



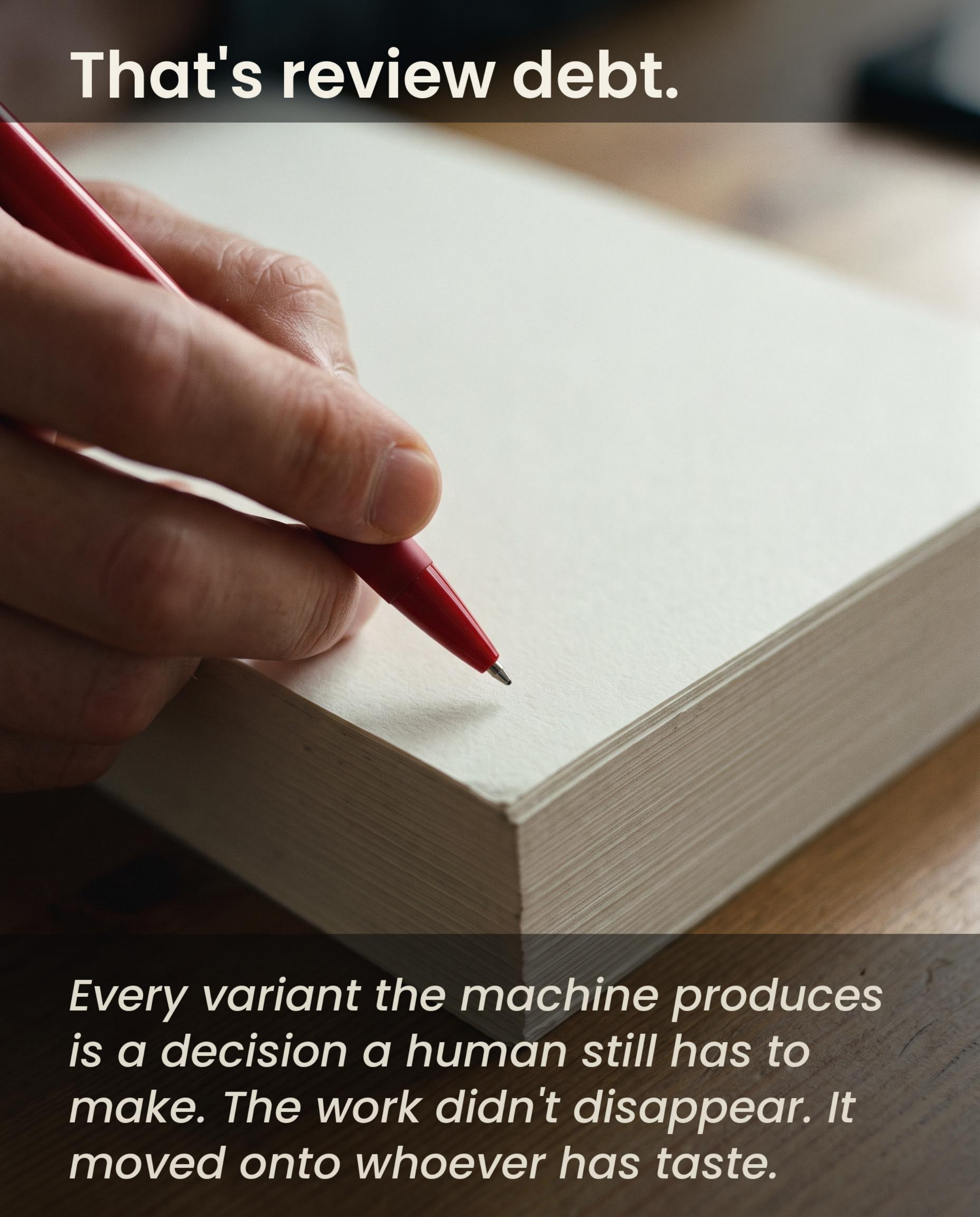
Six hundred and
ninety-seven concepts.
Six survived.

*One retailer's brief. Ten rounds of AI
iteration to get to 697. Ten more
rounds of culling to reach sixty. Then
a human took it to six.*

A dimly lit office environment. In the foreground, a desk lamp with a warm, yellow glow is positioned on the left. A wire basket filled with a large stack of papers sits on the desk. The background is blurred, showing various office equipment and furniture, creating a sense of a busy but quiet workspace.

Making things stopped being the hard part.

Deloitte found 41% lower production costs among brands running GenAI in marketing operations. Cheaper production doesn't reduce decisions. It multiplies them.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a red pen, poised to write on a blank page of an open book. The book is resting on a wooden surface. The lighting is soft and focused on the pen and the page.

That's review debt.

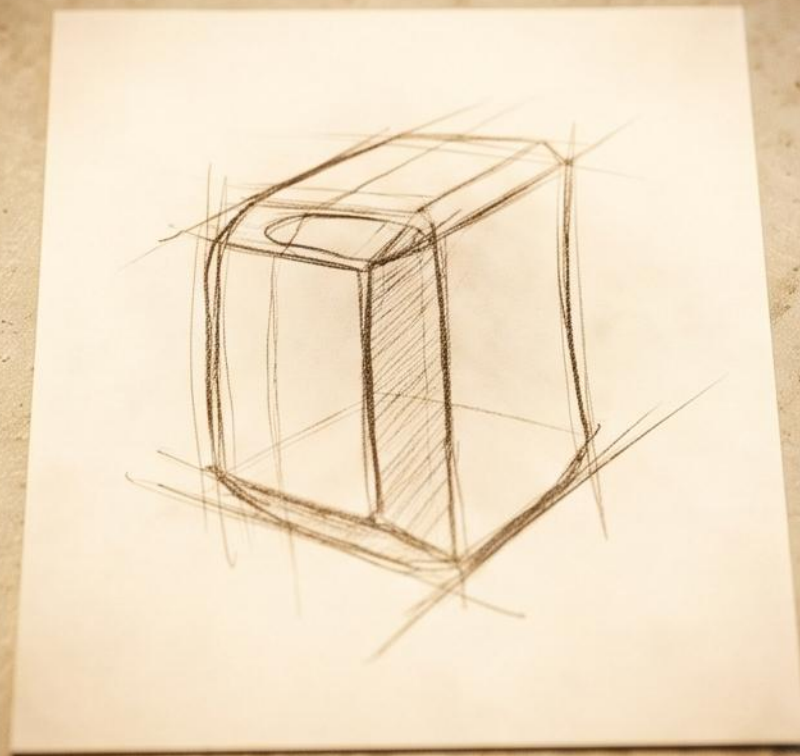
Every variant the machine produces is a decision a human still has to make. The work didn't disappear. It moved onto whoever has taste.



Sixty options is not sixty choices.

Trained on everything, the machine returns to the middle. Sixty variants of the average are still the average. Volume feels like range. It isn't.

I started outside the brief.



The spec was the floor, not the frame. Cultural signals. Ideas stolen from unrelated disciplines. AI only recombines what you point it at — and where you point it is a taste call, made before a single prompt.

Then I judged everything twice.

Once as the retailer: margin, feasibility, shelf. Once as the person who hands over the money. The retailer lens tells you what ships. Only the customer lens tells you what gets chosen. Most concepts pass one and die under the other.

697 finished renders. I still
built one by hand.



*Not nostalgia. Each render held a
fragment of the answer and none
held all of it. So I made a physical
sample blending the gist of them.
Taste isn't picked from a menu. It's
articulated.*



Six went to the room.
Buyers went to the
handmade one.

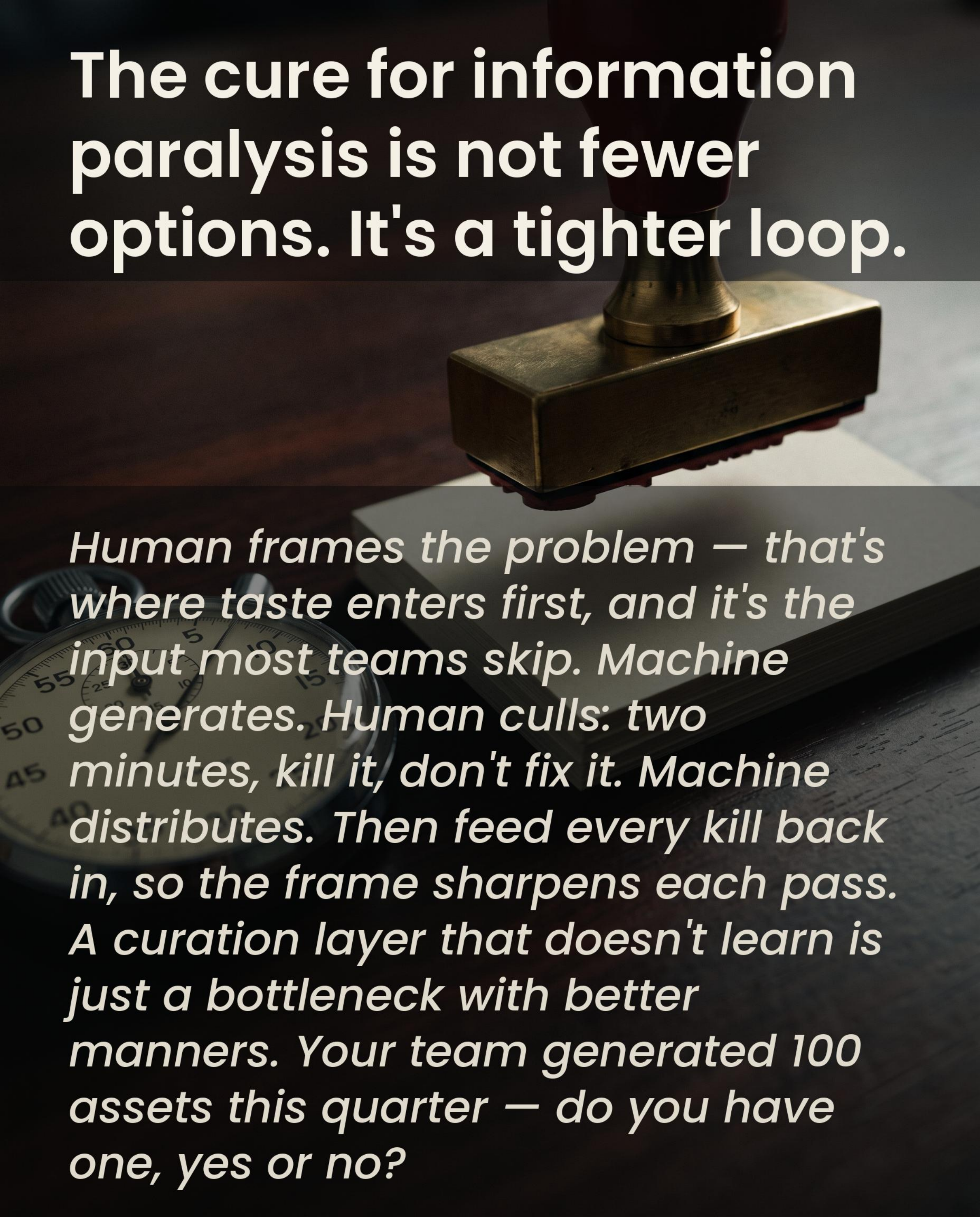
*It wasn't the most polished thing on
the table. It was the only one that
had been framed, judged twice, and
built by the same person.*



Taste is not decoration. It runs at both ends.

“If you do not have taste, the tool drives you instead of the other way around.”

— Journal of Marketing Education, 2026



The cure for information paralysis is not fewer options. It's a tighter loop.

Human frames the problem — that's where taste enters first, and it's the input most teams skip. Machine generates. Human culls: two minutes, kill it, don't fix it. Machine distributes. Then feed every kill back in, so the frame sharpens each pass. A curation layer that doesn't learn is just a bottleneck with better manners. Your team generated 100 assets this quarter — do you have one, yes or no?