

TERI FIRKINS

CONTACT

hello@terifirkins.com
612.200.6060

PORTFOLIO

terifirkins.com
linkedin.com/in/terifirkins

CREATIVE DIRECTOR | VISUAL STORYTELLER | TEAM BUILDER

Hands-on creative leader who builds teams and brands with empathy and intention. I lead by doing: designing and directing while creating the systems and culture that allow teams to do their best work. My approach blends bold storytelling with smart operations, adopting new tools to deliver work that's meaningful, clear, and actually solves the problem. I create environments where **people feel supported and challenged**, delivering results across healthcare, tech, consumer goods, government, and financial services.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CREATIVE DIRECTOR, BRAND / ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT

HGA | July 2017 – November 2025

- Transformed a reactive 1-person unit into a **strategic 6-person Creative practice**, building role structures, workflows, and career pathways from the ground up
- Managed the rollout of a **firm-wide brand refresh** by translating agency concepts into practical tools and personally training staff on brand adoption across regional offices
- Modernized brand operations by replacing fax-based procurement with a self-service Company Store and implementing Templafy for document automation, **reducing ad-hoc design requests by 40%**
- Reduced annual photography budget from \$1M+ to \$550K** by developing a 100-point scoring system that objectively determined resource allocation
- Established a **video storytelling strategy** that bridged technical expertise with human-centered narratives, setting new content standards for firm leadership
- Directed visual strategy for **high-profile thought leadership and culture initiatives**, including the federally-cited *Climate Forward* report, DEI engagement tools, and talent acquisition campaigns
- Advocated for cost and waste reduction by rolling out **digital business cards and transitioning to digital-first marketing workflows**
- Implemented **AI tools and Digital Asset Management systems** to maintain brand consistency across distributed teams

KEY IMPACT

BUILT CREATIVE TEAMS FROM THE GROUND UP (TWICE)

1 to 6 at HGA, 4 to 30 at Weber Shandwick generating \$1M+ in annual revenue

CUT ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHY SPEND BY 45% (\$1M+ to \$550K)

by developing proprietary scoring system and strategic resource planning

DIRECTED AWARD-WINNING CAMPAIGNS

recognized by Webby Awards, *PR Week*, and AdFed

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Build and scale creative teams that deliver
- Develop brand systems that actually get used
- Streamline operations without losing quality
- Direct video and digital storytelling that connects
- Execute campaigns across channels and formats
- Adopt AI tools that improve workflows
- Collaborate across functions to get things done
- Bridge strategy and execution through hands-on leadership

GROUP DESIGN DIRECTOR

Fast Horse | September 2014 – May 2017

- Owned creative strategy and design for Deluxe's Small Business Revolution, building a web experience that drove **1M unique visitors and 2.1M page views** in year one
- Executed integrated campaigns for Fortune 500 clients, startups, and nonprofits, delivering **multi-platform experiences** across brand, web, social, video, and live events
- Managed a design team while staying hands-on as lead designer on key accounts, **bridging strategic direction with craft execution**
- Directed visual strategy for Yoplait's Go Big social campaign, growing the fanbase from **zero to 5,000+ followers in four months (9% above plan)**
- Designed **event spaces and trade show exhibits** for Coca-Cola, Deluxe, and Heineken
- Art directed full-scale photo shoots** (in-studio and on-location), overseeing talent, wardrobe, set design, and client collaboration
- Contributed to **new business development** through strategic planning, pitch deck creation, and client presentations

INDEPENDENT CREATIVE CONSULTANT

Wondrous Punch | July 2013 – September 2014

- Delivered **brand strategy, investor presentations, and integrated marketing** for clients including TRIA Orthopaedic and O&T Farms

DESIGN DIRECTOR / SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, CREATIVE STRATEGIES

Weber Shandwick | July 2005 – July 2013

- Pioneered the digital transformation** of a traditional PR agency, building the Visual Communications practice from scratch to integrate design, web, social, and video
- Scaled the creative team from **4 to 30 professionals, generating \$1M+ in new annual revenue** through expanded digital service offerings
- Served on **Senior Leadership and Global Digital Leadership teams**, driving agency-wide innovation and establishing visual communication as a strategic driver
- Directed **multi-channel campaigns for Fortune 500 and government clients** including General Motors, Allstate, Honeywell, Cargill, U.S. Census Bureau, and U.S. Treasury
- Directed **award-winning campaigns** recognized by Webby Awards, *PR Week*, and Forrester Research, including a *PR Week*-honored campaign for the U.S. Army

EDUCATION

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities | Bachelor of Arts, Design Communication

SELECT CLIENTS

CONSUMER & LIFESTYLE

Coca-Cola, General Mills, Land O'Lakes, Mr. Bubble, SweeTango, Amy Thielen, Wholly Guacamole, Yoplait

CORPORATE & INDUSTRIAL

Allstate, American Express, Cargill, General Motors, Honeywell, Vermeer, Wausau Tile

EDUCATION & NONPROFIT

CARE, IEEE, Minneapolis Parks Foundation, Minnesota Public Radio, University of Minnesota

GOVERNMENT

Florida Dept of Citrus, U.S. Army, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Treasury

HEALTHCARE & WELLNESS

American College of Surgeons, Awaken Pilates, Blue Cross Blue Shield, NCIPE, TRIA Orthopaedic

SOFTWARE SKILLS

DESIGN

Adobe Creative Cloud (AEM, Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop, After Effects, Premiere), Canva

AI TOOLS

ChatGPT, Topaz, Midjourney

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Asana, Trello, Workfront

Other: Google Suite, Microsoft Office, WordPress, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

AIGA MN, AdFed, Minnesota PRSA, *PR Week*, W3, Webby

COMMUNITY

DESIGN STRATEGY & SERVICES

HGA Community Action

MENTORING

BrandLab and AIGA MNtor