

Ryan O'Connor

Sr. Director of Innovation | Creative Director | Experiential Marketing Leader

Milwaukee, WI (Open to Relocation)

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Professional Summary

Creative visionary with over 15 years of experience delivering transformative brand experiences at the intersection of storytelling, design, and technology. Proven expertise in working directly with global brands like **Nike, Meta, Marriott, and GEICO**, pitching creative strategies to senior leadership, building compelling presentations, and leading projects ranging from **sub-\$100K activations to \$5M+ large-scale campaigns**. Adept at using **AI-driven tools** and innovative methodologies to design immersive, consumer-centric activations and events. Collaborative leader with a strong track record of managing cross-functional teams and crafting cohesive strategies that inspire audiences and exceed expectations.

Core Competencies

- **Creative Leadership:** Inspiring and managing multidisciplinary teams across event design, digital storytelling, and experiential marketing.
 - **Client Pitching & Strategy:** Skilled in pitching creative concepts, building visually compelling decks, and driving strategic buy-in at the executive level.
 - **AI Innovation:** Driving creative efficiency and innovation through generative AI tools, enhancing storytelling and workflows.
 - **Brand Collaboration:** Partnering directly with global brands, from concept pitches to execution, ensuring alignment with their vision and goals.
 - **Experiential Impact:** Designing immersive events and activations that foster audience connection and reinforce brand messaging.
 - **Project Execution:** Leading end-to-end creative projects, including budgeting (sub-\$100K to \$5M+), team management, and stakeholder alignment.
 - **Relocation Flexibility:** Experienced in remote collaboration and open to relocating for on-site leadership roles.
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Professional Experience

Sr. Director of Innovation | Creative Director

RedPeg Marketing — Alexandria, VA (Remote)

June 2022 – Present

- Pitched creative strategies directly to senior clients, including **Nike, Meta, and Marriott**, delivering high-impact experiential campaigns with budgets ranging from **\$100K to \$3M**.
- Designed and presented detailed creative decks to align stakeholders on campaign vision, execution plans, and measurable outcomes.
- Developed the **Meta Suite at Capital One Arena**, integrating AR/VR storytelling with live branded experiences.
- Directed creative leadership for **Nike Learning & Development Programs**, engaging 400+ senior executives through immersive events and branded installations.
- Implemented **AI-driven workflows**, boosting team efficiency by 33% and enabling scalable creative solutions.
- Managed a team of seven creatives, specializing in 2D/3D design, motion graphics, and experiential marketing.

Key Achievements:

- Created a 600-piece interactive art installation for **Nike HQ**, blending leadership storytelling with innovative design.
 - Pioneered scalable AI strategies, reducing operational costs while maintaining exceptional creative standards.
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Creative Director

Astound Group — Las Vegas, NV

February 2022 – June 2022

- Directed experiential design for luxury clients, including the **Faraday Future flagship retail store**, blending digital innovation and architectural storytelling, with a **\$1M+ budget**.
- Partnered with cross-functional teams to align designs with client goals, enhancing customer engagement and brand loyalty.
- Developed client-facing presentations that clearly communicated creative vision and project milestones.

Senior Art Director

GMR Marketing — Milwaukee, WI

July 2016 – February 2022

- Managed creative direction for over 100 clients, including **Google, Intel, and NFL**, delivering award-winning campaigns and activations with project budgets ranging from **\$100K to \$5M**.

- Designed **Google House for Tokyo Olympics 2020**, showcasing interactive storytelling (project paused due to COVID-19).
- Pitched creative solutions to Fortune 500 clients, leading to project wins and expanded brand collaborations.
- Built dynamic presentations and creative decks to align stakeholders on experiential concepts and campaign vision.

Key Achievements:

- Delivered scalable designs for **Altria IQOS**, including mobile and touring formats, driving brand visibility and engagement.
- Oversaw project budgets exceeding **\$1M**, ensuring alignment with client objectives and on-time delivery.

Education

Master of Architecture — University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

- Henry Adams Medal Recipient for academic excellence.

Bachelor of Science in Architecture — University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

- Summa Cum Laude, Urban Planning Certificate.
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Key Projects

- **Meta Suite at Capital One Arena:** Designed a tech-driven branded environment featuring AR/VR storytelling to engage diverse audiences, with a **\$3M budget**.
 - **Nike Leadership Program:** Delivered AI-powered immersive experiences for 400+ VPs, fostering leadership alignment within a **\$2M+ budget framework**.
 - **In-N-Out Anniversary:** Crafted a two-day experiential event celebrating brand culture for 1,000 employees and their families, managing a **\$750K activation**.
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Skills & Tools

- **AI Tools:** ChatGPT, MidJourney, DALL·E, PromeAI
- **Design Platforms:** Adobe Creative Suite, Cinema 4D, Rhino, Grasshopper
- **Collaboration Tools:** Figma, Keynote, Google Workspace, Microsoft Office
- **Project Management:** Cross-functional leadership, remote team management, budget oversight (\$100K–\$1M+)