Clay Schmidt

ClaySchmidt00@gmail.com | (941) 448-0156 | www.ClaySchmidtCreative.com/portfolio

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Senior Creative Director & Brand Strategist with 15 years of experience building scalable creative operations, establishing multi-channel brand positioning, and leading cross-functional teams from discovery through global execution. Proven track record across corporate, agency, and independent environments, directing multi-million dollar brand portfolios across SaaS, healthcare, and higher education sectors. Expert at aligning creative vision with business performance to drive revenue, accelerate project delivery, and optimize cross-functional team output.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- **Leadership:** Creative Vision, Cross-Functional Team Leadership, Senior Stakeholder Advisory.
- **Strategy:** Brand Architecture, Campaign Development, Client Discovery & Strategic Roadmapping.
- **Operations:** Scale Architecture, SOP Design, Resource Allocation, Vendor Governance.
- **Design Execution:** UI/UX & Web Design, Video & Motion Direction, Content Framework Development

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ART DIRECTOR | Kudzu Brands — 2021–2025

- **Creative Operations:** Engineered scalable creative architectures and cross-functional workflows across development, product, and content units, reducing turnaround times by 15% and revision cycles by 50%.
- **Executive Leadership:** Served on the core leadership team to shape agency-wide brand standards, direct resource planning, define staffing metrics, and guide executive client selection.
- **Technical Innovation:** Independently developed an AI-driven proprietary prospecting tool to analyze regional web architectures, shortlisting highly qualified leads to directly impact the business pipeline.
- **Talent Optimization:** Directed and mentored a multidisciplinary design team, implementing targeted performance frameworks that reduced time-per-task by 15–20% within 30 days.
- **Brand Strategy:** Spearheaded brand identity development, high-impact campaigns, and UI/UX solutions across healthcare, tech, and e-commerce verticals, increasing stakeholder engagement by 20%.
- **Stakeholder Management:** Orchestrated discovery sessions and defended creative directions to C-suite clients, establishing the agency's strategic positioning during high-stakes presentations.

FREELANCE CREATIVE DIRECTOR & CONSULTANT | CLAY SCHMIDT CREATIVE — 2012–PRESENT

- **Client Portfolio:** Served as the lead strategic advisor and primary executive contact for 100+ multi-sector client relationships over a 13-year period, growing project contracts into multi-year retainers.
- **Team Governance:** Recruited and managed a cross-functional bench of freelance creative talent, photographers, developers, and copywriters while maintaining strict creative quality controls.
- **Identity Systems:** Standardized and enforced end-to-end brand guidelines and digital design playbooks for 100+ unique corporate visual assets and digital footprints.

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

WEB DESIGNER | FLOORFORCE / BROADLOOM — 2019–2020

- **Strategic Initiatives:** Appointed to lead an enterprise-level custom architecture build for a flagship corporate partner, driving product execution end-to-end with an international development unit.
- **System Maturation:** Programmed custom digital components that expanded existing system frameworks and evolved visual design playbooks past legacy technical capabilities by 20%.

BRAND DESIGNER | SW Sustainability Solutions — 2016–2019

- **Global Brand Management:** Directed brand integrity as the internal creative lead for a $50M+ international multi-product manufacturer, governing 10 global product brands and their sub-brands.
- **Market Expansion:** Spearheaded the end-to-end visual identity, strategic positioning, and launch assets for an entirely new product line, successfully driving company expansion from single-use into multi-use industrial markets.
- **Technology Launches:** Designed comprehensive naming strategies, identity systems, and high-converting go-to-market campaign materials for the commercial launch of 2 proprietary technologies.
- **Product Launch Strategy:** Prototyped and engineered consumer packaging architectures built for shelf presence, taking concepts from design through physical production to optimize portfolio alignment.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

- **Bachelor of Arts,** Minor in Sociology & Anthropology — University of Florida, 2012
- **Google UX Design Professional Certificate —** Coursera, 2025
- **StoryBrand Marketing Framework Certification —** 2026
- **Executive Leadership Coursework —** The Optimism Company / Simon Sinek, 2025

TECHNICAL PROFICIENCIES

- **Creative Suites:** Adobe Creative Cloud (Premiere Pro, After Effects, Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign), Figma, Canva
- **Web & Digital Product:** UI/UX Architecture, WordPress, Responsive Web Design, Component Libraries, Dev Hand-off
- • **Brand & Operations:** Brand Architecture, Asset Governance, Budgeting, Resource Allocation, Creative Brief Development
- **Workflow & AI:** Teamwork, Jira/Asana, Generative AI Prototyping (Midjourney, Firefly), Agile Methodology