

CANDICE LAXTON

**Creative big-picture professional, proven leader, and creative problem solver**

**SKILL-SET SUMMARY:**

My super-power is translating business, brand, marketing objectives, and organizational values into key differentiators that drive tangible mission driven deliverables; building awareness, equity, and a strong marketing presence.

My expertise is in my ability to establish the creative vision for a brand, an idea, or a project, and then manifest that vision through creative problem solving, strategic thinking, and deliberate design.

As creative director, brand strategist I am able to maintain a cohesive voice and brand expression of a project, manage the entire creative process, as well as mentor and guide the creative team consisting of art directors, copywriters, content strategists, graphic artists, and Web/UI/UX designers.

**Skill Set Summary:**

- Creative, analytical, and strategic thinker.
- Expert at distilling down abstract business concepts and client needs into refined, elegant creative solutions.
- Copywriter and visual content creator – creative/art director/web/graphic designer.
- Ability to pitch ideas confidently and present the creative vision clearly to clients, as well as communicate the creative concept and vision to the creative development team.
- Strong supervisory, people management, and leadership skills and the experience to effectively lead, inspire, hire, and develop, the creative team.
- Ask smart questions, take risks, and champion new ideas.
- Brand strategy and user research experience expert.
- Lead generation/qualification.
- Project management skills, able to establish budgets, timelines and manage the client service relationship.
- Ability to build an integrated communication strategy that delivers a cohesive message across digital and traditional channels to engage audiences, build and sustain trust and provide a positive brand experience.
- Advanced skills working with marketing tools, platforms, and the Adobe Creative Cloud
- Degree in visual communications advertising.

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

### **Pattern Ranch – Self-employed**

September 2021 -- Present, Portland, Oregon

Creative/Art Director, Brand Strategist

The Pattern Ranch creates illustration, and surface pattern design for a broad range of products, including textiles, home furnishings, fashion, UX/UI, giftware, and stationery. The cowgirls love to collaborate, and we welcome all commissions, and custom freelance projects. Our cowgirl specialty is working collaboratively with your ranch to wrangle full design technical repeats, colorways, coordinates, line extensions, or custom illustrations.

### **Candice Laxton – Self-employed**

August 2017 -- Present, Portland, Oregon

Brand Marketing Specialist, Creative/Art Director, UX Researcher

As a brand marketing, and creative consultant, I help startups to Fortune 500 companies come up with creative ways to execute on their strategy and deliver marketing results. As a generalist and Jill of all trades I provide strategic marketing leadership, guidance, and council on all marketing activities, by translating business objectives, and research into actionable marketing/advertising strategies and creative execution. My work encompasses traditional, and digital media, and is designed to generate top-of-mind awareness, sales, brand differentiation and a strong market presence.

### **Mercy Corps – Encore Fellow**

May 2019 – January 2020 Portland, Oregon

Brand Strategist, Creative Director, UX Researcher

Internal Communications and Knowledge Management Fellow

While employed with Mercy Corps as a Fellow, I was tasked with working with the ICKM team to help stakeholders prioritize creative communications and projects, implement internal brand strategy and online learning, maximize project management success, and drive best practices and standards to achieve department and organizational goals.

### **Icon Time Systems - Subsidiary of Paychex Corporation**

August 2011 -- Present, Beaverton, Oregon

Brand Marketing Specialist, Creative/Art Director, UX Designer

As the "marketing department", I was responsible for the overall marketing, creative and advertising efforts of Icon Time Systems. I provided strategic leadership, guidance, and council on all marketing activities within the organization and with outside professional services firms. Working internally with management I drove a broad range of marketing initiatives including, website initiatives, lead generation, advertising, brand experience, public relations, social networking, product development, UI design, web/graphic/interactive design, multimedia tools and the design/production of print collateral.

### **TacticalPoint Media**

August 2008—March 2010 Beaverton, Oregon

VP Brand Strategist, Managing Creative Director

TacticalPoint Media was an integrated cross-media marketing firm that created personalized, variable data marketing campaigns that helped companies boost lead generation and cost effectively brand, market, and sell products and services to their customers. Responsibilities included the management of day-to-day business operations, creative direction, brand strategy,

competitive analysis/strategy, copywriting, project management and client services. Responsible for creative and sales presentations to clients, new business development, strategic planning, and proposal generation.

### **Abacus Design Communications**

December 2001—August 2008 Mountain View, CA

Managing Principal, Creative Director, Brand Strategist

Managing partner and co-founder of Abacus Design Communications, a strategic brand and visual communications firm. Responsibilities include the management of day-to-day business operations, creative direction, brand strategy development, project management and client services. Responsible for creative and sales presentations to clients, strategic planning, and proposal generation. As managing principal I built and mentored cross-function teams, wrote competitive analysis/strategies, provided creative leadership and oversaw implementation. Skilled in contract negotiations, client acquisition, art direction, project management and design process administration.

### **Luminant Worldwide**

July 1999 —March 2001 San Francisco, CA

Delivery Principal, Senior Creative Director, Brand Strategist

Responsible for the strategic development of online branding and advertising, retail user experience, and e-commerce web site development. Senior level project management and delivery responsibilities; including team building, estimating and proposal generation. Management of projects with cross-functional teams including business strategists, creatives, and new media engineers. Accountable for managing creative staff on accounts and fostering professional development. Responsible for client development and presentations to clients to clearly articulate strategy behind creative concepts. As a project and delivery principal, I communicated concept and strategic direction to art directors, copywriters, designers, and photographers. Consistently created work that was exceptional, effective, and strategic, as well as on time, and on budget.

### **Adobe Systems**

May 1998—June 1999 San Jose, CA

Content Team Manager and Creative Director for the Adobe Content Team.

Responsible for the creative/art direction of software content development and acquisition for Adobe consumer software products. Accountable as lead project/creative manager directing cross-functional teams of artists, designers, production managers, copywriters, developers, outside vendors, product engineers and QA managers. Wrote and developed team process and technical specs for template and content development. Responsibilities included cost center control, project estimating, milestone setting and team building. Art directed and developed collection/template assets, managed in-house content developers, and outside vendor relationships.

### **Microsoft**

January 1997—December 1997 Redmond, WA

Senior Art Director and Creative Lead for the Microsoft Media Store

Content acquisition and creative development. Responsible for content acquisition and development, project management and supervision of creative staff. Built successful vendor and client relationships. Developed creative strategy and art directed the selection and visual review

of 25,000 media assets for the Microsoft content collection. Worked with team leads in supporting key wording and meta-data, file naming and indexing conventions. Wrote and developed team process and technical specs for template and content development. Responsible for content archiving and database management, as well product localization. Responsible for the art/creative direction of vector, web and photo collections found in Microsoft Publisher, Greetings Workshop, Office 2000, Home Essentials and Clip Gallery Live.

**Education:**

University of Oregon: theater, speech, secondary education.

Seattle Central: A.S., graphic design, visual communications, and advertising.

Portland State University, theater, speech secondary education.

Stanford University, school of humanities & sciences, continuing studies, creative writing.

UCSC, continuing studies, creative writing, and advertising.

**Community Service:**

Gifted Wishes

Teachers Brigade