

# Zata Banks FRSA

*Brand specialist \* 17 years of career experience \* agency-side, client-side, and own-business experience  
Brand strategy \* brand management \* creative development and brand alignment with external agencies and internal teams  
Agency management \* employer branding \* recruitment marketing \* brand semiotics \* articulation of brand and design rationale  
Previous employers include **Boston Consulting Group, PayPal, Royal Mail**; agencies **FutureBrand, Heavenly, Bladonmore***

## Education

**University of Warwick (UK)**

**MA English Literature**

(Modernism; Psychoanalysis; Mythology; Poetry)

**BA (Hons) English Literature**

(Creative Writing; Film)

## Experience

**Freelance Brand Consultant**

*April 2021–present*

Contract roles include: Brand and Content Manager (Fintech); Brand Strategist/Content Strategist (agency retained team); Global Brand Strategist (Finance); Brand Advisor (Engineering).

## Career break

*London and Devon, 2019–2020*

I decided to take a one-year planned career break in 2019; when I began seeking employment in 2020, the virus happened.

**Royal Mail** ([www.royalmail.com](http://www.royalmail.com))

*April 2016–Oct 2018*

**Brand Manager** (*operating as a one-person 'Brand Department' for the whole of Royal Mail*)

Six months after joining, I became the one sole Brand person employed by Royal Mail. I managed brand-related activities of all kinds, championing the brand internally and externally, providing strategic recommendations, and delivering brand projects for the new CEO. (I started this role as a maternity cover contract; I left as a full-time employee following two company restructures.)

- **Brand Creative:** I provided creative guidance rooted in objective brand, design, and semiotic rationale to external agencies and to internal colleagues. I approved agency-produced creative assets, monitoring and aligning design standards and brand standards across the spectrum of brand creative expressions. I championed the importance of aligned and consistent brand expressions in all contexts. I led regular Brand Foundation, Brand Clinic, and Creative Review sessions with agencies including **LIDA, M&C Saatchi, OLIVER, FutureBrand, BrandStrutt, Thirty Three**.
- **Brand Centre online portal:** I maintained the online site where 30,000 users accessed visual brand assets.
- **Responsive Logo:** I delivered an audit and recommendation for a logo architecture sized from favicon to signage.
- **Brand Strategy:** I advised the leadership team on master brand positioning, purpose, and vision; master brand and sub-brand architecture; brand development; nomenclature and naming protocols; visual identity design language.
- **Digital Rebrand:** as the brand stakeholder, I provided brand and creative guidance for the master [royalmail.com](http://royalmail.com) website and the Shop site redesigns and relaunches. e.g. incorporating the colours of stamps as a secondary colour palette.
- **Pantone:** I personally initiated the formal official registration of the brand's iconic (501-year-old) 'red' colour with the Pantone Colour Institute, naming the colour *Royal Mail Red*. Inaugural colour standards (reference samples and colour values) were produced for Coated and Uncoated Stock, Plastic, Fabric, and Paint.
- **Uniform Audit:** After noticing inconsistencies in the appearance of the master logo on multiple garments, I personally initiated and led an inaugural audit of the entire uniform catalogue. This resulted in a new Logo Size and Position Design Language system for the uniform supplier for all existing garments, including guidance for future garment designs, ensuring consistency in the appearance of this important public-facing brand expression.
- **Photo Shoots:** I personally initiated and led a new photography partnership with LCC (London College of Communication) and I delivered 10 themed shoots. The new working model improved quality and decreased cost, and added value to society and education. I also created a new timing model, delivering one themed photo shoot each month instead of having one huge shoot every few years; this meant that it was possible to respond to live business needs.
- **PowerPoint and Email Templates:** design and implementation of consistent design layouts and formats.
- **Stationery redesign:** Redesign of all stationery including business cards, A4 letterhead, compliments slips, envelopes.
- **Budget:** I was personally responsible for a £500,000 annual budget for master brand projects.
- **Legal, IP, Trade Marks:** I personally managed all incoming logo licence requests and the annual trade mark renewals.

**Rannsóknasetri Háskóla** (University Research Centre in north Iceland near the Arctic Circle) *Dec 2015–March 2016*

**Researcher-in-Residence** (*residency award from NES Art Centre*)

I spent four months under the Northern Lights researching semiotics and communication theory. (Between jobs.)

**Bladonmore** ([www.bladonmore.com](http://www.bladonmore.com))

**Narrative Strategist / Brand Language Strategist** (*contract*)

*April 2015–Oct 2015*

Work included a large brand perception audit for **Macquarie**; linguistic concordance; brand positioning; proposition development; visual identity development; global messaging house modelling; architecture; narrative strategy. Workshops I personally designed and led: brand positioning; brand strategy; value proposition development; insight mapping.

Clients: **Macquarie, AIG, Rolls-Royce**; client pitch work for: **Macfarlanes, CNBC, Howden**.

**FutureBrand** ([www.futurebrand.com](http://www.futurebrand.com))

**Heavenly** ([www.weareheavenly.com](http://www.weareheavenly.com))

*various freelance contracts in 2014*

**Freelance Brand Strategist**

Brand strategy projects: brand audits; 'Brand Plus' development; positioning, personality, values, purpose; TOV; strategic development; brand reputation analysis; naming; comms planning; brand film storyboard transcreation.

Clients: **FutureBrand: Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park** (East Bank naming); **Hero. Heavenly: Miele; Dailymotion; OINK energy.**

**PayPal** ([www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com))

*May 2013–Jan 2014*

**Senior Brand Creative Manager, Global Agency Management**

I worked with external creative agencies and internal marketers to deliver powerful B2B and B2C creative assets. I was the single UK Brand contact for marketers and creative agencies for all brand expressions. Firstly, I approved the creative briefs that were written by the marketing teams, and then I worked together with the creative agencies to develop powerful creative materials that were aligned with the brand and brief.

- **Brand Approval:** I provided detailed feedback rooted in brand, design, and semiotic rationale, and I gave formal approval.
- **Brand Training:** I gave Brand training sessions externally and internally that were presented in a spirit of excellence.
- **Assets:** ATL, BTL, rich media, TV, emails, banners, microsites, display banners, print, events, POS, co-branding.
- **Creative Reviews:** I ran monthly B2B and B2C sessions sharing and analysing work in the contexts of brand and craftsmanship.
- **Creative Agencies:** I initiated a new system to raise the standards of creative work by introducing regular feedback sessions that were two-way discussions: how PayPal could be a better client; how the agency could deliver better work (Quality, Cost, Time). I ran quarterly agency reviews for seven agencies and these were productive meetings where I positioned myself as an ally.
- **Brand Projects:** rollout of new Visual Identity and photography; re-launch of the master PayPal app; UK launch of PayPal Here: a small device for SMEs that turns a mobile phone into a chip and pin machine; Digital Wallet: iterative prototype testing in shops in Richmond; EMEA Christmas Campaign (photo shoot and film shoot for rich media digital assets).
- I left PayPal in January 2014 because my department (me and 30 Creatives in the UK, and our EMEA equivalents) was disbanded due to a company restructure in San Jose, USA.

**Touch of Mojo** ([www.touchofmojo.com](http://www.touchofmojo.com)) branding agency

*July 2012–April 2013*

**Brand Strategist**

I delivered strategic projects for consumer and corporate clients working closely with the MD of this boutique agency.

- **Brand Strategy:** positioning, personality, essence, heritage, feeling, philosophy, TOV, promise.
- **Research:** I used consumer and stakeholder interviews to build territories and to create messaging hierarchies.
- **Brand TV Commercial and Brand Film:** 30-second Brand TVC and two-minute film for **Sudocrem**.
- **Brand Book:** brand guidance copywriting; working closely with designers on layout, look and feel.
- **Brand Strategy and retail space planning:** for an independent optician in Windsor.
- **Consumer Insights and NPD:** 'Inspiration Day' creative workshops; quant & qual consumer research for Sudocrem (£100K) & Café Direct (£10K). Insights and consumer typologies were developed to create brand communication strategies and NPD concepts. This included bespoke workshops and conversational exercises with specially chosen 'creative consumer' participants, which took place at 'Home' in Covent Garden, a space with one-way viewing mirrors.
- **Digital App design & build:** I personally project-managed an external app agency to deliver an app called *My BIC Notes* (for both iOS and Android) for the client (£125K).

Clients: **BIC Pens, Sudocrem; Allies & Morrison architects (nominated for the Stirling Prize); Café Direct; Voltarol (Novartis); Maxinutrition (GSK); Savlon (Novartis); dot digital; Camellia Tea; Eye Academy.**

**The Boston Consulting Group** ([www.bcg.com](http://www.bcg.com))

*Oct 2011–June 2012*

**EMEA Recruitment Brand Manager**

I operated as an "internal agency" for 24 EMEA offices, producing bespoke collateral and delivering strategic projects.

- **Brand Approval:** I approved marketing collateral and worked closely with a creative team in Vienna. Collateral included brochures, posters, advertisements, banners, emails, PPT aligned with corporate brand guidelines.
- **Brand Toolkit:** I wrote a 50-page Brand Handbook for local offices, and I invented (previously not existing) systems and templates (e.g. an interactive PDF form) to roll out the recently refreshed visual identity efficiently.
- **Brand Films:** I organised a two-day film shoot to produce a series of recruitment marketing films. I personally interviewed 17 women consultants, including Partners and Senior Partners.
- **Employer Brand Strategy Review:** As EMEA Recruitment Brand Manager, I was one of 15 global stakeholders at a two-day Employer Brand workshop in Frankfurt. Together with Partners and Senior Partners from around the world BCG'S 'Grow Further' Employer Brand positioning was explored.

**Sutton Young** ([www.suttonyoung.com](http://www.suttonyoung.com))

*Aug–Sept 2011*

**Brand Strategist / Creative Strategist**

Two months working at Sutton Young agency. Work included a piece of cultural history research for the Kings Cross redevelopment; project support for the on-site branding of two property spaces in Soho that were being redeveloped.

Clients: **Argent; Annington.** (I was in the BCG recruitment process when I joined; I left to accept the BCG job offer.)

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**Imperial College London**  
**Careers Consultant (part-time)**

Sept 2010–Feb 2011

I was employed by the Careers Department for three afternoons per week in the autumn term. I met with individual international students for 20-minute appointments. I provided feedback and guidance in relation to CV documents and application forms for graduate employers. This was a part-time role alongside the Graduate Elite business.

**Graduate Elite**  
**Founder and Director**

Nov 2007–Sept 2011

After leaving HotOnline, I decided to set up and run my own business: a marketing company specialising in employer branding and graduate recruitment marketing. The company published three annual career guides that were sent to UK and European universities (titled **Graduate Elite, Legal Elite, Business Elite**), and the company also delivered bespoke on-campus recruitment marketing and employer branding campaigns. Clients were Times Top 100 employers from many industry sectors. I personally sold the campaigns, winning new business from brand new clients, and building long-term business relationships. **There were over 50 corporate clients. Clients includes Barclays, Barclays Capital, FSA, HSBC, Santander, Standard Life, Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs, Slaughter & May, Ashurst, Pinsent Masons, Bain, McKinsey, Accenture, M&C Saatchi, FT, WPP, PwC, Citi, Oracle, Boots, Harrods, KPMG, TomTom, The Times, Economist, Ernst & Young, Channel 4, Lazard, Dresdner, Atos Origin, Pilkington, Bloomberg, Thomson Reuters, Civil Service, eFinancial, Meltwater, Corus, DESG, VT Group, Network Rail, Co-op, Cooper Industries, Centrica.**

**HotOnline** (bought by Trinity Mirror Digital Recruitment; [www.hotonline.com/www.tmdr.com](http://www.hotonline.com/www.tmdr.com))  
**Head of Sales for 'The Graduate' division**

Mar 2005–Nov 2007

I sold print and digital graduate recruitment marketing campaigns to corporate clients. Award for Best Newcomer 2005 (I personally delivered over £100K of revenue); promotions in 2006 and 2007. I managed a small team. Clients included: **Clifford Chance, Freshfields, Allen & Overy, Lovells, Orrick, Clyde & Co, TLT, Burges Salmon, AWE, RAF, Army, Navy, BAE, ExxonMobil, Shell, Nestle, Grant Thornton, RM, Arcadia.**

**The Independent**  
**Advertising Consultant**

Jan 2004–March 2005

Independent Educational Publishing (IEP) published a portfolio of careers magazines in association with The British Council. I sold advertising and advertorials to corporate clients and to postgraduate departments at universities.

**Selected additional experience during my spare time**

**PoetryFilm project in my spare time**

Jan 2002–Dec 2016

**Founder of a research film art project Arts Council funding for the full year Jan 2014–Dec 2014**

PoetryFilm is a creative project that I set up in 2002 in my spare time (alongside my full-time brand roles) in order to explore semiotics and multimodality through the poetry film art form. PoetryFilm was active for about 15 years. I have curated and presented 100 film screenings and events at venues such as Tate Britain, the ICA, Curzon Cinemas, CCCB Barcelona, and the South Bank Centre. In 2014, I received a five-figure grant from ACE (Arts Council England), which enabled me to spend a full year cataloguing the PoetryFilm archive of 1,000 art works, and to research semiotics. I have judged poetry film competitions in the UK, Ukraine, and Germany; I have presented guest lectures at the Royal College of Art, London Met University, and at the NFTS (National Film and Television School); I have presented a talk at the House of Lords, and events in Miami, Spain, and Iceland. PoetryFilm is one of the British Council's listed Experimental Film organisations and a part of the BFI Network, part of Film Hub London. The project relates to the discipline of branding in the contexts of language, meaning, semiotics, and perception.

- **Art commission award (£2,000) Ruskin Gallery:** Noble gas artwork (neon, glass tube typography). (2016)
- **Keynote Speaker at The House of Lords:** 'Creative Opportunities at the Intersections of Poetry and Film'. (2016)
- **Lecturer, University of Lincoln:** Lecturer and assessor for a Poetry and Film module, **BA Graphic Design**. (2016)
- **Lecturer, Royal College of Arts:** 'Meaning-Making: words-images-sounds', **MA in Visual Communication**. (2013)
- **Lecturer, London Metropolitan University:** Sessions about PoetryFilm, **MA in Creative Writing**. (Nov 10; Nov 12)
- **Lecturer, Hult Business School:** Session about **Branding for MBA** students. (March 2012)
- **Film Curator: Tate Britain, Curzon Cinemas, ICA:** 200 seats at the Tate Britain cinema sold out. (2006–2015)
- **Selected publishers:** Bloomsbury Academic; Three Rooms Press (New York); Eyewear Books; Kanal (Germany).
- **Memberships:** The Typographic Circle; Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

**Torquay Grammar School for Girls (Devon)**

**A-levels:** AAC

English; French; History

**GCSEs:** A\*A\*A\*A\*A\*A\*A\*AAA

English Language; Literature; French; German; Polish; Maths; History; Science; R.E.

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