



Damian Ashton

Design Research & Strategist, Marketer, Educator

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WORK EXPERIENCE

Jan 2011 - Present

Freelance Consultant, Culture Incite Design and Marketing

Design Research and Strategy:

- Conducted a year-long ethnography on urban and suburban identity expression through Hip Hop clothing brands, leading to the brand identity and marketing strategy for Dub-Stuy Records, where I became Marketing Director.
- Created a social innovation digital platform to foster healthy masculinity, working with over 30 participants and over six community groups using focus groups, interviews, and UX research and design.
- Supported NYC's transition to reusable bags using quantitative data, expert interviews, observations, systems mapping, and partnerships with two city agencies, five grocery stores business to test service design strategy and one community-based organization to test another prototype.
- Skilled in operations and strategic design, co-creating workflows and systems to optimize collaboration and project management with over 20 business and organizations
- Launched over 24 websites by creating design briefs, developing wireframes, building websites, and conducting UX testing.
- Led over twenty brand identity and strategy projects, collaborating with clients on moodboards, design, logos, and typography.

Marketing Strategy & Communications:

- Created communication design assets both producing and directing vendors to produce videos, eBooks, social media assets, and digital ads, to name a few
- Guided over 15 clients in developing their MVPs, supporting them with product launches, including digital and in person events, podcasts, and services decks
- Worked with clients to develop or improve their marketing and content strategies across digital, social and activations having overseen over 100 content campaigns
- Experienced in digital ad buying and campaign management working with budgets \$30k+
- Created email marketing and social media campaigns, maximizing ROI thru strategic budgeting, collaborations, raising email open rates on average by 15%

Additional Consulting:

- Skilled in partnership development, having collaborated with over 50 private, governmental agencies and nonprofit institutions
- Experienced developing marketing and business strategies having consulted with over 80 clients, which resulted in a 70% success in their ROI
- Constructed and managed in person and remote teams ranging from 2-15 people
- Coached clients using human centered design to create tools to overcome barriers to meeting objectives
- Over two decades of experience with event production and management ranging from conferences, activations and concerts, from 100- 1000+ attendance



Aug 2022 - Present

Part-Time Faculty, Parsons School of Strategic Design and Management

- Designed an interactive and case study-based curricula to teach the fundamentals of strategic design, and critically reflect on design research, design thinking, business strategy and innovation
- Anchored in a Freirian and Socratic approach, I guided student's leadership and facilitation skills, social/emotional knowledge, and core principles of listening and rapid iteration
- Built and taught a BBA course 'Design for Social Innovation' at New School, teaching design thinking and human-centered design where students researched and prototyped solutions for social issues like increasing student composting, student loneliness, and mental health services for non-English speakers.

Nov 2021-Oct 2022

Director of Communications, Equipundo

- Developed the process and led the organization's rename and rebrand through a co-creative process, which also included a website redesign, all of which was accomplished in under six months and involved over 60 internal and external stakeholders
- Oversaw \$500k+ annual department budget
- Co-created and launched the processes and tools to streamline interdepartmental workflows and project management
- Managed partnership relationships with public, private organizations, and funders, such as P&G, UNFPA, L'Oreal, UN Women
- Rebuilt the comms department, content strategies, outputs, and new staff hires and contractors
- Launched and oversaw the social digital marketing strategy, including an instagram organic growth rate of 5k% in three months and an average email open rate of 28%

Jan 2013 - March 2020

Marketing Director and Consultant, Dub-Stuy Records

- Starting as a consultant, leveraged the *Culture Incite* communications strategy, where I lead workshops with staff to develop the brand's core values, which were adapted to content strategy and business outputs
- Email campaign design and management securing an average open rate of 32% open-rate
- Lead the success of the brand's social media growth from 0-45k, mostly organically through a dynamic content strategy
- Supported business development opportunities, including partnerships with local and international brands such as Red Bull, Boiler Room, the Lot Radio
- Authored design briefs for albums, events and products
- Expertise in campaign evaluation, including monitoring and reporting
- Event design and planning, including ticket sales strategy, co-managing the brand's 15k watt sounds system, as well as event programming/lineup, partnerships and activation
- Experienced in press and PR partnerships, including the Wall St. Journal, NPR, Vice, Red Bull Music Academy



Jan 2010 - Jan 2011

Marketing and Ad Account Associate, Wax Poetics Magazine

- Coordinated online digital marketing, including managing content and advertorial social media content
- Supported and tracked marketing and ad campaigns by creating and managing an Excel reporting dashboard
- Created integrated advertising campaigns for ad buyers
- Collaborated on ad activations with brands, such as Makers Mark
- Helped with activation event production, including set up, run of show and performer coordination

VOLUNTEER WORK

Sep 2022 - Present

Commissioner, New York City Mayor's Office on Gender Equity

- One of 32 appointed commissioners to the NYC Mayor's Office on Gender Equity, working to expand and increase safety and inclusivity, every gender or sexual orientation
- Working group member on Communications, Reproductive Justice and Safety

June 2023 - Present

NYC Chapter Co-Lead, Bescy (Formerly Action Design Network)

- Responsible for co-leading the programming, organizing and facilitation the 501c3 NYC chapter, which consists of over 3,500K members, promoting behavioral science

EDUCATION

2018 - 2020

Masters Degree, Design for Social Innovation, School of Visual Arts

2003 - 2006

Bachelor's Degree, Ethnography and Political Economy, Hampshire College

SKILLS

Mixed qualitative methods, immersion, interviews, focus groups, facilitation, probes, experience design, graphic design, innovation, business consulting, operations design, project management, monitoring and evaluation, service design, strategic design, budget management, content strategy, marketing strategy, brand strategy, social media marketing, public relations, email marketing, seo, DEI, conflict resolution, team leadership, management, analytics, human centered design, system mapping, journey mapping, prototyping, Adobe Creative Suite, Google Suite, Microsoft Office, video editing