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What are your tenets of creating and executing effective strategy?

Great strategy starts with knowing the unique skills of the people at your agency who will be charged with bringing that strategy to life. At GMR, we start with understanding the human problem that sits behind our clients' business problems. The solution needs to answer that problem through insights and advantages. With our five core disciplines, we have incredible confidence that our people are always able to take those insights and advantages and create a memorable brand story, told through amazing designs, partnerships, activations, and virtual worlds that offer the best human + brand experiences.

How have you observed the role of Strategy evolve at agencies in your career?

The role of data-informed work is still finding its strategic footing, which can create challenges. I love to see CSOs that promote the immeasurable value of good instincts and strategy as an art form with pathways exposed by data. There still needs to be a healthy dose of risk-taking within the work.

What do you think the future of strategy at agencies looks like?

I believe the future is grounded in strategists that can masterfully navigate the art and science of marketing. We aim to unearth insights (unspoken human truths) connected to solving problems for brands in ways that are provocative, measurable, and simple. Integrating an audience's lived experience and demonstrating proficiency in cultural fluency will become foundational for strategists responsible for identifying how best to attract and engage with consumers to deliver impactful, salient brand experiences.

What tactic or capability do you think the agency world doesn't tap in to enough?

Without a doubt, it's data science and measurement. We are currently working on a project – the GMR Brand Experience Index® – that is actively measuring hundreds of brand executions across dozens of sporting, music, and cultural events from both the

consumer and marketer perspectives. Through that process, we've gained an immense amount of data detailing how an effective activation translates to downstream consumer choices. We'll be releasing our inaugural report on these findings in March 2023, but we're already finding incredible value by applying data science tools and practices to our work, and the resulting insights are being used to fine-tune our strategic and tactical choices with clients.

What's the most exciting thing you're working on right now?

It's definitely the GMR Brand Experience Index® and the research project underpinning it, which we call "SOLE Science." We're so excited to release this report and start a larger discussion about what makes a great brand experience. For GMR, we're steadfast in our belief that there are three key factors in that process: sensory immersion; context; and level of engagement. We hope this report sparks debate on how those factors influence how brands become embedded in the kinds of memories that play a decisive role in structuring the choices a consumer makes.

What can we expect to see in the GMR Brand Experience Index®?

At its core, the report will be a look at the top experience brands of the year, based on our three-factor research methodology. Included in the report is data from more than 50 live events we attended across America in 2022, and analysis of hundreds of brands and their individual activations at those events. We'll be ranking the best of the best based on sensory immersion, context, and engagement, as well as offering deeper insights for brands and marketers on what we're seeing across the experience landscape.

And when and where can we expect to see the report?

We'll be releasing the first GMR Brand Experience Index® in March 2023, and our plan is to continue that annual release schedule moving forward. We'll be releasing it on our website – GMRMarketing.com – alongside some exciting partners in the sports, entertainment, and culture spaces. Those partners will help us add some live elements to the report, so you'll see it integrated at a few different events and gatherings across North America