

# The creative agency-client relationship strategy

A playbook to guide creatives in their client relationships for growth of impact.

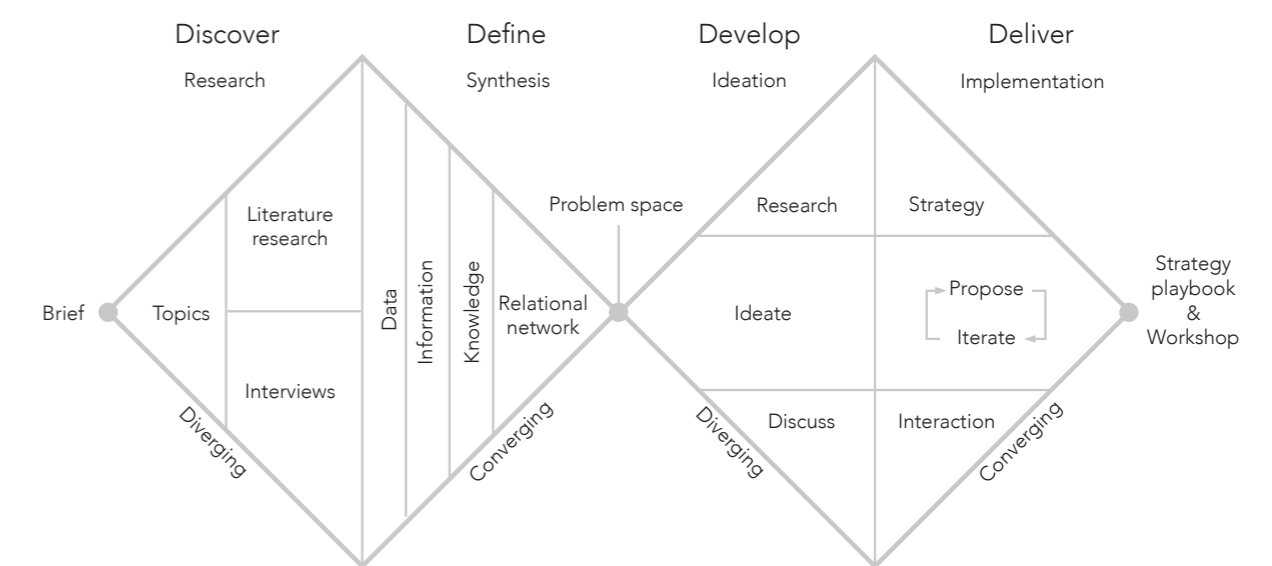
## Context for the strategy

The creative agency landscape is filled with young designers willing to improve the companies they see around them. These designers are well equipped to innovate along the human and planetary boundaries. However, doing the work is only one part of the battle. For the clients to implement the proposals they need to understand the value of design and trust the agency. Therefore, the purpose of this project is to help the designers curate and nurture their client relationships to grow the impact of their projects towards their purpose.

## Creation of the strategy playbook

In order for designers to build their client relationships, a strategy playbook was developed with the Double diamond method. The problem space was defined through use of interviews with a young creative agency and a variant of an analysis on the wall performed in Miro. Combining this, with insights from literature and discussions with experts, to create six principles to live by for lasting relationships. These are supported by the question cards and impact measurement tools. Applying these three elements to enact the rule of thumb.

## The double diamond



## Define your purpose

## Apply the rule of thumb

**S** Set goals

**R** Reflect regularly

**M** Measure progress

### Principles

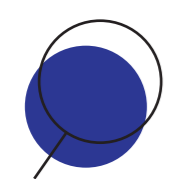
The principles outline the essential elements for a lasting relationship with clients. These focus on what to pay attention to, what activities to undertake and how to conduct yourself when working with a client on a project. The principles are shown below.

### Approach

The approach consists of questions to aid designers in conducting themselves in accordance with the principles. For each principle there are three questions that correspond with the three project phases (start, middle & end). The first set is shown below.

### Impact measurement

The impact measurement graphs aim to respectively provide a measure of the growth an agency is making towards their purpose and the health of the relationships with their clients. This is measured in impact as that is the ultimate measure of their evolution and growth of their relationships. There are three levels of impact defined, with organizational service being the lowest, then organizational process and finally organizational transformation. Examples of what the graphs could look like when filled in are shown below.



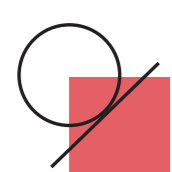
People make a client

Who is the client?



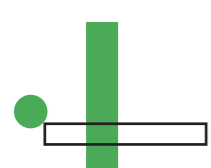
Get in it for the long run

Where is this request coming from?



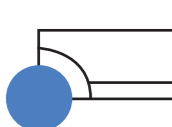
Preach what you practice

What is the project objective?



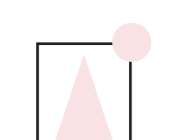
Be vulnerable

How are we going to work together?



Be yourself

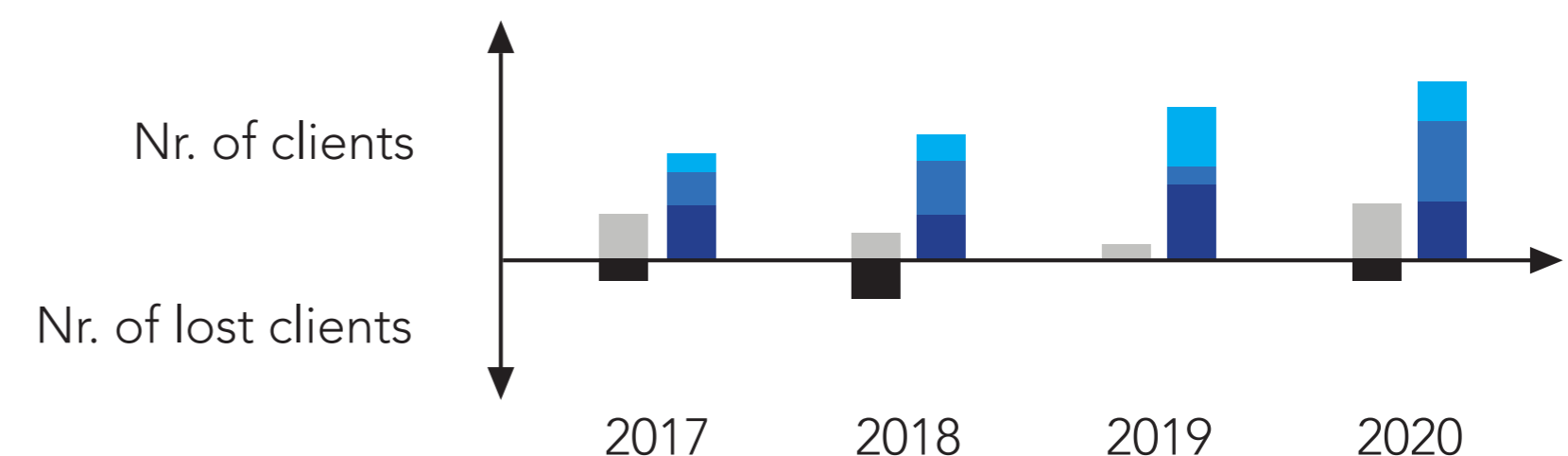
Are there further opportunities?



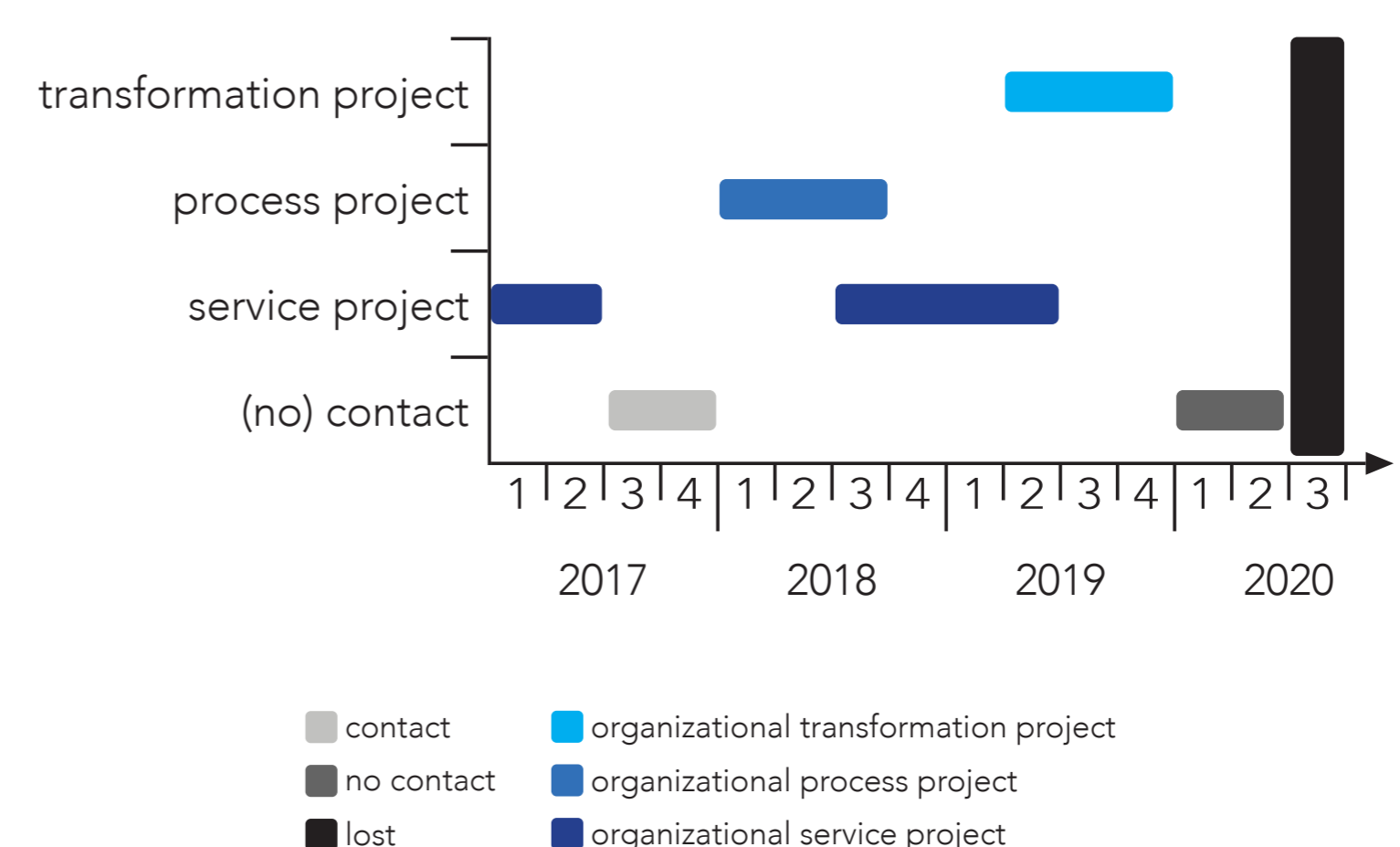
Find common ground

What do we have in common?

#### Agency impact portfolio



#### Relationship impact portfolio



George Kuhfus  
Designing creative agency-client relationships: A strategy to build lasting relationships for impact  
26-07-2021  
Strategic Product Design

**Committee** Dr. Rebecca Price (Chair)  
Dr. Giulia Calabretta (Mentor)  
Ir. Stein Wetzter (Company mentor)  
**Company** Unplugged

