

The framework for consistently creating great ideas

Frameworks first, ideas second.



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The Framework Is More Important Than the Idea

Whenever we're searching for a creative answer to a business problem, we begin with a simple rubric:

Right Ideas > Good Ideas

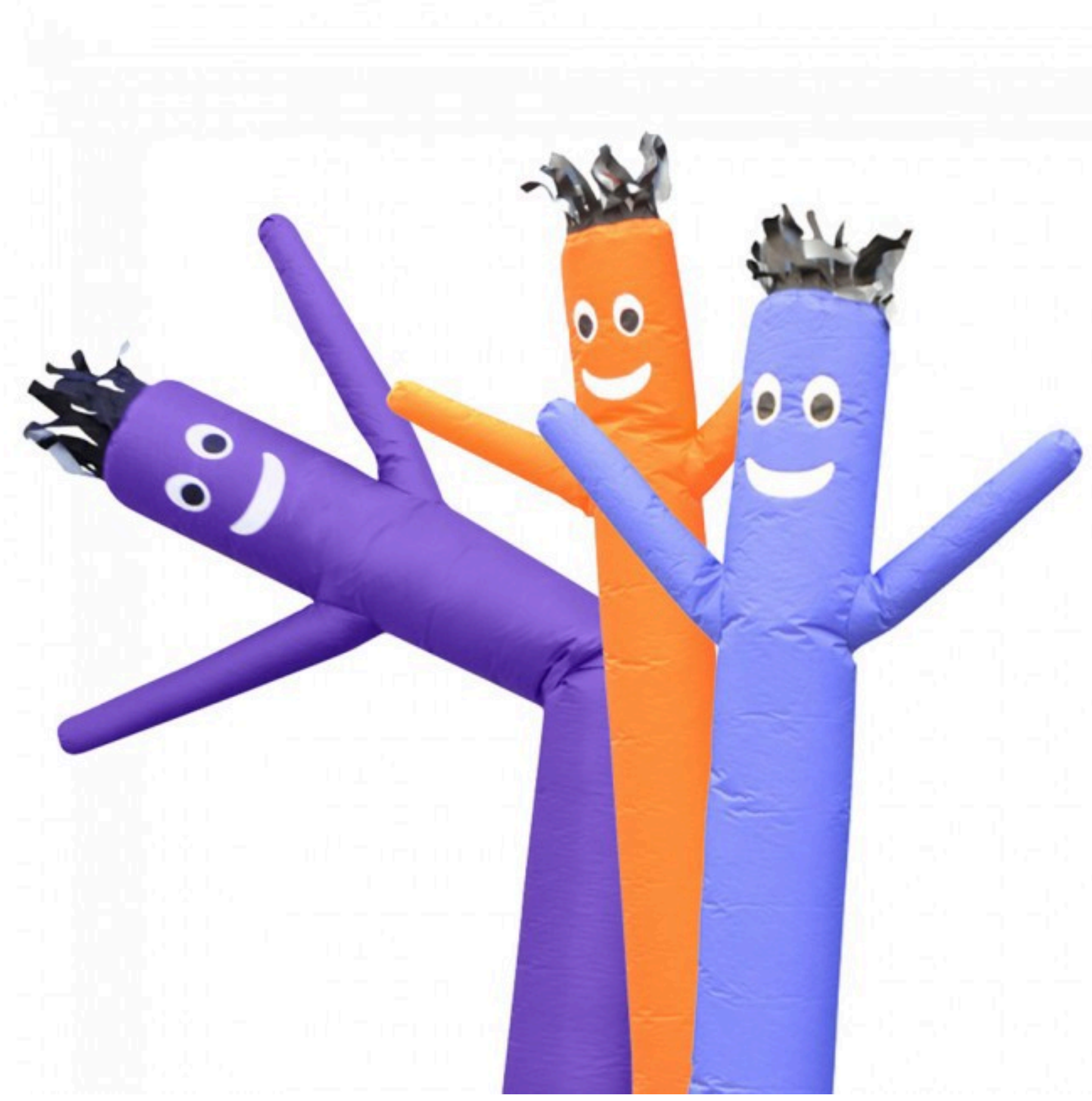
This is straightforward enough.

Everybody likes good ideas.

Everybody has good ideas.

Everybody (usually) recognizes good ideas.

But the definition of "good" is a bit wishy-washy. A bit ephemeral. A bit hand-wavy, like those air dancers that promote used car lots.



Why? Because a "good" idea is usually something that we, the idea-maker-uppers, think is clever or interesting or new.

That is, good ideas flatter the idea-haver.

But you're not trying to flatter the idea-haver.

You're trying to flatter the problem-holder.

So you're not looking for a good idea. You're looking for a *right* idea.

You're looking for an idea that appropriately and elegantly solves a problem for the client and the client's audience.

That should tell you something.

That should tell you that the framework for your idea is more important than the idea itself.

The Framework for the right idea

Every client engagement is different. Every problem has its own peculiarities. Regardless, we can use a similar approach to generating ideas.

That, after all, is how you scale creative solutions. You ask the same questions to find different answers.

Here are the questions we ask, in the form of a simple function:

$$B(i) = \frac{e}{r}$$

Where e = emotional, r = rational, and i = the input (the idea).

The B, in the finest algebraic tradition of Homer, stands for emBiggen. We are embiggening the idea to take it from "good" to "right."

Put it together, it looks like this:

$$B(i) = \frac{\text{Emotional: Will it elicit our intended response from the audience?}}{\text{Rational: Will it sell more ____?}}$$

You may wish to remember this equation by its mnemonic "bier", which is both the German word for beer and a helpful hint for how to generate the best ideas quickly.



Sandwiches help, too.

So when evaluating ideas and solving for this equation, we ask ourselves the following questions:

Emotional

Can the idea do more to...

... *tap into the thoughts, hopes, and dreams of the entire target audience and make them feel understood?*

... *present the best reason to get excited about the brand/product?*

... *tap into the broader cultural zeitgeist in a fresh, interesting way?*

Rational

Can the idea do more to....

... *stand out in the product category? In the broader media context?*

... *make more most cost-effective use of the client's marketing dollars?*

... *faithfully represent our strategy and reach our goal?*

What are the risks or dependencies associated with the idea?

And sometimes, when you're resolving or playing with this tension, it can feel like you're flip flopping.

But that discussion is really about tuning the dials on the quality of the idea.

On embiggening the idea from good to right.

So that the idea works for the client and the client's audience.

Not just for you.



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Steve specializes in content strategy, branded content, product development, and editorial operations. Yes, he'd love to get a drink.



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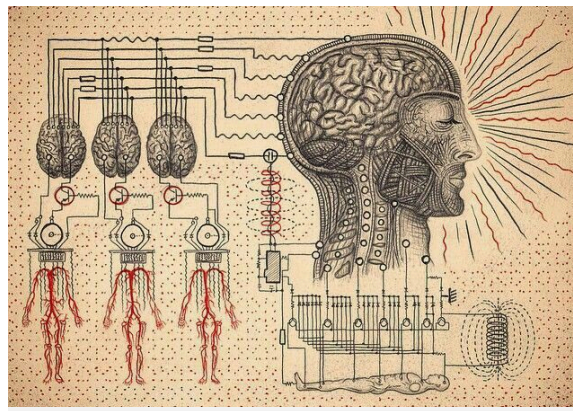
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