

Michael R. Nelson

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Thirteen years of design experience gathering customer information and translating their needs into innovative design strategies. I have experience in many different design disciplines developing solutions for products, environments, graphics, and digital experiences. My online portfolio (<http://www.Michael-R-Nelson.com>) shows numerous examples of successful projects (examples of recent work with Home Depot available upon request).

Skills include: Design strategy and innovation process, new product development, industrial design, environment design, packaging design, voice of the customer research, marketing communications, retail merchandising, customer experience design, consumer trend forecasting, brand licensing, art direction, web design, graphic design, UX design, sketching, 3D rendering, exhibit & retail design.

MBA – Mercer University, B.S. Industrial Design – Georgia Tech

Professional Experience

2011 – Present

Industrial Design Manager - The Home Depot

Atlanta, Georgia: Home Depot is the world's largest home hardware retailer. I am embedded in the private label group developing product for Home Depot's 18+ private label brands across the store. We execute many different beneficial strategies using the creative design process ranging from gross margin enhancement through supplier disintermediation to sales lift through product enhancements.

Notable Accomplishments:

- Founded the Industrial Design Department in Home Depot and successfully developed an internal design business that is contextualized and implemented uniquely to fit Home Depot's culture.
- I am the qualitative voice of the customer research expert and built various research capabilities new to the department.
- I drive the conversation on innovation for the private label group and routinely speak on the topic of creativity to various groups around Home Depot.
- Successfully grew the industrial design team inside Home Depot's private label group; Our product designs sold more than \$758 Million of product in 2015 (planned to surpass \$1 Billion in annual sales in 2017).
- Responsible for creating, implementing and policing the Husky visual brand language for Husky hand tools. This visual re-branding and increased attention to product quality and ergonomics has contributed greatly to a product line that has out-competed the department as a whole and increased its net promoter score with HD associates.
- Established a world-class, unique product color quality control process that increased product color accuracy and was scalable for Home Depot's vast and variable supply chain.

2009 – 2011

Marketing Communications and Industrial Design - Cooper Wiring Devices

Peachtree City, Georgia: Cooper Wiring Devices manufactures lighting controls and commercial/industrial electrical equipment. I was responsible for all phases of creative development supporting new product introductions. I contributed industrial design concepts, develop brand and messaging strategies, and produced high quality web, print, and merchandising communications. I am also responsible for serving all creative needs for the largest customer Lowe's providing them with associate training tools and supporting all merchandising efforts.

Notable Accomplishments:

- Re-designed Cooper Wiring Device's lighting controls merchandising bay for our customer Lowe's; The retail set increased sales \$5 Million dollars annually across all Lowe's stores in a market when competitors were either flat or declining.
- Art directed & project managed the creation of 600 page Arrow Hart catalog. When I took over the project, it was behind schedule and not meeting management's expectations. After re-scoping the timeline, and making design changes, the design team I put together went to print on schedule, impressed our customers, and aided in an easier shopping experience.
- Contributed utility and design patent worthy industrial design work on numerous projects that significantly improved the viability of the product. The industrial design work for the QuickGrip product significantly altered the course of the project and received notice from Lowe's who ultimately picked up the product, increasing the annual production demand by 10 fold.
- Developed social media strategy for entire organization.

2007 – 2009

Industrial Designer – Cooper Lighting

Peachtree City, Georgia: Cooper Lighting manufactures lighting fixtures and related products for indoor and outdoor use. Responsible for a variety of new product development tasks including customer research, product development strategy, concept sketches, sketch models, visual prototypes, user interfaces design and 3D renderings for use in all phase of the DMEDI stage gate process leading toward the creation of innovative and unique products.

Notable Accomplishments:

- Served as the lead industrial designer for Cooper Controls (a division within Cooper Lighting), for new line of commercial occupancy sensors (36 SKUs). The Senior Marketing Manager called the family of products a “series of home runs.” Customer research preferred our new designs 8-to-1 over competitor’s products and usability testing showed that our scene control products increased user accuracy by 8 fold over our competitor. The occupancy sensor won a platinum ADEX award in 2011 for design excellence.
- Developed innovative LED lighting concepts.
- Specialist at collecting voice of the customer research. Responsible for writing online surveys, scripting focus groups, and conducting onsite ethnography to gain greater insight into customer preferences to drive innovation. Saved Cooper \$30K for each voice of the customer study conducted and improved the quality of the end data.
- Managed annual multigenerational product planning sessions.
- Created cross functional brainstorming sessions. Introduced new brainstorming methods that lead to an increased quantity and quality of ideas generated.

2005 – 2007

Lead Designer - Murphy & Orr Company

Forest Park, Georgia: Murphy & Orr designs, fabricates and installs custom museum interiors, environmental graphics, tradeshow exhibit, and interactive exhibits. I managed clients after acquisition and translated their needs and marketing objectives into high quality exhibits and environmental graphics. I designed every aspect of a project, from 3D exhibits and installations to the 2D graphics and dynamic touch screen interactive. After initial design I project managed the construction and installation of each project.

Notable Accomplishments:

- Elevated the quality level of design within the organization. Designed and project managed over \$3M in projects annually.
- Implemented innovative new audio-visual technology into in-house capabilities created a new revenue stream making my position a profit center.
- Managed largest existing client (West Virginia University) and generated \$200K in additional purchases in 2006 by providing extra project management attention and proposing additional projects.
- Took on project management tasks and raised on-time delivery of projects from 70% to 100%.

2003 – 2005

Principal Designer / Owner - Ninth Hour Design

Atlanta, Georgia: Design firm contracting to companies of various sizes to fulfill any of their creative services needs. I was responsible for all aspects of the business from client acquisition and management to completing high quality design work. The company offered services in retail design, graphic design, exhibit design, industrial design, web design, SEO, and user interface design.

Notable Clients:

- Smith Hanes Design: (Restaurant fixture and architectural detail design) Designed environment details for the Blue Eyed Daisy Bakery in the architecturally unique Serenbe community.
- The Coca-Cola Company: (Brand communications and product design) Worked with Coca-Cola's Worldwide Licensing Department. Created product designs and graphics applications for their licensed products. My specific area of focus was 'home/kitchen' product lines; client liked the graphics program so much they extended the program to the 'back to school' product.. Assisted in the creation and preparation of the consumer trend forecasting report for 2006.
- Miller Zell: (Retail design) Lead designer in preparing design and strategy for new store fixture designs, and graphic signage layout for Blue-Linx (a Georgia-Pacific Company). The designs successfully gained Miller Zell business from the company.
- Mr. Bar-B-Q: (Product design) Developed new line of spatulas and lighters for high end market.
- Daydream Holdings: (Product design) Lead designer in product concepting that successfully licensed product ideas to the Advantus Corporation (an office product distributor).
- Bella Cucina Foods: (Graphic design and direct marketing) Designed and implemented an e-marketing campaign promoting their trade show attendance resulting in a 30% increase in exhibit traffic.

Education

MERCER UNIVERSITY

Atlanta GA

Masters in Business Administration
Focus in Marketing

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Atlanta GA

BS Industrial Design
Graduated with Highest Honors

Computer Skills

- Adobe Creative Cloud
- Illustrator + Indesign + Photoshop
- Dreamweaver + Flash
- After Effects + Premier Pro
- Microsoft Office
- Microsoft Project - Roadmap
- SolidWorks (certified in SW Essentials, Surfacing, Advanced Assembly, and Advanced Parts)
- Sketchbook Pro
- HTML + CSS

Honors / Activities

- 2011 ADEX Platinum Award Winner
- Received Georgia Tech's President's Undergraduate Research Award 2001-2002; research published by the IDSA
- Re-occurring speaker at various Management and Industrial Design classes at Georgia Tech.
- Elder at Crosspointe Church in Peachtree City – I oversee general church and budget decisions, perform pastoral care and preach several times per year.
- Fayette County Young Life Volunteer and Team Leader for nine years – Sandy Creek and Starrs Mill High School