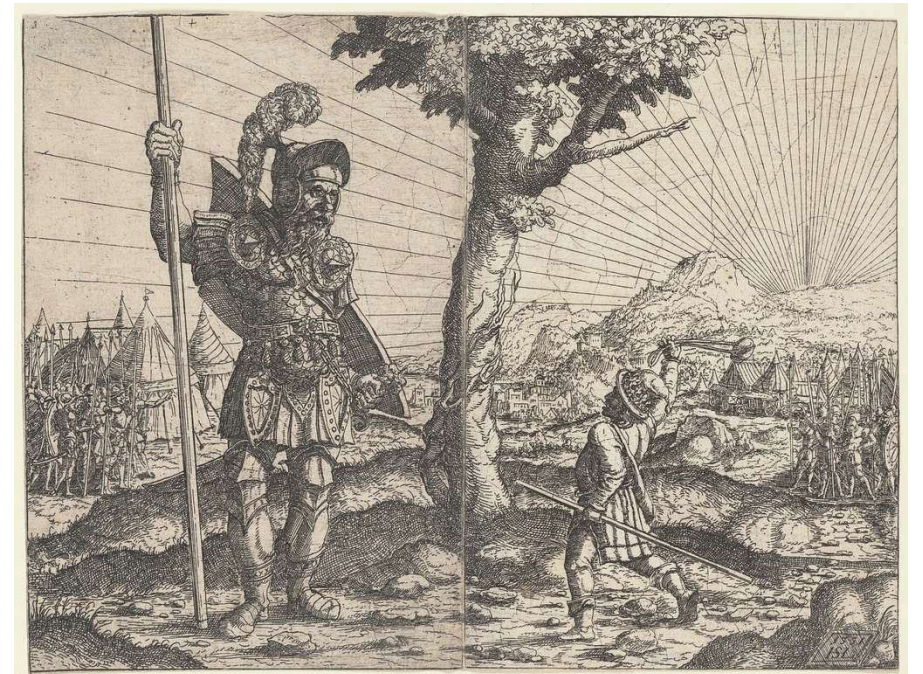
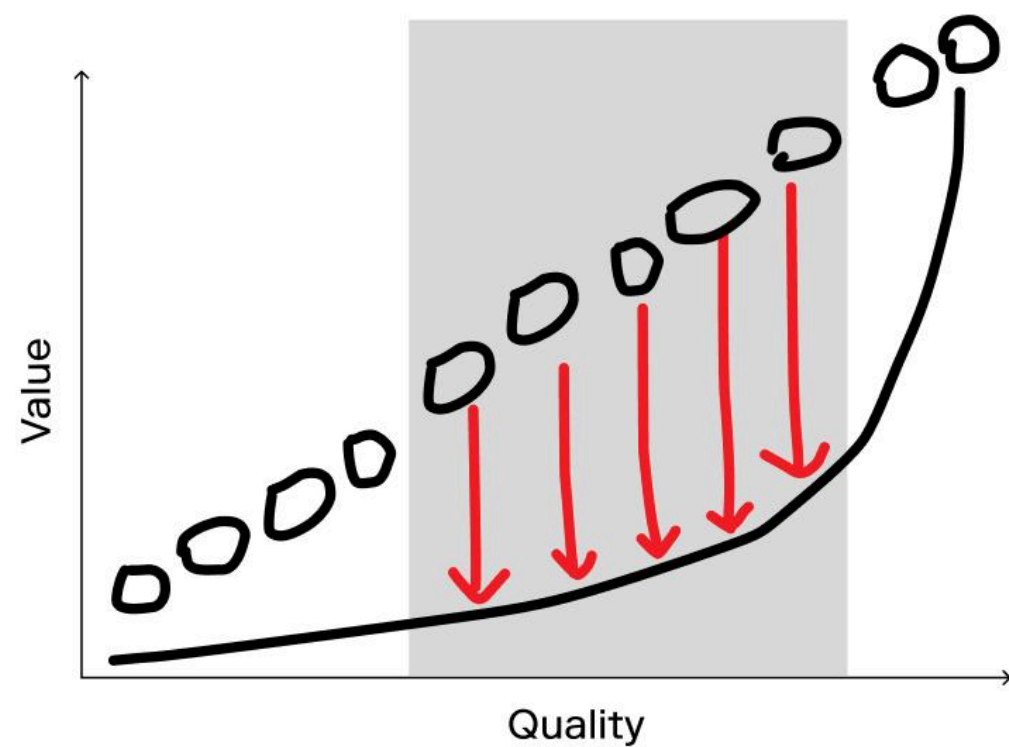
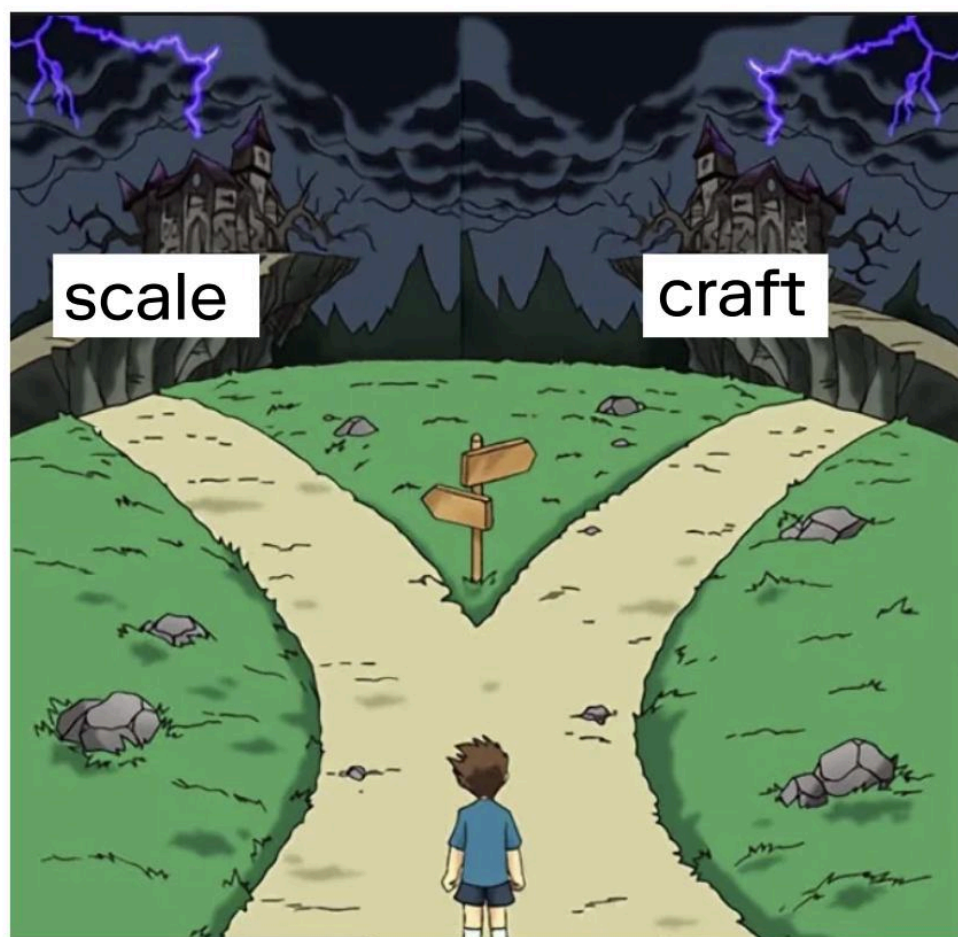


# Loose thoughts on AI and the future of creative work

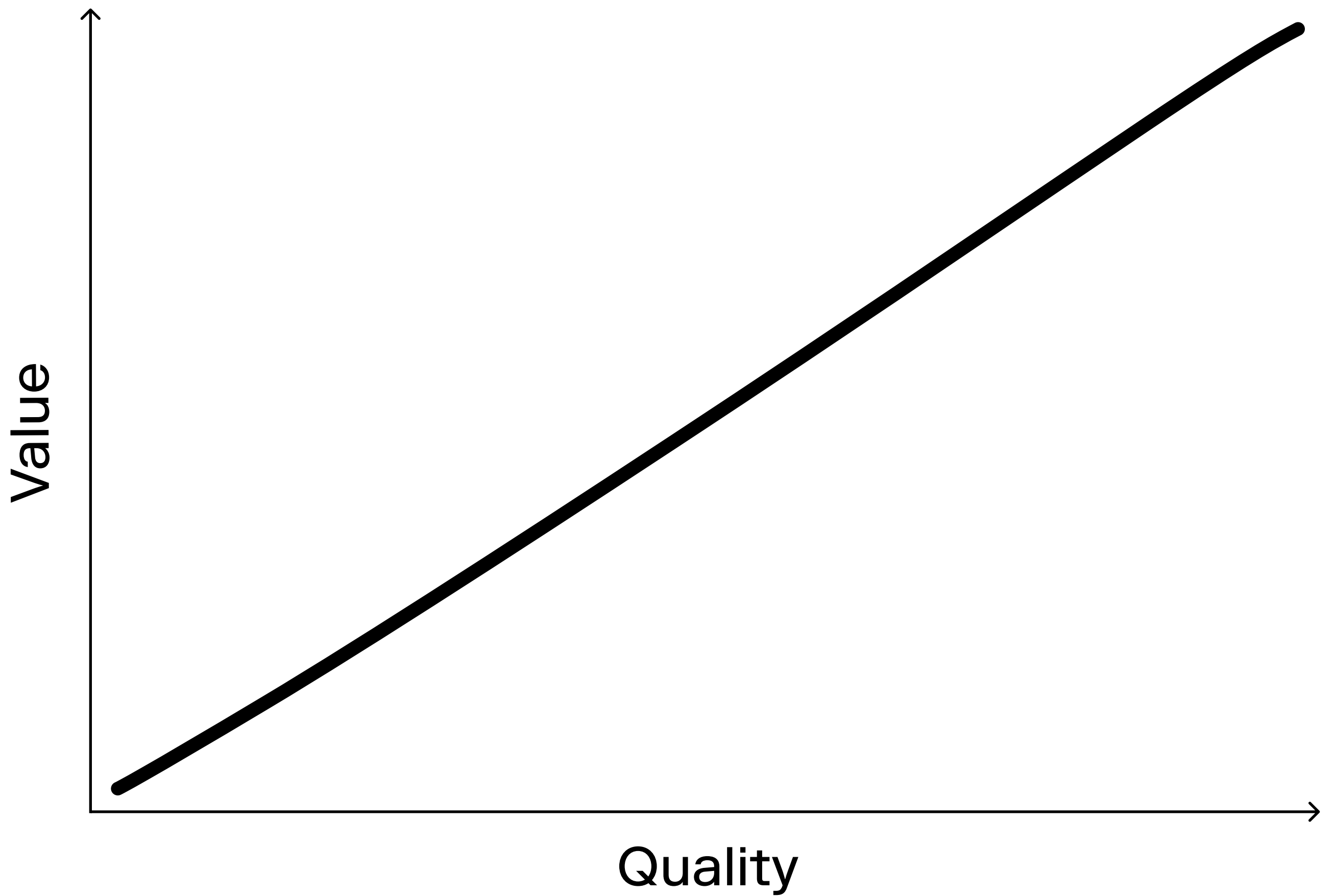


Being genuinely stupid might be the last human superpower.

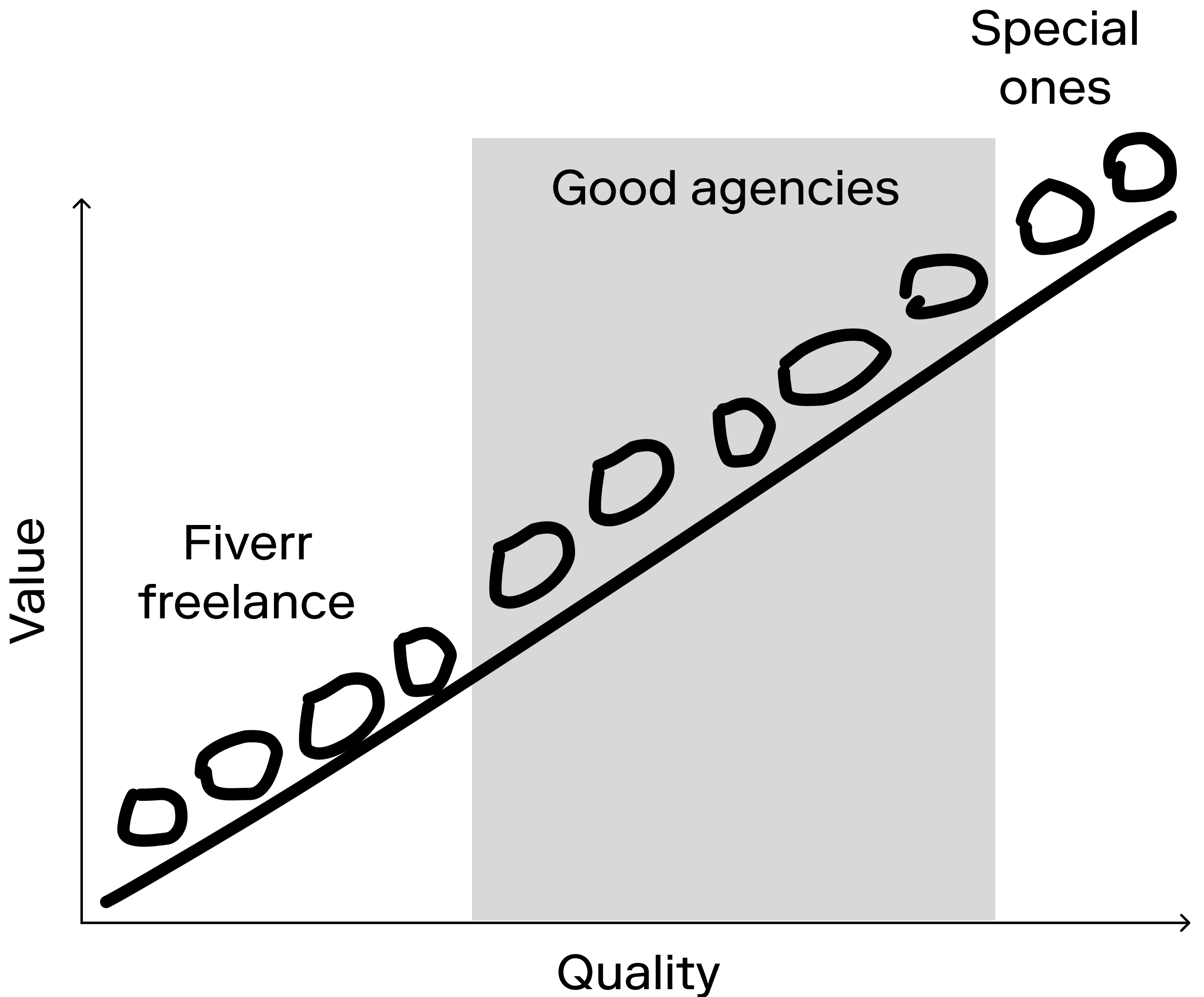
1

Good agencies  
are in trouble

# The value function of creative work. Until now



# Good agencies make good money with good work



AI ~~will be~~ is able to do a lot of  
the stuff creative agencies  
currently make money from.

Not exceptionally good.  
But good.

# Develop good strategies

SOFT

Brand Strategy Agent ↗ Results Custom Agents Run Agent

**400 hours of brand strategy.  
Delivered in minutes.**



**S** BUILT AND SUPPORTED  
BY SOFT

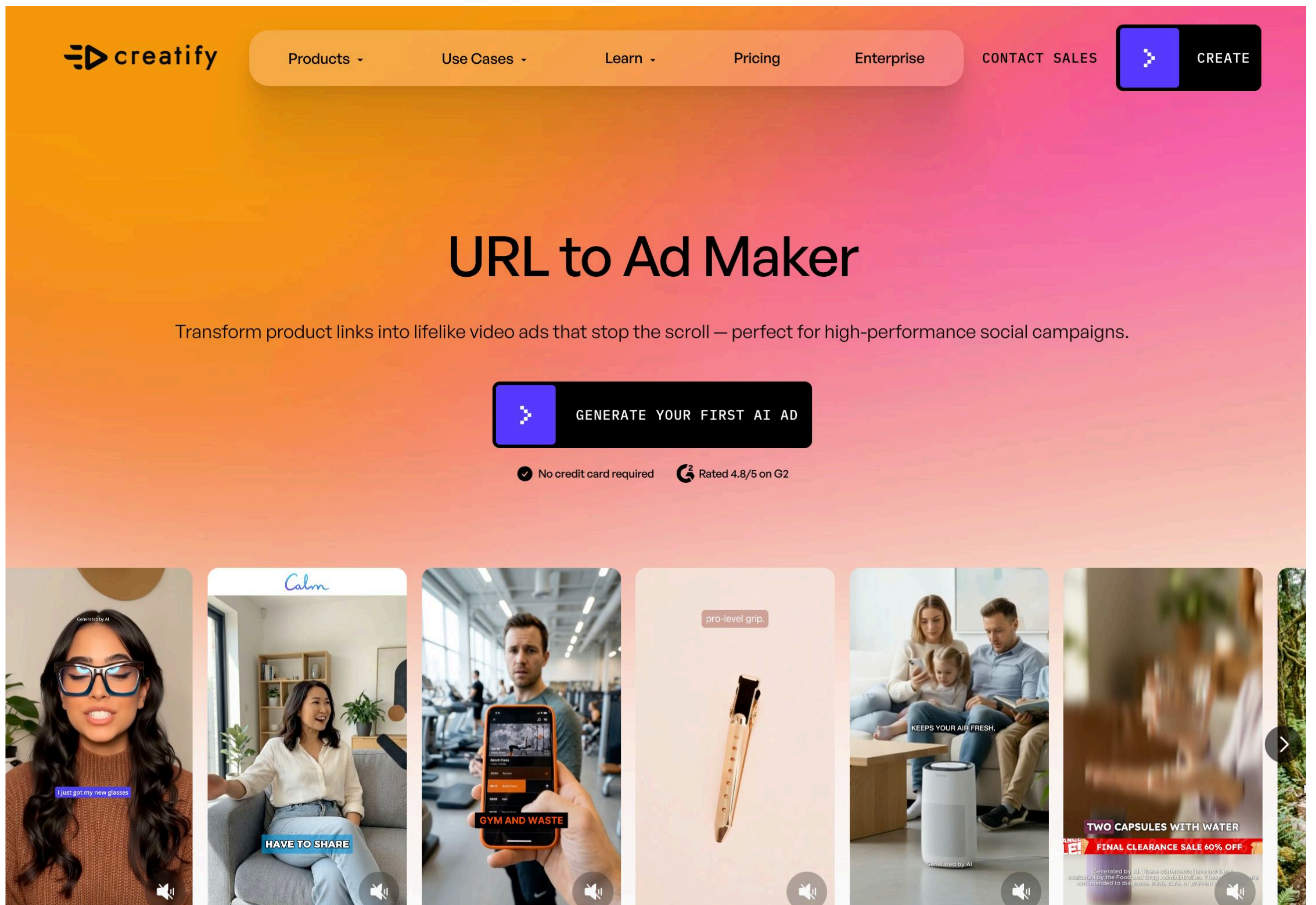
## Brand Strategy Automation Flow

A modular five-step automation flow for brand strategy creation. It moves from ecosystem and audience analysis to cultural trend scanning, concept synthesis, and a visual design brief. Built on widely used brand strategy principles, excluding any client-specific frameworks. Developed by SOFT for general agency and consultancy use.

TYPICAL RUN: 5 AGENTS 360 SOURCES 55 Q&AS 40M 47S

sosoft.ai

# Create good social ads



The image shows the top portion of the Creatify website. At the top left is the Creatify logo. To its right is a navigation menu with links for 'Products', 'Use Cases', 'Learn', 'Pricing', and 'Enterprise'. Further right are 'CONTACT SALES' and a prominent 'CREATE' button with a right-pointing arrow. The main heading 'URL to Ad Maker' is centered in a large, bold font. Below it is a sub-headline: 'Transform product links into lifelike video ads that stop the scroll – perfect for high-performance social campaigns.' A large 'GENERATE YOUR FIRST AI AD' button is centered below the text. Underneath this button are two smaller icons: a checkmark with the text 'No credit card required' and a globe icon with the text 'Rated 4.8/5 on G2'. At the bottom of this section is a horizontal carousel of six video ad thumbnails. Each thumbnail shows a different scene with overlaid text: 1. A woman with glasses, text: 'I just got my new glasses'. 2. A woman on a couch, text: 'HAVE TO SHARE'. 3. A man holding a smartphone, text: 'GYM AND WASTE'. 4. A pen, text: 'pro-level grip.'. 5. A family sitting on a couch, text: 'KEEPS YOUR AIR FRESH.'. 6. A person's hands, text: 'TWO CAPSULES WITH WATER' and 'FINAL CLEARANCE SALE 60% OFF'. Each thumbnail also has a small 'Generated by AI' watermark and a mute icon.

creatify

Products - Use Cases - Learn - Pricing Enterprise CONTACT SALES CREATE

## URL to Ad Maker

Transform product links into lifelike video ads that stop the scroll – perfect for high-performance social campaigns.

GENERATE YOUR FIRST AI AD

✓ No credit card required ⚙️ Rated 4.8/5 on G2

I just got my new glasses

HAVE TO SHARE

GYM AND WASTE

pro-level grip.

KEEPS YOUR AIR FRESH.

TWO CAPSULES WITH WATER

FINAL CLEARANCE SALE 60% OFF

creatify.ai

# Design good brands

The screenshot displays the Lovart AI design interface. At the top left is the Lovart logo. The navigation menu includes 'Home', 'Pricing', and 'News'. A 'Get started' button is located in the top right corner. The main heading reads 'YOUR AI DESIGN PARTNER' followed by 'Design a Brand System<sup>(3)</sup> for a Local Coffee Shop'. A 'Design now' button is centered below the heading. The interface shows a chat window titled 'Coffee Shop Brand System' with a 'New Chat' button. The chat content includes a prompt: 'Develop a complete visual identity for a neighborhood coffee shop, covering in-store, packaging, and digital touchpoints.' Below the prompt, three icons represent 'Analyzed user intent', 'Explored visual trends', and 'Collected references'. The chat response states: 'I've designed a brand system for a local coffee shop focused on craft, warmth, and everyday use.' The chat area also features several image thumbnails: a person holding a coffee cup and a bag, a coffee shop interior with a sign that says 'manufactured by Not Too Hot', a coffee pot, and a coffee receipt.

lovart.ai

# Write good copy

jasper

[Platform](#) [Solutions](#) [Resources](#) [Company](#) [Pricing](#)

[Log In](#) [Free Trial](#)

[Get A Demo](#)

New research: [The State of AI in Marketing 2025. Download now](#) →

## Put AI agents to work for marketing

Orchestrate intelligent agents to run end-to-end marketing workflows—delivering speed, control, and measurable impact.

[Start Free Trial](#)

[Get A Demo](#)



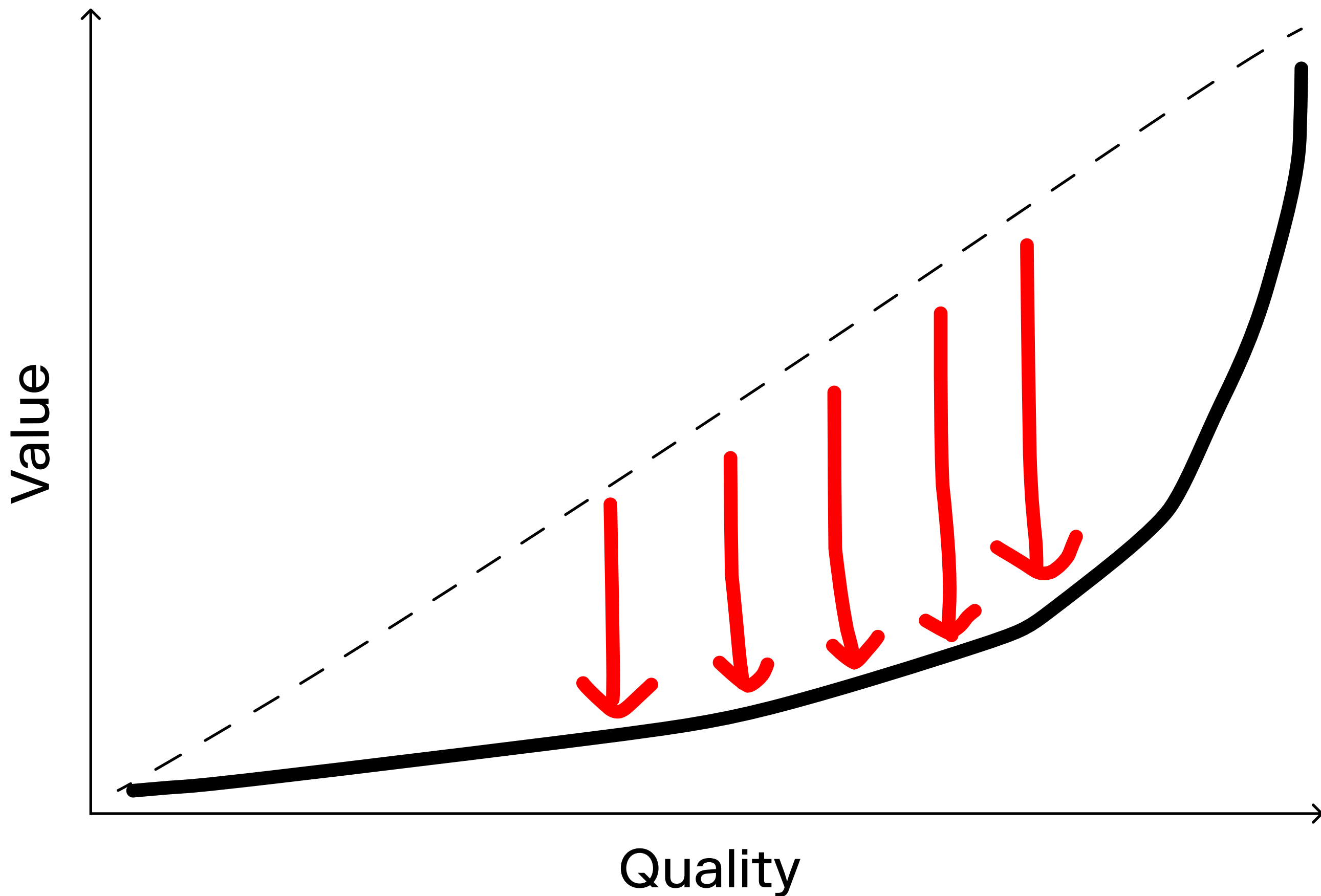
**i** Optimize 2,000 web pages for search, instantly

organic traffic

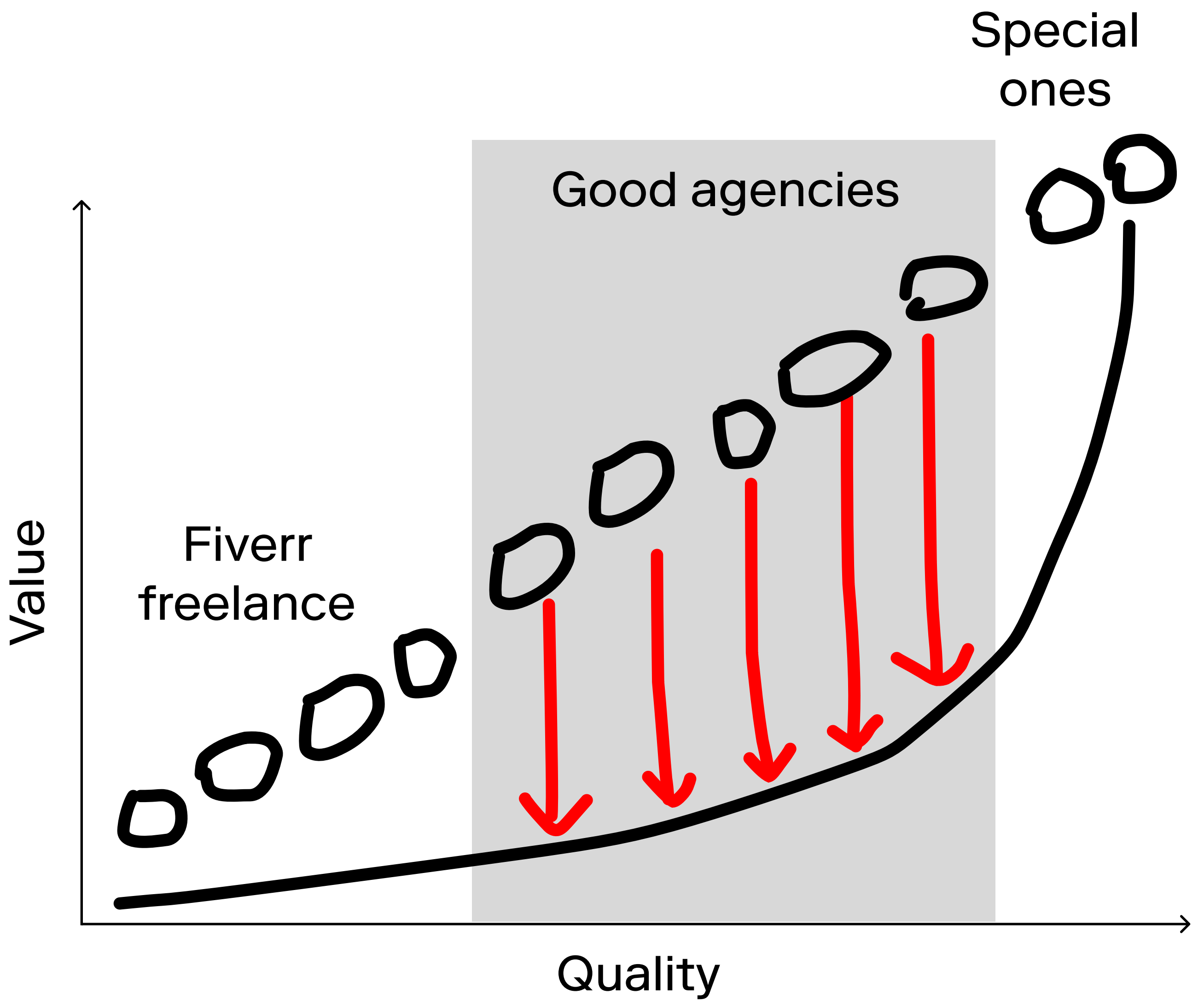
+63%

jasper.ai

# The value of good creative work drops massively



# This is a problem for good agencies

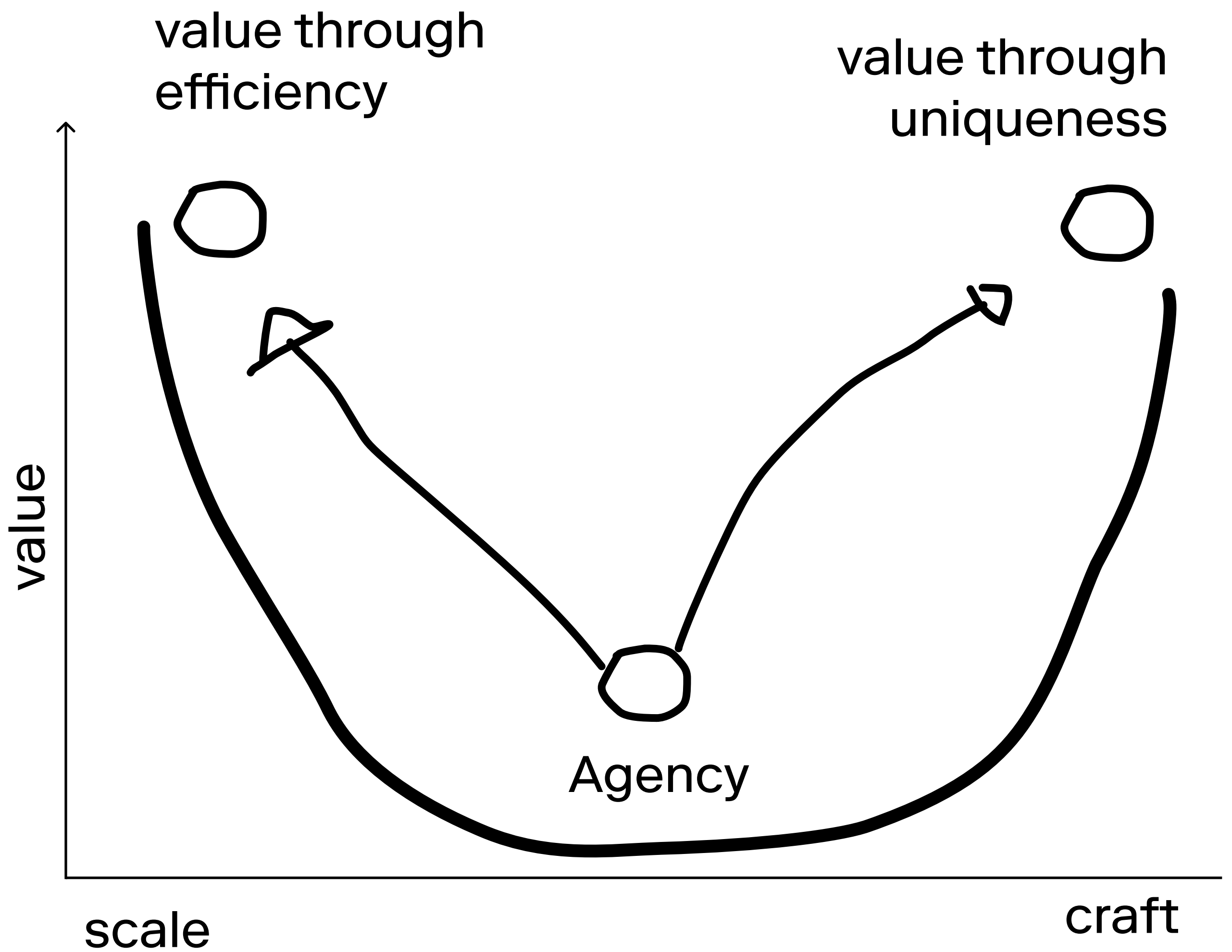


What now?

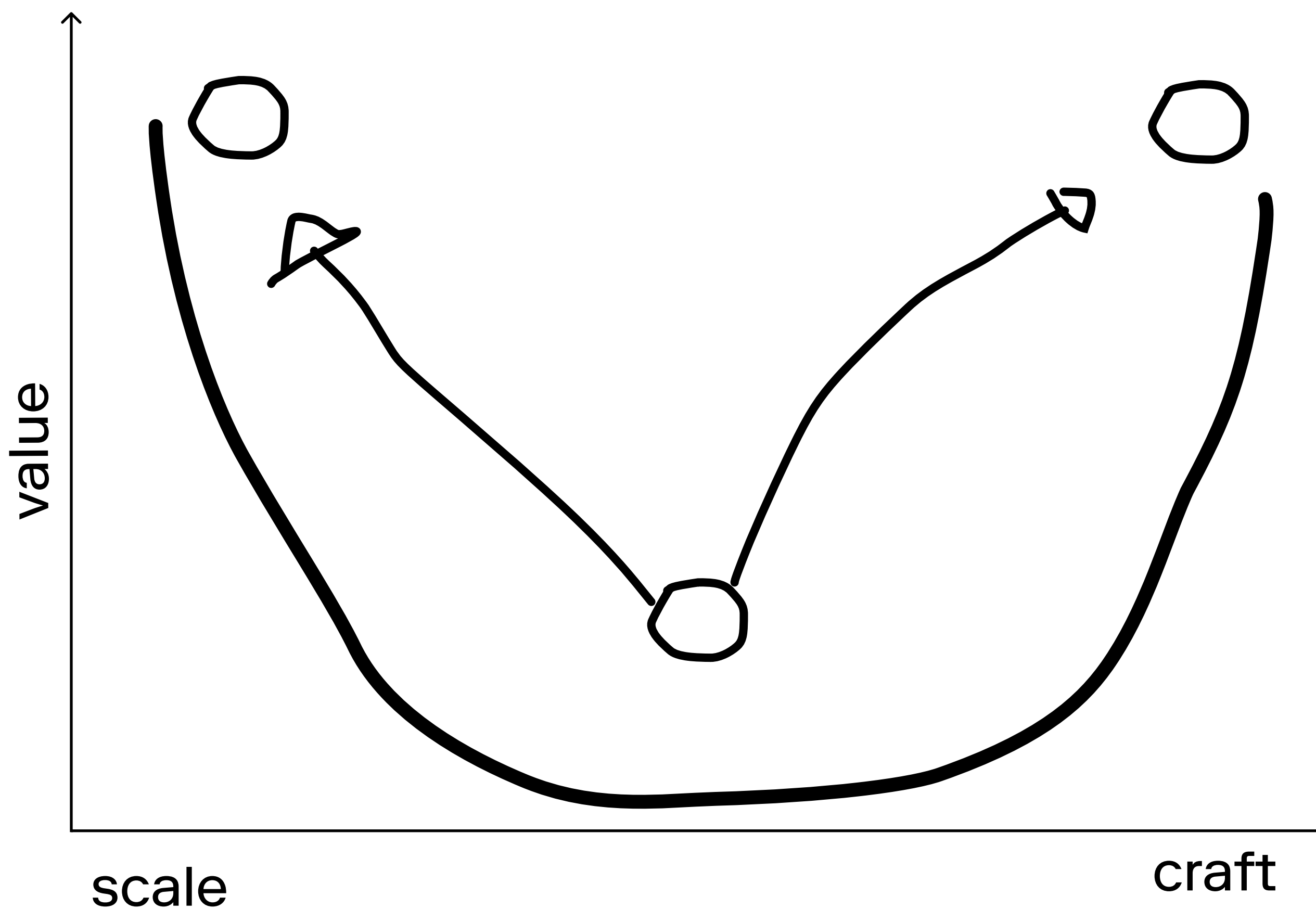
2

Scale or craft

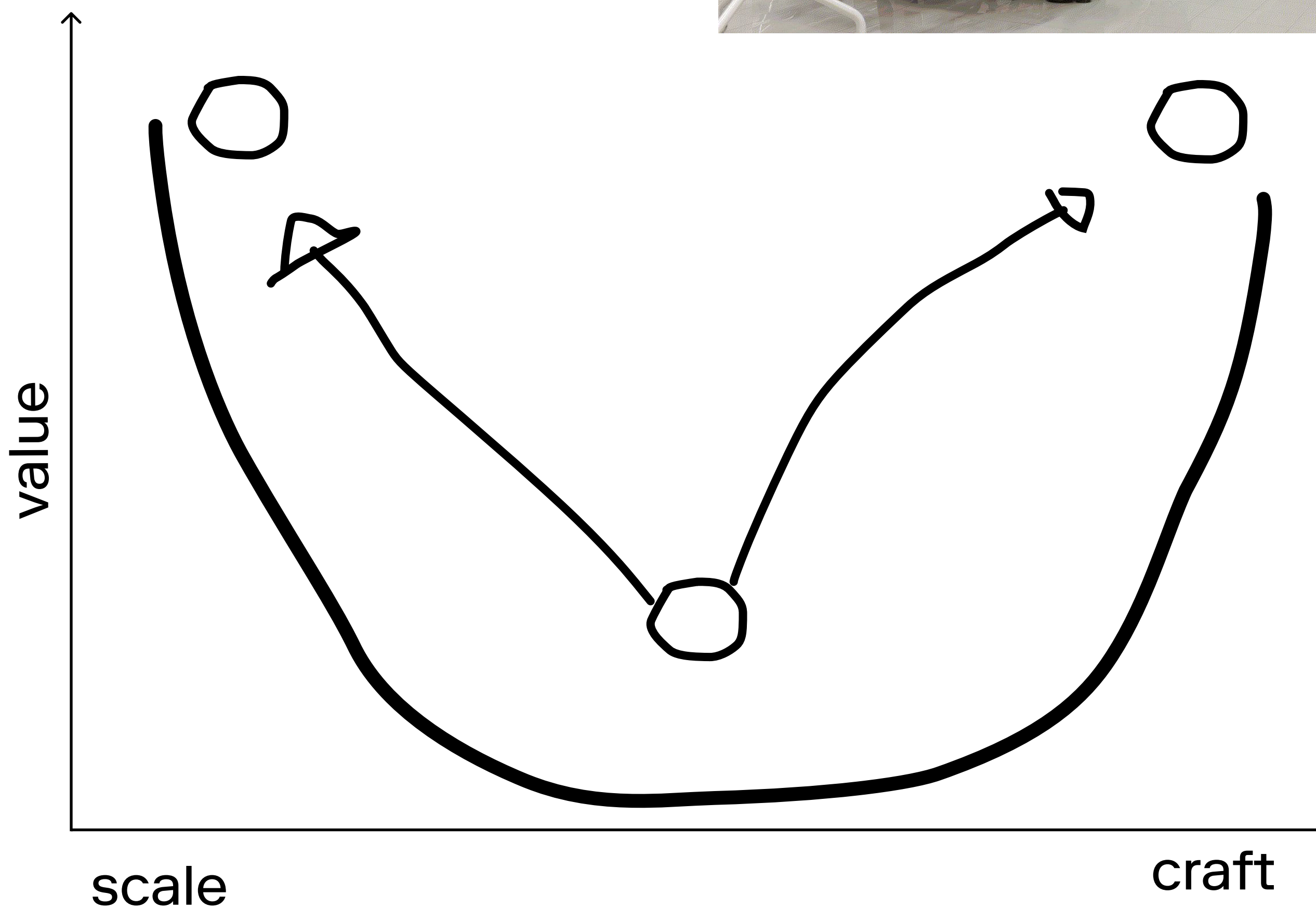
# Scale or craft



# Every industrialization has left niches for craftsmanship



# Every industrialization has left niches for craftsmanship



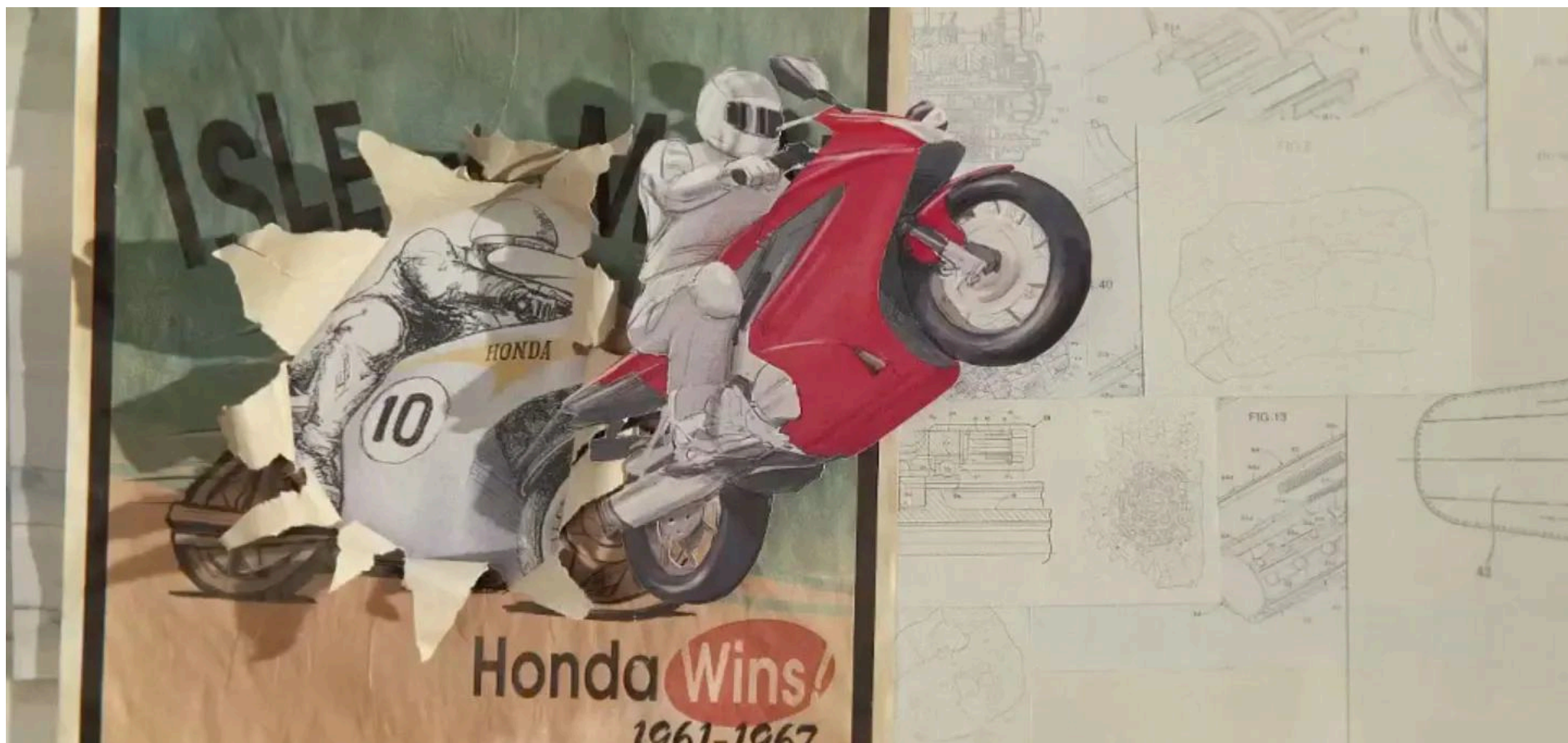
# Every industrialization has left niches for craftsmanship

**It's Nice That**

Inspiring Creativity Since 2007




A new stop-motion Honda advert took four months, dozens of illustrators and thousands of drawings



# Every industrialization has left niches for craftsmanship

SCRATCH

## The Rise of the Hand-Painted Billboard

 Share full article

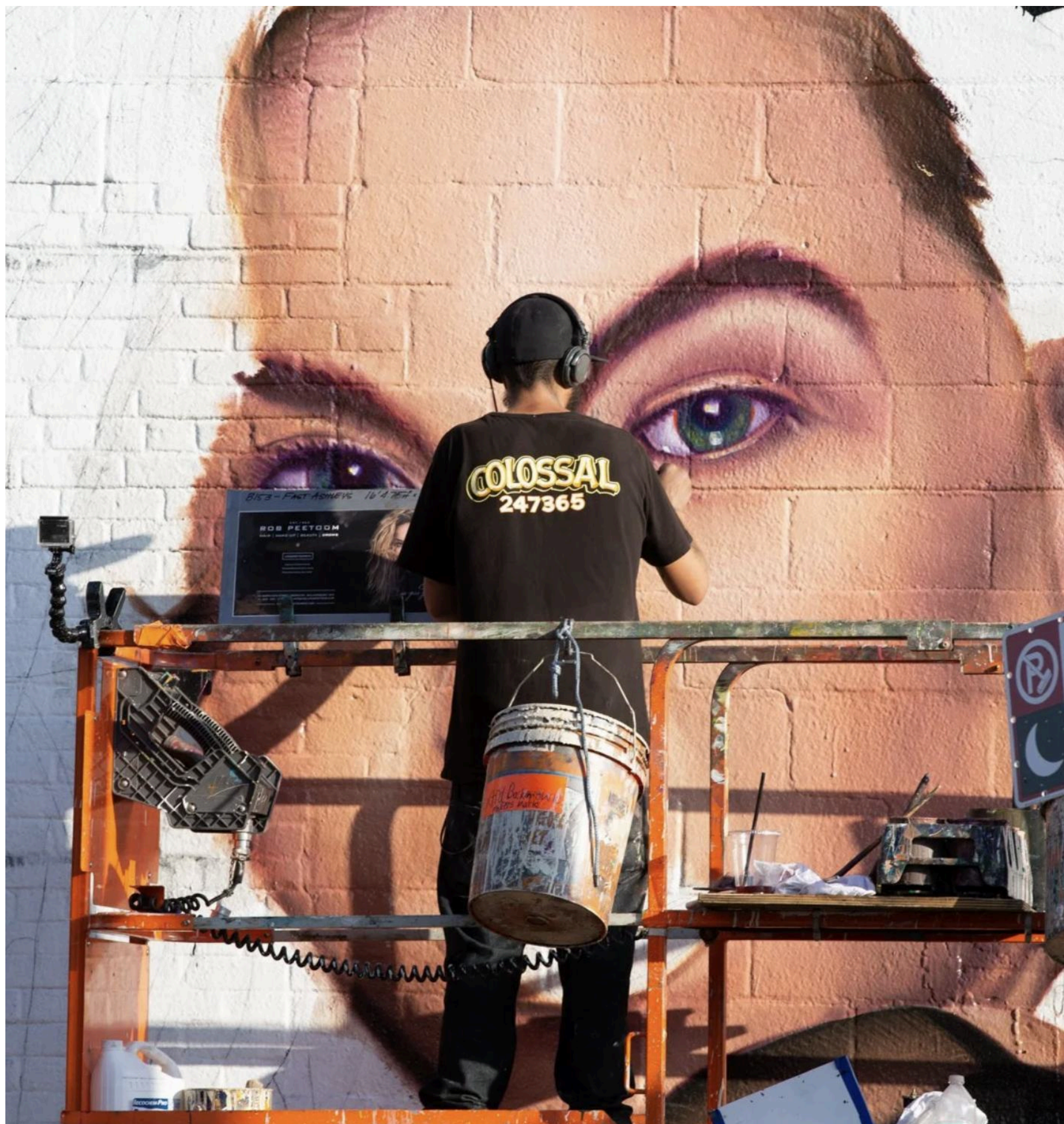


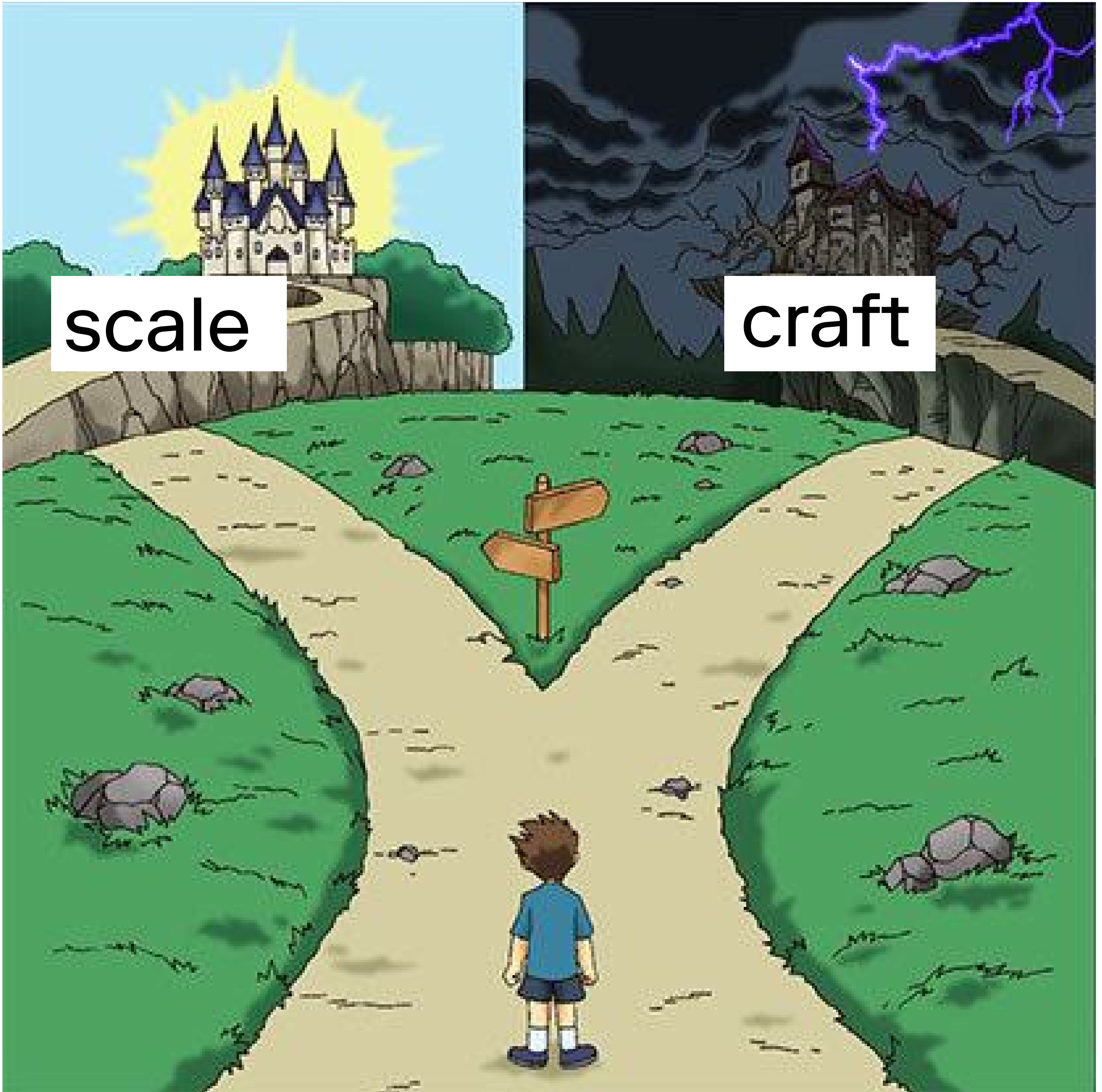
By Julia Rothman and Shaina Feinberg

Sept. 29, 2022



Do you want to be the last of your kind? And more importantly: are you good enough?

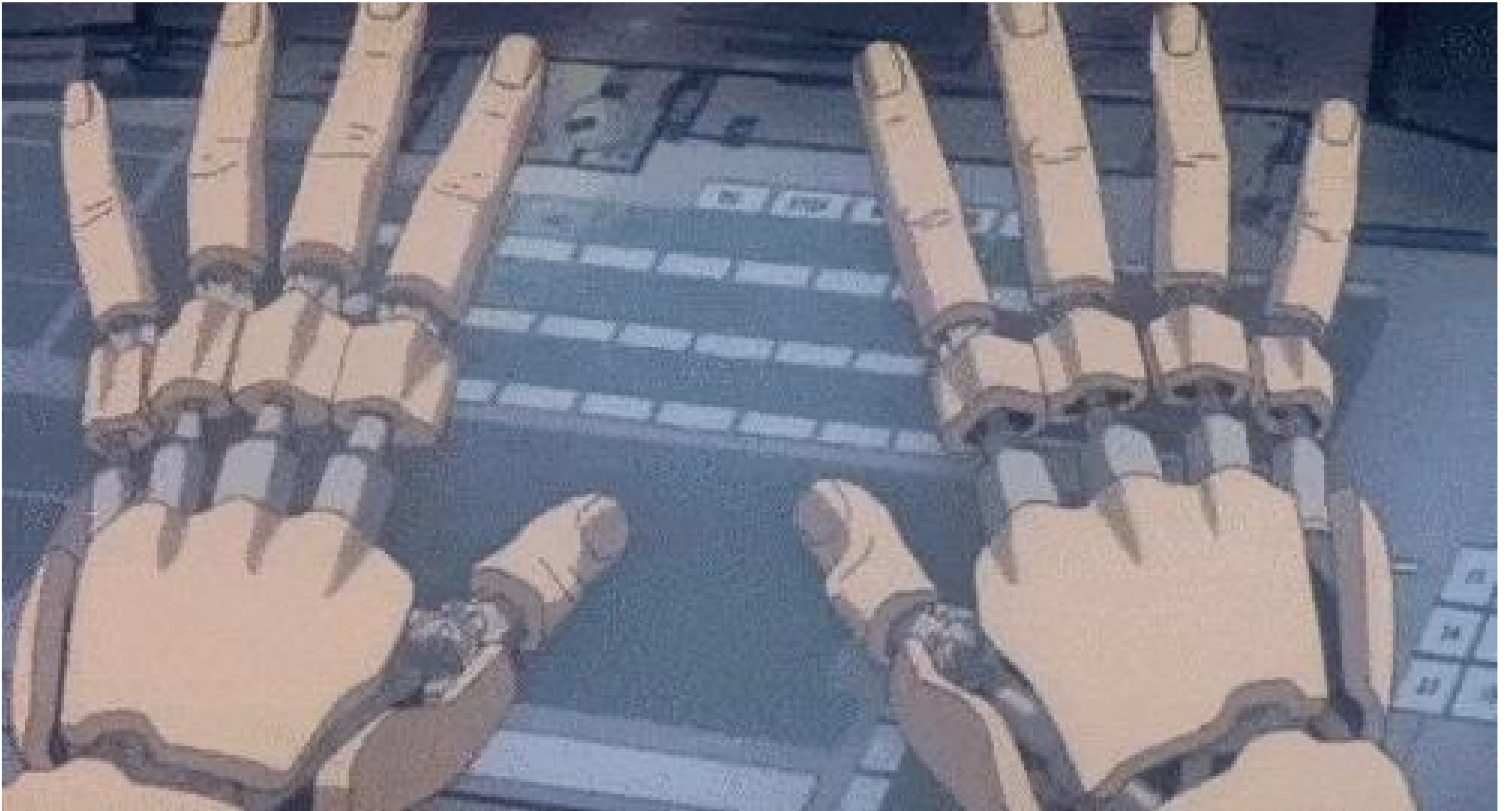




scale

craft

Scale: create value through efficiency



# 100x your output



**Chris** ✓  
@everestchris6

Folgen



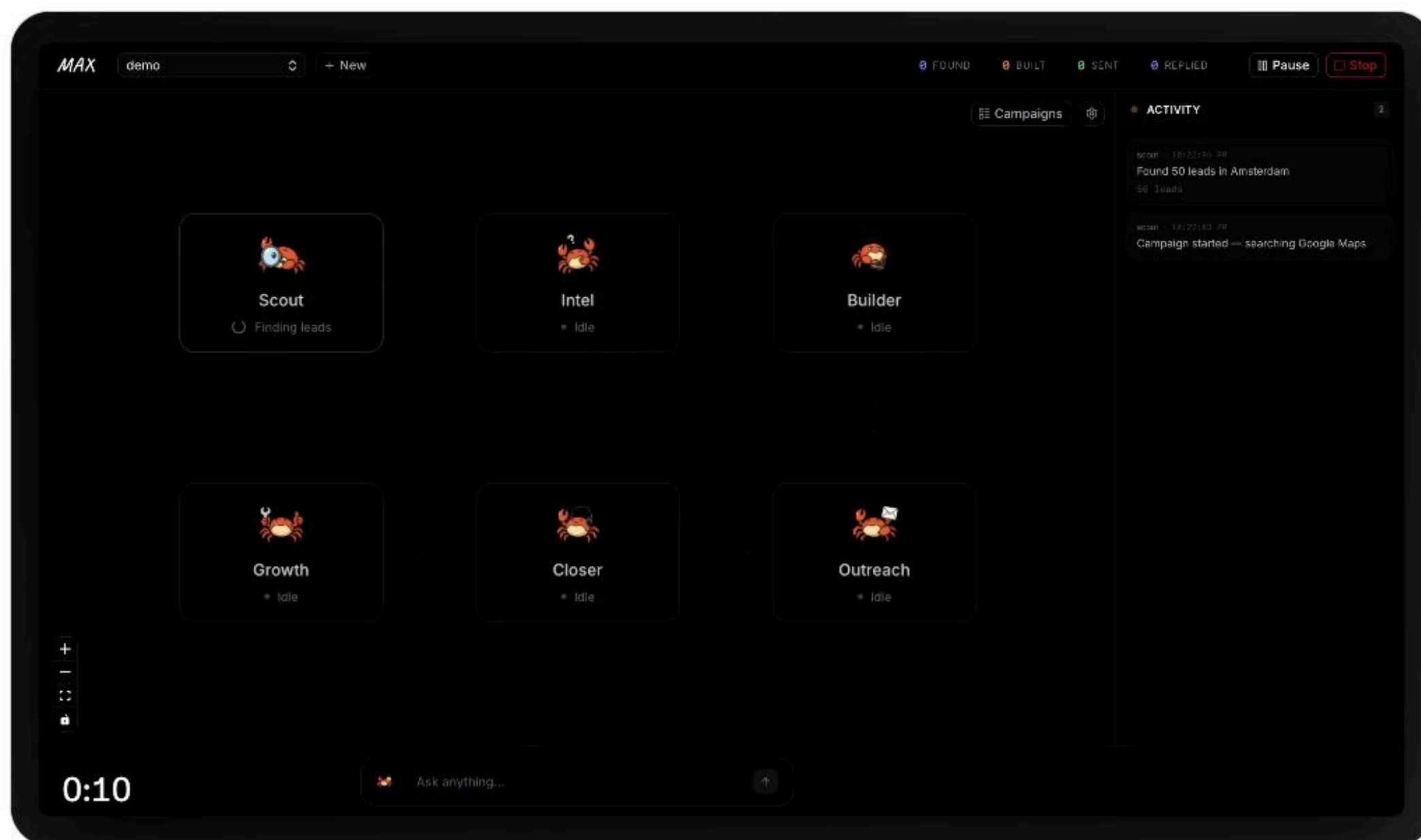
My OpenClaw bot runs 6 AI agents 24/7:

- Finds local businesses without a website
- Builds a custom demo site for them automatically
- Sends outreach with the preview + payment link
- Handles objections and closes the sale

Most local businesses don't have a website, this system finds them, pitches them, and collects payment automatically

Reply "OpenClaw" and I'll send you early access (must be following)

[Post übersetzen](#)



[x.com/everestchris6](https://x.com/everestchris6)

# YC: agencies of the future will look like software companies

About ▾

Companies ▾

Library



Partners

## AI-Native Agencies #

By [Aaron Epstein](#)

Agencies have always been crazy hard to scale. Low margins, slow manual work, and the only way to grow is to add more people.

But AI changes this.

Now instead of selling software to customers to help them do the work, you can charge way more by using the software yourself and selling them the finished product at 100x the price.

Think of a design firm that uses AI to produce custom design work for clients upfront, to win the business before the contract is even signed. Or an ad agency that uses AI to create stunning video ads without the time and expense of setting up a physical shoot. Or a law firm that uses AI to write legal docs in minutes, rather than weeks.

That's why agencies of the future will look more like software companies, with software margins. And they'll scale far bigger than any agencies that exist in these fragmented markets today.

If you're rethinking how agencies and service businesses of the future will be built, we'd love to hear from you.

[ycombinator.com/rfs#ai-powered-agencies](https://ycombinator.com/rfs#ai-powered-agencies)

# When do you stop being an agency and become a software company?

Platform - API Scale ♦ Resources - Pricing CONTACT SALES **CREATE**

# AI Ads that win.

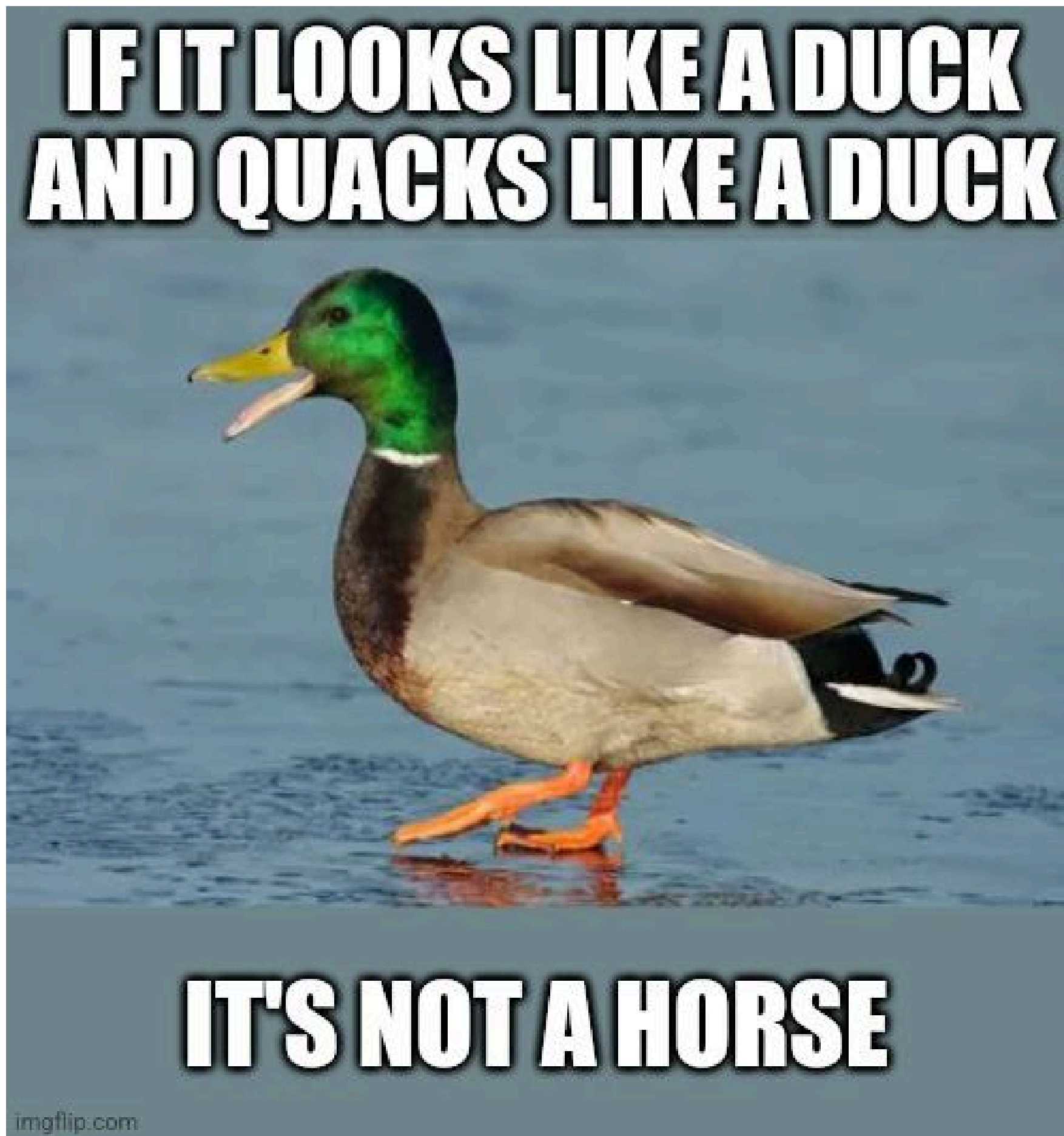
Paste a product URL. Get 10 video ads. Test what converts—automatically.  
(yes, it's really that simple)

**CREATE YOUR FIRST AD FREE**

✓ No credit card required Rated 4.8/5 on G2

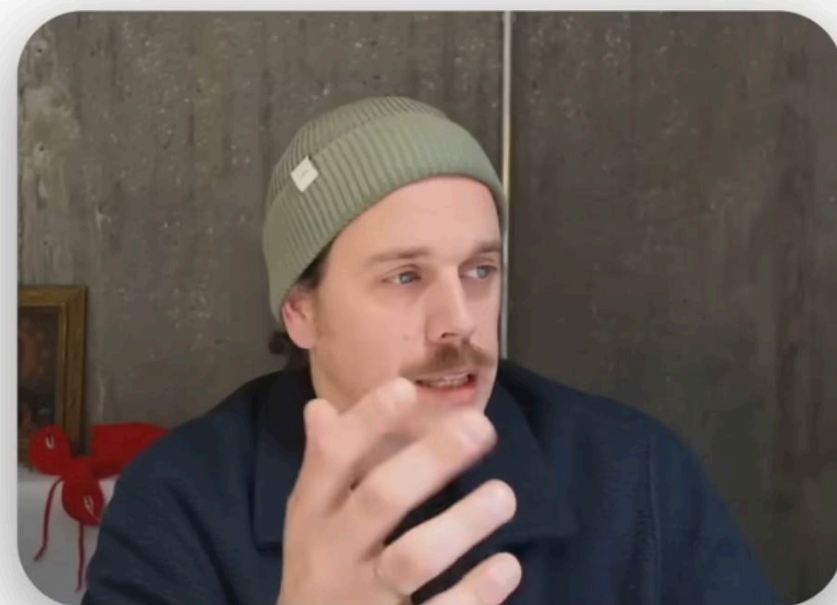
AI GENERATED AI GENERATED AI GENERATED AI GENERATED AI GENERATED

Do today's agencies have what they need to become software companies?

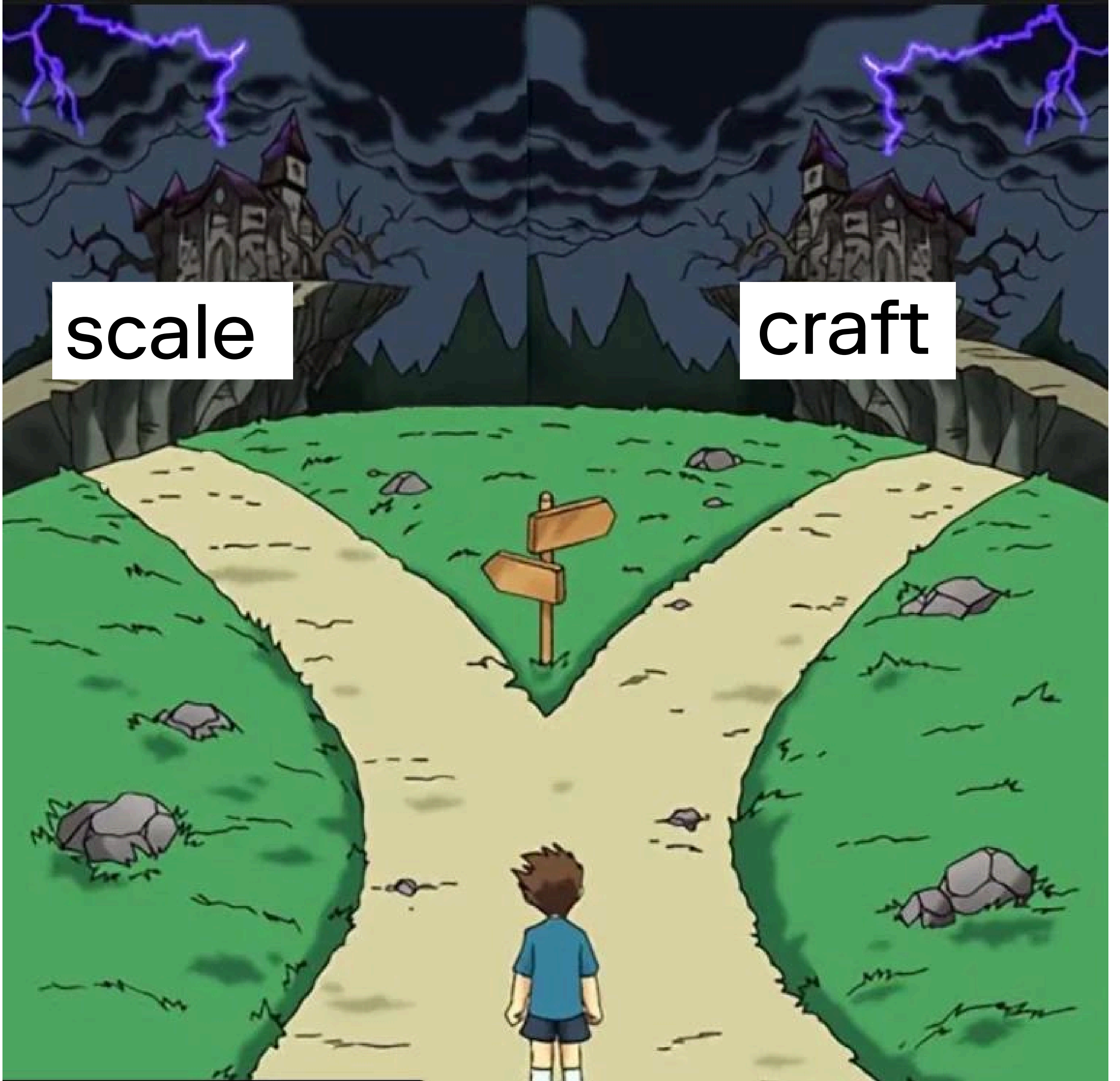


# Are software companies really the role model for future success?

**“There is only 5 years of software development left (maybe less)”**



[youtube.com/@prototypecap](https://youtube.com/@prototypecap)



scale

craft

3

no stack. anti-scale.  
always blank page

# Software co's and agencies are fundamentally different

Software

custom

stack

Agency

custom

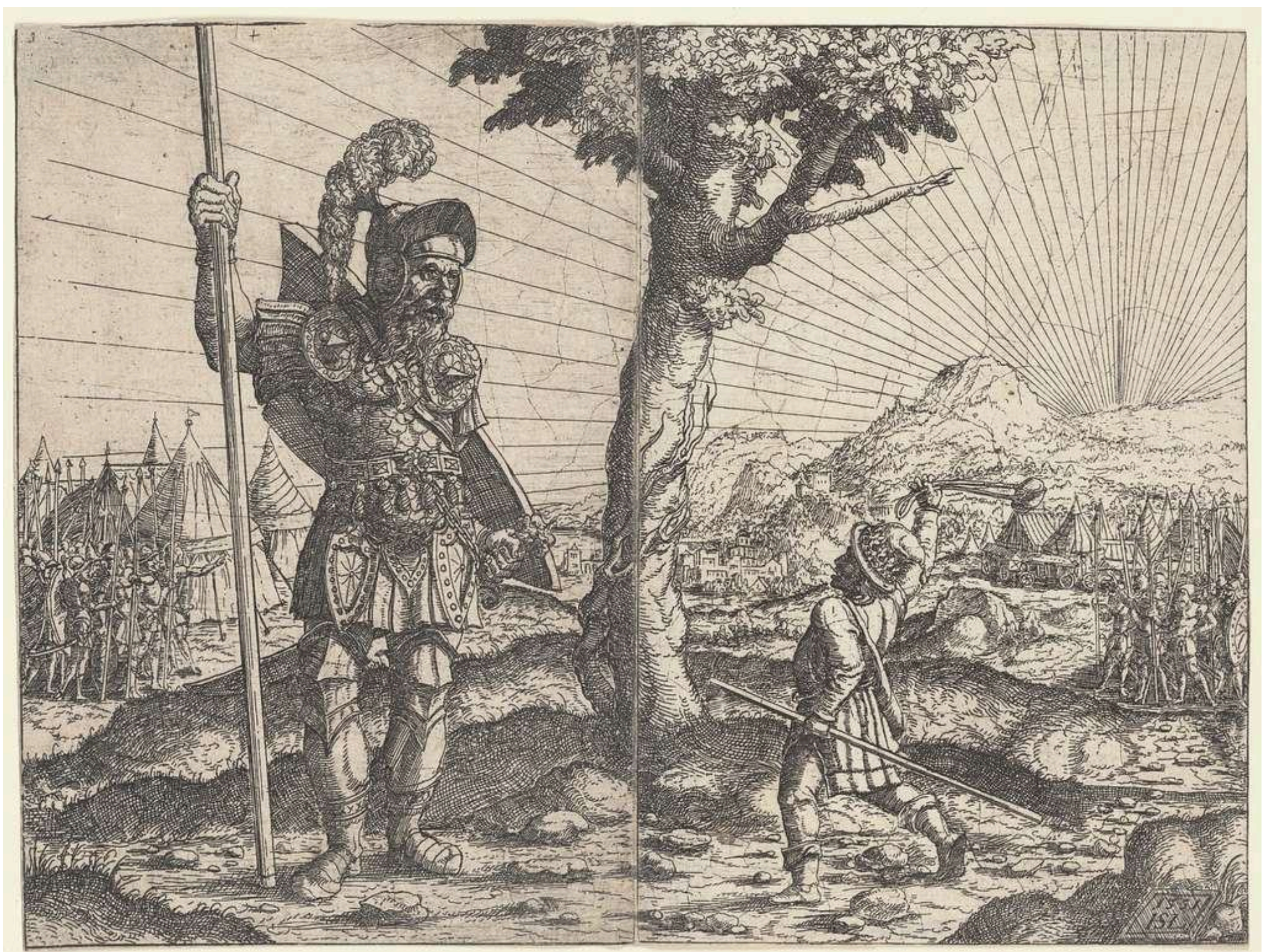
stack

Software companies sell thousands of instances of the same product with minimal marginal costs.

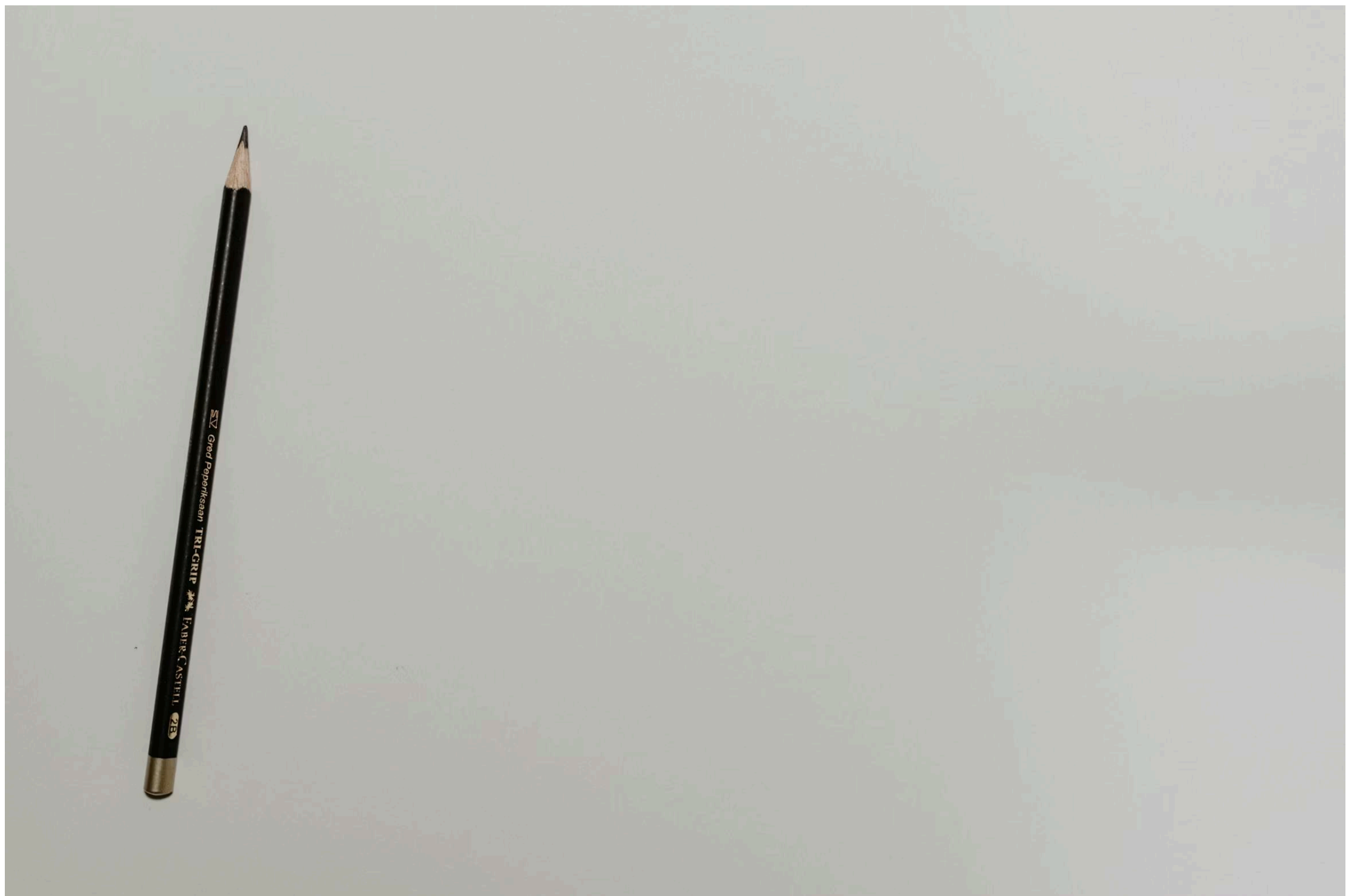
That's a powerful business model.

With one weakness: it forces you to sell the same product to every customer.

Maybe the path for the agency of the future isn't to become more like a software company but less like one



If you don't have a stack, you can start every project on a blank page. Because you doesn't have to sell something you already built



Sure, that doesn't scale. But it enables full creative freedom and flexibility.

Something that might be really valuable when things move fast af.



sam   
@samdape

you basically need to be unemployed rn to keep up

14:48 · 25.02.26 · **1,1M** Views



458



2K



20K



1,8K



# What does this mean in practice?

Don't invest in anything that incentivizes you to do the same thing twice:

- production infrastructure
- standardized processes
- vertical expertise

# Instead, build a small team of highly adaptive generalists



**Stan Reimgen** • 2nd **Connect** ...  
Founder & Design Director ...  
2d •

The most in-demand designers right now - according to Anthropic:

## 1. The "block-shaped" generalist

Not just broad - but consistently strong across multiple areas.

Like 80% in several domains.

Rare.

TEAM

## 2. The "long T-Shaped" specialist

Deep craft. Top 10% in a core area.

The kind of designer where the bar is simply different.

Also rare. Also hard to hire.

NETWORK

## 3. The "newbie / grad" designer (often overlooked)

Curious. Ambitious. Adaptive.

Comfortable with constant change.

Design has changed so much that years of experience alone are no longer a reliable proxy for impact.

TEAM

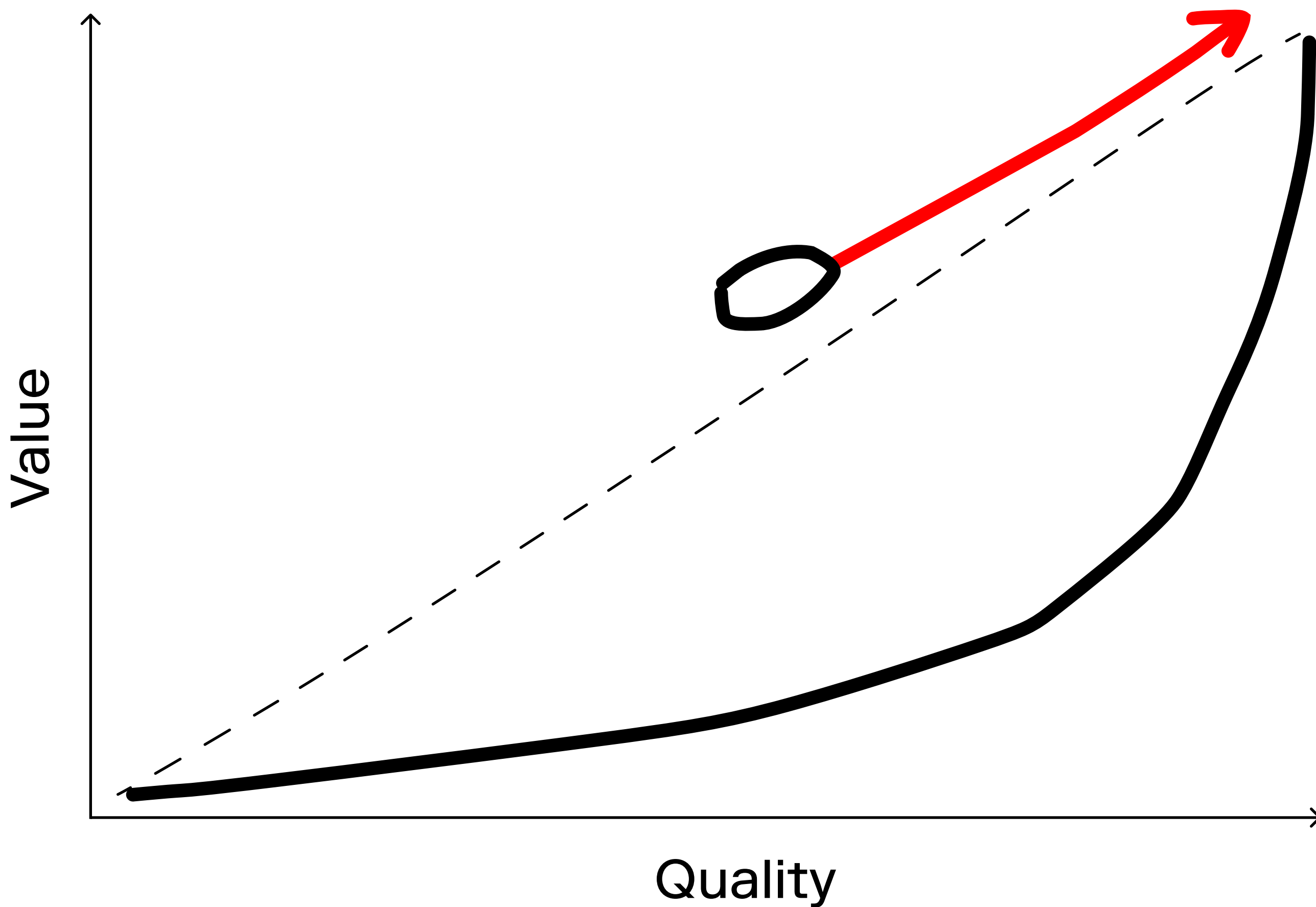
Be the antidote to scale. Be lightweight. Give yourself the freedom to start every project with a blank page.



4

double down on  
where you excel

If machines take over the average, double down on where you're excellent



# Niche down heavily

LL

∴ Substrate is a boutique intelligence studio for extraterrestrial cultural infrastructures.


We move across scales to build original frameworks and stories for start-ups, academic institutions, brands, space agencies, and NGOs eager to navigate the ethical, ecological, and geopolitical challenges of emerging technologies and space exploration.

Our work unlocks the value of counterintuitive insights and underexplored problem spaces, fostering legitimacy and providing sound research principles for your next project.

Back ←   Read Our Research ↗

NH

∴ Substrate



# Find and strengthen your signature

WHITEPAPER

## BUILDING A SIGNATURE BUSINESS



IN 2026

**SAVVY**

FOUNDATION

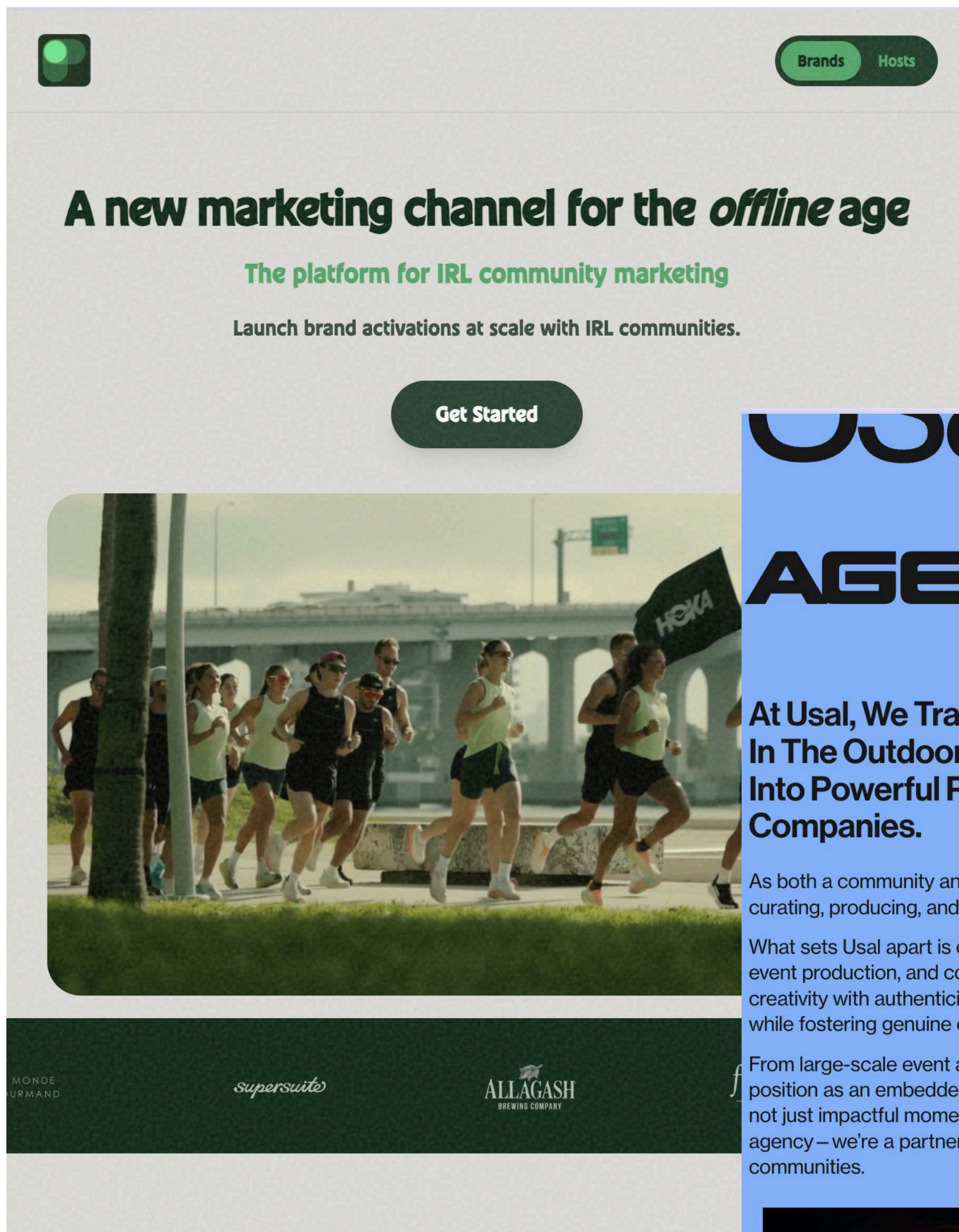
savvy-foundation.com  
Maria Meermeier (Founder)  
maria@savvy-foundation.com

"Does this sharpen my  
Signature - or dilute it?"

**SAVVY**  
FOUNDATION

[savvy-foundation.com](https://savvy-foundation.com)

# Go where the agents can't




Brands Hosts

## A new marketing channel for the *offline* age

The platform for IRL community marketing

Launch brand activations at scale with IRL communities.

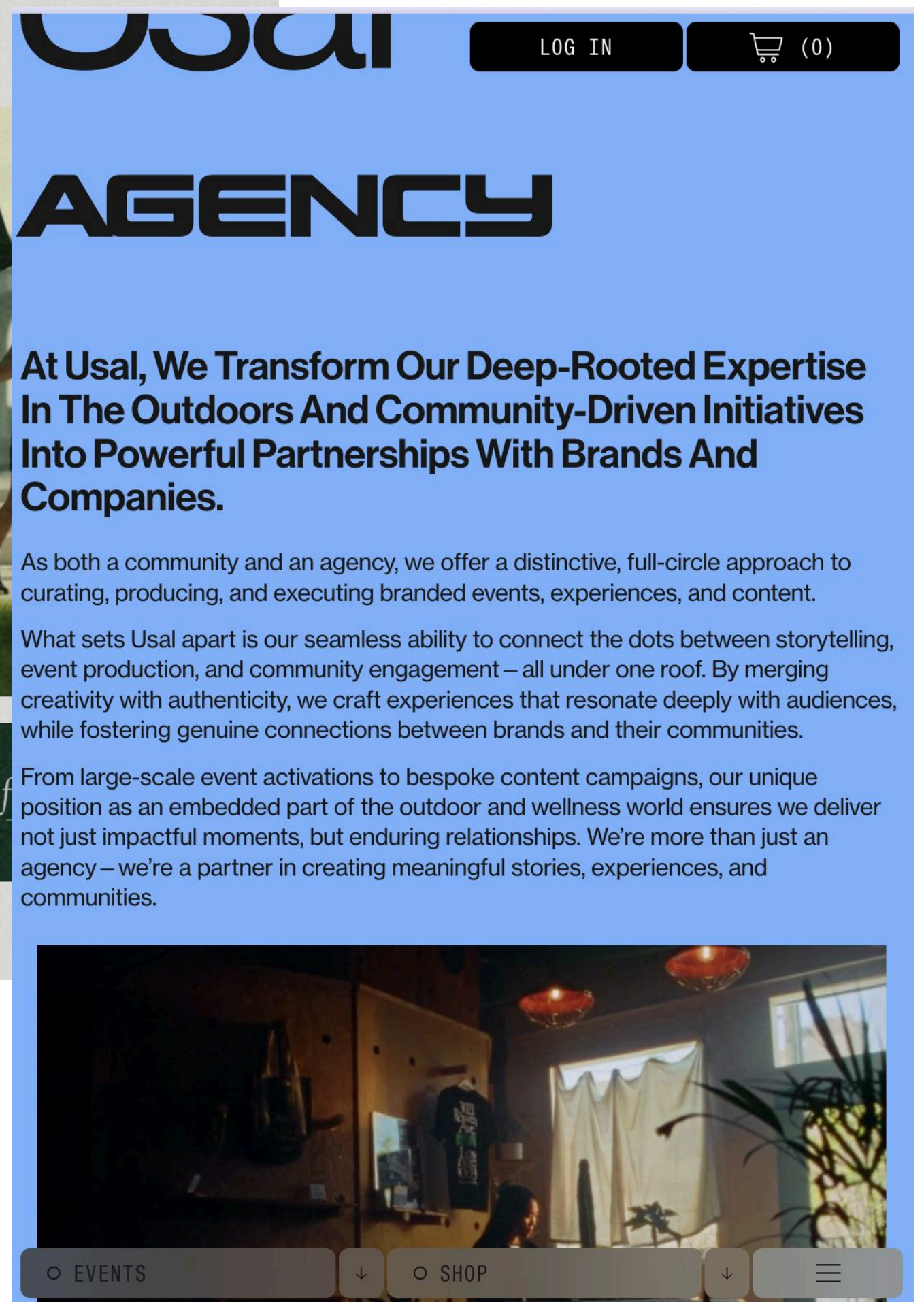
Get Started



MONDE  
URMAND

supersuite

ALLAGASH  
BREWING COMPANY



LOG IN (0)


# USAL AGENCY

## At Usal, We Transform Our Deep-Rooted Expertise In The Outdoors And Community-Driven Initiatives Into Powerful Partnerships With Brands And Companies.

As both a community and an agency, we offer a distinctive, full-circle approach to curating, producing, and executing branded events, experiences, and content.

What sets Usal apart is our seamless ability to connect the dots between storytelling, event production, and community engagement – all under one roof. By merging creativity with authenticity, we craft experiences that resonate deeply with audiences, while fostering genuine connections between brands and their communities.

From large-scale event activations to bespoke content campaigns, our unique position as an embedded part of the outdoor and wellness world ensures we deliver not just impactful moments, but enduring relationships. We're more than just an agency – we're a partner in creating meaningful stories, experiences, and communities.



EVENTS SHOP

offlinetalent.com  
usalproject.com

# Do what the agents can't



balancing act

Subscribe



None of these were efficient uses of time. They were the opposite. But they led somewhere optimization never could.

AI handles the optimized stuff now. Better than we ever could. It finds patterns, maximizes output, eliminates waste. What it can't do is be genuinely stupid. Being genuinely stupid might be the last human superpower.

It can't have the random collision that changes everything.

AI raises the baseline. Randomness becomes the edge.

5

literacy +

adaptability >

execution

# AI takes over execution. Not only in design but across all creative work

## A Design Turn

Designers are anxious. Layoffs have not let up,

AI has seemingly trivialized our magic skill of

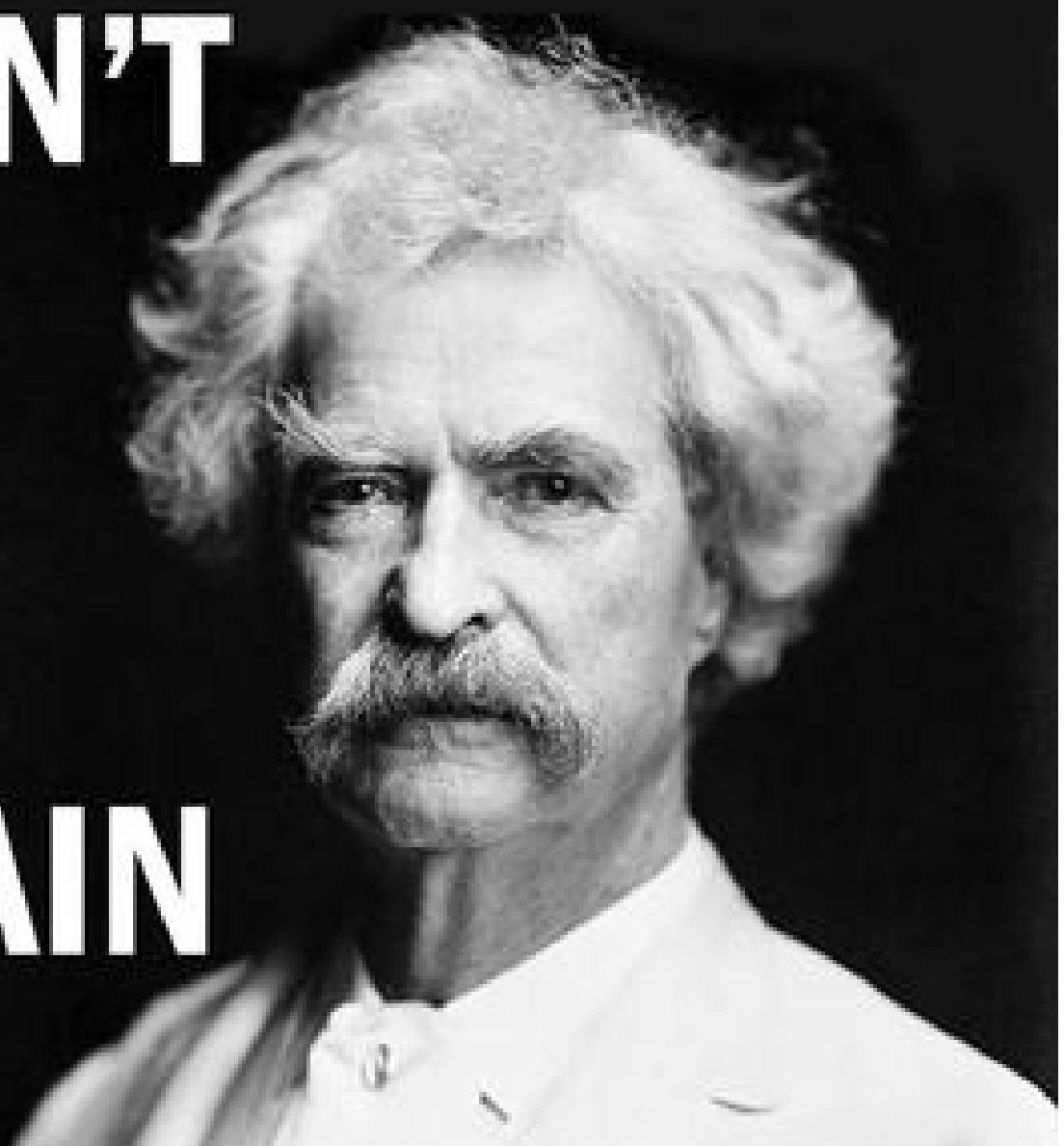
making things, and practicing designers

describe the assembly-style nature of software

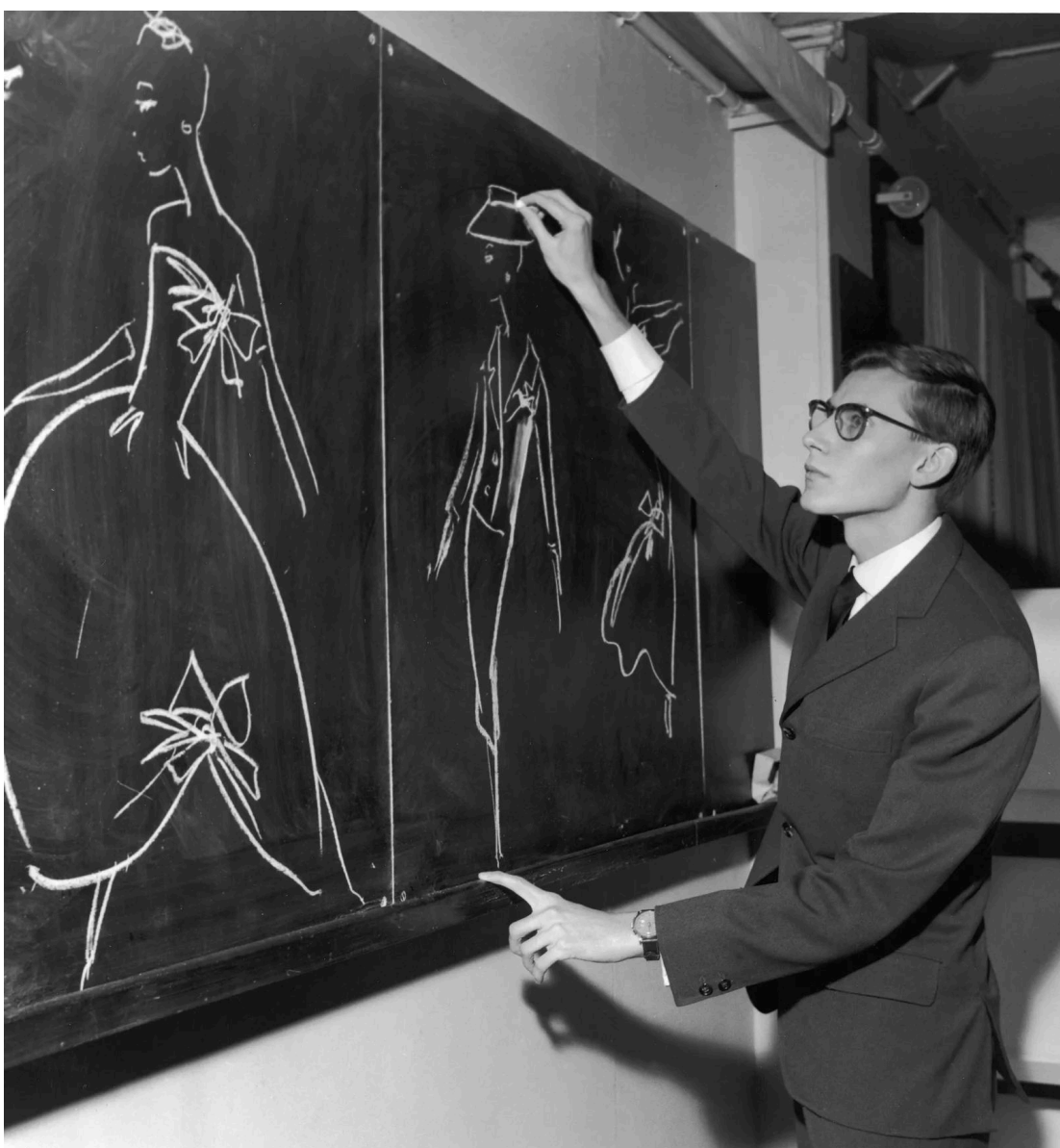
design as soul-crushing.

We've been there before

**HISTORY DOESN'T  
REPEAT ITSELF  
BUT IT OFTEN  
RHYMES  
-MARK TWAIN**



# With the computer, a lot of technical execution skills in design became obsolete



# But new tools emerged



# And curation, creative direction, and taste became more important



*"My iPhone is my office. As long as my phone has battery power, I can continue to work and produce whatever I want and need."*

[nssmag.com/en/fashion/28162/virgil-abloh-way-we-work](https://nssmag.com/en/fashion/28162/virgil-abloh-way-we-work)

# Taste matters

## The Sublime

### What matters in the age of AI is taste

the case for why a curated personal knowledge base has never mattered more



SARI AZOUT  
FEB 22, 2025



297



40



69

Share



## Learning From Examples

ESSAYS

### Taste is all you need

Discernment in the age of the machine



HARRY LAW  
JUN 03, 2025

## On Brand

### When Everyone Has AI, Only Taste Matters

The AI backlash is coming—here's why brands with taste will survive it



KIRA KLAAS  
APR 18, 2025

# Curiosity → Practice → Literacy



Mitch Paone 5. Feb.  
Mitch Paone

Subscribe



Everyone's saying "taste" is the new currency in the age of AI. But nobody explains how it's built. It just floats as an abstract gift you're supposed to "develop" and "own." Or were just born with.

I reject this deeply. Taste is not magic.

Curiosity is the most important ingredient. It pulls you toward the material.

Practice builds the pattern recognition and dexterity. Literacy is the depth of embodied inputs. Taste is just the essence of the whole sequence running.

John Coltrane practiced until his reed cut his lip, then kept going. He shedded for years before anyone heard the results. A Love Supreme was thousands of hours of harmonic study and physical repetition distilled into forty minutes.

# literacy > execution

Interaction design has experienced a number of turns, including a turn away from usability engineering, a turn that recognized ethics and accessibility as integral to the job of designing, and a turn that presented design as fundamental to strategy.

I think we are in the middle of another turn, this time toward design

literacy (and away from design making). To explore this, I want to

revisit a formative text that was prescient in arguing just this, Richard

Buchanan's "Wicked Problems in Design Thinking," from 1992. I

# Right now, experimenting with the new matters more than mastering what's there



**Build the habit of adapting.** This is maybe the most important one. The specific tools don't matter as much as the muscle of learning new ones quickly. AI is going to keep changing, and fast. The models that exist today will be obsolete in a year. The workflows people build now will need to be rebuilt. The people who come out of this well won't be the ones who mastered one tool. They'll be the ones who got comfortable with the pace of change itself. Make a habit of experimenting. Try new things even when the current thing is working. Get comfortable being a beginner repeatedly. That adaptability is the closest thing to a durable advantage that exists right now.

[x.com/mattshumer\\_](https://x.com/mattshumer_)

My guess:

AI won't kill the creative agency as a form of organization. If it could, the computer would have done it already. It has made many execution skills in creative work obsolete. But new tools and skills emerged. And agencies are still here.

My guess:

If you create value mainly through execution without being the absolute best, you probably have to adapt. Experiment with new tools and shift value creation beyond technical execution.

thede.co

acolorbright.com