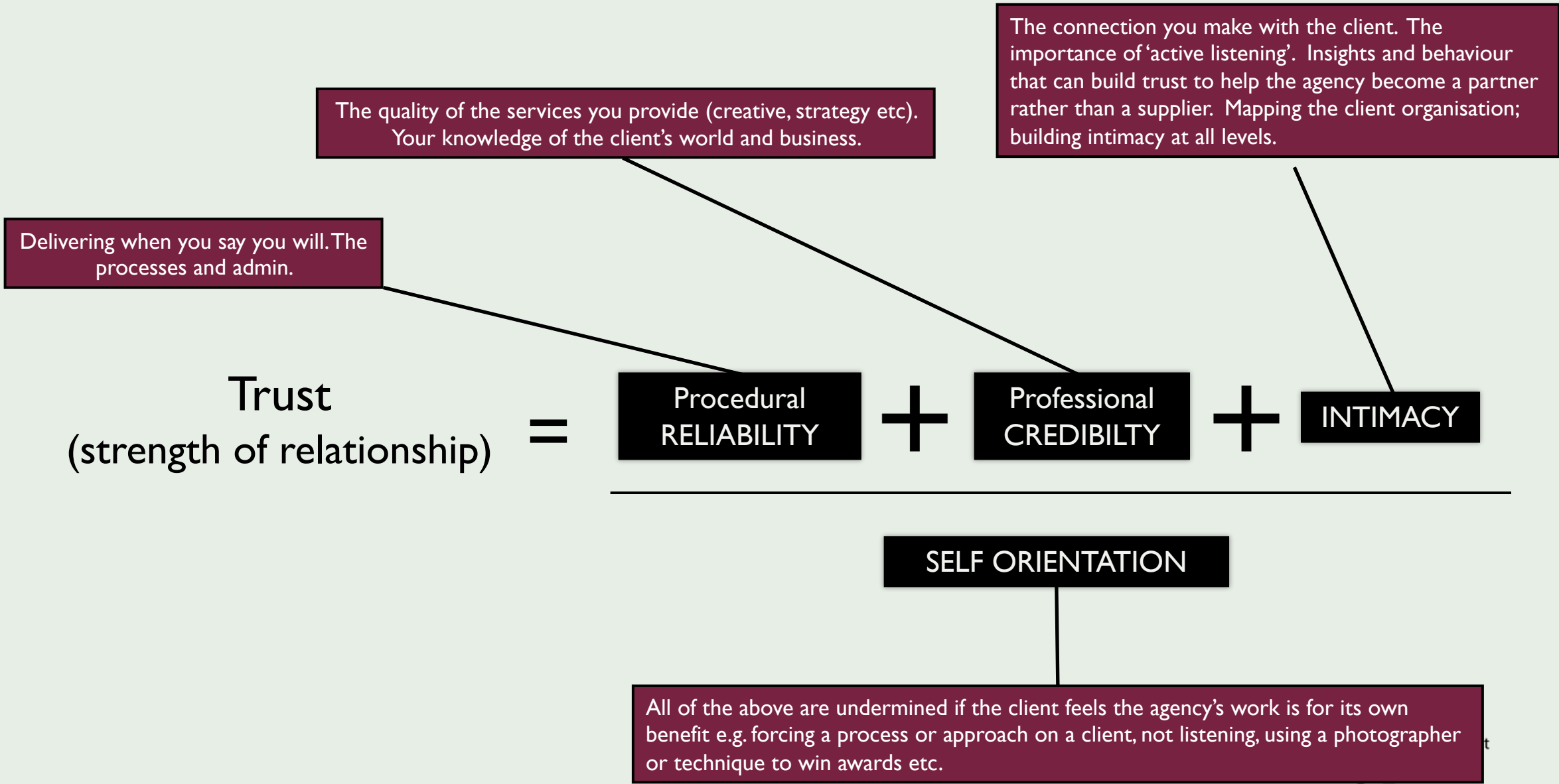
Some tips and behaviours



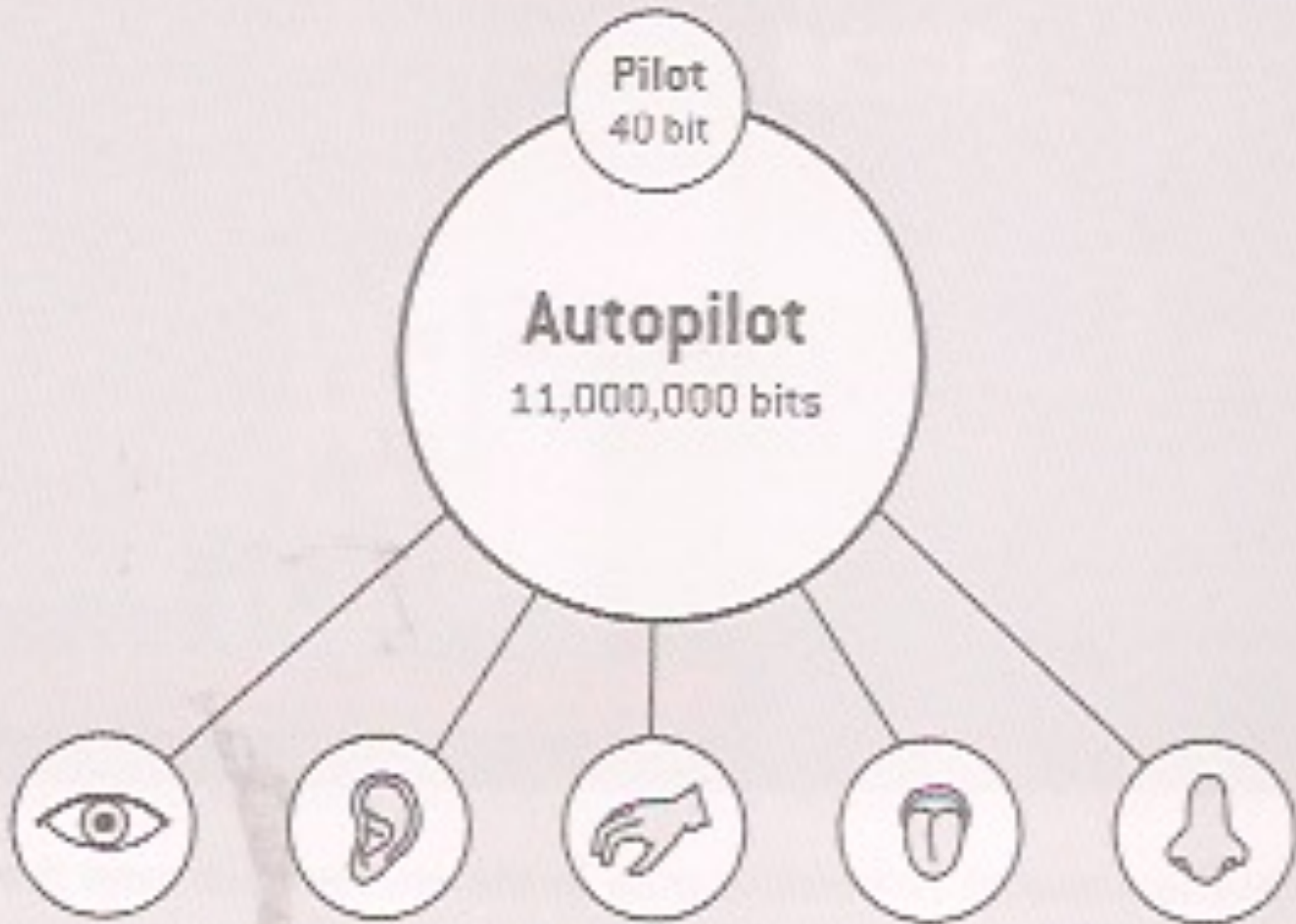
The Trusted Advisor is a foundational text for any consulting professional looking to build, sustain, and grow their client relationships

Janet Fouty – Chair of Deloitte





All professional relationships are also just relationships (It's innate)



Source: Decoded by Phil Barden

ice of
endent
cies

Autopilot brain automatically decodes faces





- Social interactions vital for survival
- Our Brains evolved to give this high priority.



**What happens if you can't see faces
and hear voices?**

*Emails or messages are not necessarily good communication
Because it is so easy to do it doesn't show that you care (signaling)*

If there is a problem an email may be the worst thing you can do - because you cannot have dialogue or communicate tone

*People want and need to hear voices and see faces.
This is basic, innate and unchanging*

- Rania Robinson



of
ent

Active listening

My simplified version:

Be interested in other people

Ask them questions

Listen to the answers

Ask follow up questions

5 principles for active listening

Give full attention

Eye contact/nodding/verbal cues such as “I see”

Paraphrase

Restate in your own words to demonstrate understanding

Ask clarifying questions

Preferably open ended

Reflect feelings

Back to show empathy and understanding

Avoid interrupting

Don't jump in before they have finished speaking

Paul Philips' tip



At the end of the meeting ask:
Whether the meeting was what they wanted/expected
(Or call soon after and ask the question)

90 day plan

Breakouts

Name three habits that you are going to develop/persist with
(i.e. things that you will regularly do)
to build client partnership

Today – a discussion about

Partnership with your client

What is it, why it really matters

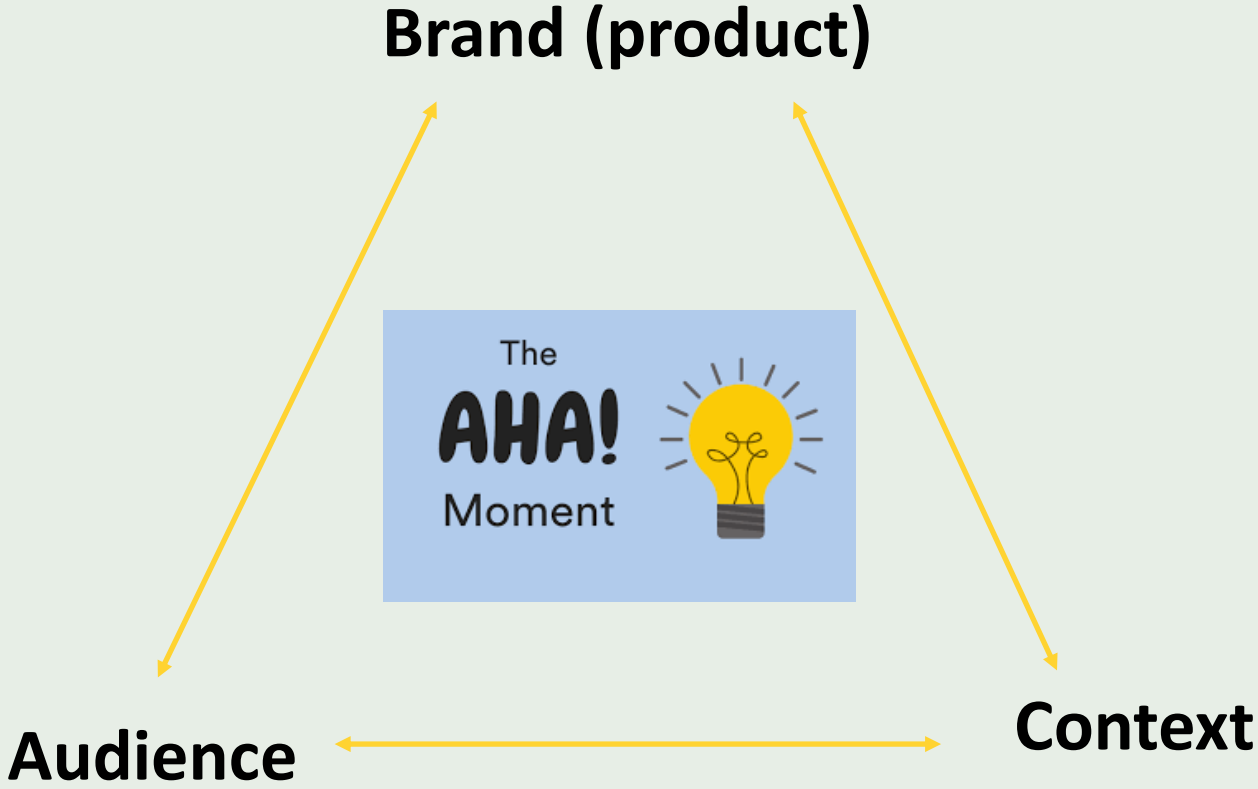
Foundations of partnership: expert views

Your partnership plan

What's the context?

Collaborative methods

Your homework task



Our choices are made in context

Perceived value

- in comparison to other prices

Perceived premiumness/exclusiveness

- From the company you keep/places you are seen

Perceived difference

- from competitive norms

Perceived modernity

- from riding cultural waves/or failing to evolve with shifting culture





KFC: growing cheap competition

No 2 quick service restaurant – *but* a third of the size of MacDonald's

Boom in Independent Chicken Shops.

KFC has a 2.5% share of chicken-
and is being undercut on price

APG Gold 2021



“A bold new strategic angle: use the competition we’ve inspired to establish KFC as the number 1 chicken shop”

Key point of difference:

The original one, the authentic one commands respect

Emerging trends in luxury

Traditional luxury

Status

Superior craftsmanship

Design

New Luxury

Creativity, adventure, curiosity and wellbeing, were defining the best luxury experiences

Research showed just how *playful* luxury brands were becoming.



Audi

Vorsprung durch Technik

Yayoi Kusama, Louis Vuitton and Selfridges



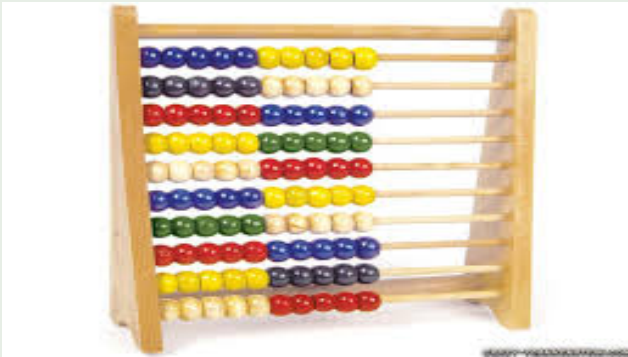
Barbies surprising media context

“We launched during a major Sunday night NFL game and invited dads to share their own stories of playing with Barbie with their little girls.”



Lego's old competitive context

Educational toy



In an interactive electronic age



Seemed dated by contrast with the exciting novel interactive electronic toys

New context: part of entertainment world



“Lego reframed its competitive context through partnerships with entertainment franchises giving the brand both new news and a stimulus to product innovation” HBR

Change your context to energize your brand

- Define your competitive superiority and deposition competitors
- Be the most salient and newsworthy versus your competition
- Resonate with changing cultural codes and norms
- Partner with brands and personalities that take your brand into new markets
- Change the context in which the brand is seen

Four methods

Category norms:

What norms to follow and/or be different from

Culture surfing:

identify an emerging trend or underexploited opportunity

5-Why:

Drilling down identify the key issue

Barriers + SWOT

How constraints can help us define or redefine the opportunity



Category norms:

Who are our competitors?

Customer definition v category definition

What are the competitive norms in our marketplace?

(Messaging, use of media & channels, imagery, customer image)

-often defined by the brand leader(s)

Should we be different and are we capable of being different?



Using AI ?

Start broad

Drill down and get more specific

Investigate ideas

Switch to other platforms (eg Youtube) to find other examples

Prompt

What are the most successful
small charities in the UK

- **Crisis:** Focused on homelessness, Crisis offers support and resources to help people rebuild their lives.
- **Mind:** While not small in reach, their local branches operate independently, providing essential mental health support and advocacy.
- **The Trussell Trust:** Known for its food bank network, it addresses food poverty across the UK.
- **Shelter:** Focused on housing issues, Shelter provides advice and advocacy for those facing homelessness.
- **Youth Music:** This charity supports music-making opportunities for young people, especially in disadvantaged areas.
- **The Child Brain Injury Trust:** Offers support to families affected by childhood brain injuries, providing resources and advice.
- **Surfers Against Sewage:** This environmental charity focuses on marine conservation and aims to reduce plastic pollution.

**What charities have been most
successful at using influencer
marketing**

Please give examples

- **#BlackLivesMatter:** During the 2020 protests, the Black Lives Matter movement received widespread support from influencers across various platforms. Celebrities like Rihanna, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, and many others used their platforms to advocate for racial justice, significantly raising awareness and funds.
- **Oxfam:** Oxfam has partnered with influencers and celebrities to promote their campaigns, such as the "Oxfam Fashion" initiative. Influencers have shared Oxfam's mission and their thrifted finds, encouraging sustainable fashion choices and donations.
- **Charity: Water:** This organization uses influencer partnerships to share compelling stories about clean water initiatives. Influencers like Casey Neistat have raised awareness and funds for the cause, leading campaigns that encourage followers to donate and support water projects.

Culture surfing: identify an emerging trend Or underexploited opportunity



Cadbury spotted a big new need in the pandemic



“1m bars hit shelves with the words removed or ‘donated’ - along with 30p to Age UK from each one sold.

We asked the nation to ‘donate their words’ to help, just by having a chat with an older person or giving an older relative a call.



Trends

Broad questions on cultural context

How are macro changes affecting culture – demography, economy ?

How is technology shifting behavior and culture ?

What is the discourse in the media?

What are leading edge thinkers and influencers saying ?

What is hot in the media on this topic ?

*“Never under estimate the power of
demographic change to alter the culture of a society”*

JM Keynes



Top tip
Successful challenger brand
often ride emerging trends

Big trend- plant based eating




Mastodon “decentralization”



“Decentralisation where control and authority are transferred from a larger single entity to individuals or smaller groups.”

Tip – ask what could be the countertrend in this market



Aldi sees itself as a democratiser of everything that should matter in the modern world, from health to sustainability.

Prompt
Please tell me about 5
successful challenger brands in
the UK

- **Oatly:** This oat milk brand has gained significant traction by promoting sustainability and health, challenging traditional dairy and plant-based milk brands with a fun, irreverent marketing style.
- **Gymshark:** Founded by Ben Francis, Gymshark is a fitness apparel brand that grew rapidly through social media marketing and influencer partnerships, positioning itself as a community-driven alternative to established sportswear brands.
- **Monzo:** This digital bank has disrupted the traditional banking sector with a user-friendly app, transparent fees, and a focus on customer experience, appealing especially to younger consumers.
- **BrewDog:** Known for its craft beers, BrewDog has challenged mainstream beer brands by focusing on quality, sustainability, and bold marketing campaigns that resonate with a younger audience.
- **Airbnb:** Although global, Airbnb has significantly impacted the UK travel and hospitality market by offering unique lodging experiences, allowing homeowners to rent out their properties and challenging traditional hotels.

Please tell me how Gymshark
used marketing to grow ?

- **Influencer Marketing:** Gymshark partnered with fitness influencers and athletes early on, using their platforms to showcase products. This helped them reach a wider audience and establish credibility in the fitness community.
- **Social Media Engagement:** The brand has built a strong presence on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. They share user-generated content, workout videos, and behind-the-scenes looks, fostering a sense of community and encouraging customer engagement.
- **Content Creation:** Gymshark produces high-quality content, including workout guides, motivational posts, and educational materials. This positions them not just as a retailer but as a brand that cares about fitness and lifestyle.
- **Community Building:** Gymshark emphasizes community by hosting events, gym meetups, and challenges, creating a sense of belonging among its customers. This fosters brand loyalty and encourages word-of-mouth marketing.

eatbigfish.

Challengers to Watch 2023

An eatbigfish report

Breakout

Broad questions on culture

How are macro changes affecting culture – demography, economy ?

How is technology shifting behavior and culture ?

What is the discourse in the media?

What are leading edge thinkers and influencers saying ?

Competitive context in our marketplace ?

Nature of competition- customer journey/industry definition

Messaging, use of media & channels, imagery, customer image

-often defined by the brand leader(s)

What are emerging norms or themes in our marketplace

-often expressed by emerging, successful challengers



Method: Five-Whys

A flexible laddering technique. Such as:

- Brand x is growing (WHY/WHY/WHY/WHY/WHY).
- Brand y is launching a new product (WHY/WHY/WHY/WHY/WHY).
- The market is commoditized (WHY/WHY/WHY/WHY/WHY).
- Consumers are stuck in existing habits (WHY/WHY/WHY/WHY/WHY).
- We are not getting credit for our actions (WHY/WHY/WHY/WHY/WHY)

What are the key issues on your project ?

Five-WHYs

Market Fact: spirits consumption is low in Sweden relative to other European countries

1. **Why?** Because spirits prices in Sweden are extremely high
2. **Why?** Because State taxes imposed on spirits are high
3. **Why?** Because the State was keen to reduce spirits consumption in Sweden
4. **Why?** Because there is a historical legacy of alcohol abuse
5. **Why?** people tended to either drink very hard or abstain or both

Insight:

Deep down in the national psyche there is a feeling that spirits consumption is “sinful” and that consumers need “social permission” to drink spirits

Method: barriers

- All goals are pursued in a context.
- Think of these as **barriers**
- Mental judo-use the barrier to sharpen up or even redefine the role for communications



What sorts of barriers?

External

- Competition-how heavy and nature of
- Consumer-such as entrenched behaviours/beliefs
- Environment- media interest and regulation
- Brand-such as how you are positioned in people's minds

Internal

- Resources- such as spend/infrastructure/innovation
- Culture- such as management beliefs

Competitive norm barrier

Market usurped by new entrants

“Price comparison websites had become the self proclaimed customer champions by dramatically simplifying the process of comparing policies on *price*”

Problem redefined

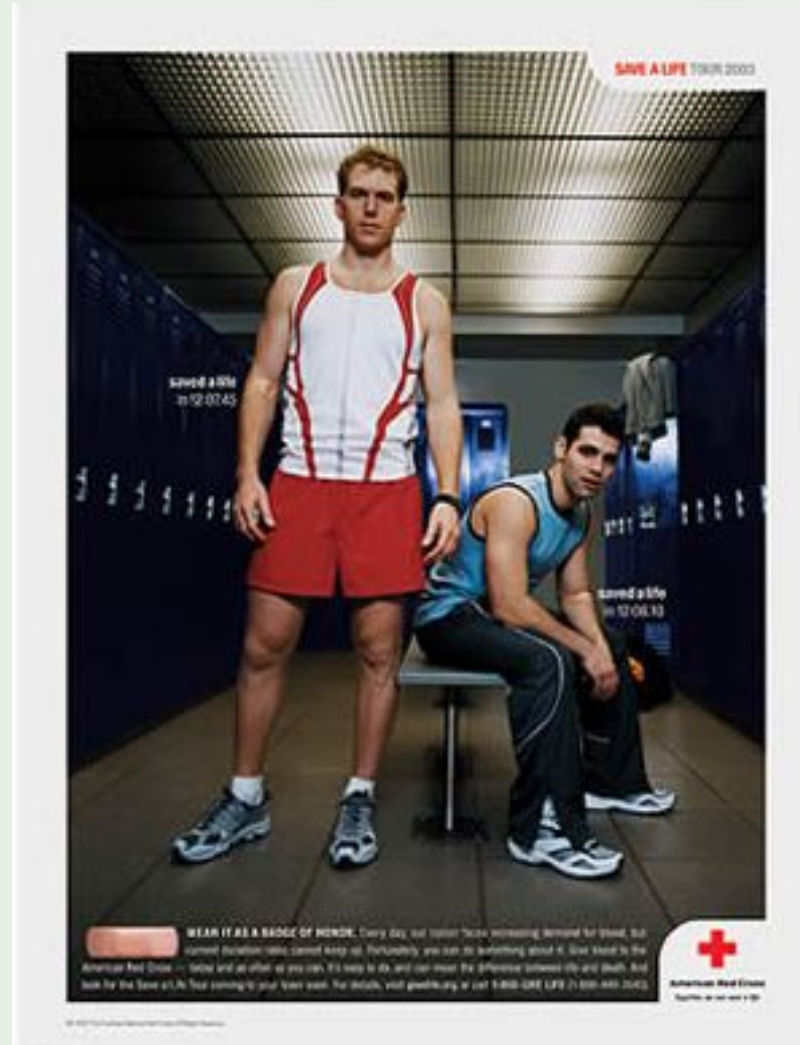
Show how Direct Line's service is a valued by customers

Dramatise its value : you use it when most in need

Source: APG Grand Prix 2015



Human inertia barrier



What stops you giving blood ?



Who can make it possible for you to take time ?

Donations up 26% in RSA



Role for communication:

Motivate HR directors in big companies to give staff an hour off work to give blood

Women and barriers to exercise

Not being fit enough Showing their body Being seen in Lycra It's too far away
It's too expensive Not knowing the rules Having a red face Being sweaty
Wearing sports clothing Being the worst one there Not appearing feminine
Not being competitive enough I can't get there Bringing the wrong equipment
Family should be more important Not being good enough Holding back the group
Changing in front of others Wearing tight clothing Studying should take priority
Need childcare Time with friends should be more important Exercise isn't cool
Being the only new person Wearing the wrong clothing/kit Not looking 'made up'
Housework takes priority Developing too many muscles Being 'too' good
Body parts wobbling when exercising Being seen as too competitive Looking silly

Unifying barrier

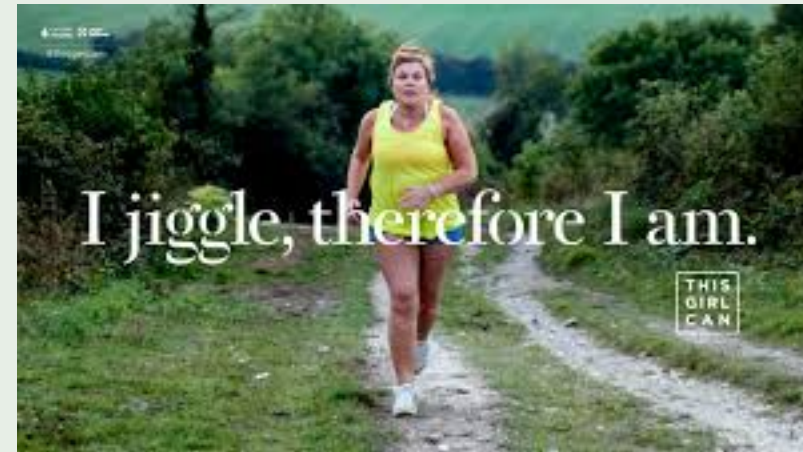
“ The fear of judgement.
Fear was stopping women from
exercising”

Source: APG grand prix 2017

This girl can

Role for coms:

Liberate women from the self judgements that hold them back.



What sorts of barriers?

External

- Competition-how heavy and nature of
- Consumer-such as entrenched behaviours/beliefs
- Environment- media interest and regulation
- Brand-such as how you are positioned in people's minds

Internal

- Resources- such as spend/infrastructure/innovation
- Culture- such as management beliefs

S

STRENGTHS

- Things your company does well
- Qualities that separate you from your competitors
- Internal resources such as skilled, knowledgeable staff
- Tangible assets such as intellectual property, capital, proprietary technologies etc.

W

WEAKNESSES

- Things your company lacks
- Things your competitors do better than you
- Resource limitations
- Unclear unique selling proposition

O

OPPORTUNITIES

- Underserved markets for specific products
- Few competitors in your area
- Emerging need for your products or services
- Press/media coverage of your company

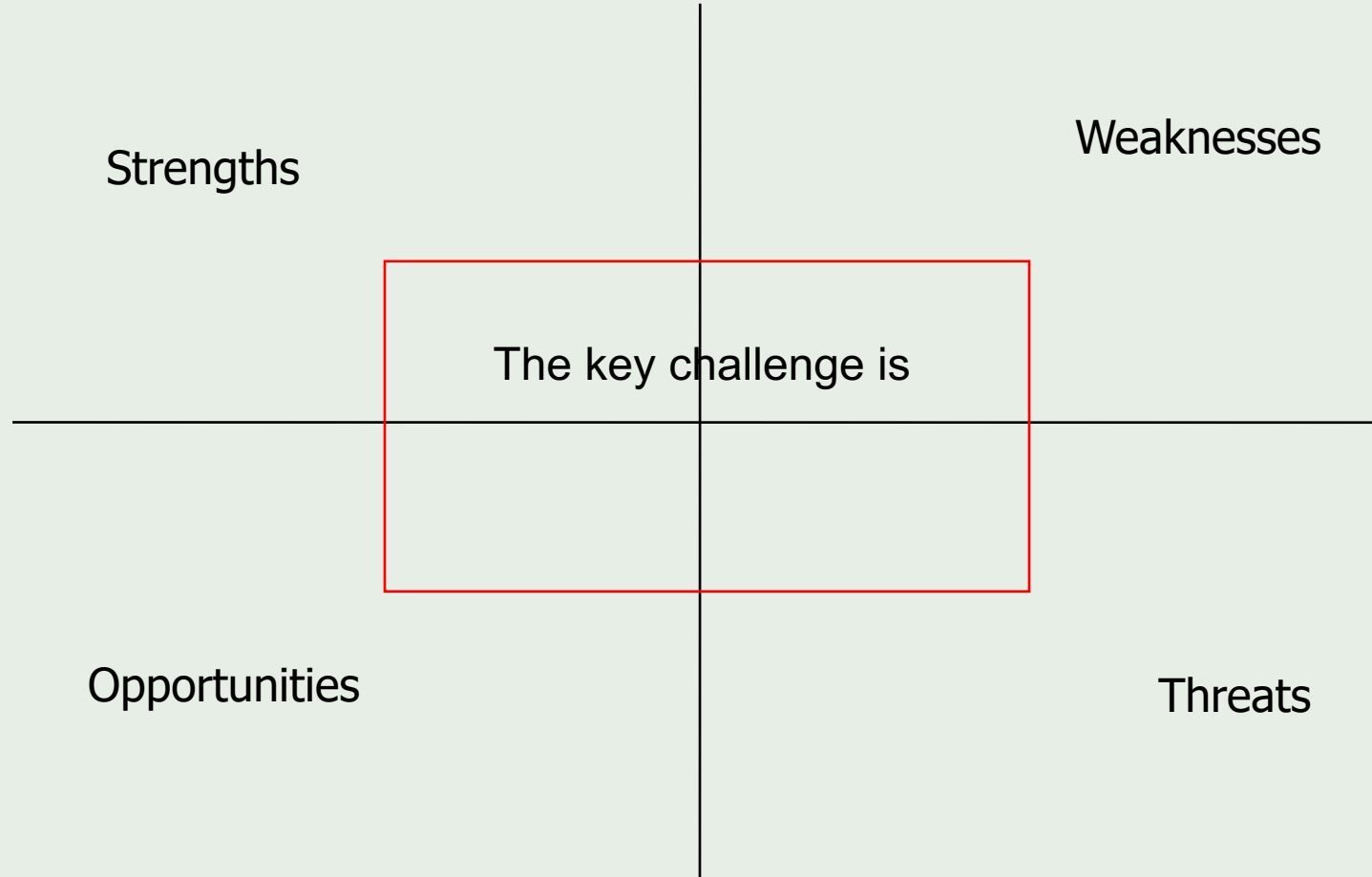
T

THREATS

- Emerging competitors
- Changing regulatory environment
- Negative press/media coverage
- Changing customer attitudes toward your company

 WordStream

SWOT



Opportunities

Weaknesses

The key challenge is

Threats

Tip on SWOT: do at the end. Good ones are short.

Category norms:

What norms to follow and/or be different from

Culture surfing:

identify an emerging trend or underexploited opportunity

5-Why:

Drilling down identify the key issue

Barriers + SWOT

How constraints can help us define or redefine the opportunity



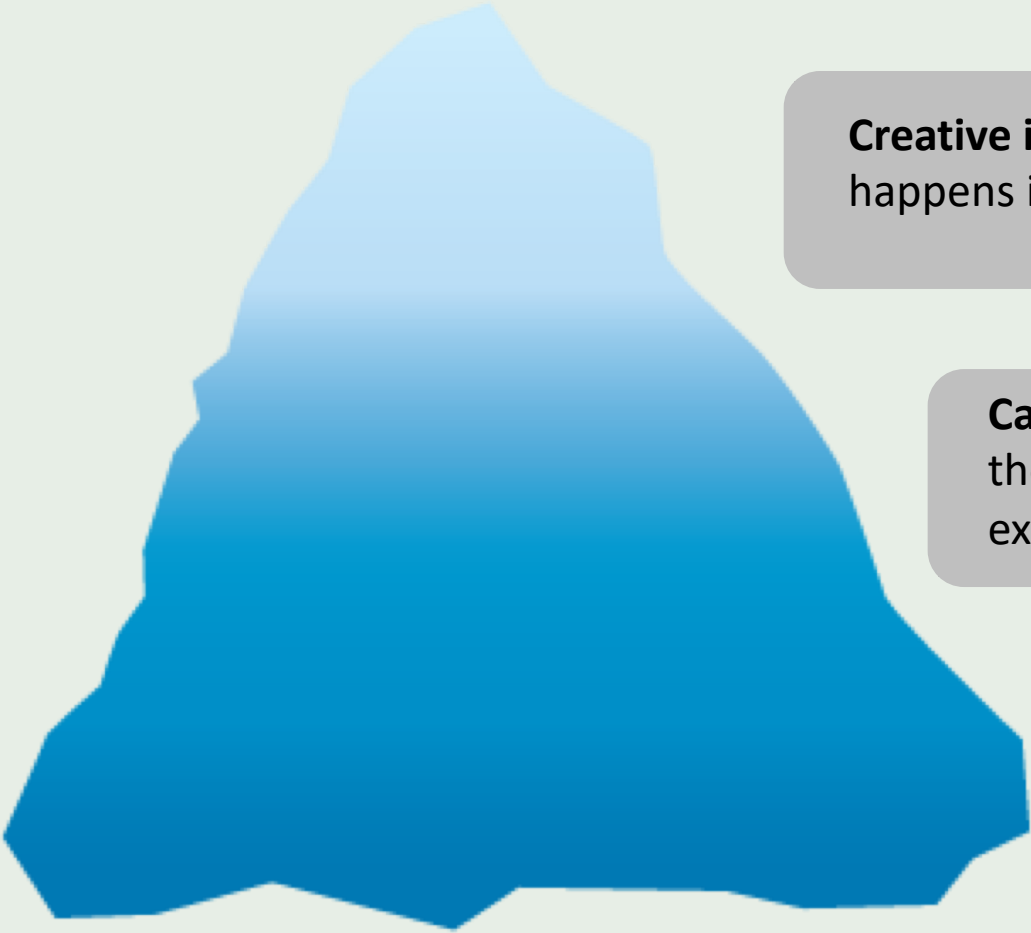
Your exam question:

Share with me a creative execution (any medium/any type/does not have to be an ad, but can be if you wish) that you think is great and why it is great?

Specifically answer these two questions

- a) Why it is motivating/exciting for its audience(s) and
- b) Why it is effective for the brand that produced it (write no more than 50 words in total)

Using the iceberg format work out the different ideas in play in this piece of work (See the notes to help you do this). Keep it as brief as possible- a short sentence or phrase in each box)



Creative idea: what happens in this execution?

Campaign idea: what theme links up different executions?

Brand positioning idea:
What does the brand stand for in a few words ?

Questions to ask in defining:-

Creative idea

What happens in the execution?

What is its basic structure ?

How does it work as an execution?

Campaign idea

What is the theme that links up the executions in the campaign ?

What is the idea behind the execution ?

(often but not always this is the end line)

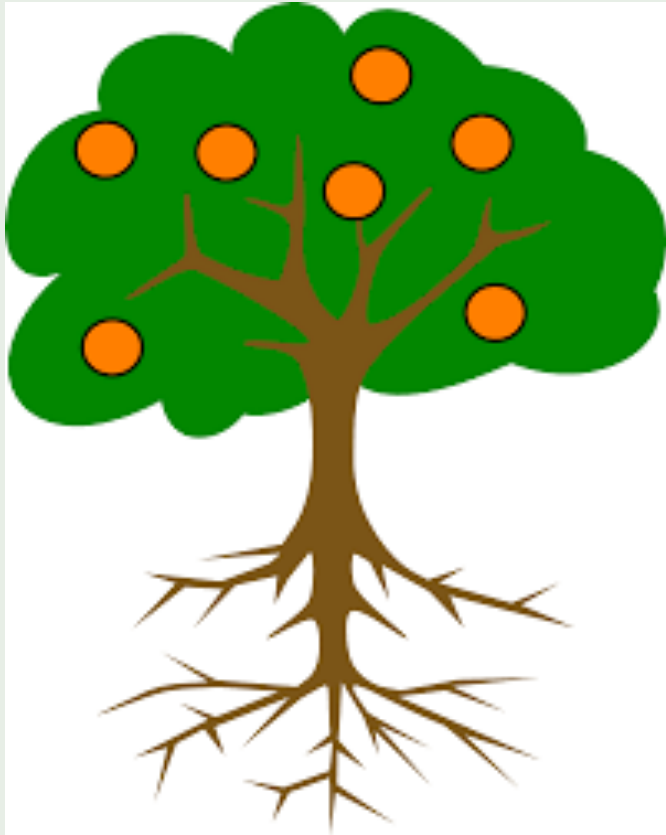
Brand positioning idea

What fundamental need (practical or psychological) does this brand satisfy ?

How is this brand positioned in our minds?

Can you sum this up in a short phrase or a few words ?

You could think about it like this

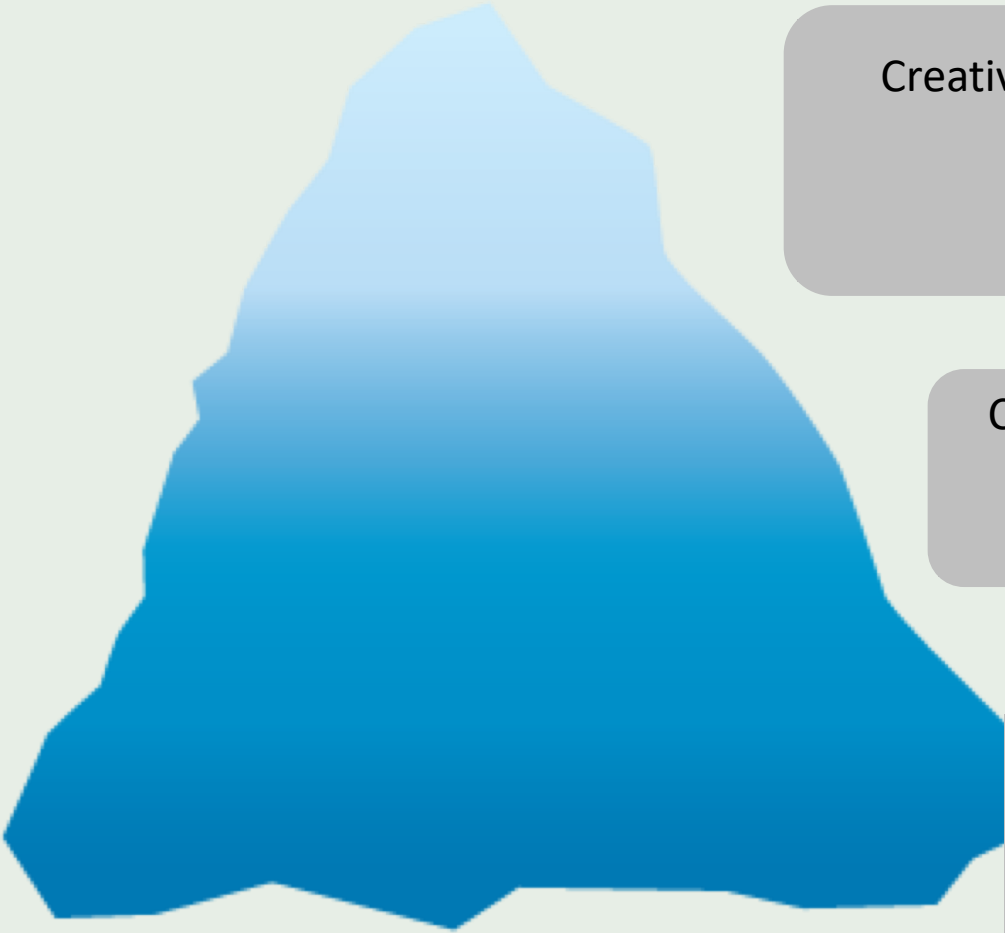


The **creative ideas** are the leaves (and fruits)- they are what you see

Through photosynthesis the leaves nourish the tree and roots (ie add fresh meaning to the brand)

The branches are **the campaign idea** that hold it all together

The roots are the **brand positioning idea**- that nourish the whole tree and are in turn nourished by the leaves

An iceberg diagram with a blue gradient. The tip of the iceberg is above the water line, and the much larger base is submerged. Three grey rounded rectangular boxes are positioned to the right of the iceberg, corresponding to different levels of visibility.

Creative idea:

Campaign idea:

Brand positioning idea:

Empowerment through play

Questions to ask:-

Creative idea

What happens in the execution?

What is its basic structure ?

How does it work as an execution?

Campaign idea

What is the theme that links up the executions in the campaign ?

What is the idea behind the execution ?

(often but not always this is the end line)

Brand positioning idea

What fundamental need (practical or psychological) does this brand satisfy ?

How is this brand positioned in our minds?

Can you sum this up in a short phrase or a few words ?



Creative idea:

**Girls act out adult roles with
with confidence and charm**

Campaign idea:

**A girl can be anything
she wants to be**

Brand positioning idea:

Empowerment through play

Contacts

julians@joinedupcompany.com

