

RYAN UNDERWOOD

Design Lead | Systems and Brand Strategy | Associate Creative Director

SUMMARY

I've been designing for longer than I care to admit — and I've spent the last decade turning that obsession into systems that actually scale. My sweet spot is where brand strategy, design systems, and cross-functional execution intersect: building frameworks that make teams faster, campaigns more consistent, and brands genuinely recognizable. I lead with clear goals, sweat the details, and believe that great design is less about aesthetics and more about making the right thing obvious.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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WORK EXPERIENCE

Design Lead – Systems & Brand Strategy (Associate Creative Director)

Alight Solutions

2022 - Present

Remote

- ↳ Architected a scalable global design system that unified visual identity across all product lines and marketing surfaces, eliminating inconsistency at scale.
- ↳ Drove a 30% increase in marketing campaign engagement by analyzing user feedback and iterating on brand assets, UI components, and messaging frameworks.
- ↳ Built and maintained asset libraries and governance processes, ensuring brand compliance across distributed teams and external agencies.
- ↳ Partnered with Marketing, Product, Communications, and Technology teams to establish brand and cross-channel design standards, reducing design debt and accelerating cross-team delivery.
- ↳ Developed responsive design strategies for digital campaigns, measurably improving user experience and customer satisfaction scores.

Senior Art Director

CrossCountry Mortgage

2019-2022

Cleveland, OH

- ↳ Led a 10-person creative team to unify branding across digital and print channels, achieving measurable improvement in cross-platform consistency.
- ↳ Designed and implemented a SASS-based design system that streamlined workflows for 40+ designers and reduced redundant production work.
- ↳ Managed large-scale email campaigns aligned to strategic growth initiatives, improving delivery pipelines and engagement metrics.
- ↳ Instituted a structured design review process that shortened feedback cycles and improved on-time project delivery across the team.
- ↳ Produced executive-ready marketing materials and presentations supporting leadership decision-making and business development.

Art Director and Front-End Developer

PERL Mortgage

2016 - 2020

Chicago, IL

- ↳ Owned brand strategy and visual identity for a 500+ person national organization, writing internal brand guidelines adopted company-wide.
- ↳ Built interactive, branded landing pages using Jekyll, HTML/CSS, and JavaScript — improving user engagement and contributing to measurable conversion rate increases.
- ↳ Designed and executed regional marketing campaigns that boosted loan officer engagement and expanded brand visibility across multiple markets.
- ↳ Produced a full suite of marketing collateral that elevated outreach quality and reinforced brand cohesion across channels.

Freelance Art Director & Designer

Various Agencies

2013 - 2016

Chicago, IL

SKILLS

- ↳ Team Leadership & Management
- ↳ Branding & Brand Systems
- ↳ Strategic Design Thinking
- ↳ Web Design
- ↳ Design Systems Development
- ↳ WCAG Compliance
- ↳ Email Marketing
- ↳ Process & Workflow Optimization
- ↳ Funnel Building

TOOLS

- ↳ Figma
- ↳ Illustrator
- ↳ Photoshop
- ↳ Indesign
- ↳ Affinity Suite
- ↳ Miro
- ↳ Pen and paper
- ↳ HTML/CSS

EDUCATION

Illinois Institute of Art – Chicago

Bachelor of Design | 2010 – 2013