

Kaelyn Malkoski

Creative Strategist | Story Designer | User Researcher

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Professional Experience

Independent Brand Designer & Consultant

Chicago, 9/18 - present

Notable clients: The House of Rohl, Kitty and Vibe, Rise Gardens; notable partners: Earle & Company, TBD Innovation

Character | Senior Brand Strategist

San Francisco, 10/17 - 2/19

Notable clients: Focals by North, Saint Haven, LG ThinQ, OLLY, Reebok, Anki

» Led research and executed comprehensive brand strategies for consumer lifestyle brands; collaborated with writers and graphic/UX designers on brand identities and experiences across web, mobile, packaging). Deliverables: research & workshop design and application, positioning, naming, content strategy and creation (copy, narrative, verbal identity system).

- » **Brand strategy, verbal identity & web copy:** Built sustainable, subscription-based clothing brand ecosystem, Saint Haven, via positioning, messaging and web experience.
- » **Positioning:** Identified unique experience for LG's AI assistant, LG ThinQ, that informed its visual design system integrated across all LG smart products and platforms.
- » **Leadership role:** Represented firm at industry events, attended new business meetings.

fuseproject | Design Strategist

San Francisco, 1/17 - 10/17

Notable clients: L'Oréal Group, Diageo

» Working closely with multi-disciplinary teams, designed and executed research, framed insights and crafted compelling stories for clients — tech startups to Fortune 50 companies.

- » **Framework ideation & development:** Created a Fortune 100's retail merchandising strategy for new product portfolio implemented globally in hundreds of flagship, boutique and pop-up stores. Framework to be used as future cornerstone capability.
- » **User research, product ideation & strategy:** Led research to identify market, UX and portfolio brand for a L'Oréal Group-backed makeup coaching tool (app + hardware). Collaborated with designers to ideate and prototype design concepts and product.
- » **Innovation lab:** Conducted international qualitative research (ethnographies, immersions, IDs) to understand markets and determine product concepts for a billion-dollar tech company reinventing its industry with a profitable and socially responsible product portfolio.

VSA Partners | Brand Strategist

Chicago, 8/14 - 10/16

Notable clients: Cargill, BP, Google, Hornitos, Northern Trust, SIEMENS Molecular Imaging

» Created brand and marketing strategies for B2B and B2C brands. Outputs: architecture, research synthesis, positioning, narrative, messaging, naming, customer journeys, workshops.

- » **Research & product strategy:** Led research to identify white space opportunity, messaging and product for financial company with disruptive intent. Research included segmentation, focus groups, concept testing, programmatic in-market test, interviews.
- » **Value proposition toolkit & organization alignment:** Developed framework for Cargill's 150,000+ employees in 70+ countries to craft compelling, data-driven value propositions. Toolkit used as VSA's foundational resource for similar business asks.
- » **Brand narrative:** Developed red-thread narrative to inform external comms for international gas and oil company. Worked with a world-renowned, archetypal psychologist. Research included message testing with global CEOs and Pulitzer Prize winner.

Leo Burnett | Reputation & Communications Strategist

Chicago, 8/13 - 8/14

Notable clients and partners: HuffPost Live, The Chicago Tribune, Always

- » **Thought leadership design & execution:** Activations included #SXLB @HuffPost Live, a co-branded content series on HuffPost Live feat. influencers at 2014 SXSW Interactive, and Humans Being: Sharing, an installation of a Leo Burnett human behavior study.
- » **Research design & copywriting:** Humans Being: Sharing.
- » **Communications strategy for ad campaigns:** Included Emmy-winning #LikeaGirl (Always).

Education

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Graduated with honors, May 2013

- » Bachelor of Arts, major in journalism (reporting), minor in women's studies; GPA: 3.9/4.0.
- » Involvement: Editor of campus magazine Scope; copyeditor at The Daily Tar Heel; events chair of Delta Delta Delta sorority.

Competencies

- » **Strategy:** brand, innovation, design, product, experience, communications.
- » **Research:** qualitative research design, planning, recruitment, facilitation, analysis and synthesis; quantitative familiarity; methodologies include ethnographies, surveys, interviews (stakeholder, small group, in-depth), social listening, focus groups, immersions, segmentation.
- » **Storytelling:** writing, presentation design, copyediting and AP Style.
- » **Project management & collaboration:** scoping, iterative prototyping, cross-disciplinary ideation.

Honors & Awards

- » **Floyd S. Alford Jr. Scholarship**, 2012
Awards outstanding journalistic talent at UNC.
- » **AEJMC's Startup Magazine Award**, 2012
2nd place: National award for a startup magazine, Wabi-Sabi.
- » **David S. Barr Journalism Award**, 2009
Newspaper Guild of America's national award for best published piece by a high schooler.

Internships

- » **E! Online | Editorial**
Los Angeles, 5/12 - 8/12
- » **Marie Claire | Editorial**
New York City, 5/11 - 8/11
- » **Ubiquity Brands | Marketing**
Chicago, 5/10 - 8/10

Tidbits

- » I am a classically trained pianist.
- » (Good) grammar makes me (very) happy.
- » I have lived in each cardinal direction.
- » I like words. Serendipity is my favorite; I like its meaning and the tangible feeling of saying it.