

Ryan Underwood

Design Lead | Systems and Brand

Current Responsibilities

Design Responsibilities:

- **Social Media Tiles:** Create social media graphics and visual content for various platforms.
- **Product Pages:** Design and update product pages to enhance user experience and engagement.
- **Print Materials:** Design print collateral such as brochures, flyers, and posters.
- **Emails:** Design email templates and campaigns, ensuring they are visually appealing and functional.
- **PowerPoint Presentations (PPT):** Create visually engaging PowerPoint presentations for internal and external use.
- **eSuite Publications:** Design assets for eSuite publications, ensuring they align with brand guidelines and design standards.
- **Blog Posts:** Design blog post graphics, images, and other visual elements to complement written content.
- **Interior Web Pages:** Design and maintain web page layouts, ensuring they are visually consistent with the brand and user-friendly.
- **Marketo Landing Pages:** Design and build landing pages within the Marketo platform, optimizing them for conversion and usability.
- **Email Testing:** Build emails and test them through Litmus to ensure compatibility across various email clients (such as Outlook, Gmail, etc.), ensuring cross-platform functionality.
- **Reports and White Papers:** Assist with the design of PDF reports, white papers, and case studies to ensure they are visually engaging and easy to navigate.

Design System Responsibilities:

Design:

- **Figma Design Iterations:** Design and iterate on existing Kentico templates within Figma to refine and improve user experience.
- **Marketo Page Blocks:** Design custom page blocks for Marketo, creating reusable components for future campaigns.
- **Social Tile Templates:** Design and build social media tile templates within Figma, optimizing them for different platforms and campaign needs.
- **Pattern Development:** Design and build novel design patterns for campaigns that do not yet have templated designs, ensuring consistency and scalability across all platforms.
- **Display Ad Templates:** Design and develop display ad templates in Figma for both standard and rich media ad formats.
- **Exploring New Design Patterns:** Research and explore new design patterns to evolve the visual language of the brand and stay ahead of design trends.
- **Email Design System (DS):** Design email sections and templates for the upcoming Email Design System to speed up email development and iteration.

Development:

- **Marketo Landing Page Blocks:** Continuously build and refine reusable components for Marketo landing pages to streamline design and development processes.
- **Email Development Framework:** Work on developing a robust HTML/CSS framework to speed up email development, making the process more efficient and consistent.
- **Jekyll Framework for Marketo Pages:** Build an HTML/CSS framework using Jekyll for the development of Marketo landing pages, minimizing the need to rebuild blocks and improving speed.
- **Exploring New Libraries and Code:** Research new design libraries and code exercises that can be incorporated into the design system to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of designs.

Documentation:

- **Zeroheight Documentation:** Use Zeroheight to document design templates, components, and visual language guidelines, ensuring consistency across all design work. This documentation serves as a source of truth for both marketers and designers.
- **Building a Living Document:** Maintain a living document that serves as an onboarding resource for new team members and external partners, helping everyone quickly get up to speed with the brand's visual language and design systems.
- **Anatomy Charts for Templates:** Create anatomy charts for each template, clearly showing the structure and functionality of each component. Provide examples to clarify usage and mitigate revision requests.
- **Cross-team Education:** Foster education across teams (designers, marketers, etc.) to ensure that all members understand and properly utilize the brand's visual language.

Other Responsibilities:

- **Internal Audits:** Reach out to team members for internal audits of design work to identify gaps or areas for improvement within the current version of design systems or templates.
- **Weekly Updates and Training:** Provide regular updates and training to the team, including participating in weekly traffic calls to ensure everyone is aligned and informed.
- **Design Silo Audits:** Review and audit various silos of design (print, digital, product) to identify emerging design patterns, adding them to the roadmap for future inclusion.
- **Quality Assurance:** Conduct quality assurance (QA) on templates, components, and patterns to ensure they meet design specifications and function properly, helping designers move from 80% completion to final output with minimal revisions.
- **Research Best Practices:** Continuously research design best practices to drive adoption of the design system across teams and improve its effectiveness.
- **Competitive Research:** Research competitors and other design systems to compare approaches, identify trends, and implement industry best practices within our own design system.

Responsibilities Better Suited for a Junior Designer

Social Media Tiles

I can delegate the creation of social media tiles to a junior designer. This task usually involves high-volume, deadline-driven work, and the designer can follow our brand guidelines to create consistent graphics for posts, promotions, and campaigns.

Product Pages

I can have a junior designer assist with standard product pages, focusing on layouts, styles, and images. They may need some guidance, but they can handle the design of more templated, less complex pages.

Templated Print Materials

For print collateral such as white papers, reports, a junior designer could execute the designs based on existing concepts, ensuring they align with the brand's visual identity. This is often a more straightforward task.

Blog Posts

Junior designers can support the creation of blog post graphics by using pre-existing templates and visual guidelines. This is usually a quick turnaround task that doesn't require much strategic input.

Display Ad Templates in Figma (for growth)

A junior designer could also work on creating display ad templates in Figma. These templates are usually based on established formats, and they can handle resizing and ensuring consistency across different ad sizes and platforms.

Template Iterations and Refinements (for growth)

When it comes to iterating on existing templates, junior designers can refine and update designs, particularly for well-established designs or patterns. They can focus on adjusting layouts, typography, and other visual details.

Emails

Designing email templates and creating assets for emails is another task I could delegate. A junior designer can handle the visual aspects and even test emails through Litmus, but I would still provide oversight for more complex issues, such as ensuring cross-client compatibility.

Email Testing via Litmus

Testing emails through Litmus for compatibility across different clients can be delegated to a junior designer. They can flag any issues, and I can oversee troubleshooting and adjustments as needed.

HTML/CSS Framework for Marketo Pages (Assistance Role)

While the development of an HTML/CSS framework for Marketo pages is likely outside the scope of a junior designer, they could still assist with more basic tasks, such as coding predefined elements or making layout adjustments.

Responsibilities Better Suited for Senior or Lead Designers

Advanced Product Pages and Web Design

For more complex product pages or customized web designs, I would handle these myself. These require strategic thinking, attention to user experience, and a deep understanding of the brand's objectives, which are better suited for senior-level expertise.

Complex Print Designs

For more intricate and customized print materials, I would take the lead on these projects myself. Print design often involves a high level of detail, from layout to typography, and requires a deep understanding of the brand's visual language and messaging. These projects typically need strategic thinking to ensure the final product not only looks visually appealing but also effectively communicates key messages to the target audience. Given the need for precision and alignment with overall brand objectives, complex print designs are best handled by someone with senior-level expertise.

Email Design System (DS) Development

I would take on the responsibility of developing and evolving our email design system. This involves strategic thinking about email user experience, deliverability, and designing sections or components that will scale across multiple campaigns.

Exploring New Design Patterns

I would be responsible for exploring new design patterns that help evolve our visual language and align with emerging design trends. This requires a high level of creativity and insight into both our brand and the larger design landscape.

Building and Managing the Design System

I would manage the design system, which includes developing and maintaining reusable components, patterns, and templates. This is a strategic, ongoing task that ensures the system scales as our design needs evolve.

Developing and Maintaining Documentation

As the lead designer, I would oversee the creation and maintenance of comprehensive documentation for our design system. This includes detailing how templates and components should be used, and ensuring consistency across teams.

Quality Assurance and Audits

I would take the lead on quality assurance for our design components, templates, and patterns. This involves conducting audits to ensure everything functions as intended and aligns with our design standards.

Internal Audits & Feedback

I would lead internal audits of our design system and provide feedback to improve and refine our templates, ensuring they meet evolving business and design needs. This task requires a strategic understanding of both design and the organization's goals.

Cross-team Education and Training

I would be responsible for leading training sessions and educating other team members on how to use our design system, ensuring everyone is aligned with the brand's visual language and best practices.

Research and Best Practices

Researching design best practices, competitor strategies, and industry trends is something I would take on. I would ensure that our design system stays relevant and incorporates the latest techniques and tools to keep our design work at the cutting edge.

Summary

Junior Designer Tasks:

I could delegate more execution-focused tasks to a junior designer, such as creating social media tiles, email templates, blog post graphics, PowerPoint presentations, and assisting with basic web and print design work. These tasks often involve following established templates or guidelines with minimal need for strategic input.

Lead Designer Tasks:

As a senior or lead designer, I would handle the high-level, strategic aspects of the design process—developing the design system, refining and evolving complex web and product pages, leading research and development for new design patterns, and overseeing documentation and team education.

By delegating more routine tasks to a junior designer, I can free up my time to focus on the strategic growth and improvement of the design system, while also mentoring the junior designer to help them grow and develop their skills.

Design system contingencies

I would need to collaborate with Jen Troyer to determine which design system-specific tasks, if any, she would like to take on. Together, we can assess her priorities and areas of interest, and then develop a roadmap that aligns both print and digital design efforts. This will help ensure we create a more cohesive approach across both mediums, driving consistency and streamlining our workflow as we evolve the design system.