

Creative strategists - fact or fantasy?

 By [Mari-Louise Kaplan](#)

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In a business world that prizes "return on investment" just as much as "thinking outside the box," it makes perfect sense for companies to create a position for that illusive unicorn, the 'creative strategist'.

On the face of it, the term 'creative strategist' might seem like a classic oxymoron, especially in the advertising industry, where swords at dawn have often been the only way to settle a difference of opinion between the For the Love of Art! creative director, the bottom line-orientated strategic planner, and the client-pleasing account manager.



Enter the creative strategist: A person whose profile doesn't quite fit into traditional moulds, but lies somewhere between using left-brain neuromarketing to understand the behaviour of the target consumer and applying right-brain creativity to make an emotional connection and trigger the desired action.

Do these mythological creatures really exist?

First we have to look at scientific views that claim there is no evidence that people preferentially use their left or right brain. In fact, through The Study of a Thousand Brains, the University of Utah was able to prove that the whole focus group used their entire brain equally throughout the course of the experiment.

However, and herein lies the rub, "the preference to use one brain region more than others for certain functions, which scientists call lateralisation, is indeed real", according to lead author Dr Jeff Anderson, director of the fMRI Neurosurgical Mapping Service at the University of Utah.

I see creative strategists

Patently, without a shadow of a doubt, creative strategists walk among us. Hey, they are all of us. Or should be. Unfortunately, it's not simply the preferred use of the right or left brain that determines a person's success at straddling the gap between strategy, creative execution and emotional connection with colleagues, clients and consumers.

Experience, an eclectic skills base and an ability to shapeshift into different roles for different projects are all essential elements to finding the perfect strategic-creative fit to your company or agency.

Here's how to capture one:

1. Research the value a creative strategist can add to your organisation.
2. Create the position. And commit to it.
3. Open the castle gates when it comes to a job spec. (These people do not fit a traditional mould, but will usually have a background in either marketing, brand or communications strategy and some sort of creative discipline.)
4. When you find the right chemistry hold on tight, as these dragons, centaurs and unicorns are a rare find.

ABOUT MARI-LOUISE KAPLAN

Mari-Louise is a creative strategist and TTL copywriter. Her offering to organisations and advertising agencies is somewhere between using left-brain neuromarketing to understand the behaviour of the target consumer and applying right-brain linguistics to make an emotional connection and trigger the desired action. She loves talking, sharing and learning, so drop her a note anytime at marilouise.kaplan@gmail.com!

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