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Darren Ray Cotton

Freelance Designer | 2.1 MDes (hons)

1 personal statement

A designer qualified in industrial product design with an extensive array of skills in graphics, online, retail, format development, branding and marketing. Excellent project management skills to supply a complete design solution, individually or as part of a team. Pursue a healthy lifestyle, support local fund-raising initiatives for local charities and a keen photographer with a love for travel.

2 career achievements

Jan 14 – Present

Freelance Designer | Cotton Ink

Freelance designer offering services in design and marketing to both existing businesses to support their growing needs as well as assisting the development of new business areas within several sectors including retail, graphics, print, online, signage, marketing and events.

Client Case Studies:

- **Everards Brewery Ltd | Jan 19 – Current:**

Cotton Ink started working for Everards after reviewing the artwork created for the Western Park Charity Beer Festival (Everards are the main festival sponsor) to help create and build a unified brand between their online presence, print and social media.

Duties, Responsibilities and Achievements

- **Print Media:**

Everards has a strong online brand however their print media styling did not reflect this style and Cotton Ink appointed to bring together the two elements to ensure the company presented an untied feel to the consumer. Initially starting with publications aimed at publicans who operate their public houses, after receiving very positive feedback, the styling update was rolled out with Cotton Ink leading all aspects of print marketing.

- **Online and Digital Content:**

With the print media styling resolved, Everards asked Cotton Ink to apply the new branding to their social media content which they use heavily to promote their brand, public houses and vacancies/opportunities. It was key that the feel linked closely with both the website and revised styling to reflect the brand.

- **Polar (UK) Ltd | Feb 14 – Current:**

Initially appointed by Polar to become a secondary design source to support their UK based marketing department but this relationship has grown to see Cotton Ink becoming the preferred and primary design service when they require bespoke branding.

Polar has a strong brand style which a designer is expected to work within but can be expanded upon to meet third party requirements (e.g. online retailers). This has allowed for creative input from Cotton Ink which has subsequently been incorporated in future guideline updates for global brand use.

Duties, Responsibilities and Achievements

- **Online and Digital Content:**

Over the past couple of years, Polar UK have been expanding their online presence including social media campaigns with celebrity endorsement and brand pages major on retails sites including Amazon, Argos, Up and Running and Wiggle. Monthly, Cotton Ink creates and supplies content for all Polar UK online activity offering a quick turn round- times to ensure maximum impact aligned with the demands of social media.

- **Print Media:**

Polar use a variety of different print media including adverts for big brand publications, information flyers for stores, competition advertisements, counter cards, pop-up banners, display stands and multiple page brochures to highlight products, services or features.

Cotton Ink created a new mini-brochure format with the Polar 'feel' whilst allowing them to communicate more information to interested parties. Due to their success, Polar UK created have created eight in the last year.

- **Sign Specialists Ltd | Jan 14 – Current:**

Sign Specialists are one of the oldest family run signage companies in the UK and work all over Europe on a wide range of projects including rolling programmes of refits for major retailers to bespoke one-off projects and events. Cotton Ink supports their internal design team on a wide range of design projects; this has included creating new brands, re-branding existing companies, office interior styling, creating signage proposals for roll-out programmes, designing furniture and display cabinets and interior design and also creating the artwork for one of UK largest events in a variety of sector, including retail, commercial, events, marketing and branding.

Other Notable Clients:

- **Haldex (UK) Ltd | Jan 15 – Jun 15:**

Designed and created the interior graphics for Haldex's new offices at Mira, Hinckley including working closely with the signage supplier to project manage the install. As part of the project Cotton Ink also created artwork from their products which was framed and installed around the building.

- **TEK Retail Ltd | Feb 14 – Current:**

Drafting and design services covering the retail sector and creation of promotional brochures and case study information for use with prospective clients.

Feb 05 – Dec 13

LloydsPharmacy Ltd (Part of the Celesio Group)

One of the UK's largest Pharmaceutical chains with an annual turnover of approximately £1 billion.

Positions:

Aug 12 – Dec 13: Lead Retail Designer | Market Development

Feb 05 – July 12: Senior Pharmacy Designer | Property & Development

Employed originally as the Senior Designer heading up a small team focused on the company's re-branding programme across the estate.

Duties, Responsibilities and Achievements

- **Store format design:**

2013 | Heavily involved in store design layouts for the new look and feel of Lloydspharmacy.

2012 | Developed 'Pop-Up' Pharmacies concept winning the tender for the Olympic park.

2011 | Developed the Health Village concept stores being trailed in London.

2009 | Designed LloydsPharmacy's first concession within Selfridges & Co on London's Oxford High Street.

2
career
achievements
continued

Oct 03 – Jan 05

Silver Knight Exhibitions Ltd (Mice Group PLC)

Large independent exhibition and shop-fitting company with an annual turnover of approximately £80 million.

Position:

Exhibition Designer

Working as part of a small team to design and develop exhibition stands, museums and shop fit outs. Clients include Volkswagen, Mitsubishi, Liverpool Natural History Museum and Harrods.

Aug 01 – Sep 02

Catering Design Group | Industrial Placement

Industrial placement undertaken with a small design consultancy primarily concerned with the design of commercial catering facilities. Yearly turnover £4.8 million.

Position:

Junior Designer

Engaged as part of a small design team to provide design solutions for a range of clients which included Wedgwood Potteries and Napier University (Edinburgh).

3
academic
qualifications

Sept 10 – Jun 11

City & Guilds in Photography (Level 2)

Passed with a Distinction in all four modules, receiving 100% in each

Apr 10 – Aug 10

City & Guilds in Photography (Level 1)

Passed with a Distinction

Oct 04

CITB Managers Health and Safety

Construction Industry Training Board Managers Health and Safety Site Management

1999 – 2003

MDes Industrial Product Design | Coventry University

Masters of Design 2:1 Hons

1997 – 1998

Foundation in Engineering | Coventry University

1995 – 1997

A-levels | Nicholas Chamberlain Sixth Form College

Technology (A) / Biology (C) / Geography (D)

1991 – 1995

GCSE's | Nicholas Chamberlain Comprehensive School

10 (A* - C) subjects including English, Mathematics, Science, Design & Technology and Art & Design

4
additional
information

Skills Summary

- Experienced user of a variety of graphics applications, to include:
Adobe: Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign and Muse / AutoCAD / CorelDraw
- Advanced user of Microsoft Office including Word, PowerPoint, Excel and Outlook
- Clear and effective presentation skills with the ability to generate interactive media
- Ability to manage and prioritise own and team member workloads

Outside Interests

- Enjoy a healthy lifestyle and take part in mountain biking, squash and swimming, as well as regular gym user
- Interested in photography including a taking a qualification to improve technique with a range of images being used by the National Trust
- Support a charity beer festival which raises funds for good causes in and around Leicester.
- Keen traveller always looking to experience different cultures both inside the UK and further afield to places including Romania (Transylvania including the Ice Hotel), Germany (Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt, Romantic Road), France (Paris), Spain, Italy (Rome, Sardinia, Riviera, Milan), Greece, Belgium to list a few
- Interested in architecture, both modern and antiquity

Available upon request.

5
references