



2023 Key Takeaways

Two Flagship Events to
Celebrate Strategic Excellence

The Jay Chiat Awards and StratFest foster, recognize, and celebrate strategic excellence in our industry. At the 4A's, we are intentional about how we plan and deliver these two very different, yet closely related events. Each standalone event serves a unique purpose, and together, they advance the holistic pursuit of exceptional strategic work. While the Jay Chiat Awards recognize the most excellent examples of visionary strategy across different categories, StratFest examines the insights and approaches that lead to excellence.

We believe both events play a role in empowering our members to evolve, thrive and compete: one rewards great work, the other facilitates it.

Whether you attended one, or both events, or if you missed participating in 2023, we encourage you to save this recap and return to it often to take advantage of the treasure-trove of learning they delivered.

The background is a dark blue gradient with a pattern of thin, concentric yellow circles. There are also larger, solid yellow circles in the corners and a solid light blue circle in the top right. The text is centered and reads:

**4's / Jay
Chiat
Awards**

2023

“The Jay Chiat Awards place a premium on strategic contribution and its role in the outcome, market results and story told.”

Marla Kaplowitz, President & CEO, 4A's

At a glance

- 11 categories and head jurors, hundreds of entries, 60 finalists
- 9 Gold winners, 38 winners overall
- 2 special awards – Grand Prix, Agency of the Year
- Highest number of entries in recent years
- Submissions from around the globe

“**Doing what’s best in the interest of brands needs bravery. Strategists are called to lead and champion brave work, and our community rose to the occasion.**”

Elizabeth Paul, Chief Strategy Office, The Martin Agency | 4A’s Strategy Committee Co-Chair



The announcement of the 2023 Jay Chiat Awards winners on October 2 marked the culmination of an incredible journey to recognize and celebrate bold, impactful, visionary strategy across 11 categories. Sound strategy is the heart of impactful, culture-shaping campaigns that influence decisions, and the jurors were meticulous in identifying exceptional strategic contributions. Thank you to everyone who entered this year and kudos to all the finalists. These campaigns not only showcased talent, creativity, and innovation but also set new standards in strategic bravery. It is heartening to see the science and craft evolve and thrive in such capable hands and we know this community will only continue to raise the bar higher.

[View Winners](#)

[View Case Studies](#)

[Read Press Release](#)

[View Head Jurors](#)



“Events like the Jay Chiat Awards are a reminder that a great idea is a simple idea. A big but simple idea can turn the telescope around, so you see the problem from an entirely new perspective. That’s why the awards are named for a man who helped turn an industry on its head.”

Tim Maleeny | President & Chief Strategy Officer, Havas | National Strategy Head Juror



“The Jay Chiat Awards recognize that bright vision and sharp clarity are more necessary than ever to steer our most brilliant ideas.”

Nick Childs | Co-Founder, DIRT | CX Strategy Head Juror

2023 Jay Chiat Awards Case Studies



[View all case studies](#)



Featured Case Studies

See my Skin
Edelman

Think Ote
Alma

Is that a Gummy in your Pocket
Partners + Napier



A's | STRATFEST
2023



Invest these 8 hours selfishly in yourself, your career and craft. It will pay itself back in spades for months to come."

Tomas Gonsorhik, Chief Strategy Officer, DDB Worldwide | 4A's Strategy Committee Co-Chair

A Call for Strategic Bravery in Risk-Averse Times

The simple, big idea: the strategy secret you've known all along

Ever-deepening data insights continue to prove what we in the industry have always known: a strong foundation of consumer-centered strategy is more critical than ever in the complex, competitive landscape unfolding today.

Leveraging new frontiers in technology and innovation for brand differentiation, audience targeting, and effective positioning calls for sound, visionary strategy shaped by sensitivity to cultural influences and the ability to connect the dots.

Through a jam-packed day of inspiring talks, panel discussions, case studies and interactive workshops, StratFest exposed attendees to carefully curated topics around the elements of a strong strategy, the approaches to build one and ways to avoid common pitfalls along the way.



For the Culture

Presented by: Dr. Marcus Collins, Marketing Professor, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan



“ Culture influences consumption. There is no external force more influential to human behavior than culture.”

Shift your focus from what you're selling to who people are.

Unpacking the many layers of culture reveals the secrets to connecting with our target audience. Dr. Collins challenged us to strive for cultural resonance when addressing consumers. Who we are as people, and an understanding of our audience's cultural context and values must be the central forces driving strategy. To leverage culture, we must first understand it.

Cracking the Culture Cheat Code:

- Understand who people are; stop putting them in boxes.
- Focus on intimacy, not information. Delve into insights, not just data.
- Remove lenses, biases, ethnocentrism.
- Observe the sociological and psychological factors driving consumption.

Who we are determines:

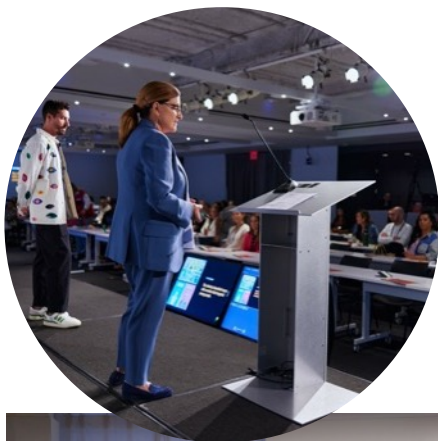
- What the world means to us and how we navigate it
- The ways in which we express ourselves
- Our cultural experiences
- Just about everything we choose to do...and buy!

Culture connects:

Consumption shaped by culture brings us together as marketers, organizations and as a society. By shifting our focus from products to people, we can tap into those inherent connections to serve our clients and their customers more effectively.

Strategic Bravery Behind Truth

Presented by: Ryan McDaid, Head of Strategy, Mojo Supermarket | Elizabeth Kenny, Chief Marketing and Strategy Officer, Truth Initiative



In 2018, a threat far more deceptive and dangerous than cigarettes entered the market with a carefully crafted brand image that positioned them as desirable, cool, and worst of all, safe. Vapes were targeted at a Gen Z audience and promoted as coping aids for mental health issues. Not only did this group believe vaping was not harmful, they were deceived into thinking it was helping them.



The Mental Health Connection

Discovery revealed mental health was something Gen Z cared about. And vapes were known to aggravate mental health issues. The dots needed connecting.

The strategy teams developed a bold campaign that used culture to tackle culture, bust myths, shift perceptions, and take on the dangerous, false claims of the vaping industry with a dash of humor.



The Four-Fold Strategy

#1

Call out nicotine as a silent contributor to teen mental health issues.

Course-correct the normalization of the attitude towards vaping.

#2

Get culture to call a vape what it is - a "depression stick".

Through the launch of a fake product, the agency developed a satirical, multi-channel campaign exposing vaping's effects. Results proved the approach and campaign worked.

#3

Bust the myth around vaping as a safe mental health aid.

The Breath of Stress Air campaign hit the nail on the head.

#4

Follow-through with support and evidence.

Real stories of quitters
24x7 text program
Quitting as an alternative
Crisis helpline and Breathwrk partnership - leading to 30% greater success rate in quitting



Defying Your DNA: The Invisible Barrier to Bravery and How to Overcome It

Presented by: Joan Colletta, Sr. Director, Global Marketing Transformation, McDonald's | Becca Peel, Lead Strategist, Contagious



The hardest job in the industry falls on those approving great ideas!”

“Everyone wants to kill creativity – even you,” was the premise of this session. But why? And what do we do about it? In a world where 85% of content is ignored, a highly creative idea is paramount to earning attention and driving results. In this session, we explored the reasons why we reject creativity and 4 intentional strategies agencies and clients can lean on to push through the reluctance and embrace unconventional ideas.



4 Strategies to Push Past the Reluctance to Creativity

Strategy #1:

Build the business case for bravery.

Move from philosophy to proof. Creativity is fundamentally uncertain! Demonstrate the commercial benefit of your creative ideas both in the short term and long term.

Strategy #2:

Articulate and codify a universal language of creativity. Treat creative judgment as part of capabilities building.

A universal language helps navigate the inherent subjectivity in creativity and is useful in formulating feedback.

Strategy #3:

Bring creativity into the conversation with more routine and regularity.

Create a routine to build the creative muscle with periodic reviews, inspiration sessions, training, refreshers and open briefs to explore out-of-the-box ideas outside the cycle of client deadlines.

Strategy #4:

Create and celebrate "Collective Effervescence"

Internal awards and other tangible rewards

Create anticipation around the creativity ritual

Encourage a shared culture

Socialize the idea



Ideas that Scare Us – The Musical

Presented by: Tim Leake, Founder / CEO, Lightbulb and Jeff Tan, TEDx Speaker, 7 Continents Marathoner



The most interesting, differentiated, impactful, and innovative ideas are usually the ones that most scare us. How do we push past the fear and force ourselves to do the scary thing?

Presenters Tim Leake and Jeff Tan pushed themselves outside their comfort zones by delivering their call to shun mediocrity...as a musical. Performing to a packed and captive audience, Tim and Jeff's use of humor, creativity and a delightful sing-along drove home the memorable message while leaving no room for an afternoon lull. If laughter were a metric, this session was off the charts.



Strategies to stay on the course of creativity:

- Quiet the inner critic that kills creative ideas.
- Move past inhibitions, premature judgment of ideas and the urge to discard them as "dumb".
- Remind yourself constantly to do things you don't always feel comfortable doing.
- Trust your voice, "lock yourself in".
- Use positive affirmations.
- Put your brave ambitions out there for the world to see.
- If your brave idea has the potential to deliver results, be bold enough to present it to the client without a backup plan.



You, Multiplied: The Future of Storytelling, Powered by AI

Presented by: Amir Ariely, Global Head of Initiatives, Creative Works, Google



It's a great time for good creative.

If you had any doubts about how deeply entrenched AI already is in the tools we use, and the extent of its impact on creating, delivering and scaling content, this session put them to rest. Amir Ariely examined some of the key questions and opportunities around AI as a multiplier of media, creativity and impact.

Advertising & Content Consumption Insights

- Relevance matters. Ads are getting longer, richer, deeper but relevance remains key.
- Sure, we skip ads, but we also seek them out more.
- Ads transcended more mediums and formats than ever before.
- Diversity and inclusion, sustainability stories saw positive trends, but there's room for plenty more.
- The marketing funnel is not linear. Adios AIDA!

Forces Driving the Future

- Hunger for content
- Expectations for relevance
- Impulses and infinite information
- Gen-Z lives in a multi-screen, multi-format universe and expects to move seamlessly between them.

Creative is seen to be the #1 driver of sales effectiveness.

Personalize & Scale

- Harness AI for scale: Multiply marketing from 25 ads to 40k+ ads per campaign!
- Put the right moments in front of people to drive decisions: Stop making ads. Deliver a library of interesting, relevant, memorable and personalized moments.

AI-Powered Data: The Missing Link Between Strategic Bravery & Agency Growth

Presented by: Ericka Podesta-McCoy, Chief Marketing Officer, Resonate



AI-powered data helps you compete at scale...scale that is simply impossible without AI.

How can strategy teams take advantage of AI-powered consumer data and intelligence in a challenging ecosystem? This session delved into the role of AI-powered data and insights as the foundation for brave and effective strategy, igniting growth and efficiency for agencies.

Deep data reveals why customers are making the decisions they're making and helps capture previously hidden opportunities at different stages of the customer journey.

Ensure you have the best possible data. Take advantage of predictability.

Leverage AI-powered tools and re-establish yourself as indispensable.

Use AI to eliminate bias and improve efficiencies.

Why Agency Brands Matter

Panel: Elizabeth Paul, Chief Strategy Officer, The Martin Agency & Co-Chair, 4A's Strategy Committee Tomas Gonsorcik, Chief Strategy Officer, DDB Worldwide & Co-Chair, 4A's Strategy Committee
Moderated by Brian Bonilla, Senior Agency Reporter, Ad Age



The ability for strategists to be brave is often driven by the culture, values, and brand positioning of their agency. In this session, 4A's Strategy Committee Co-Chairs Elizabeth Paul and Tomas Gonsorcik sat down for an honest conversation with Ad Age's Brian Bonilla about what it takes to get your team to believe in the power of your agency brand.

On differentiation

Encourage a storytelling culture and don't overlook the power of specificity. Care about the brand's philosophy all the way through.

On industry mergers

Find resonance. People just want to be surrounded by talent, work in the right culture, and be able to do their best work. It's about finding that resonance in our key values.

On building a strong agency brand

Apply your process to your own agency brand. Be your own case study! If you consistently build your own brand, you will be successful in building your clients'. Be intentional about the philosophy and have a clear point of view.

On agency values

Be a lighthouse! Signal your values consistently until the world navigates around it. Good positioning shows the market what you stand for. This is true for talent, and for clients. The right audience will gravitate towards you, and those who're not the right fit will move away.



Embracing the Managerial Role: From Inspiring Strategist to Empowering Leader

Presented by: Timanni Walker, Strategy Director, BBH USA



The industry called it the talent shortage. What we felt was talent abandonment.”

The industry's sink or swim culture is the reason many professionals leave, according to Timanni Walker. In her powerful and engaging talk, the BBH USA strategy director shared her transformative journey from a successful senior strategist to a capable yet unprepared strategy director and the challenges she navigated as a new manager, feeling inadequately prepared for her new responsibilities.

“Nobody teaches you how to be a manager and all the responsibilities that come with it including managing up to your boss and managing your team.”



Challenges of a new manager

- Terms used in agency job descriptions hint at a lack of support: “self-starter”, “wear many hats”, “superhero”
- With no support system to navigate growing responsibilities, there's an urge to quit the agency life.
- More responsibilities and less time to do it all.
- The perpetual cycle of creating unprepared managers continues.

Take the lead in creating better managers. Foster a culture of growth.

- Establish clear channels for communication and prioritize understanding how your team works best together.
- Maximize meeting time. Use it to help your direct reports learn some of the skills they will need as managers: narrative building, taking initiative, bringing ideas to the table.
- Curb bad habits. Be open to feedback and look for ways to improve.



Try Timanni's “Unbore your week” meeting starters to teach narrative building

What is happening in the world that I need to know about?

What is something I need to ignore?

Fireside Chat

Marla Kaplowitz, President & CEO, 4A's | Antonio Lucio, Founder and Principal, 5S Diversity



In a fitting finale to StratFest's thought-provoking and content-rich programming, Marla Kaplowitz sat down with superstar marketer Antonio Lucio, former CMO at Meta, Pepsi, Visa, and HP to discuss the biggest concerns on CMOs' minds, what strategists should prioritize and the applications of AI, among other things.

The biggest concerns on CMOs' minds

CMOs today face unprecedented levels of pressure: their clients' bottom line is on top of their minds. Performance, purpose, sustainability compliance, are all weighing down on not only CMOs but also the teams reporting to them.

What CMOs should prioritize

- Speak the language of numbers and revenue. It's a P&L game!
- Be immersed in the industry you serve.

How strategists can be better brand partners

- Be a business-first partner. Invest in understanding the complexities of your client's business challenges.
- Be proactive, take initiative, participate in the process.



Creativity must be a vehicle to deliver business goals."

The adoption of AI

Apprehension is natural with any new technology. Move past that and learn to tap into the power of AI as a leveler. Learning to reinvent will be imperative.

The premium on creativity will be greater than ever when scale and size of the agency cease to matter. In a world where competence is a given, the cream of the crop will inevitably rise above the rest.

Leaning into creativity...strategically!

Shun creativity aimed only at winning awards. In the words of David Ogilvy, "If it doesn't sell, it's not advertising."

2023 StratFest Workshops

Brave by Design: Delivering for Your Brand on TikTok

Pierrah Hilaire - Content Creator

Allison Micelli - Creative Agency Partnerships Lead, TikTok

Krystle Watler - Head of Creative Agency Partnerships,
North America, TikTok

De-risking Innovation: Building for the Future in Times of Constraint

Dylan Viner - Chief Strategy Officer, TRIPTK

Braver Thinking for Bigger Impact: The Power of the B Side

Karen Faith - Founder & CEO, Others Unlimited

Steffon Isaac - Founder, The CLU Studio

How Brave is Your Brand? Scoring Your Brand's Ability to Deliver High-impact Ideas that Drive Business, Brand and Culture

Lynne Field - Head of Strategy, FutureBrand North America

The Audience is the Message: How Audience Intelligence and AI are Changing Strategic Planning

Francesco D'Orazio - Founder & CEO, Pulsar Platform

Monica Tailor - SVP, Global Director, McCann Live, McCann

Strategic Bravery: Are We Ready for What Comes Next?

Ann Marie Kerwin - Americas Editor, WARC

Martyn Clarkson - EVP, Global Head of Strategy, Jack Morton Worldwide

"I'm Not Creative, But..." — Yes, You Are

Tim Leake - Founder / CEO, Lightbulb

Tearing Open the Black Box of the Brain

Nick Childs - Co-Founder, Dirt

Brendan Murray - Co-Founder & Chief Science Officer, DIRT

[View full list of workshop descriptions here](#)

2023 StratFest Workshops



In the News

[Key Takeaways
from StratFest](#)

[Breaking Down Time-
Honoured Strategic
Frameworks Ahead of
The Jay Chiat Awards](#)

[4A's Celebrates
Strategic Excellence
with 2023 Jay Chiat
Awards and Sold-
Out StratFest](#)

In Attendees' Words

Elliot Lollis (She/Her) • 2nd
Serial Question Asker | Resident Cheerleader | Brand strategist changing the...
1w • 1

I'm happy to be sharing my favorite take aways from the 4A's StratFest over the next week. It was an amazing event and honestly, so comforting to be in a room full of talented strategists that love their career. I needed that.

Dr. Marcus Collins was the keynote speaker and provided probably my most favorite and most valuable takeaway:

"We mistake information for intimacy."

This is something I notice often and try to call it out as much as possible.

Information is not "knowing" or "understanding" the culture of the audience.

It's generalizations. And it tends to contain bias.

The only way we understand the culture is to get closer to the culture.

Have you found yourself mistaking the information and data for understanding? I know I have.

What are some ways you've found to form intimacy around your audiences and truly understand their wants and needs in order to engage them?

#brandstrategy
#stratfest2023
#strategist

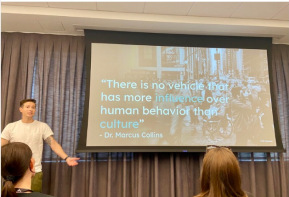
Well Done Marketing
4372 followers
5d • Edited • 1

We'll go to great lengths to make sure our strategy is on point, even to the Big Apple! Recently, Client Services team members **Joe J., Jennifer Welch,** and **Alexandra Williams** attended the 4A's Stratfest Conference to learn the latest in strategic planning techniques. **#4Astratfest**

Joe J. • 3rd+
Highly Skilled Performance-Driven Marketer
6d • Edited • 1

2023 **#4Astratfest** was a refreshing experience with many important topics covered, including a call to get closer to the audiences we're helping our clients reach. Identity is the strongest driver of behavior, not demographics. And culture is a cheat code for accessing a more meaningful level of intimacy with the people we're trying to reach. Demographics matter, but we need to go beyond them.

Great professional development opportunity with the **Well Done Marketing** team. A shout out to 4A's for putting on this event and to **Dr. Marcus Collins** and **Dylan Viner** for killer presentations.



Timanni Walker (She/Her) • 2nd
Strategy Director at BBH USA | Fashion Designer | Auntie
4d • 1

Transitioning from being a MAIP intern to becoming a main stage speaker is something my mind still struggles to fully grasp. I am continually amazed that I had the opportunity to address the audience at 4As Stratfest, discussing a topic I am deeply passionate about – management. I recognize that many of us have inherited the title of manager without adequate training, often leaving us feeling ill-equipped for the role. I shared these tips as a starting point to help us make the most of the time we spend in meetings with our direct reports. I want to express my gratitude to everyone who supported and sent me kind messages. I will be responding to each of you shortly.

Grateful to **BBH USA** for giving me the training I needed to succeed in this role. Thank you **Elizabeth Paul** for nudging me for over a year to speak. To the **4A's** I learned so much at Stratfest and I can't wait to return.

A's **LEARNER**
How to maximize your time as a manager in order to leave more room for creativity

- 1. CREATE A MANUAL USE YOUR MANAGING TIME TO SET EXPECTATIONS**
Create a Manual of Use. Let your team know how they should get the most of you.
- 2. SHAKE IT UP USE YOUR MEETING TIME TO MOVE**
Use your meeting time to move your team forward.
- 3. OWN YOUR WEEK USE YOUR MANAGING TIME TO LEARN**
Use your meeting time to learn from your team.
- 4. GET A HEAD START USE YOUR MANAGING TIME TO TEST THINKING**
Use your meeting time to test your ideas.
- 5. OWN BAD HABITS USE YOUR MANAGING TIME TO IMPROVE**
Use your meeting time to improve your habits.

Jamey Handesty, MPH (He/Him) • 3rd+
SVP, Scientific and Healthcare Strategy
2w • 1

I had an absolute blast at the 4A's #StratFest yesterday with some of my Jack Morton Worldwide strategy colleagues where we were able to spend time considering what strategic bravery is in a world where business demands are higher than ever. As a healthcare strategist I don't often get the chance to sit in with the "cool kids", but came away realizing that the walls between healthcare and non-healthcare aren't nearly as high as they once were.

What were your top takeaways?

My top 3 takeaways:

1. Consumption is a cultural act. Culture reflects who we are and what we believe, but intimacy comes from looking to the narrow of the gaussian curve and outside of the expected boxes we put people in. Only then can culture act as a cheat code for better understanding and engaging our audiences. **Dr. Marcus Collins**
2. We have to overcome a bias towards the rejection of creativity. While everyone wants big ideas, few have the courage to act on them. The bravest person in the marketing universe is the person who acts on them. Our DNA is coded to look for reasons to reject creative work (it's real science), and that's why we need brand frameworks to gauge creativity effectiveness and ensure we're able to guide it to its maximum impact. **Rebecca Peel**
3. My most admired work was the **Edelman** Grand Prix winning work with **Vaseline: See My Skin**. They had the bravery to recognize and respond to the insight that women of color couldn't identify their skin conditions through googling as 94% of all the images were on white skin. Creating a database to drive awareness and recognition and then serve the care needed took courage. It was equally brave to build a campaign focused on a specific audience when the brand serves a much larger collective. But as they noted, "something for everyone is for no one". What's important is to make sure your brand has the credibility to be there. And that work will resonate more widely.

“ This was my first time attending in-person, so it was great to connect with other strategists on such a relevant topic: strategic bravery. Loved the Jay Chiat Award-winning case studies, hearing from Marcus Collins about the power of culture, Google about future of storytelling and AI, Timanni Walker about the journey to management, and the workshops were a great way to spark collaboration and new ways of thinking. Overall, it was a rewarding experience and glad I had the opportunity to be there!”

Sean Pitts | Associate Strategy Director, Walton Isaacson