JULIAN GRIMES

Senior Brand Strategist

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I'm a designer at heart who became a strategist to get upstream of the planning conversation, so creative starts from a thoughtful idea instead of an executional to-do list. In seven years at agencies including Droga5, The Martin Agency, TBWA\Chiat\Day, and Archer, I've built brand architecture, positioning, and messaging frameworks, and written briefs that work as a springboard for creatives rather than a box. I turn brand health data, syndicated reports, and cultural trends into a sharp point of view I can defend with executive leadership. I've also led design teams, and I do my best work putting people in a position to succeed. That approach produced a record-breaking market launch, double-digit sales lifts, and a winning global new business pitch.

EXPERIENCE

Senior Brand Strategist 2026

Archer | Memphis, TN | Remote

Clients: Primrose Schools, CASE Construction, Dechra (Pet Pharma), Palm Beach Tan

- Translated client brand research, cultural trends, and brand health tracking into audience insights and points of view for clients, building the strategic core of creative briefs.
- Developed discussion guides, surveys, brand architecture, positioning, and messaging frameworks, and carried strategy from audience insight through creative execution.
- Led competitive reviews and situational analyses, facilitated client-facing ideation sessions, and briefed creative and communications planning teams.

Strategist, Freelance 2025 – Present

Charlotte, NC | Remote

Client: The Brandon Agency (New Business)

- Developed and executed brand strategies that integrated consumer insights and market research to drive new business growth.
- Defined brand architecture, positioning, and product naming, translating strategic vision into compelling narratives for diverse clients.
- Partnered with key stakeholders to deliver marketing goals and manage project deliverables.

Senior Experience Strategist 2023 – 2024

This Place | Los Angeles, CA

Client: Google (Retail/Consumer Tech)

- Bridged Google Retail and Brand, developing customer-centric designs and omnichannel experiences that synchronized physical and digital touchpoints.
- Led the biannual third-party retail refresh for Chromebook with partners including Best Buy, Amazon, and Target, increasing in-store engagement by 20%.
- Developed messaging, content strategies, and benefit-led design systems to guide in-store and online purchase journeys for global product launches.
- Solidified brand architecture and implementation strategy for Google AI products, working with Product and Design teams to lead the strategic integration of Gemini into the user ecosystem.

Senior Strategist 2022 – 2023

TBWA\Chiat\Day | Los Angeles, CA

Clients: Jack in the Box (QSR); DirecTV (Design by Disruption)

- Defined the Jack in the Box "Brand DNA" as the strategic framework for FY23 planning and long-term brand evolution, and directed strategy for high-volume LTO product cycles.
- Directed strategy for Jack in the Box's first new market expansion in over a decade (Salt Lake City and Louisville), driving record first-month sales; Salt Lake City beat the prior new-market record by 66%.
- Launched the "24 Days of Jackmas" holiday campaign with exclusive rewards-member deals, lifting same-store sales 11% and setting system-wide December sales records.
- Designed and ran qualitative research, leading consumer workshops and co-creation sessions and partnering with cultural insights teams and research consultants on study design.
- Analyzed client brand health tracking and syndicated audience reports with strategy teams, turning findings into implications for working briefs.
- Led visual identity exploration for DirecTV using the "Design by Disruption" methodology to evaluate category influences and modern design systems.

Strategic Planner 2020 – 2022

The Martin Agency | Richmond, VA

Clients: Buffalo Wild Wings (QSR), Virginia Tourism, Terminix

- Led global creative strategy for Buffalo Wild Wings International, from brief to execution, and performance marketing and social planning for domestic work, including product launches developed with Mtn Dew and Doritos.
- Built the communications plan for the 2022 Virginia Tourism brand campaign and authored creative tactical briefs for seasonal work across paid social, OOH, digital, and video.
- Designed a consumer journey map for Terminix using Martin's Tension Mapping practice, identifying barriers to conversion and informing creative briefs that address consumer pain points.

Junior Brand Strategist 2019 – 2020

Droga5 | New York, NY

Clients: Kimberly-Clark/Huggies (CPG), Sprint, Meta, Chase, Under Armour, United Rentals, The Africa Center

- Helped craft the strategic frameworks and creative territory for the agency's first global new business pitch under Accenture Interactive, which won the Kimberly-Clark/Huggies account.
- Supported Meta brand architecture and positioning research, and analyzed Huggies brand health data to shape insights.
- Conducted competitive audits, developed discussion guides, led expert, stakeholder, and audience interviews, and observed focus groups to develop insights for Sprint, Huggies, and The Africa Center.

EARLIER CAREER: DESIGN, UX & CREATIVE DIRECTION

UX Designer 2016 – 2017

Lowe's Companies, Inc. | Mooresville, NC

- Developed product architecture and user flows for Lowes.com and Lowesforpros.com; redesigned high-traffic category pages (patio, paint, lighting) to improve information hierarchy and product education.

Art Director 2015 – 2016

Spark Strategic Ideas | Charlotte, NC

- Led the brand redesign for American Forest Management, developed B2B brand voice and positioning for HarperLove, designed for Blaze Pizza and Moe's Southwest Grill, and contributed to the Hanes pitch.
- Managed and mentored junior designers, freelance creatives, and design interns.

Art Director 2011 – 2015

Charlotte Regional Business Alliance (formerly Charlotte Chamber of Commerce) | Charlotte, NC

- Directed brand management and creative across departments; managed campaign lifecycles for membership recruitment, retention, and community engagement, along with creative budgets, vendors, and production timelines; managed junior designers, interns, and agency partners.

Lead Brand Designer 2009 – 2011

Food Lion, LLC | Salisbury, NC

- Served as creative team lead and project manager, developing in-store creative strategies (POP systems, high-volume CRM campaigns), setting brand design standards, and directing national features for Southern Living and the NASCAR Hall of Fame yearbook.

SKILLS

Brand planning & strategy • Brand architecture & positioning • Messaging frameworks • Creative briefs & agency partnership • Audience insights & cultural trends • Qualitative & quantitative research design • Brand health & syndicated data analysis (Nielsen/MRI, GWI, YouGov, Kantar, System1, SurveyMonkey) • Social listening (Brandwatch, Hootsuite)

EDUCATION

Virginia Commonwealth University, Brandcenter | M.S. Business, Brand Strategy

University of North Carolina at Charlotte | B.A. Art, Graphic Design; B.S. Mechanical Engineering

LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT

- Student Mentor, VCU Brandcenter & UNC School of Journalism (2019 – Present)
- AAF Charlotte Chapter Board Member, Creative Director & Diversity Chair (2014 – 2016)
- Courageous Conversation Academy: Systemic Racial Equity Transformation (2020)
- Skookum (now Method) Night Shift, digital strategy and design program (2015)
- Cross Functional Leadership Academy (2014)
- Leaders Under 40, Class 4 (2013)