



Ben Milligan

Personal Statement

At an early age I developed an appreciation for and dare-I-say addiction to joining the dots between people and different aspects of culture. From establishing neighbourhood book groups, to making mixtapes for my mates and from paying homage to Morrissey lyrics in English essays, to playing rough-hewn *Guns 'n' Roses* cover versions at school concerts and writing vitriolic gig reviews in student newspapers, I've always loved using my love of language and my curious, open mind and to open those of others. Over twenty years in the marketing communications field saw me doing that for a living – using innovative media channels, uncovering and harnessing cultural insights to drive change in attitudes, behaviours and businesses. Along the way I worked with pioneering practitioners, forward-thinking brands and ambitious colleagues; leading teams, uncovering fresh insights, solving problems and making award-winning work. However, I've never shied away from the chance to challenge myself, so having suffered from redundancy during lockdown, I decided to channel and develop my skills as a facilitator and inspirer of learning by becoming a trainee English teacher. Despite receiving plaudits for my classroom engagement and content delivery, I found the routines, processes and protocols outweighed the opportunities that I was hoping for to work with students and colleagues more closely. So now that I'm back in marketing, I'm looking for a meaningful role as part of a purposeful, culturally-connected team, where I have a fresh opportunity to use, develop and impart my skills as a creative communicator and 'dot-connector' to their full potential.

Work Experience

September 2020 – Present

Communications Strategy Consultant (Freelance)

I worked primarily with **Big Potato Games** (a board games business), **Futerra** (a sustainability strategy consultancy) and **Homeground** (a sports, entertainment and culture agency) using my experience and insights on a range of projects: from brand development and comms strategy, to briefings, workshops and pitches, for brands such as adidas, Guinness and COS.

September 2021 – October 2021

Trainee Teacher (Schools Direct) Secondary English

Keen to channel my experience and passion for language into a more purposeful and meaningful field, I took the plunge into teaching. From day one I was the lead English teacher across a number of classes in Year 7, 8 and 10: Planning, delivering and managing their learning through the curriculum-led scheme of work, dealing with behaviour management and all the related data and administration. After an exhilarating, exhausting but hugely rewarding half-term, I decided to return to the communications field and seek fresh opportunities within it.

February 2021 – July 2021

Key Worker, Southover Partnership (SEND School)

I worked closely with one student suffering from acute autism and depression, supporting his learning and engagement with lessons and the school community. My role was mainly an inter-personal one, helping my student develop and maintain the social skills and attitudes to support not only their day-to-day learning but their wellbeing and agency in wider society and later life.

February 2015 – September 2020

Iris Worldwide: Group Planning Director

An opportunity to bring all my experience and passion to bear in a truly integrated way. Having created effective and award-winning work for their most prized accounts (MINI and Domino's), I led the planning on Britvic and then became strategic lead at iris Culture, working across the agency's culture-focused clients, adding greater rigour and vision to elevate the work. Most recently I was leading the development of the agency's new Cultural Assets initiative, fusing cultural theory with provocative behaviour to create cultural properties for brands and develop their role as patrons in the world of culture, sports and entertainment. Highlights include:

Greatness (Domino's): Breaking category norms with a brand platform and behaviour that was commercially savvy and culturally-participative

No Fakers (adidas): A provocative call-to-arms to distance the brand and its advocates from the rest and give it a fresh voice in football culture

This Is Home (adidas/Arsenal FC): Launching the partnership and the new kit with an insightful, heart-warming rallying cry to the fans, just when the club needed it

Reimagine Sport (adidas): Fusing the brand's 'for creators' positioning with insights direct from influencers and sub-cultures to create a new voice in the category

Ready for Sport (adidas): Elevating a product truth and category-specific insight to create a culturally-resonant, positive cross-category platform when sport and its participants at all levels most needed it

June 2014 – February 2015

Wieden + Kennedy: Planning Director

At one of the most culturally and creatively-led agencies in London, I led the planning for Nike (Western Europe), Halls (Global, non-UK) and Trident (North America). It was a huge challenge to make a difference to their most famous and well-established client, whilst also applying my skills to global and non-UK clients for the first time. However, in a short space of time I brought fresh thinking, continued the agency's run of innovative, socially-led campaigns and helped lead renewed efforts to connect with different audiences across Western Europe.

February 2013 – May 2014

Saatchi & Saatchi: Planning Director

I arrived at the famous 80 Charlotte Street ('Look at me Mum!') to lead the planning on Toyota (GB), Asda and Kerry Foods. I worked on a number of new research, brand and campaign planning tasks, from effectiveness models to Asda's Christmas campaign, which forged stronger links with other agencies and senior clients on both pieces of business. Despite the new challenges, in a short space of time I became a pivotal member of the account teams, nurturing new planning talent, pushing the creative work beyond the traditional and added a valued new dimension to the planning department.

April 2010 – November 2012

Karmarama: Head of Planning/Planning Director

Having wanted to 'make ads' since I was about 14, I finally got the chance to join an 'ad agency'. My previous experience had taught me that culture and an independent progressive spirit was what excited me and in Dave Bonaguidi and Sid McGrath I found two kindred spirits and provocateurs I could learn a lot from. The move also enabled me to successfully develop my management skills and apply my varied planning experience at a more influential level. I learnt a lot about progressive brand planning techniques and developed and coached the planning department to apply these effectively across a broad range of clients and projects, including CRM, user experience and brand identity briefs. Key clients included Carnival Cruises, lastminute.com, Nintendo and Costa, winning a Marketing Week Effectiveness Award for both

April 2008 – April 2010

Holler Digital: Strategy Director

I joined this pioneering, independent agency to challenge my strategic thinking and leadership skills and give the emerging discipline of 'social media strategy' some much-needed rigour, vision and respect. In doing so, I was able to broaden and strengthen its role with existing clients, enrich the client portfolio into uncharted sectors and position the planning team as the central hub for all the agency's activities. Key clients included Channel 4, Kickers, Red Bull and the BBC, leading new product/service launches and category-innovating content initiatives.

November 2000 – April 2008

Naked Communications: Senior Strategist

When I was invited to join this ambitious, 'punk' 5-person start-up I couldn't say no. The industry was flat, media planning was becoming formulaic and we wanted to change things. When I left 8+ years later, we'd grabbed headlines, invented (or at least noisily-championed) a new discipline in 'comms planning', ruffled some feathers, won multiple awards, put on some great parties and become a global group employing over 150. As a founding member I helped shape the culture, worked in and led teams of varying size and was responsible for integrating and often leading the client's other agencies. Key projects and awards included Selfridges (Campaign Media Grand Prix and Campaign Of The Year 2001), The Government Central Office of Information (APG 2003 for Best Public Service Campaign and Special Creative Planning for Adult Sexual Health 'The Sex Lottery'), Tate Galleries (Cannes Gold Lion 2002) and Channel 4 (Marketing Week Effectiveness 2007, Cannes Media 2007 Shortlist and IPA Gold 2007)

1st October 2006 – Present

Family Music: Founding Partner

Set-up, self-funded and co-managed this online music consultancy and record club. This 'labour of love' was a steep learning curve and whilst the on-set of an actual family meant its scope is now reduced to mixes and radio broadcasts, it's an enjoyable outlet for my creativity, thirsty ears and relentless musical obsession.

5th July 1999 – 10th November 2000

Rocket (PHD): Media planner/buyer

We were a small, mischievous sibling to a bigger media agency and fresh out of uni, I loved the culture and energy of the team and the environment. My work involved developing and implementing innovative, multi-media plans on behalf of clients as such as Sci-Fi Channel, Terrence Higgins Trust, Eidos Interactive, EMAP Radio and Highland Distillers. It may have been my first job, but working with the inspiring and much-missed John Harlow gave me the courage to take risks and be creative regardless of the task, something I've tried to do ever since.

Education

1996-1999, Bournemouth University: BA (Hons) Advertising Management 2:1

1993-1995, Farnborough 6th Form: A-levels in English Lit (A), Business Studies (A), Maths (B)

References

On request