



**The Harvard Crimson**  
*The University Daily since 1873*

# Brand Innovation Workshop

*Nishka Patel, Anaya Sheth, & Christian Armaly*

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# Agenda

- I Overview of the Strategy Department
- II Introduction to Brand Innovation
- III Small Group Workshop
- IV Group Presentations

## Strategy in 2026

- 1.** Serve as an **internal consultancy** that advances revenue growth, streamlines operations, and sharpens decision-making.
- 2.** **Design innovate and impactful content** focused on a brand's unique value proposition.
- 3.** **Utilize analytical methods** to gain data-driven insights that steer product strategy.



**Christian Armaly, Nishka Patel and Anaya Sheth**  
FY2026 Strategy Managers

# Department Structure

*Mission Statement: Drive sustainable revenue growth and expand the value we deliver to clients and readers*



## Design & Innovation

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- Client-facing department
- Ad-hoc design and pitching materials creation
- Develop content for our physical products
- Drives product innovation and maintains existing offerings

***Creativity***



## Operations

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- Internal-facing department
- Optimize internal workflows for the Board
- Support key platform development
- Support operations in Ads and Programs, such as planning pitch sprints or conference timings

***Problem-Solving***



## Analytics

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- Data Analytics projects for client retention, pricing, readership, and more
- Build and maintain data systems to collect and analyze data
- Interpret results, build reports, and make recommendations to Board and Execs

***Analytical Thinking***

# Project Workflow

*How to traverse from ideation to execution*



- What specific outcome are we trying to improve?
- What constraints matter? (time, budget, brand, resources)
- How will we know if this problem is solved?

- Gather internal data (past campaigns, performance metrics, client feedback)
- Identify patterns, bottlenecks, and root causes
- Trial new tools and software

- Define ownership, timeline, and required resources
- Focus on MVPs and pilot tests rather than perfect solutions
- Anticipate execution risks and mitigation plans

- Measure outcomes against the original goal
- Decide whether to scale, refine, or pivot
- Communicate insights clearly to the board

## What Is Brand Innovation?

*How does Brand Innovation fit into the department?*

*Brand Innovation is the process of creating **new solutions to existing business problems** by rethinking how the brand shows up, delivers value, and drives results for our clients & readers.*

- I** Identify where current approaches are underperforming
- II** Question default assumptions about audience, messaging, format, or distribution
- III** Test small, high-leverage changes before committing major resources

# Brand Innovation Framework

*Look familiar?*



## Brand Innovation in Action — Clay AI Pilot



# Clay AI Pilot Structure

*A look into what Strategy is doing today*



## I. Identify Problem

- We currently use **Apollo** for leads and **GMelius** for email sequencing
- The workflow is slow and manual
- Sending too many emails increases the risk of spam flags

## II. Research

- Reviewed how **Apollo** and **GMelius** are used today
- Identified delays, duplicate work, and low-quality sends
- Tested whether **Clay AI** can handle lead sourcing and email campaigns

## III. Implement

- Piloting **Clay** for finding leads and sending emails
- Running small campaigns alongside the current workflow
- Adding controls to limit volume and avoid duplicates

## IV. Analyze

- Comparing **Clay** to **Apollo + GMelius** on speed and results
- Tracking open rates, replies, and spam issues
- Deciding whether **Clay** should replace one or both tools

## The Scenario

*Workshop a situation yourself*

**Context:** The Crimson's revenue is highly seasonal.

- Q1: **No major revenue-driving products**
- Q2: Commencement and Reunion print
- Q3: Career Guide & Back to School
- Q4: Harvard-Yale & Parents Weekend

**The Problem:** This creates a dip in Q1 revenue, leaving the business overly dependent on later quarters. How might The Crimson generate sustainable revenue during Q1, given there are currently no “big-ticket” items?

## Today's Task (15 min, small groups)



### Deliverable

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Create a **two minute** proposal for a Q1 revenue-driving product that the Crimson could utilize.

Make sure:

- Must be feasible within The Crimson's existing brand and resources
- Should complement, not cannibalize, existing Q2–Q4 products
- Keeps client priorities and goals in mind



### Considerations

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**Your proposal should address:**

1. Product format (Program, listicle, guide, etc.)
2. Target audience (Who is this for?)
3. Value proposition (Why would advertisers or attendees pay for this?)
4. Revenue model (Sponsorships, ticketing, bundled ads, etc)
5. Marketing/Pitching campaign (When and how will it be sold?)
6. Why this works specifically in Q1
7. How would you measure its success

**A Crimson Business team member will guide you through the exercise! Ask questions!**