

J. FOREST LEE

Creative & Marketing Leader

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A successful and energetic creative, marketing & agency leader, strategic storyteller, brand developer and writer, with nearly 20 years of experience getting the best out of my clients' brands. I build and lead high performing creative teams that become indispensable parts of the business by developing mind-blowing brand strategy, content and creative work. I'm comfortable everywhere, from hypergrowth startups to industry-leading organizations.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Branding & Marketing | Creative Direction | Creative Strategy | Art Direction | Brand Architecture
Strategic Planning Process Improvements | Integrated Marketing | Customer Insights | Content Strategy
SEO | Web Strategy | Copywriting | Creative Team Development | Sales Enablement | Visionary Leadership

EXPERIENCE

RAPID ROBOTICS | July 2022-October 2023

Director of Brand Narrative

Took total ownership of all marketing activity, brand strategy, content, creative, brand messaging & identity, PR, sales enablement, and more for a fast-growing robotics startup serving North American manufacturers.

- Developed a holistic content strategy from scratch, onboarded and managed freelance creatives, and executed, published & syndicated more than 100 pieces of content.
- Owned and executed all brand .com activities, including design & development, SEO, organic backlinking, and overall web strategy, leading to ongoing improvements in search ranking and traffic.
- Coordinated with Sales to develop an effective enablement strategy, create high-performing enablement materials & marketing activities that drove a 40x increase in actionable pipeline.
- Developed a video content strategy, briefed & managed freelance video teams, and ensured video production met required objectives.
- With the events team, coordinated all marketing activities around trade shows and events.
- Identified Rapid SMEs to speak at industry events, booked speaking slots, wrote abstracts, and created all presentation materials.
- Collaborated with SDRs & Demand Gen to ensure that outbound marketing, including emails, newsletters, and PPC ads, was consistent with the Rapid brand, and of the exceptional quality required to inspire trust and drive qualified leads.
- Built customer relationships to develop a robust, production-ready queue for case studies, and to transform customers into Rapid brand evangelists in industry media.
- Managed Rapid's PR agency and worked with them to vet media opportunities and identify Rapid employees to serve as influencers and subject matter experts in industry and mass outlets, resulting in improved brand recognition and trust.
- Developed a comms strategy & executed all materials with freelance design support, including a totally new website, to support a new product launch and strategic direction for the company.
- Created content for and produced 15 webinars, as well as a major livestream event in Rapid's SF HQ featuring industry influencers from across North America.

THRASIO | September 2020-May 2022

Associate Director, Copy & Creative Strategy

Helped drive the transformation of the Core Creative group from a production team to a full-scale, in-house brand identity development agency for this multimillion-dollar Amazon aggregator and one of the fastest-growing startups in history.

Creative Leadership:

- Optimized storytelling across all brand expressions by personally coaching and mentoring the 16-person Core Creative copywriting team on best-in-class practices and industry trends.
- Nurtured an environment of creative innovation by encouraging curiosity and a desire to learn and improve through the facilitation of workshopping sessions.
- Helped Thrasio mature as a new-generation CPG company by sharing process and branding expertise across a growing team and organization.
- Built a solid staff pipeline by rapidly hiring and personally onboarding top industry talent, expanding the team in just eight months' time.

Creative Strategy:

- Grew a 4-person copywriting team into a 16-person department handling the creative optimization and brand tone for 200+ consumer goods brands across every imaginable category.
- Delivered an average 12% increase in sales during the first year of brand ownership by developing a creative strategy process that was rapidly operationalized and repeated for long-term brand building and sustainable growth, setting the creative framework of a 150+ person Core Creative team.
- Continually improved output speed without sacrificing quality by implementing training, standard operating procedures, and Creative Strategy briefs to streamline, scale, and set operational capabilities and focus.
- Identified and activated new areas of opportunity for performance creative, including effective and scalable content marketing, new & updated Amazon sales tools, and more.

BLACKBOOK MEDIA, INC. | February 2020-January 2022**Creative, Marketing, and Brand Consultant**

Initially hired to write content and contribute to user flow, but quickly pivoted to strategically developing brand identity, creative strategy, marketing direction, and investor acquisition strategy.

- Enabled the launch of the app in Q4 2021 by crafting a 60+ page business plan and corresponding investor presentation materials/decks, initial brand identity/guidelines, and international go-to-market strategy.
- Developed an investor outreach and communication strategy to promote positive and productive long-term relationships with angels and VC firms committed to the mission to rebuild and support thriving events communities worldwide.
- Ensured the company's future health by vetting investor candidates for investment strategy/values match and actively recruiting and managing advisory groups, including investment advisors and a customer advisory board.

SKYWORD, INC. | November 2018-January 2020**Senior Director, Creative Operations**

Promoted to lead the cross-functional planning and conceptualizing of the overarching creative marketing strategies for Skyword's portfolio of clientele.

Creative Leadership:

- Drove the development and execution of video, photo, design, audio, and other creative assets, holding oversight of the Digital Production and Creative Strategy teams.
- Delivered a double-digit NPS score improvement and a faster sales process resulting in larger contract value by collaborating with the Sales team on a multi-tiered program pitch incorporating a comprehensive Good-Better-Best model.
- Built a culture of creativity across the business, enabling all Skywordians and clients to create courageously.
- Originated the methodology for developing and pricing creative content marketing campaigns.
- Defined Skyword's portfolio of rich media offerings, including pricing and packaging complex content.
- Empowered clients to innovate by building a repeatable and enjoyable process for rich media production.
- Implemented a pipeline of creative concepts from our freelance community to clients.
- Identified and evaluated new 3rd party creative providers as potential partners and acquisition targets.
- Simplified the execution of rich media content by advocating for and sponsoring Skyword platform improvements.

Community Management:

- Guided the team through the growth and nurturing of a 5,000+ member community of freelance writers, videographers, graphic designers, photographers, and more.
- Achieved a 60-point YOY increase in contributor NPS scores by developing marketing plans targeting the freelance community with materials intended to increase engagement with Skyword.
- Enhanced the value of the Skyword freelance community by articulating and evangelizing a vision for global expansion of the community and continual development of new contributor capabilities.

SKYWORD, INC. | March 2018-November 2018**Director of Creative Strategy**

Drove the continual improvement of the creative process with the aim of ensuring Skyword advanced the clients' vision, empowered creative partners, and produced exceptional marketing content.

- Consistently increased contract value and improved client retention by designing and leading creative workshops/brainstorms that engaged clients with innovative and actionable creative concepts.
- Developed and routinely optimized the creative briefing process to help clients realize vision and enable creatives to deliver exceptional work.
- Set the goal of unbeatable efficiency and flawless quality by partnering with the Director of Digital Production to continually improve the creative process.
- Actively identified new creative opportunities and formats to help clients meet their marketing objectives.
- Guided creative direction for all rich media content produced by the Skyword Creative Desk, including video, audio, design, and photo assets.

EARLIER ROLE

Brand Writing Manager | HASBRO, INC. | July 2012-January 2018

Managed the creative direction for a 14-person team developing brand identity and executing a broad range of consumer-facing communications for brands ranging across all product categories. Developed and evolved creative tools that allowed the telling of compelling, open-ended brand stories aligned with the Hasbro Brand Blueprint. Researched and applied consumer insights to create brand identity and marketing assets that drove purchases and increased consumer engagement. Implemented best practices to ensure all assets supported ongoing goals, including SEO improvements to e-commerce copy, copy standards to simplify global adaptation of packaging and instructions, and the creation of industry-leading ethical communications strategies.

EDUCATION

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, Emerson College

Bachelor of Arts in English Literature (Concentration in Communications), Clark University

AWARDS & PUBLICATIONS

Speaker, [How Great Stories Build Legendary Brands](#) for Wooga Games, Berlin, January 2020

Writer, *G.I. Joe: Operation: Bear Trap* comic for FunPub Comics, Summer 2012

Ghost Writer, *Fast Like a Cheetah* preschool reader for Fountas and Pinnell, Fall 2011

Ghost Writer, *Dirty Sox, the Mystery of the 1919 World Series*: preschool reader for Fountas and Pinnell, Winter 2011

Writer, *Someone's Watching You* non-fiction book for Adams Media, June 2011

Writer, *Transformers Timelines: Wings of Honor* comic for FunPub Comics, Summer 2009

Writer, *Transformers Timelines: Games of Deception* comic for FunPub Comics, Summer 2007

First two years of *Transformers Timelines* comic series collected as *Transformers CyberTron: Balancing Act* graphic novel by IDW Comics, 2007

Writer, *Transformers Timelines: Dawn of Future's Past* comic for FunPub Comics, Summer 2006

Writer, editor, and creative director, *Maxman and the Plague of Indifference* comic for the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Council, 2006

Co-writer, *Hear No Evil* winner, Best Cinematography, Rhode Island 48-Hour Film Festival, 2006

Writer, ongoing serialized comic *Transformers Timelines* for FunPub Comics, 2005-2010

Composed Bicycle Action Item for Climate Action Plan, City of Somerville, MA, April 2003

Short story "Dismantling Saturn" published in Beacon Street Review, Spring 2001

Wrote biographies of two Cambridge, MA, artists for first gallery opening, April 2000

Published 19 movie reviews in Santa Cruz Guide (www.santacruzguide.com), May 1999-June 2000