

SHAWN VAN DAELE

BRAND, CREATIVE, COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING LEADER

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EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Executive brand, creative and communications leader with 25+ years building brands, teams, businesses and audience experiences across consumer, healthcare, nonprofit, fundraising and entrepreneurial environments. A rare strategy-to-execution operator who identifies the business problem, shapes the narrative, earns executive and Board alignment, leads multidisciplinary teams, builds scalable systems and remains hands-on in the work. Combines commercial instinct, creative judgement, human-centred storytelling and operational discipline to turn ambiguity into distinctive ideas, measurable growth and consistent delivery.

SELECTED CAREER EVIDENCE

END-TO-END LEADERSHIP • Moves from business problem and audience insight through strategy, narrative, concept, execution and measurement. • Equally credible in the executive room, leading a team or personally shaping the work.	COMMERCIAL & AUDIENCE IMPACT • Built a \$1.5M multi-studio business, a 300K+ combined audience and campaigns that materially outperformed goals. • Connects brand and creativity to acquisition, fundraising, conversion, reputation and customer experience.	SCALE, TRUST & RANGE • \$3B+ in fundraising impact across healthcare, nonprofit, education and community campaigns. • Led teams of up to 20 across 18+ brands and 50+ mission-driven organizations; advised CEOs, executives and Boards.
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CORE EXPERTISE

BRAND & NARRATIVE • Brand strategy, positioning and architecture • Visual and verbal identity systems • Executive messaging and presentations • Integrated campaigns and storytelling	CREATIVE & CHANNELS • Design, writing, art direction and photography • Digital, social, web, email and content • Packaging, retail, e-commerce and events • Fundraising and donor communications	LEADERSHIP & GROWTH • Team, function and capability building • Commercial, audience and revenue growth • Creative operations, AI and automation • Executive, stakeholder and partner alignment
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Marketing & Communications Manager <i>Chai Lifeline Canada North York, ON</i> • Led a four-person team and the integrated brand, marketing, communications and creative function for a national charity, connecting executive priorities, donor growth and family-centred storytelling across every major channel. • Conceived, wrote, designed and delivered the inaugural Rosh Hashanah Meal Program campaign across direct mail, print, email, organic social and paid media, generating \$140K+ net against a \$40K goal. • Built segmented acquisition, onboarding and stewardship journeys across Mailchimp, Constant Contact, Salesforce, Feathr and Blackbaud, strengthening audience experience while improving repeatable delivery. • Created executive messaging, donor communications, digital content and reusable AI-enabled workflows that accelerated production while protecting brand and editorial standards.	2025-2026
Creative Director <i>Ascend Fundraising Solutions Toronto, ON</i> • Led a five-person creative team while directing strategy, narrative and execution across 20+ nonprofit, healthcare, education and community accounts throughout Canada and North America. • Led creative strategy and execution for seven-figure fundraising campaigns, with recommendations influencing investment across television, digital, direct mail, print and out-of-home media. • Created cases for support, integrated campaigns, annual reports, donor journeys, brand systems and executive presentations for major healthcare, nonprofit, education and community organizations. • Personally developed pitch decks, strategy documents and creative concepts, travelling across Canada to present and defend integrated communications strategies to CEOs, executive teams and Boards. • Helped secure major healthcare and nonprofit partnerships, including SickKids, Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation and Tim Hortons Foundation Camps.	2021-2023

Director, Marketing, Communications & Design

2019-2021

St. Joseph's Hospice of London | London, ON

- Served as the organization's central brand and communications leader, partnering daily with the CEO and cross-functional teams to align reputation, fundraising, community engagement, clinical priorities and family experience.
- Independently rebuilt the organization's low-converting website around four clear actions: Give Help, Find Help, Contact Us and Donate, reducing friction and improving access for families in crisis.
- Created the enduring brand platform "We are here for you...because of you," strengthening community ownership, emotional connection and donor engagement.
- Drove substantial website, social audience and donation growth by simplifying digital journeys, strengthening the narrative and integrating web, social, email, print, events and media around clear audience actions.
- Partnered with culinary staff to launch a practical YouTube series supporting bereaved people learning to cook after loss.

Founder, Creative Director & Photographer

2009-2021

Shawn Van Daele Photography / Creative Studio | Ontario

- Founded and scaled a two-studio creative business to approximately \$1.5M in annual revenue, owning strategy, operations, marketing, sales, talent, customer experience and creative quality across Toronto/Milton and Cambridge.
- Led a 20-person team comprising 14 photographers, two studio managers and four editors, delivering up to 750 shoots annually.
- Built the complete commercial engine, including brand positioning, audience development, lead generation, paid media, publicity, partnerships, referrals, sales conversion and portfolio strategy.
- Established a distinctive photographic style and production system that drove referral growth, repeat demand and consistent client experience across two markets.

Creative Director, Marketing & Brand

2005-2009

Jarden Consumer Solutions / Newell Brands | Canada / International

- Led and mentored a 4-6 person creative team responsible for international brand, packaging, retail marketing and product-launch execution across an 18+ brand portfolio.
- Served as final creative authority across packaging, shelf talkers, end-caps, point-of-sale materials, product photography, food styling and internal documentation.
- Directed national campaigns and product launches for major brands including Crock-Pot and Coleman, translating commercial priorities into distinctive customer experiences for Walmart, Costco, Home Depot and Canadian Tire.
- Managed outsourced photographers, food stylists and regional translators while coordinating manufacturing partners in China across time zones, languages, legal requirements and production schedules.

Professor, Advanced Photoshop

2018-2020

Fanshawe College | London, ON

- Taught third-year students advanced compositing, retouching, image-making and professional creative judgement.
- Built practical assignments and critiques connecting technical execution to concept, audience and portfolio readiness.

DISTINCTIVE WORK & CREDENTIALS

GLOBAL STORYTELLING & CRAFT	WRITING & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP	TEACHING & GOVERNANCE
• Founded the self-funded Drawing Hope Project, transforming 62 children's drawings into cinematic photographic realities under "Anything Is Possible." • Earned international media attention through original concept, photography, writing, compositing, production and rollout.	• Published Life in Detox, a #1 Amazon bestselling book created from concept through writing, design and launch. • Brings equal strength in long-form narrative, brand voice, campaign copy, executive messaging and visual expression.	• Advanced Photoshop professor who developed creative judgement, critique skills and portfolio readiness in emerging designers. • Board Member, Big Brothers Big Sisters St. Thomas-Elgin, contributing governance, communications and community-impact perspective.

LEADERSHIP & FUNCTION-BUILDING

SETS THE DIRECTION • Clarifies the business problem, audience, positioning, narrative and creative opportunity before activity begins. • Builds executive confidence through sound judgement, persuasive rationale and clear decisions.	BUILDS THE FUNCTION • Creates teams, standards, templates, workflows, vendor networks and AI-enabled systems that scale quality. • Develops people through expectations, coaching, critique and practical ownership.	MAKES THE WORK REAL • Remains fluent and credible across writing, editing, design, art direction, photography, presentations and production. • Connects every deliverable to audience experience, organizational goals and measurable impact.
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TECHNOLOGY & DELIVERY TOOLKIT

CREATIVE & EXPERIENCE • Adobe Creative Cloud and Figma • Art direction, design and photography • Presentation and brand systems • Content, editorial and production craft	PLATFORMS & DELIVERY • CMS, CRM and email platforms • Social, digital and paid publishing • Microsoft 365 and collaboration tools • Campaign, vendor and workflow management	AI & TRANSFORMATION • AI-enabled research, strategy and drafting • Content adaptation and versioning • Automation and workflow acceleration • Human-led judgement and quality control
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EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bachelor of Arts, Communications & Design | OCAD University | 1997-2000
Diploma, Graphic Design | Fanshawe College | 2001-2004
Artisan & Sourdough Bread Program | San Francisco Baking Institute | 2020
Certifications: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion | Smart Serve | Food Safety Certification

COMMUNITY & ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS

Board Member, Big Brothers Big Sisters St. Thomas-Elgin (since 2022)
Chosen Committee Member, Aprons in Action, Diabetes Canada | 2026
Published author and #1 Amazon bestselling author of Life in Detox