

Michael McGrath

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Hands-on creative director focused on developing advertising and design that is strategic, simple and most importantly has an emotional connection with its audience.

Throughout my 25+ year career, I have developed award winning campaigns for clients large and small, regional and international, across all media channels—TV and web-based video, print, direct mail, out-of-home, digital content and social media.

Creative Director

Hydrogen Advertising
January 2013 - Present

Joined Hydrogen as creative director with the charge of elevating the agency's creative offerings. Visual lead across all of Hydrogen's client roster, including the agency itself.

- Developed national brand launch for new retail chain, 365 by Whole Foods Market: establishing the visual direction for all marketing elements—print and digital takeovers, digital content, social, direct mail, transit ads, street teams and out-of-home.

Results: Within the first seven days of launch 365 exceeded performance of national Whole Foods Market stores over same time period.

- Landed Heritage Bank after a creative review. Created internal and external brand launch that has continued for the past four years. Campaign idea is built around the theme "What's your heritage?" where we celebrated the diverse experiences and skill sets of Heritage Bank customers and employees. Elements included a launch kit with brand book, employee campaign, TV, Pandora and broadcast radio, print and digital and POP signage.

Results: New customer inquiries up 13%.

- Developed beer label design system and logo for award-winning craft brewer Penobscot Bay Brewery. The label designs provide uniformity at shelf while still allowing the uniqueness of each beer to shine through. The look was extended into point-of-purchase signage, tap handles and coasters.

Results: Distributor was so taken by the new look and feel, they are positioning the line as an entirely new brand.

Brand Experience: 365 by Whole Foods Market, Heritage Bank, Kenworth Trucks, Keysight Technologies, MultiCare, Overlake Medical Center, Penobscot Bay Brewery, The Polyclinic and Windermere Real Estate

SVP/Creative Director

FCB Chicago
October 2008 - January 2013

Hired to lead creative on clients including SC Johnson, Diners Club International and Newell Rubbermaid brands—Sharpie, Paper Mate and Expo. Collaborated across various creative groups and engaged in numerous creative "scrum" (where FCB brought together teams from across its global network to brainstorm over a two-day period), bringing new thinking to existing clients' business or developing creative solutions for new business.

- Worked with account service, media director and strategist in new business pitch for Aramark business services. Led a creative team of writers, art directors and designers in developing a new brand identity, theme line, brand voice and brand guidelines—executed across all medium—print, digital, video and web—as well as their own assets which include trucks, buildings, uniforms, etc.

Results: For first time, Aramark's diverse portfolio of services was unified under a common brand.

- Repositioned Sharpie markers from being a utility product to being a tool for self expression. We engaged socially active "advocates" who used Sharpie markers in unique and creative ways, and shared their stories in a web film and digital campaign. We then activated our fan-base by inviting them to share their own creations to be used in Sharpie's first ever music video to air during the MTV Music Video Awards.

Results: Millions of people are now using Sharpies to decorate cars, headphones, sneakers and more—far beyond writing a child's name in their underwear.

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- Led creative direction efforts on print promotion posters for Valspar: responsible for conceiving the idea that we custom-print the posters using Valspar paint—essentially creating large-format color chips.

Result: A series of collectible posters and calendars recognized internationally, winning numerous coveted industry awards.

Brand Experience: Aramark, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida, Boeing, Diners Club, Dow Chemical, Motorola, Nestle, Newell Rubbermaid, SC Johnson, Qwest and Valspar

Creative Director
Starbucks Coffee
Global Creative
July 2006 - May 2008

Built and managed an in-house advertising group within Starbucks Global Creative. Hired a team of 35 consisting of project managers, digital designers, print producers and creatives. Most of this team had never worked together, so it was important to bring them together quickly, building an environment of trust, inclusion and creative expression. In very short turn they were producing smart, beautiful and strategic work for our business groups and gaining a reputation of creative excellence throughout Starbucks.

- Established the first ever brand campaign for Starbucks Coffee Canada. We created a theme of “life happens over coffee” and highlighted all the ways and times of day customers interact with the brand. It positioned us firmly against the fast food vibe of Tim Hortons, the number one coffee brand in Canada.

Result: The “life happens over coffee” campaign was adopted internationally for the Starbucks Coffee brand.

Freelance Art Director + Designer
October 2002 - July 2006

Creative problem solver for hire! Freelanced in Seattle, Chicago and Boston markets over a four year period. Was uniquely situated to be able to jump in, collaborate with agency staff while quickly gaining an understanding of the creative challenges ahead. Work ranged from promoting the arrival of the area’s first Copper River Salmon to launching a new running shoe—and literally everything in-between.

- Created a coffee promotion for Starbucks that utilized an 1851 wet-collodion process of photography featuring their “coffee as art” in a series of in-store posters and promotional coffee sampler kit.

Result: The images were so well received that years later, when Starbucks opened in the Louvre, the photos were re-licensed as artwork to hang in the Louvre...store.

Agencies: Copacino+Fujikado, Cole & Weber, Creature, FCB Chicago, Hydrogen Advertising, GA Creative and WongDoody. **Brand Experience:** Alaska Airlines, Children’s Hospital, Everett Clinic, Group Health, Precor Fitness Equipment, Red Lion Hotels, Spira Footwear and Starbucks Coffee

Associate Creative Director
FCB Seattle
June 1996 - October 2002

Managed creative teams across all of FCB Seattle’s client roster. Integral member of new business team.

- Helped win and run the Boeing account out of Seattle. Repositioned Boeing beyond a commercial aircraft company and more as an aerospace technology company with a theme “Forever new frontiers.” When Boeing moved headquarters to Chicago, their account went with them. Worked with our FCB Chicago office to help them pitch the business. The visual signature I created was credited with helping them retain the account.

Result: Boeing continues to lead the way in aerospace technology. The signature I established continued to be used globally for over 10 years. And, to this day, FCB Chicago continues as agency of record on the Boeing business.

Brand Experience: AAA of Washington, AAA of Northern California, Baxter BioScience, Bellevue Art Museum, Children’s Hospital, Children’s Discovery Museum, Group Health Cooperative, Pacific Science Center, Hewlett-Packard, US Bank, and The Boeing Company

References available upon request.