



## Mick Mahoney

### AUTHOR

Most organisations now ask for innovation more loudly than at any point in the last two decades. They also produce less of it than they used to. Risk aversion and the consensus politics of polite teams quietly close down the conditions in which original ideas form. Leaders keep asking for creative breakthroughs, but the operating habits of the business reward exactly the opposite.

Mick Mahoney is a Cannes Grand Prix-winning creative director and author who helps organisations recover the creative capability they have lost to risk aversion and process discipline.

## Mick Mahoney's 2026 Biography

### Why organisations work with Mick Mahoney

- His framework treats creativity as a recoverable organisational capability. *The Creative Nudge* applies behavioural science to retrain how teams generate ideas, through small repeatable steps that work in regulated, risk-averse environments where standard creativity training fails.
- He has been Chief Creative Officer at Ogilvy UK, Havas Worldwide London, and RKCR/Y&R, featuring on *Campaign's* annual top creative directors list at all three. Senior buyers booking him get a practitioner with C-suite operating experience inside global holding companies.
- He has commercial proof that creativity moves numbers. At Ogilvy he turned a 35% revenue decline into a 70% increase by winning twelve new business pitches in twelve months, anchored on a shared creative direction.
- His written work is reference material in the field. *The Creative Nudge* has been translated into multiple languages and ranks among the best creative thinking books; *The Complete Creative Director* is the first comprehensive manual for the role, published by BIS Publishers.

### Biography highlights

- Cannes Grand Prix winner for Stella Artois and One Show Best in Show winner for Johnnie Walker
- Former Chief Creative Officer at Ogilvy UK, Havas Worldwide London, and RKCR/Y&R
- Co-author of *The Creative Nudge* (Laurence King, 2021) with Kevin Chesters and author of *The Complete Creative Director* (BIS Publishers, 2025)
- Chairman of the D&AD Film Jury, Cannes Lion film judge, and D&AD Black Pencil judge

### AVAILABLE FOR

- After Dinner Engagement
- Speaking

### MICK'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Creativity
- Culture Transformation
- Future Skills
- Leadership
- Marketing & Branding

### LANGUAGES: English

- Holder of 16 Cannes Lions, 32 D&AD Pencils, and over 150 industry awards across his career
- Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts; author of *The Guardian's Creativity Masterclass* and a TED talk on the misinterpretation of forensic science

## Biography

Most organisations now ask for innovation more loudly than at any point in the last two decades. They also produce less of it than they used to. The cause is structural. Risk aversion and the consensus politics of polite teams quietly close down the conditions in which original ideas form.

Mick Mahoney has spent thirty years working at the point where creative ambition meets commercial reality. He has been Chief Creative Officer at Ogilvy UK, Havas Worldwide London, and RKR/Y&R, with a place on *Campaign's* annual top creative directors list at all three. At Ogilvy he turned a 35% revenue decline into a 70% increase by winning twelve new business pitches in twelve months.

His books treat creativity as a discipline that can be recovered with practice. *The Creative Nudge*, co-written with Kevin Chesters, applies behavioural science to creative practice through small repeatable steps that survive risk-averse cultures. *The Complete Creative Director*, published by BIS Publishers in 2025, is the first comprehensive manual for the role.

His campaign work has shaped the brand identities of Stella Artois, Johnnie Walker, Vodafone, and Land Rover. He holds 16 Cannes Lions, 32 D&AD Pencils, and over 150 industry awards. He has chaired the D&AD Film Jury and written *The Guardian's Creativity Masterclass*. He now runs M Creative Industries from London, advising boards and leadership teams in regulated and traditional industries on how to put creativity back into the operating system.

## Key speaking topics

- Creativity as an organisational capability
- Creative leadership and creative direction
- Behavioural science applied to creative practice
- Risk aversion and the loss of creative culture
- Brand and advertising effectiveness
- Resilience and adaptive thinking under accelerating change

## Ideal for

- CMOs and brand leaders rebuilding creative confidence inside marketing and communications teams
- CHROs, L&D directors, and executive development leads embedding creativity into leadership development
- Innovation directors and transformation leads inside regulated or traditional industries that struggle to differentiate
- Boards and executive teams whose growth strategy depends on differentiation but whose operating habits favour caution

## Audience outcomes

- A behavioural method, drawn from *The Creative Nudge*, for restoring creative thinking inside risk-averse teams
- A practitioner's view of how creative leadership actually operates inside

global agencies and the world's largest brands, drawn from CCO roles at Ogilvy, Havas, and RKCR/Y&R

- A working definition of creativity as a commercial capability, separable from artistic talent or agency-style creative theatre
- Permission, with evidence, to back ideas that feel uncomfortable inside conservative organisations
- Direct answers to the question senior leaders most often ask: how do we get more creative output from people who say they aren't creative?

## **Mick Mahoney's 2026 talks & topics**

### **Unlearn Uncreativity**

The case that everyone is creative by default, with practical methods for recovering the creative thinking that adult life and corporate environments have eroded.

#### **Key takeaways:**

- The cultural and psychological forces that suppress creativity from childhood onwards
- A small set of behavioural nudges audiences can use the next day to restore divergent thinking
- Why "I'm not creative" is a learned response, not an accurate self-assessment

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### **Creativity for Boring Businesses**

A working method for embedding creative practice inside organisations whose work does not consider itself creative.

#### **Key takeaways:**

- Why creativity is a commercial capability, not a marketing department asset
- Examples of regulated and traditional industries where creative thinking has changed market position
- Specific operating changes that move risk-averse teams toward original thinking

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### **Different. The New Normal.**

A method for building resilience and adaptive thinking into daily practice, so that responding to change becomes a habit rather than a crisis response.

#### **Key takeaways:**

- Why resilience is a daily practice, not a recovery skill
  - Behavioural nudges for keeping perspective fresh in stable senior roles
  - How to make adaptive thinking routine rather than exceptional
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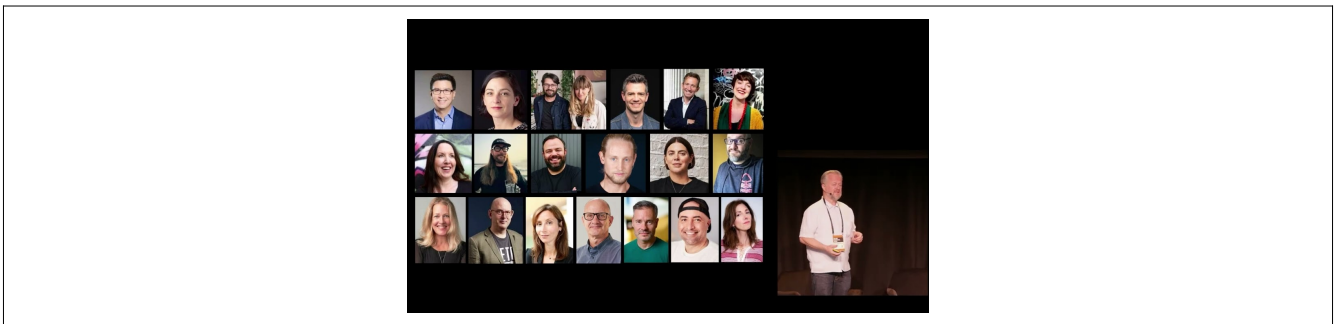
## I Love Unreasonable People

An argument, drawing on George Bernard Shaw, that organisations underestimate the cost of consensus and the value of the people prepared to push against it.

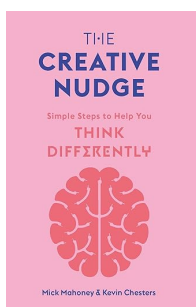
### Key takeaways:

- How politeness and the social cost of disagreement suppress the contrarian thinking that produces breakthroughs
- A framework for distinguishing productive disagreement from disruption
- Specific leadership behaviours that protect the unreasonable thinkers organisations need

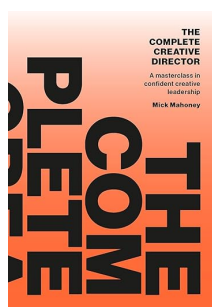
## Mick Mahoney's Videos



## MICK'S LATEST BOOKS



**The Creative Nudge: Simple Steps to Help You Think Differently**



**The Complete Creative Director: A masterclass in confident creative leadership**