BRAND STRATEGY · 2.0 · JUNE 2026

Brand Strategy 2.0

From a brand strategy we build and hand over, to a self-serve process the brand moves through. What the Adam Lurie and Steve Barth builds taught us, the model it points to, and where it goes next.

The arc

01 **The Shift** — Why the brand strategy is changing shape, what discovery taught us, and the proof from two live builds.

02 **The Model** — Brand Strategy 2.0 as a self-serve, guided process. How it flows, how the why leads every step, and how it still exports as the deck.

03 **The Engine** — The new layer. A structured way to define a core methodology, and the pipeline that turns it into content the system can write.

// One thread runs through it: show the how and why behind every call, and keep only what is load-bearing.

Today, the strategy is something *we hand over.*

The current brand strategy is strong and considered. But it is a one-way artifact. We do the thinking, lock it into a deck, and deliver a conclusion. The client receives the answer rather than moving through the reasoning that produced it, and the document goes quiet the moment it lands.

e.g. A finished PDF is the end of our process. It was never built to be the start of theirs.

// The deck is excellent at presenting a conclusion. It cannot be moved through, questioned, or refined live.

What the work taught us

WHAT WE SAW	WHAT IT MEANS
A strategy that plays back what the client said reads like a transcript.	→ The value is not the summary. It is the why behind each call, and the case for why it will land. That reasoning is the product.
A static deck is a conclusion, not a process.	→ The strategy should be something a brand moves through: recapping discovery, weighing each choice, and arriving at the north star themselves.
Hand-building every deck from scratch does not scale.	→ It wants to be a self-serve product, the way Discovery OS is. The structure is repeatable. Only the content changes.

// Do not stop at the finding. Each one points to a change in how the strategy gets built.

Two builds proved the model

Adam Lurie and Steve Barth were both built on the why-driven format, where every recommendation carries its reasoning and its impact. Both landed with the client. And both share a structural tell worth noticing.

Adam Lurie

FOUNDER & LEADERSHIP COACH

Positioned on good fuel and the company only you can build. The whole strategy ladders back to one named idea.

Steve Barth

WRITER · CONSTRAINED SYSTEMS THINKING

Positioned on Constrained Systems Thinking and the Constraint Engine. The content flows from the framework, not from the person.

> In both, a named methodology sits at the center, and the content ladders out from it. That is the pattern Brand Strategy 2.0 is built to make repeatable.

BRAND STRATEGY 2.0

A self-serve process that recaps the discovery, positions the north star, and shows *the why behind every decision.*

claude.ai/public/artifacts/c830b610-b0d6-4fad-b441-68e90fcd111a →

A guided journey, in five phases

It opens on who you are building for, then walks one module at a time through the same five phases as the deck. Twenty-three steps, in order, with a progress rail the whole way.

01
Foundation
The tension, what discovery surfaced, and the opening.

02
Audience
Mindset before stage or title. The avatars.

03
Positioning & Ethos
The position, the statement, the ownable message.

04
Expression
Voice, tone, and the messaging architecture.

05
Content & Activation
Pillars, channels, roadmap, and trajectory.

// Same architecture as the deck. The difference is that you move through it, instead of receiving it.

The why leads. The input follows.

Every module opens the same way. First the thinking behind this part of the strategy, and what makes a strong answer. Only then do you shape it. The reasoning is not a footnote tucked in a side panel. It is the thing that drives each step.

STEP 11 · THE OWNABLE MESSAGE

What story do they own?

THE THINKING BEHIND THIS CALL

Leading with the symptom works because people feel it long before they can name it. Naming it first makes the brand the one that finally did.

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

When the reasoning leads, the user understands the strategy instead of just owning a file. They can defend it, and they can extend it.

WHY IT'S IMPACTFUL

A brand that understands its own why stays consistent long after the engagement ends. That is what makes the work hold.

It still exports as the deck

Nothing about the deliverable is lost. When the process is done, it produces the branded Arcbound strategy deck on the way out. The PDF becomes an output of the work, not the medium for doing it.

THE BUILD
Self-serve process

→

THE OUTPUT
Branded PDF deck

// The deck does not go away. It stops being the only thing we deliver.

The next layer: name the methodology

The strongest personal brands are built on a named way of thinking that is theirs. We give the user a structured way to define it: the core idea, the vocabulary it owns, and the shape of how it works. This is the most valuable thing the strategy can produce.

e.g. Steve has Constrained Systems Thinking. Adam has good fuel, and Performance equals Potential minus Interference.

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

A defined methodology is the most ownable asset a brand has. It turns scattered content into one body of work that ladders to a single idea.

WHY IT'S IMPACTFUL

It gives the brand a spine to think and publish from, and it is the exact input the content engine needs to write in their voice.

THE ENGINE

From methodology to the page, with the discovery carried the whole way.

INPUT

Discovery & uploads

Everything Nova read across the connected sources, plus what they gave us.

→

DEFINE

Core methodology

The named idea and the vocabulary it owns. The keystone of the brand.

→

DERIVE

Content topics

Drawn from the methodology, so the topics are theirs, not invented.

→

PRODUCE

The writing

Drafted with the memory of discovery and uploads, processized into the work.

// The methodology is the keystone. It is what connects the brand strategy to the content engine.

Add only what is load-bearing

There is a real risk here. The more we add to the strategy, the more there is to break or muddle. So the discipline is the same one our best clients teach: keep only the parts that hold the system up. We streamline to what carries weight, and we keep the how and why visible at every step.

Removing the load-bearing parts does not make a process freer. It makes it fragile.

WHY WE RECOMMEND IT

A lean process with the reasoning intact is stronger than a feature-rich one a user gets lost inside.

WHY IT'S IMPACTFUL

It protects the quality bar as the product scales, and keeps every build legible to the person going through it.

Where this goes next

Pierce has been a huge help mapping what an interactive, fluid brand strategy could feel like, what gets streamlined, and how it exports as a deck. He has mapped a first version, and will keep mapping it out.

01 **Hand the model to Tim and Baseplate** for the production build.

02 **Build the methodology module,** and the recap of discovery into a clear north star.

03 **Wire the two connections:** export to the branded deck, and methodology into content topics and the writing engine.

Working map · claude.ai/public/artifacts/c830b610-b0d6-4fad-b441-68e90fcd111a →

Great strategy isn’t handed over. *It’s arrived at.*