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Marketers VS Designers

Lost in Translation

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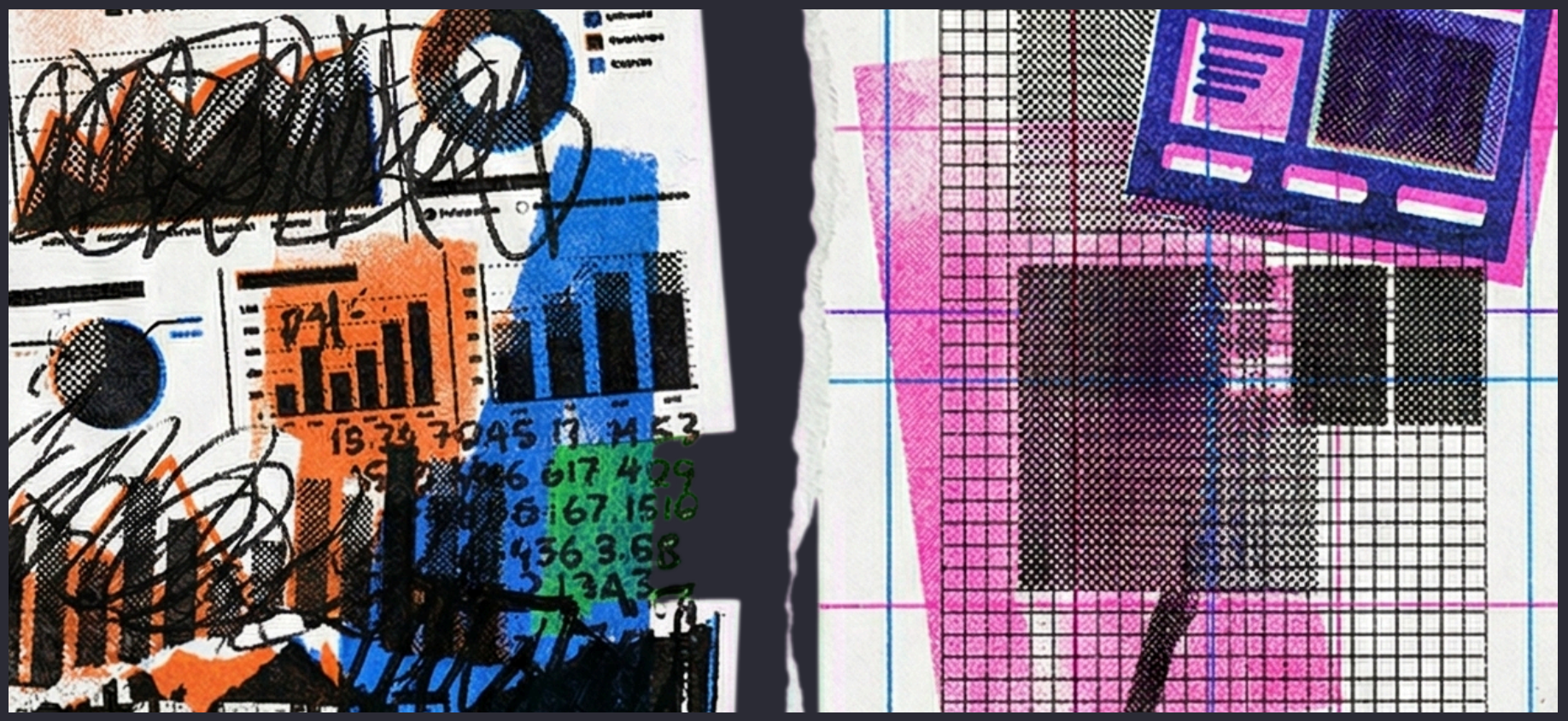

Both sides are right. That's the problem.

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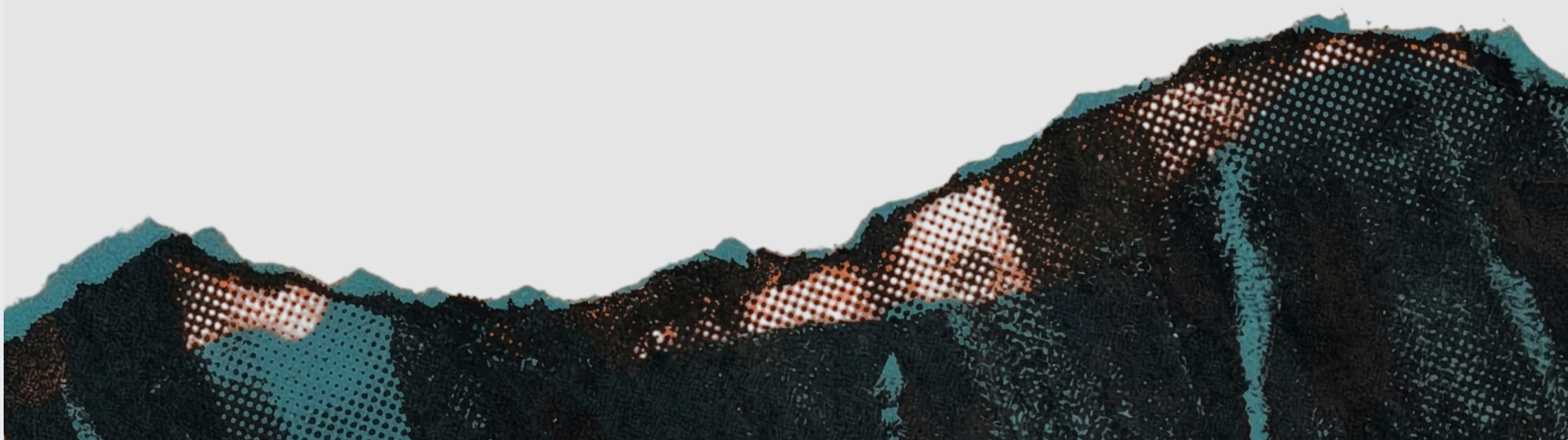
Marketers and designers are solving different problems on the same project.

We asked 6 experts who live this tension.

Swipe to hear each one.



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Featured Experts



Nish Nadaraja
Former Head of Brand and Community at Yelp



Yesenia España
Graphic Designer



Elena Lunt
Marketer



Ham Maghazeh
Social Media + Advertising Strategist



Nadia Fernández
Designer & Founder of La Isla Designs



Hristo Butchvarov
Designer

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Agree on Three Things Before Anyone Opens a Tool

*Not the mood. The **job**.*

What is this (asset) supposed to do in the real world?

Stop the scroll. Earn the click. Calm the nervous executive who forwarded a competitor's launch at 5:06am.

What matters most?

You cannot optimize for speed, conversion, brand integrity, and internal politics simultaneously. Rank them. If you don't, design optimizes for one future and marketing judges it against another.

What does success look like in something measurable?

A number. A behavior. A decision. If success is "it feels right" — you've already lost.

> **Not the mood. Not 'make it premium but scrappy.' What is this thing supposed to do in the real world?**

Nish Nadaraja

Former Head of Brand and Community at Yelp



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Round Two Is Where Feedback Goes Soft



Nish Nadaraja
Former Head of Brand and Community at Yelp
/nishisit

*"It doesn't pop" means the hierarchy is **broken**.*
Nobody said that.

Round one is still tied to the brief.

By round two, the brief is a memory.

The real problems:

- the headline isn't landing,
- the eye doesn't know where to go,
- the CTA isn't pulling.



Translation: something in the hierarchy is off. But no one has named it.

Instead of addressing the structure, teams debate fonts and colors — **because structure is harder to name.**

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Two Small Shifts That Kill Revision Purgatory

Force a ranked priority.
Show direction before polish.



Nish Nadaraja
Former Head of Brand and Community at Yelp
/nishisit

1. **No ties. Ranking five things without cheating is shockingly hard** — *that's exactly the point*

2. **In every review, ask one question: does this draft serve the number one priority?**

Tip:
Show rough compositions before AI generates something that looks finished in 90 seconds — polish creates false certainty.

A polished draft creates false certainty. It feels done, so people only critique what's on the surface.

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The Tension Isn't About Color. It's About Time Horizon.



Nish Nadaraja
Former Head of Brand and Community at Yelp
/nishisit

Designers *are protecting the brand five years from now.*

Marketers *are protecting the meeting on Thursday.*

Both are right.

The conflict isn't a personality problem. It's two people with legitimate priorities that peak at different points in time.

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Designers Shouldn't Be Making Strategic Decisions Through Composition

Without a defined priority, the layout is left guessing.

If clarity doesn't exist before design begins, the **designer fills the gap** through hierarchy, composition, and emphasis.

That's not a design problem - it's a strategy problem showing up at the **wrong stage.**

The feedback rounds that follow aren't about aesthetics. They're about **misalignment** that should have been resolved earlier.

> **Designers are forced to make strategic decisions through composition.**



Yesenia España
Graphic Designer

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Speed Doesn't Break the Logo. It Breaks the System.



Yesenia España
Graphic Designer
/yeseniaespana

Brand integrity runs deeper than logos and colors. It's the discipline of repeating structure.

- Under pressure, teams start solving each asset in **isolation.**
- Type scale shifts. Spacing compresses. **Messaging blocks compete.**
- The brand feels unstable even when individual visuals look polished because the structure underneath has ***slipped.***



> **The system basically erodes.**

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Projects Stall at First Review. Here's Why.

*The brief was clear on deliverables but unclear on **priority**.*



Yesenia España
Graphic Designer
/yeseniaespana

When teams align on outcomes before design begins, first reviews become refinements.

Stakeholders often react to the draft instead of the intent behind it.

When the outcome wasn't agreed upfront, the first review becomes the alignment conversation, not a refinement.

Fix the stage before, and first reviews become exactly what they should be: small adjustments, not restarts.

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AI Can Make the Wrong Hierarchy Look Finished

Polish creates false confidence.



Yesenia España
Graphic Designer
/yeseniaespana

Speed is helpful. But clarity has to come first.

- A clean, complete-looking AI-generated page can **bury the primary CTA halfway down**, and no one would question it.
- The visual finish makes it *feel* done but the **strategy underneath would not support conversion** at all.

One test cuts through it:

Is the primary action unmistakable within three seconds?



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Beautiful ≠ Right

*The **brief** is where assets go wrong — not the design.*

- A stunning asset can still completely miss **if the intent was never made clear** upfront.
- Being a stickler for brand guidelines isn't being difficult — it's **protecting the work.**

✗ Dictating every detail isn't the job.

✓ Giving designers enough info to make the right calls is.



I hate dictating every single detail — but when too much is left open, the asset misses the mark.

Elena Lunt
Marketer

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The Only 3 Questions That Matter

Before you open a design tool, answer these questions:



Elena Lunt
Marketer
/elena-lunt

1. **Who is this for?**
2. **What matters most to them?**
3. **How does their pain point make them feel?**

The standard: Your audience should feel totally called out — in a good way. *Like the content was made specifically for them.*

That doesn't happen fast, and **no shortcut gets you there.**

> **You want people to see themselves reflected back in a way that makes them pause.**

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What Converts Isn't Magic. It's This:

Clarity + the right emotion = the scroll stops.



Elena Lunt
Marketer
/elena-lunt

If we can't make the viewer feel anything, they're just going to keep scrolling.



The message has to be immediately understood — not clever, not layered. Clear.



The emotion has to connect directly to the specific pain point you're solving.



If the viewer doesn't believe their problem is going to be solved, you've already lost them.



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AI Has a Lane. Keep It There.

Use AI to free up humans — not replace them.



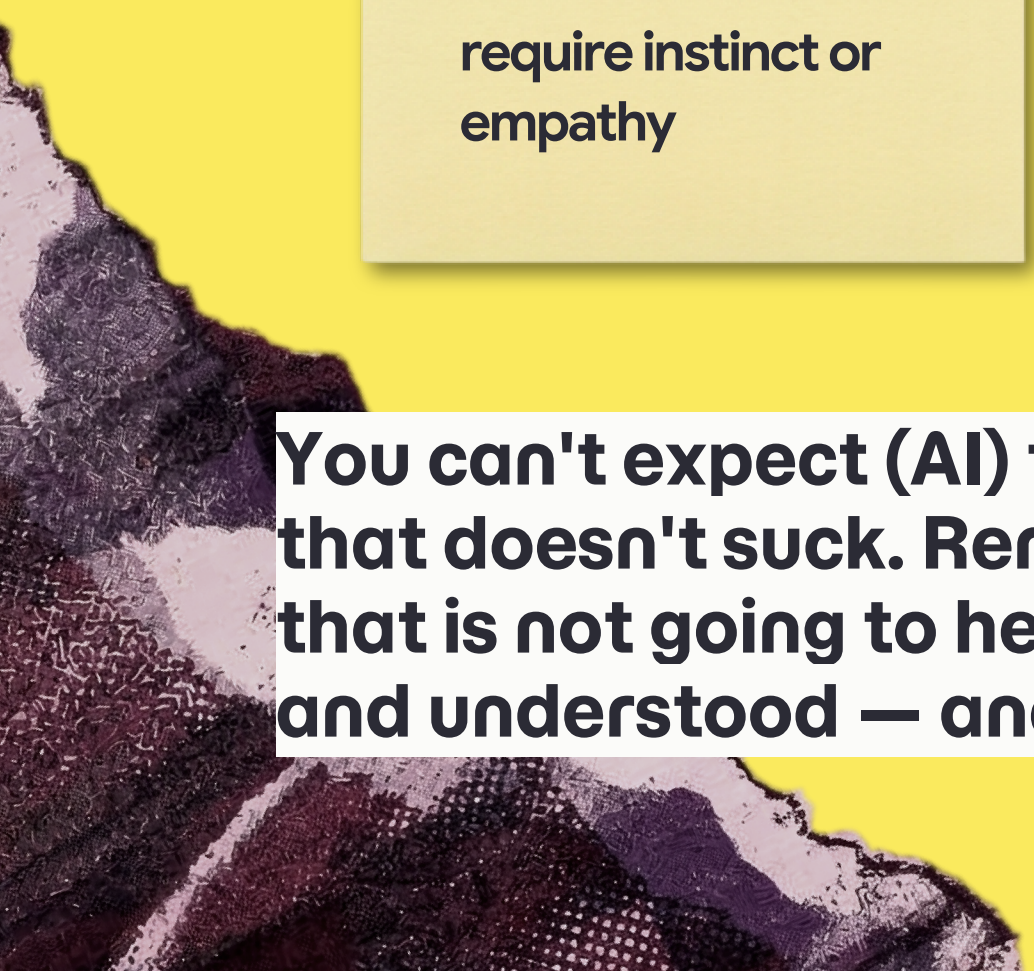
Elena Lunt
Marketer
/elena-lunt

Where AI genuinely helps:

- Organizing workflows
- Assigning tasks
- Managing operational stuff that doesn't require instinct or empathy

Where AI doesn't help:

- Writing copy that makes people feel seen
- Designing for a specific audience's emotional reality
- Understanding why someone would stop and care



You can't expect (AI) to do creative work that doesn't suck. Removing humans from that is not going to help viewers feel seen and understood — and then what's the point?

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Speed Breaks Tone Before It Breaks Anything Else

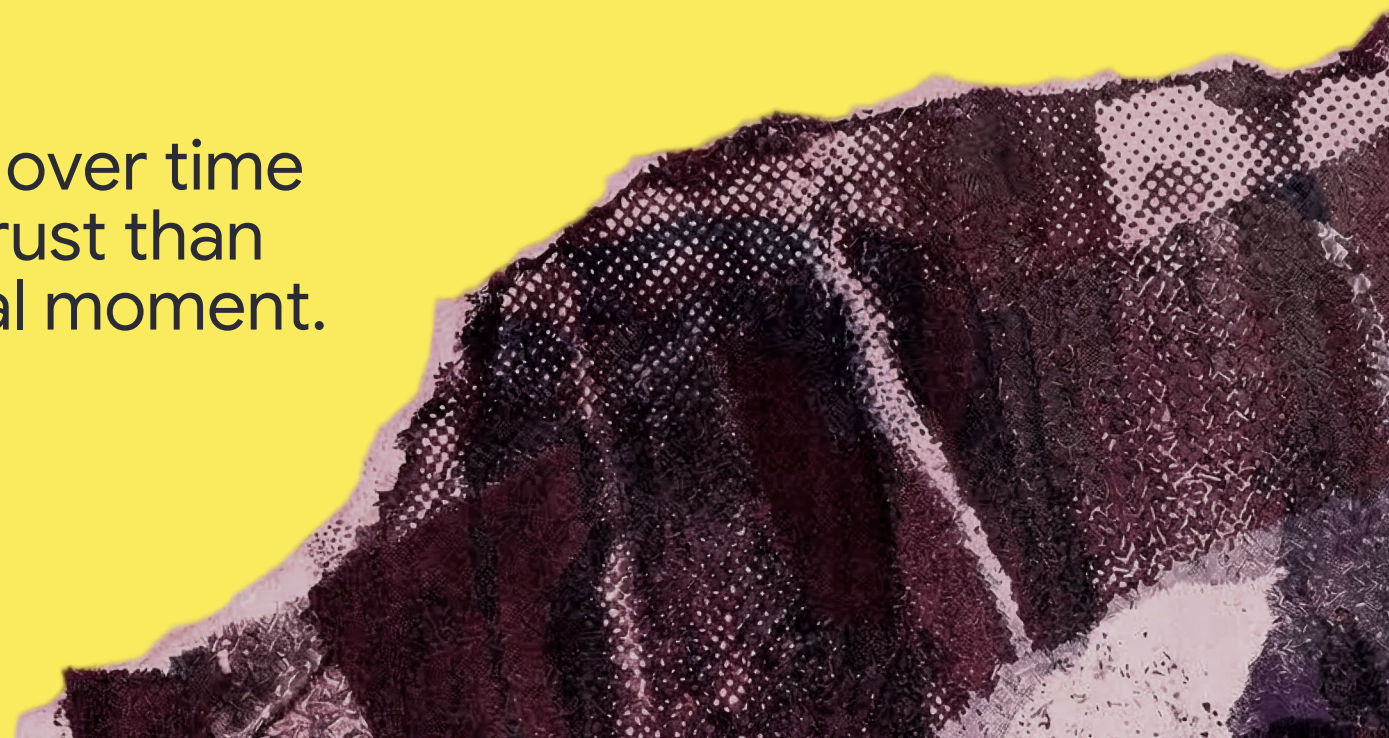


Elena Lunt
Marketer
/elena-lunt

Loyalty isn't built in virality.

- Visual brand rules bend under pressure — but tone snaps.
- Chasing a trend in a voice that isn't yours doesn't make you relevant, it makes you **noise**.
- **Consistency** over time builds more trust than any single viral moment.

Pick and choose your trends carefully. Make sure everything you release sounds like you.



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More Eyes Isn't Overhead. It's The Work.

Emotional content can't exist in a vacuum.

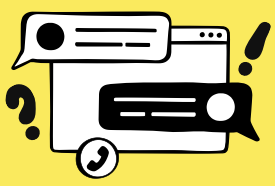


Elena Lunt
Marketer
/elena-lunt

"When not enough eyes are on a piece of content, it's harder to be sure it will resonate the way you'd like. Emotional content can't exist in a vacuum."



When one person wears **both the marketer and designer** hat, alignment is frictionless — *but so are blind spots*.



The tension of collaboration (i.e. someone pushing back, questioning intent) is what makes content **resonate beyond the person who made it.**



Great creative work needs outside eyes not to approve it, but to **pressure-test** whether it actually lands.

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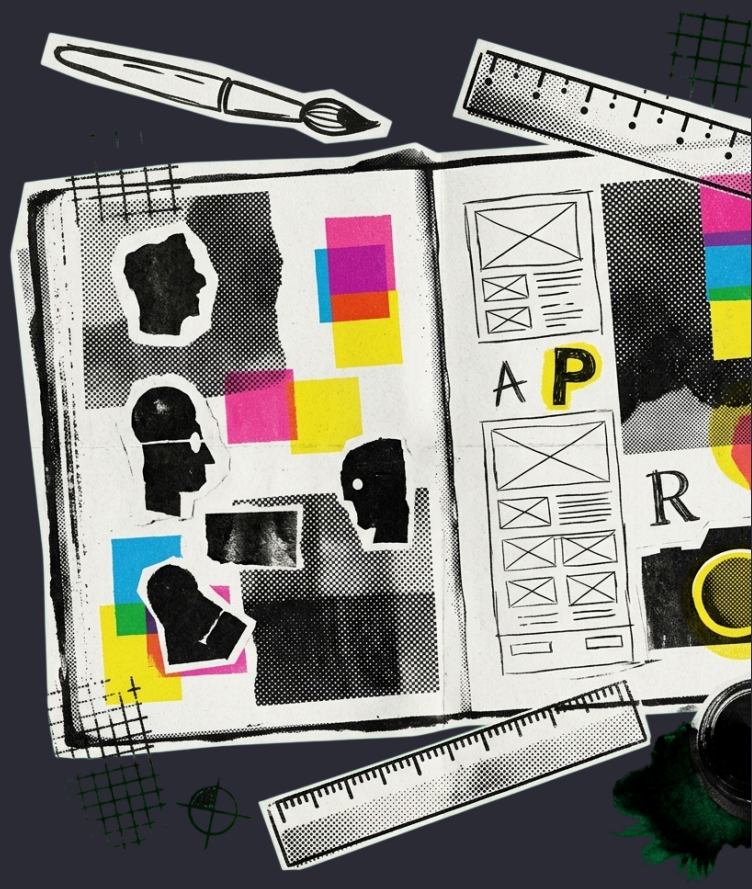
The Designer Evolved. The Workflow Didn't.

The role expanded. The process didn't. That's the real problem.



- In **2015**, a designer made **one file.** Today they are thinking across video, photography, motion, copy, social, and digital — **simultaneously.**
- The brief, the approval process, the feedback structure — in **2026**, *none* of it was built for someone operating at this scale.
- When the role expands but the process doesn't, misalignment isn't a communication failure. It's a **structural inevitability.**



Ham Maghazeh
Social Media + Advertising Strategist

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Design Is Not the Starting Point. It Never Was.

Design is the execution of a decision — not the discovery of one.



Ham Maghazeh
Social Media + Advertising Strategist
/hammaghazeh

Three things must be locked before any layout, format, or color decision begins:

1. **The Decision**
   What must the audience believe, feel, or do? Not vaguely. Precisely.

2. **The Hierarchy**
   What's first? What's second? What can be ignored? Without this, design is guesswork across every format it touches.

3. **The Narrative Prototype**
   Not a visual. A message. Flow, tension, proof, call to action.

When it works, you don't smile because it's beautiful. You smile because it communicates exactly what you meant to say.

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Subjective Feedback Is a Briefing Problem in Disguise



Ham Maghazeh
Social Media + Advertising Strategist
/hammaghazeh

"Can we make it pop more?" is not design feedback. It's strategic uncertainty.

- Subjectivity explodes when the previous stage was incomplete.
- When something looks polished, **people react emotionally instead of analytically** — and today's tools make everything look polished faster than ever.
- The strategy gap gets hidden by the finished product.

Subjective feedback is almost never a design problem.

It is a briefing problem wearing a design problem's clothes.



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A Good Review Has One Rule

Opinion is the cheapest thing in the room.



Ham Maghazeh
Social Media + Advertising Strategist
/hammaghazeh

Feedback must connect to the objective agreed before design started — *not to personal taste in the moment.*

"I prefer this version" is not a review.

"This hierarchy supports the primary action better" is.

If you can't connect your feedback to the brief, the feedback isn't ready yet.



Speed and craft coexist when the review is a check against intent — not a renegotiation of it.

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The Smallest Process Change With the Biggest Return

Before design starts, make the marketer explain the idea out loud. No slides. Under three minutes.



Ham Maghazeh
Social Media + Advertising Strategist
/hammaghazeh



If marketers can't explain an idea in 3 mins, **design can't rescue it.**



Most revision cycles aren't caused by bad design — they're caused by a brief that looked complete on paper but had **never been stress-tested out loud.**



An unclear brief doesn't cost you one revision. It costs you revisions across **every format simultaneously.**

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Marketers and Designers Are Rewarded by Fundamentally Different Things



Ham Maghazeh
Social Media + Advertising Strategist
/hammaghazeh

One optimizes for what happens next. The other optimizes for what lasts.

Marketer

Validated by action:
clicks, conversions, launch velocity

Designer

Validated by coherence:
craft, integrity, decisions that hold up over time

*The collaboration problem isn't about getting designers to execute faster or marketers to brief better — **it's about getting the designer's multi-format thinking into the conversation early enough to shape the output,** not just decorate a decision already made.*

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"It Needs More Pop" Means Nobody Agreed on Anything

Vague feedback is a strategy problem.
Not a design problem.

"Flat."
"Missing something."
"Bolder."

Specific feedback
= shared Intent

Vague feedback
= skipped step

These aren't aesthetic notes.
They're proof the goal was never set.

When intent is aligned,
feedback gets specific:
"The CTA needs to dominate - this is bottom-of-funnel"

The visual is being asked to compensate for unclear strategy.



Nadia Fernández
Designer & Founder of
La Isla Designs

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Every "Can We Add One More Thing" Shrinks the Headline

"50% Off — Ends Friday"
doesn't stay that way.



Nadia Fernández
Designer & Founder
of La Isla Designs
/nadiiafernandez

"Add one benefit"

"Throw in a guarantee"

"Then a testimonial"

The feedback loop most design teams know too well.

Now nothing stands out.

AI makes it worse ***quietly*** —
clean, balanced, professional.

But everything has the same weight. Nothing leads.
The CTA goes nowhere.



"Branding is deciding one thing matters most, then making everything else support it."

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If the Answer Changes Depending on Who's Talking, You're Already in Trouble.



Nadia Fernández
Designer & Founder
of La Isla Designs
/nadiiafernandez

A page can't lead with three jobs at once.

Define success first.

Then aim at it.

- Building an email list
- Explaining the product
- Building investor trust

3 very different goals



If the answer to **"what's this for?"** is long, insecure, or shifts between people — that's the **warning sign.**

Clear goal → clear edits.
Unclear goal → endless rounds.

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"I Don't Like It" Is Not Feedback

Too tall? Too wobbly?
Wrong color?



Nadia Fernández
Designer & Founder
of La Isla Designs
/nadiiafernandez

"I don't like it" tells you **nothing.**

Same as someone saying they don't like a chair without saying why.

If we don't know what the chair is for, we keep sanding and repainting forever.

If you need to educate them because what they're asking for won't succeed — do it.

Pushing clients to get specific is the most professional thing you can do.



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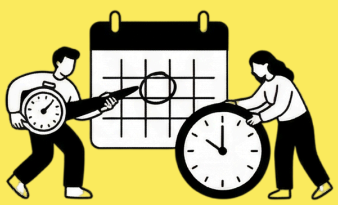
One Question. Fewer Revisions.

"If someone walks away remembering just one thing — what is it?"

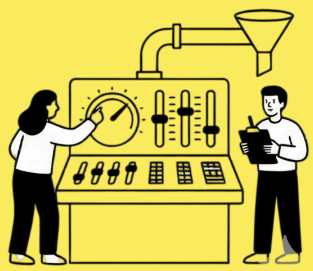


Nadia Fernández
Designer & Founder
of La Isla Designs
/nadiiafernandez

When that one thing is clear, every design decision gets easier.



"The early bird price"
biggest, boldest thing on the page. Everything else supports it.



"We're the experts"
calm, structured, confident. Not loud. Not flashy.



"We want people to feel safe"
breathing room, simple wording, clear button.

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Know the Destination Before You Pack

Going to the beach? You're not bringing the fur jacket.



Nadia Fernández
Designer & Founder
of La Isla Designs
/nadiiafernandez

If you know where you're going, the choices are obvious.

If you *don't*, you pack everything just in case — and still forget something important.



That one question forces the team to choose the destination before anyone opens a tool.



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"Just Make It Look Nice" Is a Red Flag

It sounds harmless.
It means nothing was defined.

- **No goals**
- **No audience**
- **No key messages**

Guessing leads to 10 revision rounds and **endless back and forth.**

> **When someone says 'make it look nice,' they're asking you to read their mind.**

Hristo Butchvarov
Designer





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Never Open the Software First

4 questions before a single pixel moves:



Hristo Butchvarov
Designer
/hristo-butchvarov

1. **What is the #1 goal of this design?**
2. **Who is your target audience?**
3. **Where and how will this be used?**
4. **Do you have examples of designs you like?**

Always ask. **Never assume.**



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The Best Briefs Don't Arrive. They're Uncovered.

The right questions make the client think harder than they expected.



Hristo Butchvarov
Designer
/hristo-butchvarov

The best feedback this designer ever received wasn't praise — it was a client saying:



Marketers **don't need to have everything figured out** before the conversation starts.

The designer's job isn't just to execute — it's to **help uncover what's actually needed.**

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When Feedback Is a Feeling, Make It Concrete

"This doesn't feel right" is a starting point, not a direction.



Hristo Butchvarov
Designer
/hristo-butchvarov

- Ask for an example that *does* feel right — it's harder to argue with a reference than a feeling.
- If they're still stuck, **break the design into its parts:** header, color, fonts, visual hook — and ask where the problem is biggest.
- Vague feedback usually means the client hasn't identified the real issue yet. **Help them find it.**

> **Most of the time, asking for something concrete helps a lot.**

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Design Is Not Drag and Drop.

17 years. 10,000+ projects.
The software is the easy part.



Hristo Butchvarov
Designer
/hristo-butchvarov

> **Knowing what to create is the hard part. Everything else flows from that.**



DIY tools like Canva taught people that design is drag and drop — it isn't.



What people don't see: the questions asked, the options considered and rejected, the hierarchy and color decisions made to guide the eye.



They see the final deliverable and assume it took 30 minutes.

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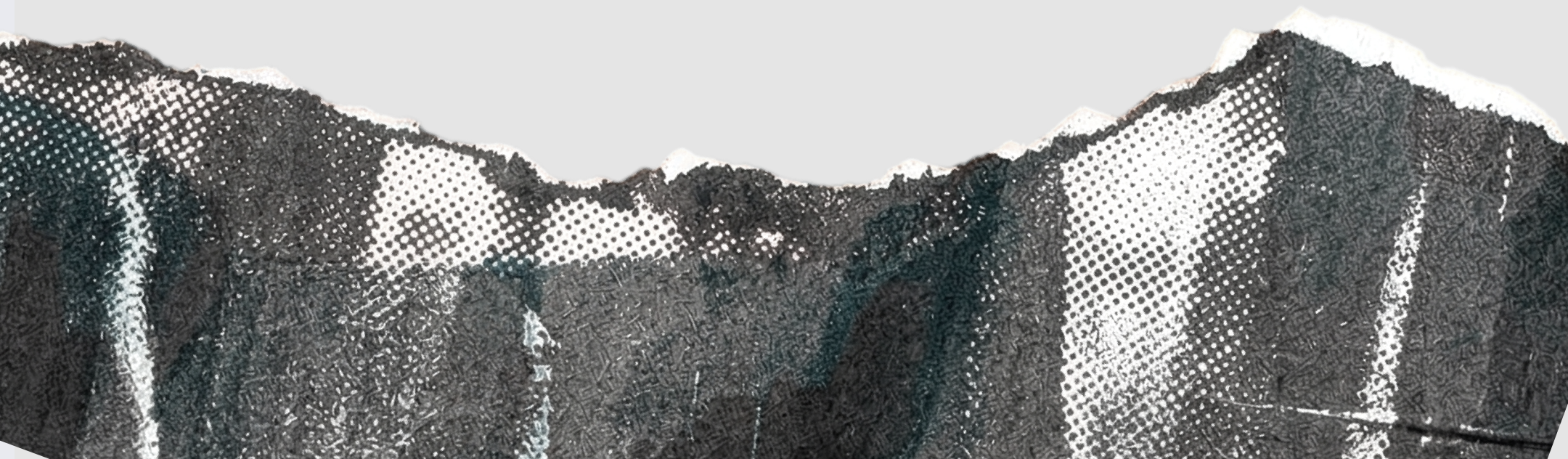
Which side of this tension do you sit on?

The next brief **doesn't have to end in a loop.**

Every revision round you skip **starts here.**



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