Kelly Smith

Senior Creative Director

Houston, TX

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EDUCATION

Web Design/New Media
Academy of Art University
Master of Fine Arts

Graphic Communication
University of Houston
Bachelor of Fine Arts

SKILLS

- Leadership & Team Development
- Cross-Functional Collaboration
- Creative Strategy & Direction
- Product Strategy & Profit Generation
- Quality Control
- Project & Process Management
- Coaching & Mentoring
- Brand Development & Positioning
- Strategic KPI Development

AWARDS

- American Advertising Federation, Eight Addy Awards, 2020 – 2012
- AAF 10th District Inaugural “Mosaic” Talent in Advertising Award, 2020
- GOLD Telly Award, 2020

PROFILE

Senior Creative Director with 15+ years in award-winning, multi-channel campaigns. Skilled at building high-performing teams and scaling design practices to support brand maturity and strategic growth. Known for aligning design with business priorities to drive impact, translating complex needs into cutting-edge solutions, and fostering inclusive, high-quality team dynamics for cohesive brand presence.

EXPERIENCE

Senior Creative Director
SmartBug Media, Remote 2020 – present

Lead high-performing design teams, scaling our visual design practice to drive brand growth, innovation, and strategic objectives, while actively developing new products that enhance agency profitability. In this player-coach role, I foster inclusive team dynamics, encourage creative development, and implement best practices that ensure cohesive, high-quality design. As a cross-functional partner, I collaborate closely with business units to align visual design with company goals, KPIs, and revenue targets, ensuring impactful contributions across departments.

Leveraging deep expertise in visual design, systems thinking, and process optimization, I translate business needs into cutting-edge, profitable design solutions that elevate our brand’s market presence. Balancing hands-on design with strategic leadership, I empower my team with clear expectations, structured growth opportunities, and effective feedback, delivering high-value, scalable solutions that drive agency success and innovation.

Creative Director
Gilbreath Communications Inc., TX 2014 – 2020

Daily responsibilities included leading the concept, development, and execution of diverse projects across print, broadcast, multimedia, and web design/development. I directed long-running, successful creative executions, adeptly managing last-minute, high-priority requests to meet tight deadlines. I played a key role in developing integrated marketing, promotional, and event strategies, focusing on budgeting and implementation for major brands.

As a team leader, I coached and mentored agency designers, guiding them to produce high-quality, impactful work. I built and managed project timelines based on creative briefs, ensuring all tasks remained on schedule. My technical expertise included developing and maintaining WordPress websites, contributing to both client satisfaction and agency offerings. Additionally, I supported agency growth by assisting in the creation of proposals, mock campaigns, estimates, and client billing.

EXPERIENCE

Art Director

S.O. Creative, TX 2008 – 2014

Responsibilities included leading design, layout, and concept development while managing multiple projects, overseeing account service, traffic management, and third-party vendor costs. I prepared print materials for production, retouched images, scheduled email campaigns, designed banner ads, and art directed photo shoots. I provided creative direction, conducted press checks, managed and coached interns, collaborating with team members and vendors to ensure timely project completion. Additionally, I updated websites and organized project timelines.

Manager

Woodforest National Bank, TX 2003 – 2008

Daily responsibilities included managing customer service, bank deposits, new accounts, and daily branch operations. I trained new employees and fostered a high-performance team through regular coaching and mentoring. By developing targeted incentives, I motivated employees to achieve KPIs, enhancing both performance and customer satisfaction. My focus on team development and strategic incentives created a motivated, results-driven environment that consistently met our branch's goals.