

A megaphone with a rainbow-colored horn, mounted on a metal stand, set against a light blue sky background.

# Using Qualitative Research in the Development of Behaviour Change Advertising

A perspective

WHY?

## The case *against* research #1:

The effectiveness of an ad, especially in an unfinished form, can't really be predicted by research...so marketers should just trust their expert judgement

# The uncomfortable truth:

Marketers' own predictions of an ad's effectiveness are no better than the toss of a coin\*.

# The case against research #2:

Research kills creativity!



Yes, it can – if  
you do it  
wrong...

A man in a dark suit is seen from behind, standing at a podium and addressing a large, blurred audience in a dimly lit hall. He is holding a microphone in his left hand and gesturing with his right hand. The audience is seated in rows, and the overall atmosphere is professional and focused.

Doing it right: the case *for* qual research..

A background image showing a gloved hand holding a petri dish with a pinkish-red agar surface. The image is dimmed and serves as a backdrop for the text.

**We are not TESTING anything!**  
(leave that to quant pre-testing)



We are NURTURING an idea...

Use the research to  
*explore* the potential  
of an idea to achieve  
its stated objectives...



**WHAT?**



## Effective advertising:

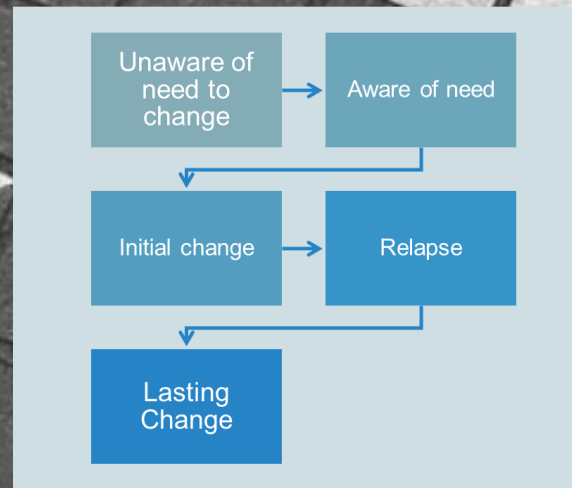
1. Gets noticed
2. Engages its audience
3. Communicates clearly

Behaviour change advertising is no different.

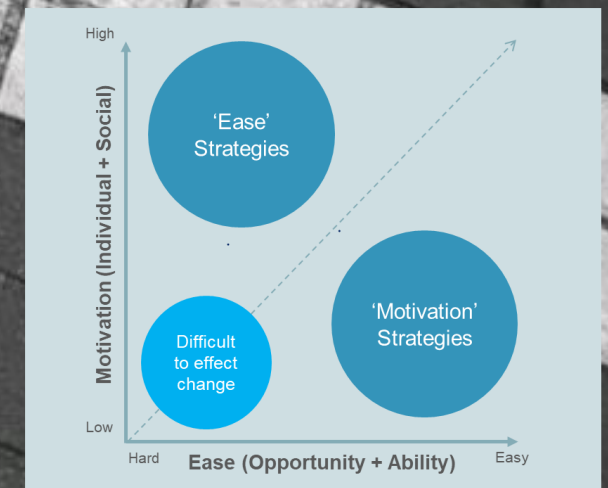
# For behaviour change advertising, first understand the *context* for the campaign and what it's trying to achieve

(hopefully, this will be in the brief, and any previous research; our framework (right) helps make the task at hand clear)

1. Identify the stage of the change: where are people in relation to our objectives?



2. Identify the barriers to change: what's preventing change, what levers can we pull?



# Advertising and behaviour change:

The most effective way for advertising to affect individual motivation and behaviour is to create a degree of *cognitive dissonance* in participants' reactions.

# Cognitive dissonance

A 'gap' between a person's *thoughts and beliefs* and their actual *behaviour*, that causes emotional discomfort, and needs to be resolved.

This is often resolved by changing behaviour.

An effective campaign 'holds a mirror' to people, and makes this 'gap' apparent to them.

# Signs of Cognitive Dissonance in Research

Feelings of unease / discomfort /  
guilt / shame

Defensive rationalisation of  
behaviour, rebuttal of the message,  
attacking the source

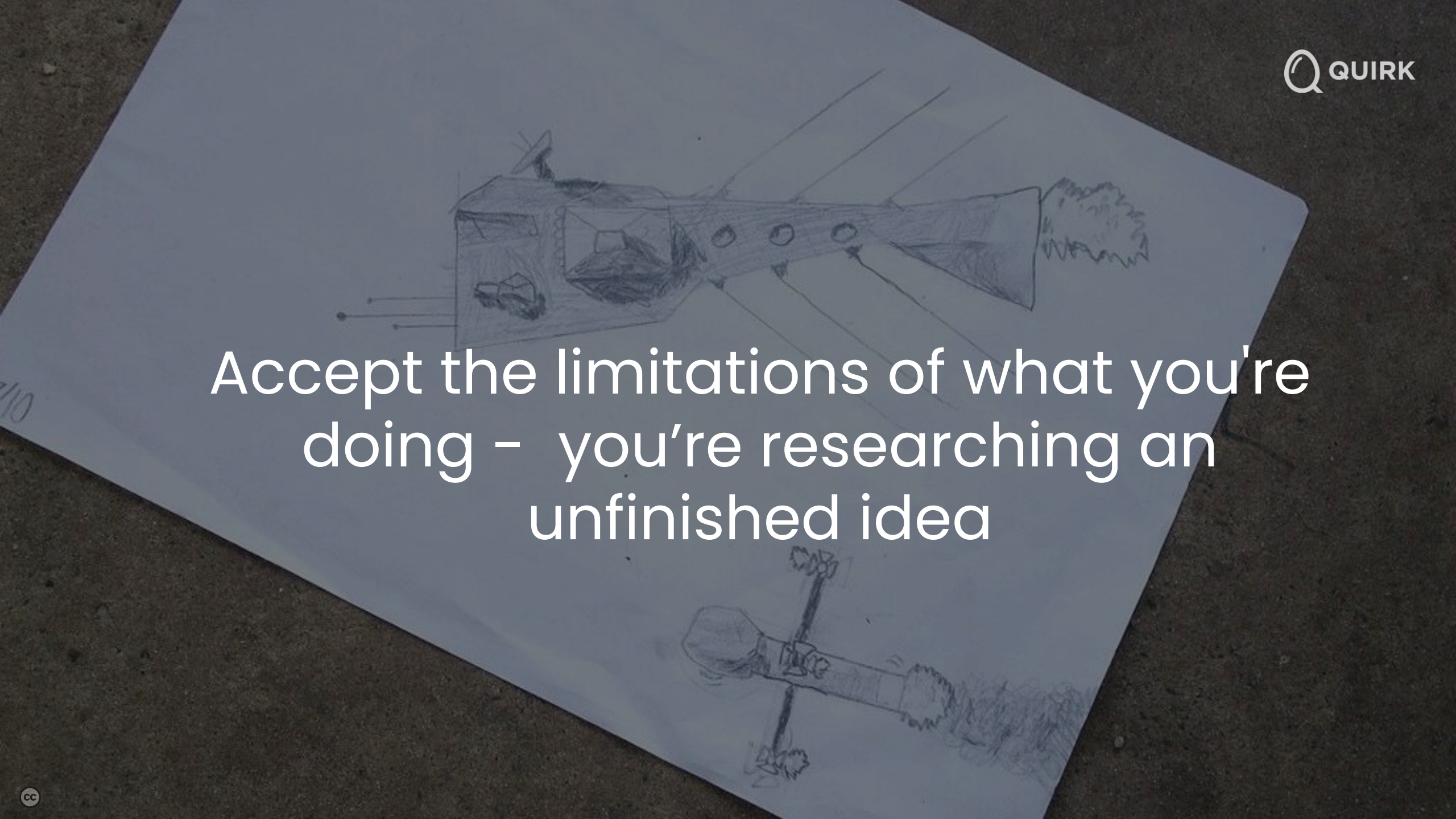
Admission ... 'You're right. I've never  
thought about it like this before'



HOW

It is *not* our  
role to tell  
the creative  
agency  
what to do –  
we're not  
creatives

Instead, think of the creative team as the 'true' client - if they can't use our research, it's a waste



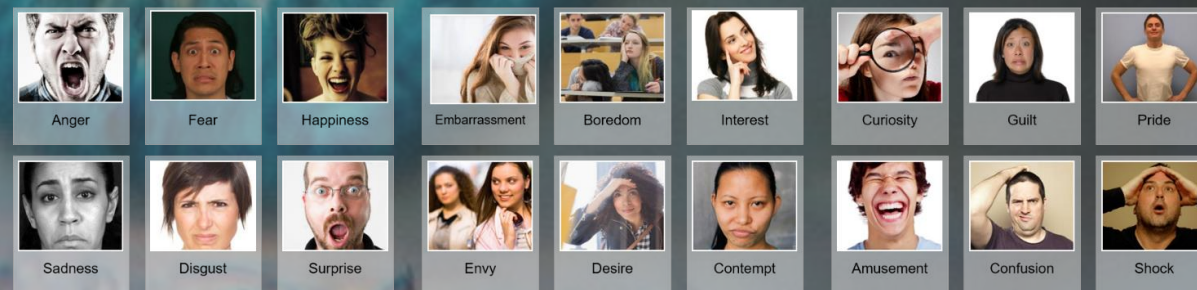
Accept the limitations of what you're  
doing - you're researching an  
unfinished idea



Use qual to understand:

1. Comprehension
2. Reactions (emotional and rational, signs of cognitive dissonance)
3. Likeability (is this likely to engage)

# Capturing emotional reactions in qual



Q. Now you've seen the ad, how does it make you feel. Circle as many feelings as apply (if any).

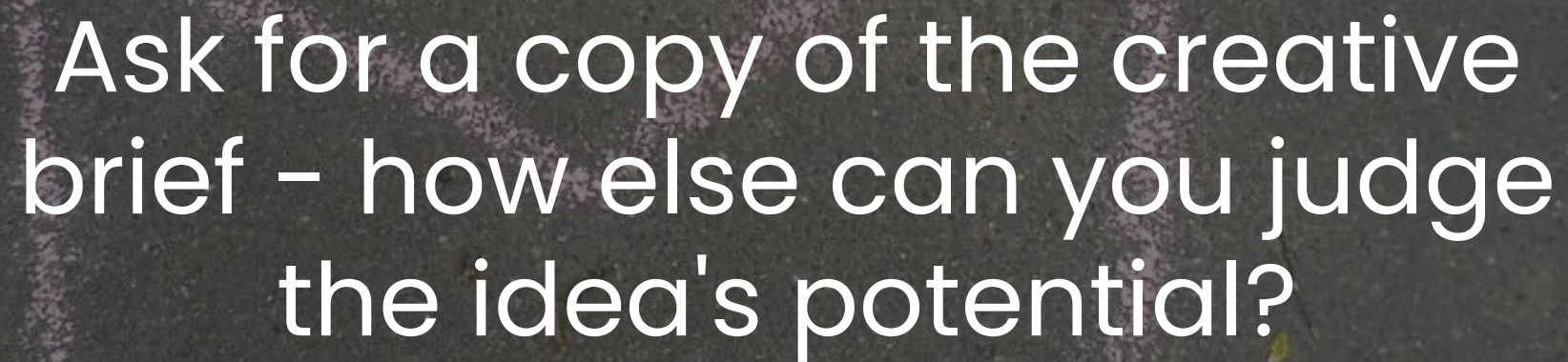
# Capturing emotional discomfort

Thinking about the ad you've seen, how 'uneasy' do you feel about your own behaviour? (Mark the line below)

Not at all  
uneasy

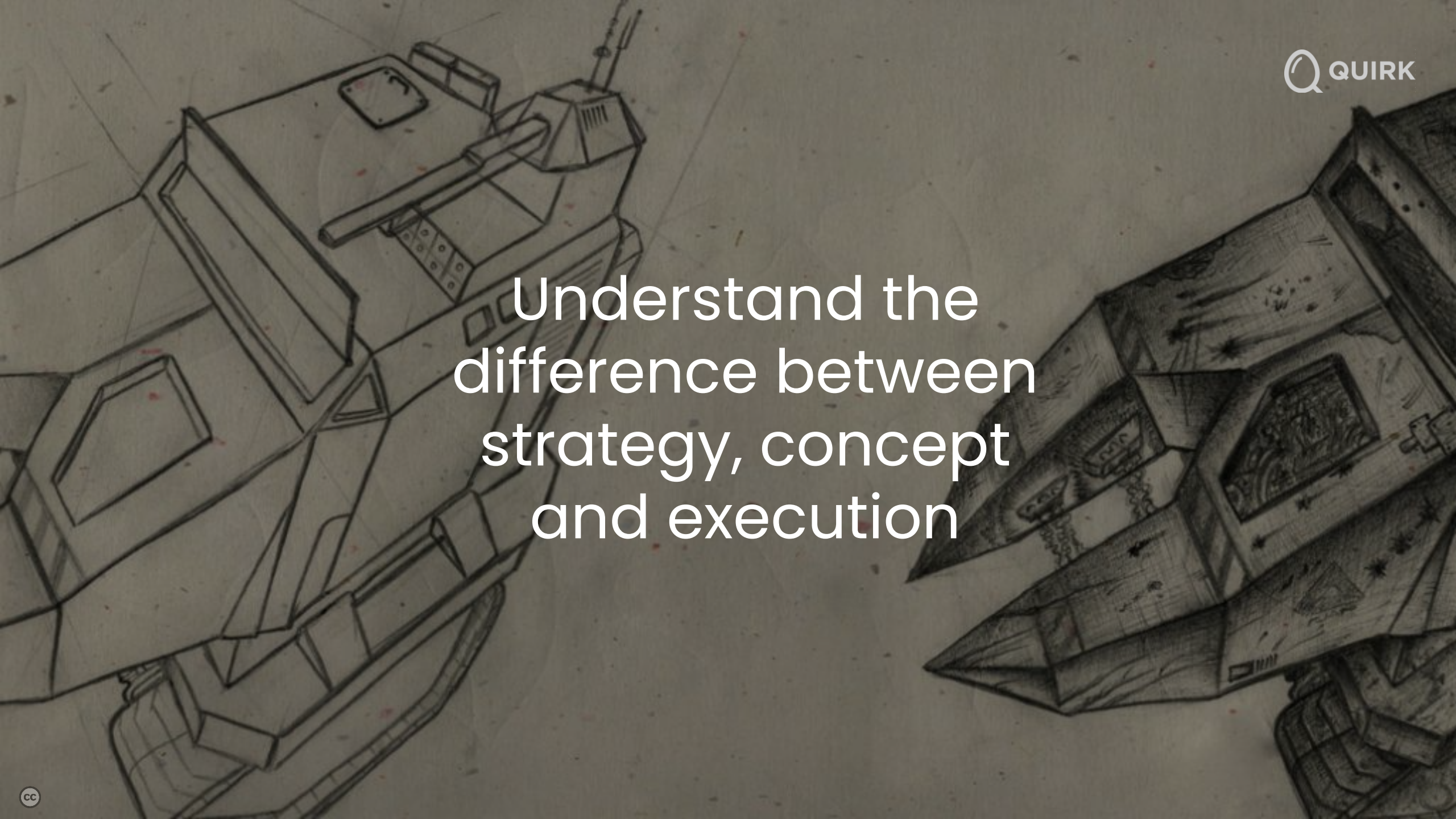
Very  
uneasy

Why?

A large, faint purple smiley face is drawn in the background of the slide, centered behind the text.

Ask for a copy of the creative brief – how else can you judge the idea's potential?




The background of the slide consists of several pencil sketches of mechanical or industrial components. On the left, there are sketches of rectangular panels and a larger assembly with a cylindrical protrusion. On the right, there are more complex sketches of mechanical parts, possibly housings or components of a machine, with various openings and details. The sketches are drawn in a technical, hand-drawn style.

Understand the  
difference between  
strategy, concept  
and execution


Reactions not  
opinions



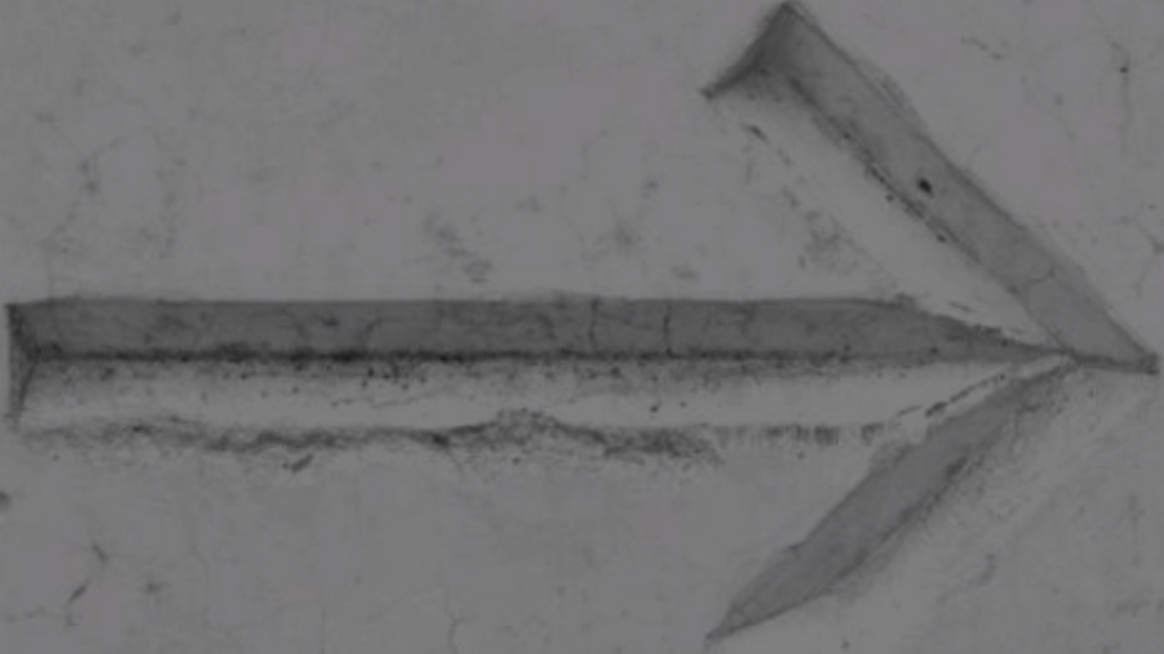
A grayscale photograph of a hand holding a pen, positioned as if about to write on a piece of paper. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights, creating a focused and professional atmosphere.

Individual responses  
before any group  
discussion

Participant suggestions  
are not welcome!  
Don't let them 'play  
creative'



SUGGESTION  
BOX



Make  
recommendations  
(but not creative  
suggestions)

# Quirk

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