

# Ben Hays

## Creative Technologist & Senior Front-End Engineer

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## About

A front-end lifer with 20+ years in the digital arts. I craft sites, UIs, and experiences that look rad and perform like champs. With a sharp eye for detail, I specialize in elegant animations, refined design, and front-end magic using React, HTML, CSS, and modern tooling.

## Skills

**Frameworks & Libraries:** React, TypeScript, Vue, Angular, Svelte, GSAP, PixiJS, Tailwind, SCSS, Shopify Liquid

**Design & Optimization:** Figma, Photoshop, Illustrator, Sketch, ImageOptim

**Tooling & Workflow:** Vite, Webpack, Storybook, GitHub, Netlify, Postman, Jira

**Back-End Familiarity:** Node, Express, Ruby, Rails

**Accessibility & Testing:** Axe, WAVE, Lighthouse, Jest

## Work History

### Senior Software Engineer | Kajabi

Irvine, CA | Oct 2013 - Dec 2024

- Joined as one of the first 10 employees and wore almost every hat available. I led and contributed to projects across the development, marketing, theming, growth, and UX teams as the company scaled up
- Created 10+ distinct versions of Kajabi's marketing site, evolving with each major product iteration and launch
- Developed the core templates and theming system powering landing pages, digital product, websites, and email templates, supporting thousands of customers and millions of live page variations
- Created Kajabi's first UI design system framework, lovingly nicknamed "Benstrap", and helped scale through multiple generations as the team and platform grew
- Delivered custom-built sites, products, pages, and emails for Kajabi's highest-profile customers. I was the go-to for last-minute launches, brand-sensitive builds, and one-off marketing asks
- Led front-end development for a vendor marketplace app connecting users with trusted pros. The app features messaging, authentication, AI-powered project briefs, onboarding flows, A/B testing, payouts, and more

### Senior Engineer | Hooky Interactive

Santa Monica, CA | Jul 2008 - Jun 2013

- Brought major entertainment brands to the web with interactive projects for Disney (Finding Nemo, The Muppets, Winnie the Pooh), South Park, and Mickey Mouse at mickeymouse.com
- Built the South Park Avatar Creator app for iOS and web, and launched the promotional site for their first video game, The Stick of Truth
- Created interactive campaigns and mini-games for FOX series like The Simpsons, Glee, Human Target, and 24
- Developed a fully interactive 3D website for U2's 360° Tour
- Delivered campaign sites for major brands like Kia, DreamWorks Animation, K-Swiss, Honda, Lexus, and Energizer
- Produced dozens of animated banner ads that stayed on-brand and hit performance targets, across a wide range of clients and formats. Remember 30kb size restrictions?
- Focused on pushing browsers to their limits in a pre-React era, using Flash, ActionScript, JavaScript

### Designer | Studio 318

San Diego, CA | Mar 2007 - Jun 2008

- Created print and digital collateral for clients like Jazzercise and Irvine Company, covering everything from apartment brochures to retail marketing campaigns
- Designed and laid out catalogs, flyers, and internal materials using InDesign and the full Adobe Creative Suite
- Delivered clean, on-brand work across multiple industries like hospitality and residential, balancing creative direction with production-ready precision
- Took silver in the company ping-pong competition. It was out of 3 people. Still counts

## Education

### The Art Institute of California

San Diego, CA | 2005 - 2007

- Studied Graphic Design and Illustration. Left early to pursue a full-time role in design and development. I ended up learning more on the job than I ever could in a classroom