

Matthew Rudnicki

Brand Strategist, Writer & Creative Director

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Open to remote, hybrid, and travel

I find the truth inside an organization and turn it into work that sells. Over the past 20 years, I've built brands from scratch into national players (including one that grew to \$10.5M in 2 years), launched Amazon Essentials footwear, shaped the messaging behind a historic \$125M Vermont child care law, and created pivotal brand messaging for companies shortly before they were acquired. Researcher, interviewer, writer, and art director, with the taste to carry an idea from first insight to work that wins.

Experience

Founder & Creative Director

Brand Animism

2022 – Present · Burlington, Vermont

- **Let's Grow Kids:** Created the “Final Lap” messaging strategy that guided the campaign to pass Vermont's \$125M-a-year child care law (2023).
- **Learnexus:** Positioned an L&D startup for acquisition with a new brand platform and key tagline, “Learn Together.” Purchased by Cognota in 2026.
- **Ostosure:** Revived stalled clinical-trial recruitment with messaging built from patients' own language. Trials are now waitlisted, and “Bag? What bag?” is trademarked.
- **Domeworthy:** Renamed and repositioned a 40-year-old dome maker around the women who drive 90% of home-buying decisions. Wrote all copy and directed identity and web.
- **Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op:** Created the 50th-anniversary identity from 40+ years of archives, which led to a full rebrand now underway.

Also: commencement speeches for Vermont State University's president (four campuses) · naming for Abodefy, Camillo Group's online home marketplace · contributing writer for Hotel Vermont's 10th-anniversary book and HelloBurlington.com

Freelance Writer & Strategist

Solidarity of Unbridled Labour · Origin Outside

2021 – 2023 · Burlington, Vermont & Whistler, British Columbia

- **Dynapower:** Created “Connecting Power to Purpose,” unifying its clean-energy and industrial businesses. The company sold for \$580M less than two months after a full brand relaunch.
- **G.H. Bass Originals:** Wrote the legacy-driven brand strategy and the copy behind the Spring '22 campaign.

Designer & Brand Strategist

Faryl Robin

2016 – 2019 · New York, New York

- Landed the contract and helped establish **Amazon Essentials footwear**, directing a launch collection of about 20 styles, including a ballet flat that has sold 3M+ units with over 85,000 Amazon reviews.
- Partnered with Amazon leadership on strategy and rollout; also created products for Target, Anthropologie, and Free People.

Creative Director, NAYA

Caleres

2013 – 2015 · New York, New York & St. Louis, Missouri

- Reimagined a struggling eco-comfort line as a modern fashion brand, leading identity, campaigns, showrooms, and trade-show design.
- Cut operating costs 50% in 18 months, raised margins 15%, and opened Athleta, Bloomingdale's, and Urban Outfitters.

Founder & Creative Director, Freebird by Steven · Head Copywriter

Steve Madden

2011 – 2013 · New York, New York

- Created **Freebird by Steven** from scratch, the company's first luxury handmade line, and grew it to \$10.5M in 2 years, building the foundation for \$50M in sales by 2014 and its own chain of retail stores.
- Identified festival fashion before it went mainstream. Built every brand asset, set pricing, oversaw production, and opened 300+ accounts, including Bergdorf Goodman and Nordstrom.
- Wrote all Steve Madden marketing copy and directed the "Crashin' Fashion" video series with PAPER Magazine for New York Fashion Week.

Earlier

Director of Sales & Marketing

Matt Bernson · 2006 – 2010

Grew sales 150% through the financial crisis.

Creative Consultant

Madison Harding · 2015 – 2016

Key Account Executive

Betsey Johnson · 2011

Strengths

brand strategy
creative & art direction
copywriting & naming
research & interviews
campaign architecture
executive speechwriting
visual identity