

Darren J. Ryan

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Visionary Executive Creative Strategist with a Proven Track Record of Delivering Innovative Brand Solutions

As a dynamic executive leader with 20 years of experience, I excel in crafting strategic, innovative solutions for both internal and external brands. My expertise lies in creating engaging brand experiences and driving results-oriented strategies. I have a proven track record in leading, mentoring, and cultivating multidisciplinary, high-performance creative teams, always striving for excellence and growth.

- Extensive and diverse experience building, managing, and mentoring cross-functional creative and digital teams to thrive and deliver optimum innovative solutions based on the specific, strategic needs of the consumer and organization.
- Exceptional ability to define and execute creative vision proven to engage your customers and enable successful marketing ROI through cost-effective marketing, and innovative programs.
- Consistent successes in building strategic, innovative, and creative solutions that can establish and revitalize the creative vision and creative direction of your brand and your consumer's needs.

Core Experiences + Skills

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|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Visual Design | • Creative Strategy | • Concepting | • In-House Agency Creation |
| • Copywriting | • User Experience | • Ideation | • In-House Agency Dev. |
| • Video Production | • User Interface Design | • Workshop Facilitation | • In-House Leadership |
| • Web Design | • Customer Experience | • Campaign Strategy | • Creative Operations |
| • Mobile Design | • Augmented Reality | • Campaign Development | • X-Functional Leadership |
| • Event Production | • Virtual Reality | • Prompt Crafting | • Creative Leadership |
| • Storytelling | • Brand Development | • Generative AI | • People Coaching |
| • Social Media | • Brand Identity | • Trend Monitoring | • Mentorship |
| • Interactive Design | • Brand Strategy | • Omni-Channel Strategy | • Team Building |
| • Interaction Design | • Brand Platforms | • Emerging Technologies | • Team Development |

Key Industry Experience: Retail, CPG, Media, Non-Profit, Hospitality, Technology, Marketing Services, DTC, eCommerce

Advanced Leadership Experience: In-house and Agency (various sized teams, remote and onsite)

Professional History

Digital Creative Labs In-House Agency Consulting and Executive Creative Director July 2018 through Present

Digital Creative Labs is my in-house agency consulting and creative strategy business.

- Developing impactful strategic plans for brands and creative teams to incorporate AI into current work streams and augment human creativity and productivity.
- Lead or provided the structure for the branding process (workshops, messaging, visual, interaction, etc.) and strategy for 10+ brands laying the foundational infrastructure and architecture for brand success.
- Developed a fully fleshed out framework for branding with delivery templates to enable a streamlined and scalable end-to-end process.

System Soft Technologies Head of Creative August 2020 through Present

I lead the creative strategy department, which includes a full range of creative and branding services, including interaction, design, content, copywriting, and video production. My focus was on rebuilding the processes and structure of the team and service offerings. My extensive experience with the creative process allowed me to develop/build a strong creative infrastructure.

- Led a team of ten creative strategists, designers, and video professionals, supporting external brands and agency clients.
- Successfully introduced a creative project management platform, improving efficiency and completing implementation 1/3 quicker than planned.
- Enhanced team efficiency through extensive process development, enabling quicker delivery of stronger creative that aligns with the client's objectives.
- Managed multiple projects and clients, leading a high-performance creative team to complete 1341 projects in 2022, a 168% increase.
- Provided individualized plans and support for over 40 hours of annual, personalized training and coaching for each team member.
- Led creative strategy to establish a revenue-generating in-house agency model to transition from in-house focused to external creative support.

Sparxoo Digital Agency Director, Brand Storytelling + Creative Director May 2018 through June 2020

I led the Storytelling Center of Excellence, which includes a full range of creative agency services, including interaction, branding, design, content, copywriting, and video production. My focus was on rebuilding the team and service offerings and exercising my extensive experience with the creative process to develop/build the creative infrastructure.

- Lead the branding process (workshops, messaging, visual, interaction, etc.) and strategy for 20+ direct-to-consumer brands laying the foundation for brand success.
- Lead the creative strategy and planning to help secure the agency a 75%-win rate for RFPs in 2019 that continued into the first quarter of 2020.

- Developed and implemented critical, creative processes and best practices to improve team workflows, increase creative output by 26%.
- Raised the bar for creative excellence through caring, personalized mentorship, skills development, and creative direction, resulting in a 125% increase in award-winning projects.
- Established the importance of creative strategy and creative process to reposition the agency from task-focused to strategic partner for various existing and new clients.

The Coca-Cola Company Director, Coca-Cola Studios June 2016 through January 2018

Led and managed the teams, business models, and services for Coca-Cola Studios. Coca-Cola Studios is The Coca-Cola Company's in-house creative strategy and execution group. Coca-Cola Studios offers a full range of in-house services, including graphic design, presentation design, web design, mobile development, custom interactive development, content development, strategic surveys, video production, meeting & event production, and creative project management.

- Increased overall project volume by 86% and average project size by 181%.
- Consistently increased internal revenue by a minimum of 24% annually (overall revenue growth was 213% increase from 2012 through year-end 2016).
- Led and consulted with architects and builders to design and build new creative studio spaces and cutting-edge video production facilities.
- Continue to drive over 40 hours of training and coaching for each direct report annually, including personalized skills-specific training plans.

The Coca-Cola Company Sr. Manager, Creative Strategy and Execution April 2011 through June 2015

I rebuilt and grew the in-house creative team from a small, under-utilized production resource into a highly creative, strategic, and influential partner. In this role, I created the award-winning, in-house creative agency - Coca-Cola Studios.

- Rebuilt and restructured the in-house creative team to perform at or exceed agency-level quality in a high-pressure, quality-focused, short-timeline environment by developing and executing extensive three and five-year strategic growth plans.
- Added and grew new services such as copywriting, content development, mobile development, virtual and augmented reality, voice design, etc., in addition to coaching and hiring new skill sets to meet the new standards of quality outlined in my planning.
- Designed and launched a successful new video production business model and state-of-the-art video production facility that exceeded expected first-year revenue by 49%.
- Increased client satisfaction ratings in year one by 35% and drove ratings to a sustained level between 81-86% completely satisfied clients.

The Home Depot Sr. Manager, Interactive Content and Blog December 2009 through April 2011

Developed and executed the overarching content strategy for the core homedepot.com eCommerce site and additional sites and properties through managing and developing the interactive content team to create effective and innovative customer-facing content daily.

- Developed and executed the first corporate blogging strategy for Home Depot, creating new revenue streams, generating content daily, and serving as editor-in-chief.
- Built and managed a team of 11 content developers who worked closely with merchandising teams to develop daily interactive, short, and long-form content for homedepot.com.
- Managed the completion of over 2,200 projects, large, small, and everything in between throughout the first 14 months and executed to meet all expectations and exceed them.
- Developed and managed editorial calendars for various forms of content for both daily and weekly promotional launches.
- Teamed with merchants, vendors, and internal clients to create and develop intuitive and interactive customer-facing content from daily promotions to large-scale capital projects.

Benevolink Corporation Head of Marketing and Creative Director April 2003 through November 2009

Managed and directed a staff of designers, artists, copywriters, and marketing specialists, including freelancers. Set the artistic direction and led the creative team to develop and implement design and marketing concepts. Responsibilities include product development, consumer services, corporate strategy, business & nonprofit sales strategy, and marketing programming. Benevolink was a startup in the fullest sense.

- Developed, planned, and coordinated a scalable market launch program proven successful by acquiring over 15% of the consumers and 60% of the nonprofits in the first market launch.
- Designed and implemented various programs for hundreds of retail and service partners resulting in over \$25 million in annual sales transactions resulting in over \$1 million in annual charitable donations.
- Designed scalable and customizable marketing solutions and tools for over 1.2 million nonprofits to learn how to market and build more robust donation channels through the Benevolink platform.
- Initiated, developed, and guided the company through significant core product enhancements, including corporate re-brand, the marketplace concept, product re-launch, new technologies programming, and more, propelling Benevolink into the leader in the charitable marketing coalitions industry.

Visit darrenjryan.com or meetdarrenryan.com for more information.