Katie Himmel

Head of Brand | Experience, Innovation, and Leadership

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SUMMARY

For over 15 years, I've turned ideas into brands, products, services, spaces, programs, policies, and events. My work ranges from a 6-store Best Buy experiential service pilot that grew to 250+ stores, to incepting the name and visual identity for Gatorade's Gx sports tech product line, to leading retail and field experience design for Amazon/ Whole Foods and One Medical, and countless projects for individual clients. I'm finishing an MBA at Gies (2027) to drive innovation with one goal in mind: lead systemic improvements that enhance the quality of life for the people within them. Because I'm here to prove what's good for people is good for business.

EXPERIENCE

KAYTO GROUP | Founder, Principal Consultant
Mar 2026–Present

- Incepted, designed, and launched a multi-category experiential product line featuring new product designs spanning functional fashion wearables, inclusion-promoting toys, and life design tool luxury paper goods & gifts
- Designed a tech platform that connects people within communities based on proximity

KATIE HIMMEL DESIGN & STRATEGY | Founder, Principal Consultant
Jan 2009–Mar 2026

- Spearheaded client service projects spanning strategic communications, contract negotiations, identity development, multi-sensory environmental & journey design, brand marketing, and program development
- Managed client resources to deliver successful initiatives, on time and on budget
- Clients served: Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, Reimagine Retail, LG, Nike, Greentarget, Wiglaf Pricing, Gilda's Club Chicago, Erasing The Distance, HB Speaks, Elevate K-12, CFA Institute, and many private clients

BOOM VENTURES | Creative Director, Experience Design Consultant
*Jan 2023–Mar 2026**

- Led creative strategy, planning, and design execution for CX, retail, field, and seasonal marketing campaigns
- Designed a Mother's Day event where 80% of surveyed retail shoppers said they will return to the store based on the event alone
- Clients served: Gillette, Clorox, Amazon Fresh/Whole Foods; Amazon One Medical, FOX-One Sports, MoneyGram/F1, and led creative for new business ventures and other opportunities

VSA PARTNERS | Experiential Creative & Design Consultant
*Jul 2017–Oct 2019**

- Executive design lead for over 21,000 ft^2 of immersive multi-sensory experiential space
- Awarded "Best in Show" (BIMSmith), for an architectural product exhibit, against 1,500+ global exhibitors
- Clients served: Marvin Windows & Doors, CME Group, Google, Spectrum Enterprise

OGILVY | New Business Design Strategy
*Jul 2016–May 2022**

- Partnered with advertising and PR leadership to anchor pitch design strategy, successfully securing over $10M in new revenue across North American offices
- Crafted and executed highly strategic "chemistry checks" for multi-million-dollar campaigns, traveling alongside cross-functional leadership teams
- Divisions served: Ogilvy New Business Ventures (Chicago & NYC), Ogilvy Health

FLEISHMAN HILLARD | Creative Director, Art Director
*Mar 2016–Feb 2017**

- Creative Directed the social campaign to shift perception of a historic CPG portfolio from 'exclusively special occasion and holiday', to 'everyday snacking favorites,' which helped enable predictable, year-round revenue from ~$375MM to $600MM over time *(Lindt Annual Reports 2025, 2017)*
- Clients served: Russell Stover, Whitman's, Quaker, McDonald's, PepsiCo, Tropicana, Gatorade, Travel Illinois

MKTG INC | Creative Director, Design Manager
Oct 2010–Jan 2016

- Led end-to-end creative for the Chicago office across 130+ high-volume client projects from tentpole events to luxury influencer experiences, garnering 20M global impressions *(continues on next page)*

**Retainer, fractional, or other contract-based role*
***Pro bono, internship, or other volunteer-based role*

- Owned full event design production lifecycles, driving operations from ideation, messaging, visual identity, to mechanical assets, and vendor management, to on-site event installation, and live show callings
- Clients served: Nike, Jordan, Gatorade, Gx, Propel, Pepsi, P&G, AON, Best Buy, NASCAR, MSNBC, ComEd, NCAA Final Four, Country Financial, Michele Obama's Let's Move Active Schools, Dick's Sporting Goods, Chelsea Collective, Beats By Dre, The Chicago Transit Authority, Groupon, Red Bull

RIGHT TO BE (FORMERLY HOLLABACK) | Chicago Site Director *Dec 2008–Dec 2016***

- Built and led the Chicago chapter of an international non-profit focused on ending identity-based violence through tech-enabled data capture and bystander intervention training
- Methodology and frameworks pioneered policy change in both global corporate and local municipal policies
- Served as the primary media spokesperson, with features on WBEZ, WGN, and The Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO HOPES | Art Teacher *Sept 2009–May 2010***

- Developed creative curriculum and led K-6 after-school arts programming across multiple temporary housing shelters, in partnership with Chicago Public Schools

LETTUCE ENTERTAIN YOU & DARDEN | Hospitality Service & Guest Ops *Sept 2005–Oct 2010*

- Delivered elevated hospitality and high-touch guest relations in fast-paced, premium environments
- Managed cash and credit transactions with security, compliance, speed, and meticulous attention to detail

FIRST STATE BANK & TRUST | Teller *Oct 2002–Sept 2005*

- Securely processed large cash volumes, ensuring absolute compliance with financial safety, regulatory guidelines, and privacy controls

SCOOTERS CUSTARD | Hospitality Service & Ops *May 1997–Oct 2002*

- Entrusted starting at age 10 with direct cash handling, customer order fulfillment, and operating kitchen equipment in a fast-paced and high-volume family-owned seasonal restaurant

EDUCATION

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, Gies College of Business, University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana (2027)

Special: Entrepreneurship & Strategic Innovation (ESI); Healthcare Innovation, Design, & Entrepreneurship (HIDE)

BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS, Columbia College Chicago (2009)

Major: Graphic Design & Applied Arts | Graduated Cum Laude

TECH STACK & TOOLS

VISUAL MEDIA Keynote, Canva, Figma, InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop, PowerPoint, Google Slides, CapCut, QuickTime; **COMMS & OPS** Acrobat Pro, Microsoft Word, Google Docs, DocuSign, Mailchimp, Airtable, Google Forms, Later, Shopify, Wix; **DATA** Excel, Google Sheets, Jira, ProjectLibre, ZoomInfo **COLLAB** Slack, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Outlook, Dropbox, Box **AI & SOURCING** Claude, Perplexity, Gemini, ChatGPT, Google Scholar.

CORE SKILLS

Concept Design | Strategic Communications | Design Thinking | Service Design | Process Analysis & Engineering | Experiential Marketing | Identity Design | Program Development | Policy & Operations Innovation | Agile Leadership | Mediation & Value-Driven Negotiation | Society & Culture | Change Management

MORE OF THE ACTUALLY FUN HUMAN BITS

TRAITS Innovative, Strategic, Determined, Highly-Collaborative, *Fun!* **INTERESTS** Building furniture, painting large abstract paintings, gardening, cooking without recipes, hosting events & gatherings, collecting vinyl, pottery & ceramic design, live events & shows, and creative writing

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