

# The strategic design process

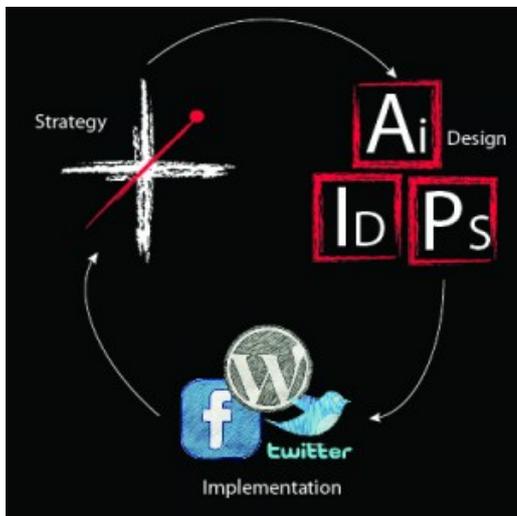
Author : GregDillon

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**I have always been an advocate of an intertwined strategic design process, nay, relationship.**



At one of the design agencies where I spent a year freelancing they had - pre-me - operated using a silo model whereby the Head of Strategy turned up to the initial briefing and then did the 'stage one' part of the project on his own, delivered it to the creatives and they then had to interpret his thoughts into engaging design. He then had no more involvement until the client presentations. He reasoned this with a fair comment that he was the strategy expert, they were the creative experts and he did not like people meddling so he didn't meddle either.

This felt really disjointed to me and was only working as the creative team was arguably the best I have ever worked with so delivered incredible concept and final design work every single time.

My approach to the strategic design process is really different to this.

I always prefer to work **with** creatives in design agencies all through the journey. From the initial

creative brief meetings with the client to having them involved in the strategy process with me so they get and buy in to the recommendations I put forward as they have been a part of the insight investigation phase.

From there the best agencies have strategy and design working together so that design is ratified throughout and adjustments made to the strategies employed if it is apparent that it needs a little nuancing based on how the project is evolving.

Something I also do - and something that has stood me out amongst peers in the past - is a technique I call 'Immersive Briefings'... whereby I (convince the agency I'm freelancing at) to invest time and cash in letting me brief in situ.

So for [Arsenal Football Club](#) for example, I did the creative briefing pitch side at the Emirates Stadium, for Aloft Hotels I briefed the team in the lobby of the hotel, for Budweiser I briefed in the beer aisle of a convenience store and for Speedo, I took it a step further to brief in an actual pool.

It contextualises the brand's problem and allows us to experience the brand as well as understanding the surroundings the brand has to live in.

How does your strategy and creative teams work together? Any innovative approaches you employ to keep everyone on the same page throughout client projects? Do you have a rigid or a flexible strategic design process?