

Sterling

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Principle, Creative Director & Co-Founder



Sterling Strategic Advisor Branding

What compelled you to establish Principle?

Establishing my design studio in Houston was a natural progression, driven by the absence of a bold approach in the city's traditional design and marketing firms that are dominated by sectors like oil and gas. Intentionally building the firm client by client, I aimed to create an environment where creatives thrived, emphasizing a shared passion for meticulous design details. While the early landscape focused on specific projects, today, our role extends to shaping the holistic brand experience.

What is verbal and visual identity? What is the difference between what you do and marketing and advertising?

Principle views branding as a dual creative foundation encompassing verbal and visual identity. The verbal aspect articulates an organization's essence, values, and communication style both internally and externally. The visual identity translates this narrative into a comprehensive system of graphic elements. The synergy between verbal and visual elements forms a unified brand foundation, allowing for the creation of authentic materials. While Principle engages in marketing and advertising, our specialization lies in crafting the foundational brand scaffolding for a confident roadmap.

Why is having a clear identity important for nonprofit organizations?

A brand is a critical tool for clarifying what a nonprofit does, how it's special, and why it matters. Polished presentation builds confidence and trust in an organization's work. Not only does a resonant identity help a nonprofit to win new hearts; it also makes it much easier for the people already in its camp to align anew and champion their cause with conviction.

What nonprofit projects are you particularly proud of?

Selecting standout nonprofit projects is challenging, as each resonates uniquely with our team. The Houston Zoo rebranding pushed us into uncharted design territory. Developing the Southern Smoke Foundation/Festival brand brought joy, with post-handover success being particularly fulfilling. Collaborating with Sterling gives us pride, knowing our contribution empowers others in the nonprofit space.

What are you looking forward to in your role as a Sterling Strategic Advisor?

I am eager to contribute Principle's perspective to nonprofits who may be considering a brand reevaluation, assessing their communication effectiveness and the timing for a rebrand. I anticipate a collaborative approach, combining my expertise with other Advisors' strengths to enhance our impact and serve as a more formidable resource for Sterling and its partners.
