

# Handbook<sup>©</sup>

Combo<sup>©</sup>

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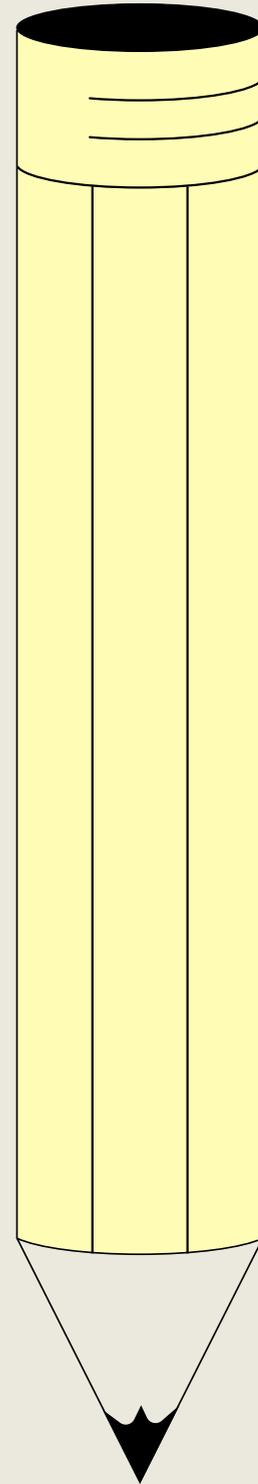
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# Your First Day, Week & Month

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# What to Expect on Your First Day

Your first day will be about getting set up and settled in, and hopefully meeting more of the team. It will most likely be on a Monday when we have our weekly all-staff meeting. We know meeting a new crew for the first time can be a little overwhelming, but just be prepared to say hi and maybe tell us something about you we don't know!

We'll have a laptop for you, as well as your email account, access to our Google Workspace and other software you might need for your job. If you have already been assigned to a specific project, you may even join a few meetings just to listen in.

# What to Expect During Your First Week

Time to dig in! During your first week, you'll certainly be assigned to a project and will meet the whole team working on it. If you're in the office this week, you'll also grab lunch at some point with one of the partners and some of the crew.

More than anything, this week is about you asking questions and us getting you answers.

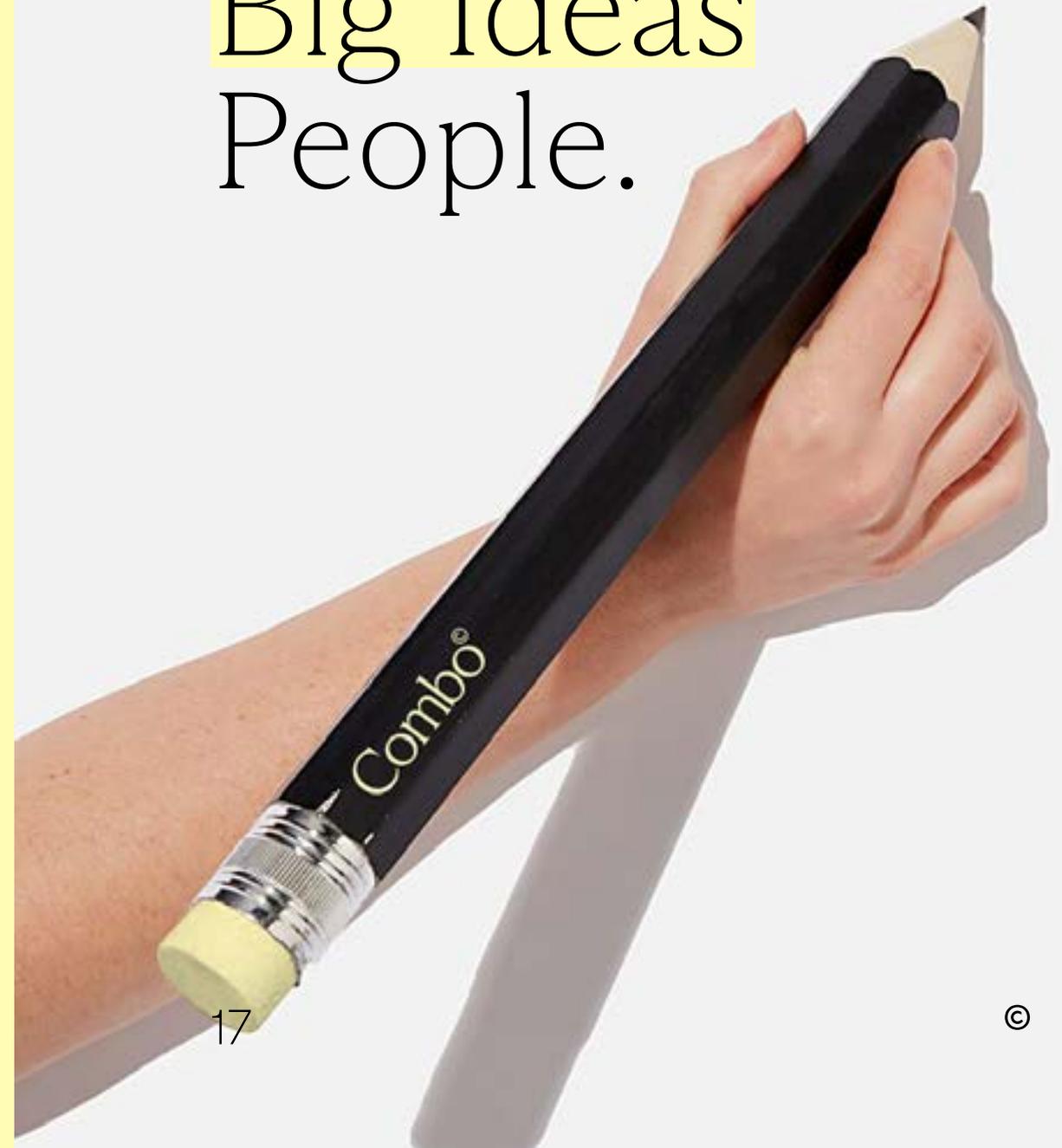
# What to Expect in Your First Month

It's possible your first month may feel light. You might think, "I'm not doing enough," or "I'm not proving my value." If that's the case, just enjoy the slow start and don't put any pressure on yourself—things will pick up, and you'll get in the groove. It's totally normal to ease in.

Or, it could be that your first month feels like a lot. You might think, "Wow, I've gone straight into the deep end." If that's the case, please let us know and we can take some of the pressure off. Things may call for a little adjustment, but we understand that feeling and will do everything we can to help.

Who We Are &  
How We Work

We Are  
Big Ideas  
People.



# What We Do

Combo© is a strategy and design agency. We integrate research, strategy, innovation and branding practices to help our clients create or increase their value, real and perceived.

Our best engagements tend to combine practice areas so that the same team of strategists and designers shares a contiguous process. This helps ensure that the integrity of the vision is carried throughout an entire project, successfully translating client objectives into consumer action.

# What Are Our Areas of Expertise?

# Research Practice

We are devoted to the truth. Combo©'s full-stack research capability allows us to develop research designs and methodologies globally and locally in service to questions and truths we seek to uncover. Research can be conducted independently or as the first step in a branding or innovation process.

# Strategy Practice

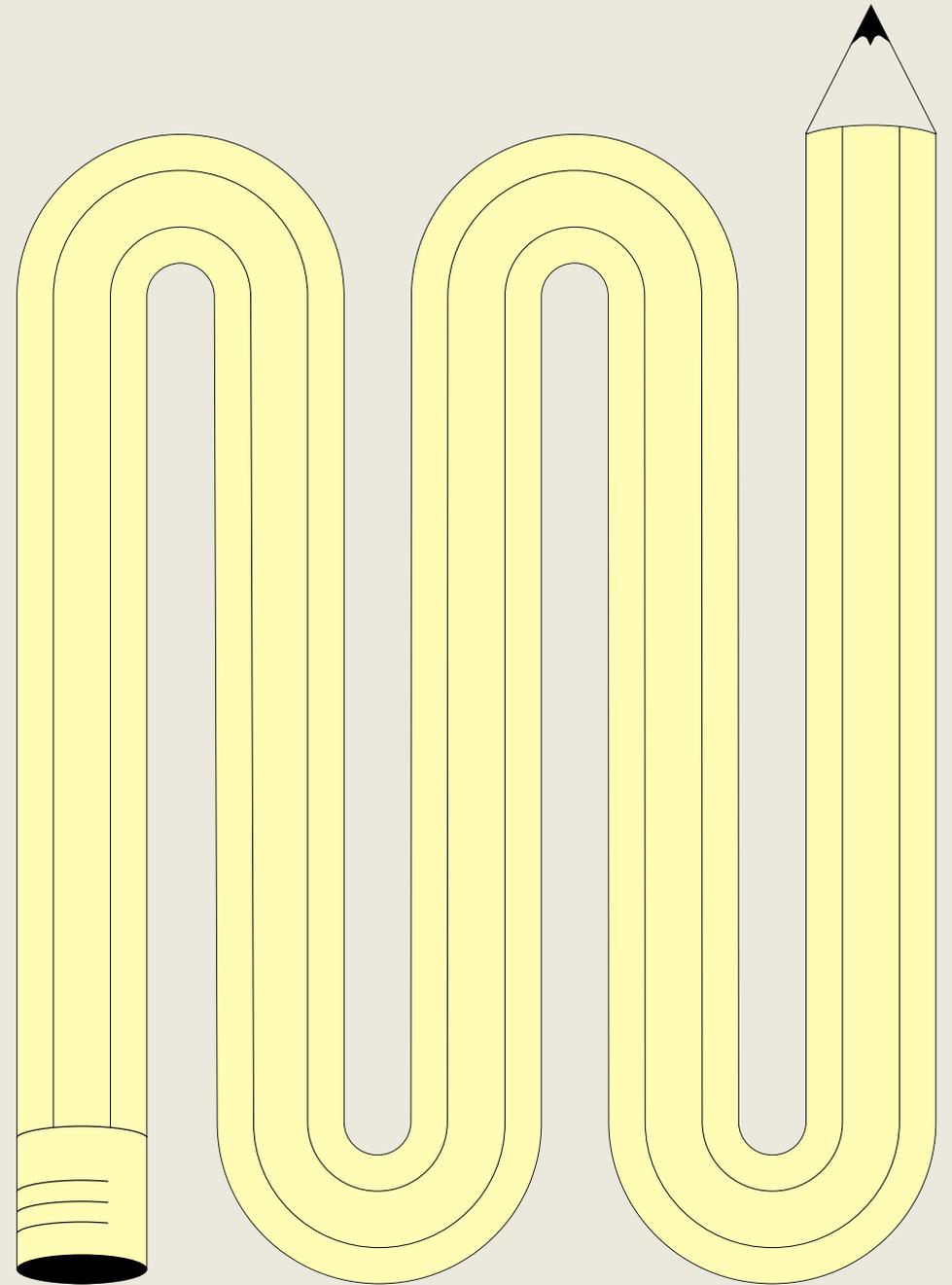
Our strategy teams specialize in identifying and anticipating consumer wants and needs, unlocking value in brands, products and businesses. Through a robust set of tools and processes, Combo© strategists interrogate markets, define audiences and create business models and brand frameworks that provide clients' unique advantages. All Combo© strategies are built to be executed, often by us.

# Innovation Practice

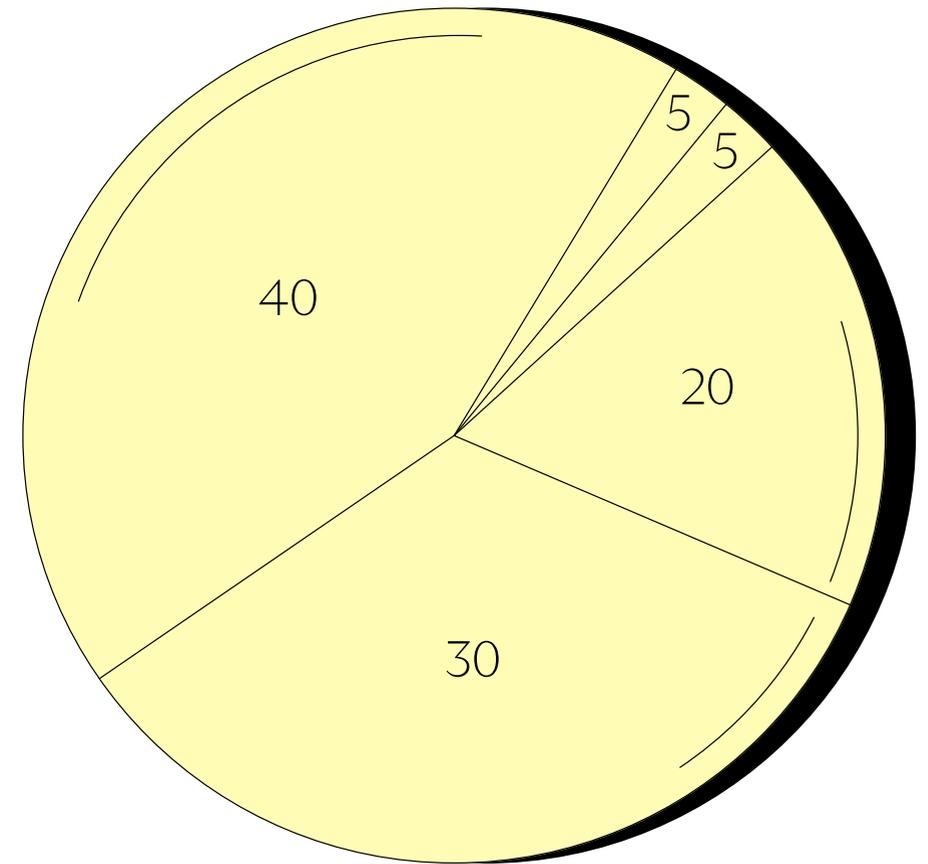
Through the application of cultural relevance and macro quantified market opportunities, Combo's strategists and designers work together to invent, develop and implement new products, processes and services across diverse categories and audiences. Our approach to innovation blends insight with cultural relevance to add a layer of emotion to utility.

# Branding Practice

Our strategists and designers work together to identify, define and articulate a brand's core truths, differences and opportunities in-sync with their business ambition and market opportunities. Combo©'s ability to unlock the mutual benefit between a brand and the audience it serves also helps ensure we create brands that resonate. Our branding practice extends from research and insight development to activation concepting and production of core brand assets and experiences.



# What Types of Clients Will You Be Working With?



Non-profits  
5%

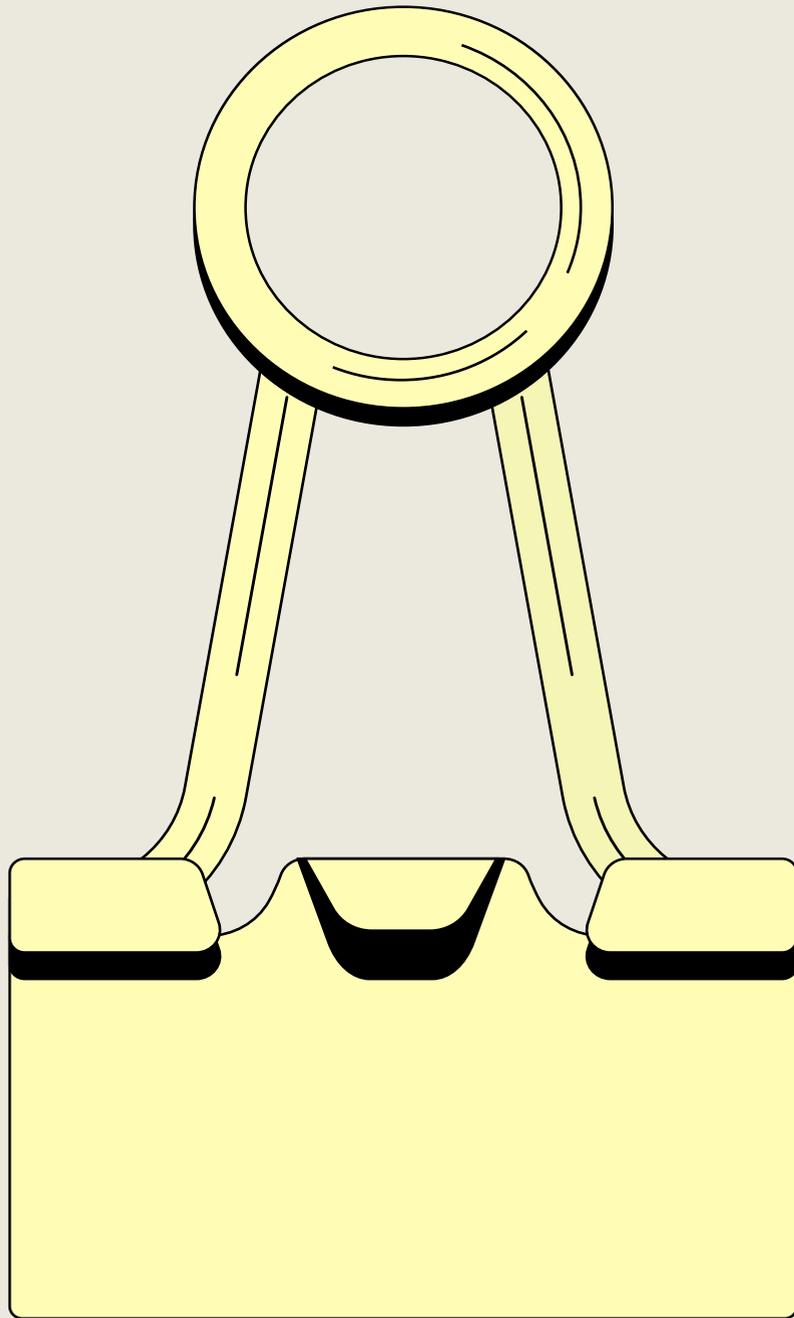
Enterprise/  
Fortune 500  
40%

Start-Ups  
20%

Institutions  
5%

Small to Medium  
Sized Businesses  
30%

# The Combo<sup>®</sup> Process



Beyond what we do, how we do it is perhaps an even bigger indicator of what it's like to work at Combo©.

Our process combines different areas of expertise to deliver solutions that are functional, emotional and culturally relevant.

# Combined Approach

Combo© combines design thinking with branding, high-fidelity design with research and cultural context with innovations. The best of our branding and innovation processes serve to inform each other in complementary ways. We believe strategies should always be based on research-driven empirical insights that then fuel a culture-forward style of design. This process aims to create outputs that simultaneously fulfill a need and create a feeling.

Fulfill a Need. Create a Feeling.®

# Our Approach to Innovation:

## Emotive Solutions:

A good product or service is a solution; we believe that these solutions must look and feel the best they possibly can. By purposefully integrating cultural relevancy and the intangible magic of aesthetic and language, we layer emotional resonance into the functionality of our solutions.

# Our Brand of Branding:

## Logical Design:

A good brand is about emotion; it activates a strong feeling people have for a business or product. We believe that when these feelings are rooted in what an audience wants or needs, we can help create behaviors and identities that connect with people in more substantive ways.

# Principles Across Practices:

## Our General Approach:

All projects should...

- Begin with an open mind instead of a gut feeling.
- Find delight in being surprised by research.
- Develop strategies that bridge objectives, audience insights, product strengths, cultural trends and whitespaces.
- Concept and design from the strategy.
- Be objective, not subjective.
- Push past references into original ideas.
- See creativity as collaboration, not conflict.
- Know that great design is one of the world's most accessible gifts.

## Desired Outcomes:

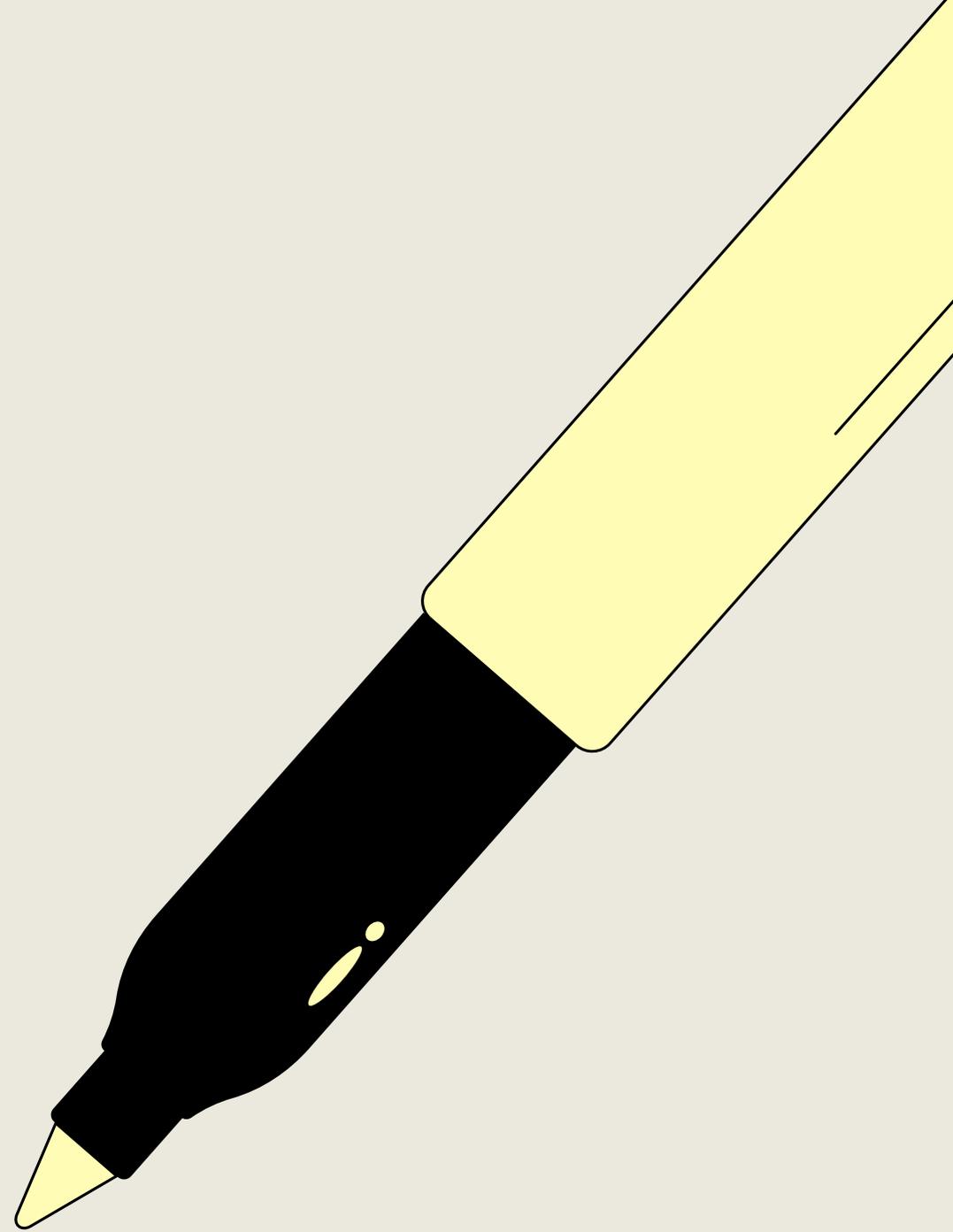
All projects should be...

- Built on truth.
- Emotionally connected to the audiences' wants and needs.
- Created to give a unique advantage to our client's business.
- Developed with a look and feel that is original, distinct and best in category.
- Durable and long-lasting.
- A reflection of our client at their best.
- A source of energy for our client's company.
- Improving as many people's days as possible.

# Where Innovations Get Fully Baked



# The Combo<sup>®</sup> Agenda



For our clients,  
we seek to  
provide best-in-  
class services  
that fulfill their  
ambitions.

For us, we  
hope to use  
their success  
and patronage  
as an engine  
to achieve an  
agenda of  
our own.

# Our Beliefs

We crave differences and demand respect.

We democratize growth and create opportunities.

We strive to be best-in-class while seeking to always support each other.

As we grow, we will maintain integrity to pursue a mass effect.

# The Purpose of Combo<sup>©</sup>

To be a nurturing organization filled with opportunities, education and accountability.

# The Everyday Mission

To combine logic and style to create the world's best services, products and brands for our clients.

# A Culture of Teaching:



We believe in nurturing young talent so we can help start careers and create work that benefits from diverse points of view.

A commitment to mentorship is a requisite for leadership.

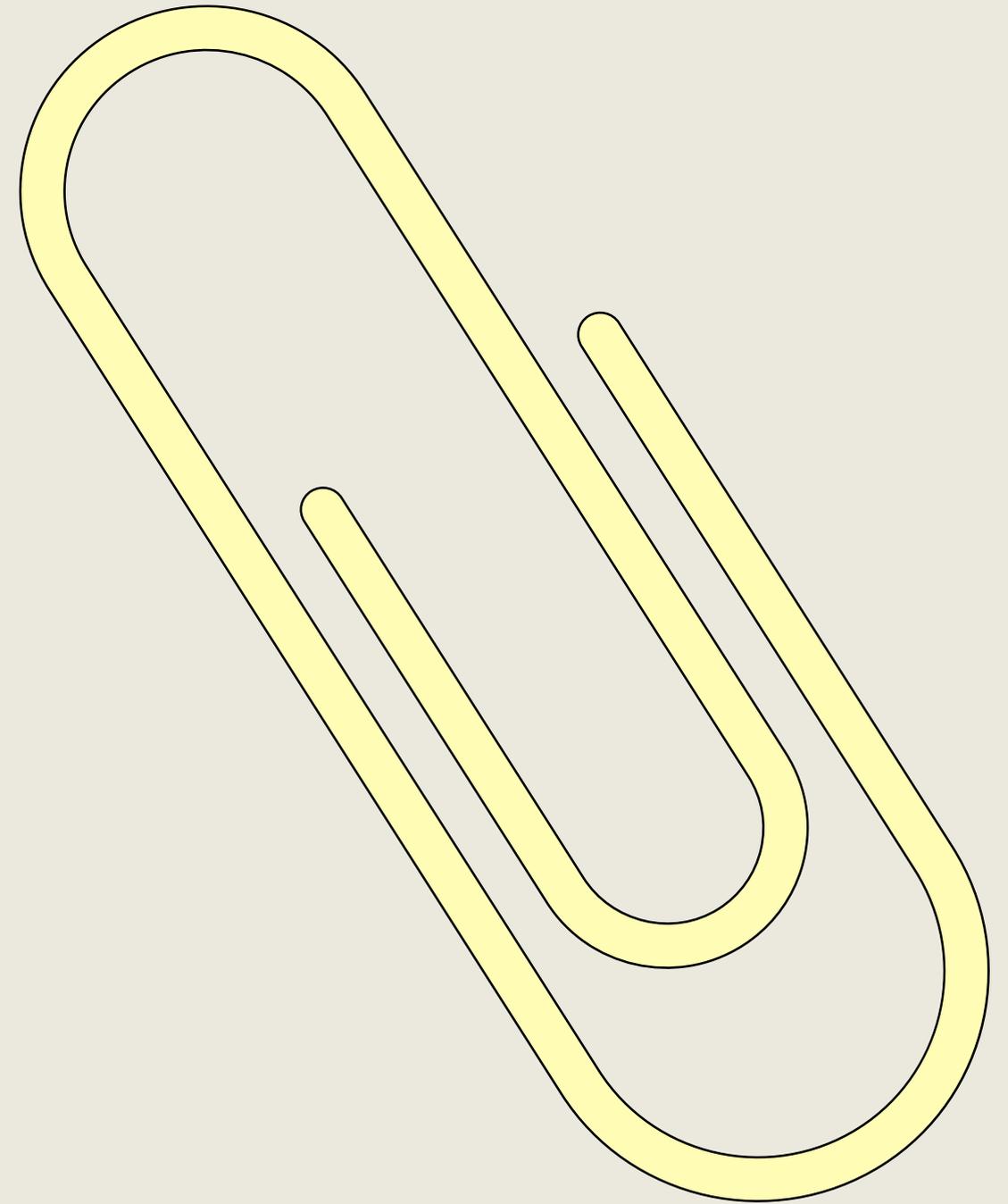
Curiosity and a desire to learn are requisites for getting hired.

# One Foundational Partnership:

Combo© has a long established relationship with Scope Of Work (SOW), a talent development agency for young BIPOC creatives that establishes equity in the creative industry. SOW supports young BIPOC creatives ages 17-24 years old, with a priority on NYC natives.

The Combo©-SOW partnership began at the inception of both companies, when the SOW model came to life in a ground-up effort to build out the teams at Combo©. A core ambition of this relationship is to create a feeder system of new talent entering the industry, supported by a structure of mentoring, on-the-job education and clear pathways to career advancement.

# Combo<sup>®</sup> Culture Dos and Don'ts



# Do

- Use respectful language.
- Give constructive feedback.
- Put people above projects.
- Be a sponge. Operate in learning mode, soaking up new knowledge from everywhere.
- Be a sieve. Filter down and share what you know.
- Be rational and objective.
- Leave room for others to speak, especially on Zoom/Hangouts.
- Hold everyone accountable, including managers and clients.
- Remember this is just a job.

Do

not

- Use language to demean. Also, we don't ever yell at each other.
- Tear down people's ideas.
- Plow ahead on a project if someone needs to talk.
- Be lazy in your thinking and think there's only your way.
- See teaching and explaining as waste of time or annoying.
- Be subjective or combative.
- Talk until the buzzer, especially on Zoom/Hangouts.
- Assume the conversation isn't worth having.

# Growth at Combo<sup>©</sup>

Combo<sup>©</sup> as an organization has been designed to provide opportunities and facilitate growth for its employees. For all employees, Combo<sup>©</sup> prioritizes internal promotions and long-term retention so that as the business grows, we all grow.

# Annual Review & Peer Feedback Loop

Annual reviews happen in June and are a chance for employees and their manager(s) to review performance over the past year and discuss what's working, areas for improvement, salary increases and promotions. To guide the discussion, both the employee and their manager(s) will fill out a review form in advance. This document will be added to each subsequent year to track performance. The accompanying peer feedback loop gathers feedback for and from each employee and is shared (anonymously) during the annual review. This loop supports Combo©'s overarching goal to foster a highly collaborative workplace culture by building strong working relationships across the organization.

# Career Growth Paths

Each department has a slightly unique growth path, charted on the following pages. Expectations and criteria for promotion can be found in the job description for each role. These paths and job descriptions should be used to anchor all career growth conversations.

# Growth Path For Client Services

Managing Director

Group Client Partners

Client Partners

Project Directors

Project Managers

Support PMs

PM Fellows & Interns

# Growth Path For Brand Strategists

Head of Strategy

Strategy Directors

Senior Brand Strategists

Brand Strategists

Strategy Fellows & Interns

# Growth Path For Design Strategists

Head of Strategy

Strategy Directors

Senior Design  
Strategists

Researchers

Design  
Strategists

Strategy Fellows & Interns

# Growth Path For Designers

Head of Design

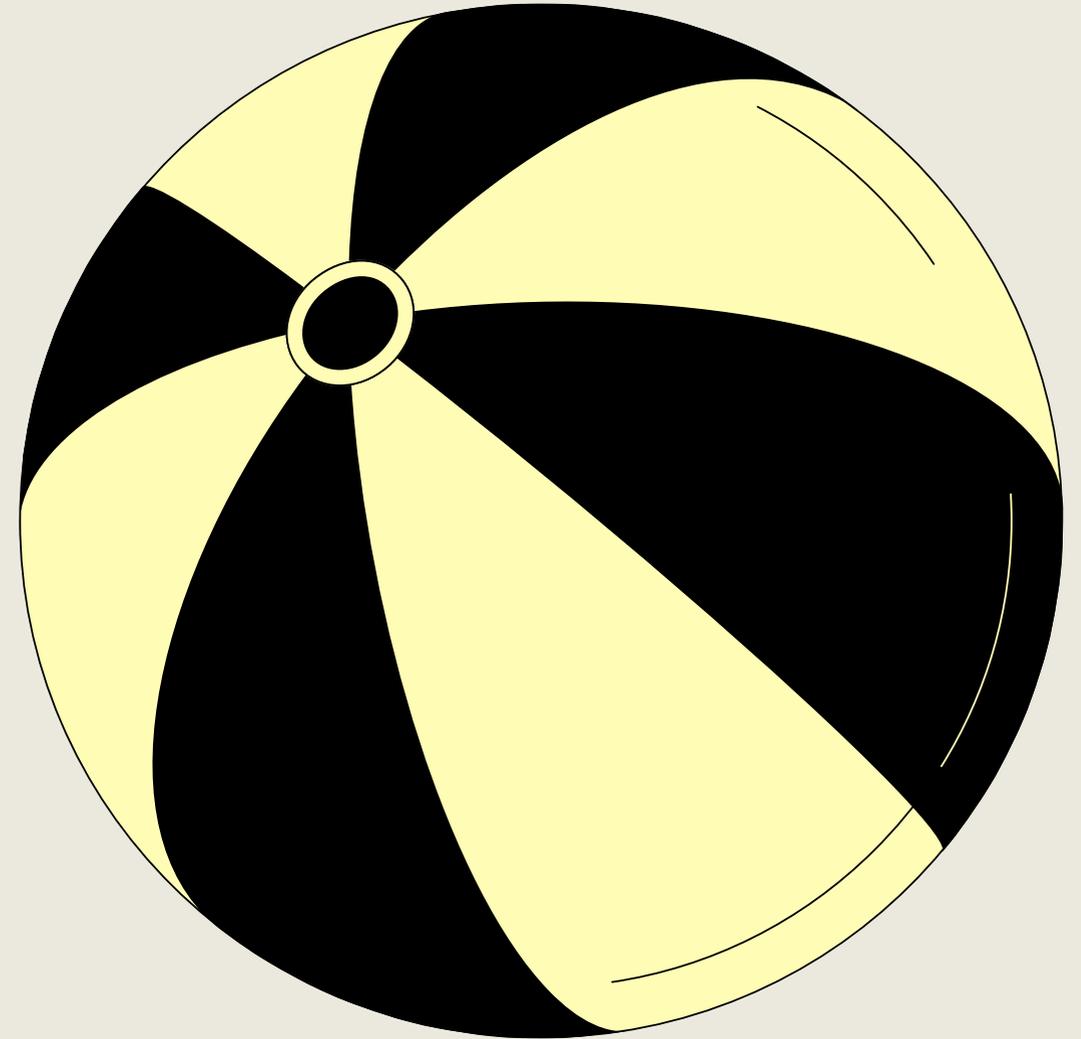
Design Directors

Senior Graphic  
Designers

Graphic Designers

Design Fellows & Interns

# Benefits



# Benefits Overview

Combo© offers a comprehensive benefits package to employees. This package includes medical, dental and vision plan options so people can choose the health benefits that are right for them. Health benefits include free membership to One Medical, access to physical and mental telehealth services, FSA and HSA accounts, supplemental life insurance and short and long-term disability plans. Combo© also offers, and contributes to, an employee 401k plan through Betterment and offers generous Family Leave and PTO benefits.

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