



Samantha Pontius

Brand Design Manager

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BRAND DESIGN MANAGER & PLACEMAKER

Elevated community engagement across high-profile mixed-use developments, including Amazon's HQ2 in Arlington, Virginia, by leveraging a placemaking approach to create vibrant, connected spaces. Expertise includes designing and executing impactful marketing campaigns, building brand identities, and fostering strategic community partnerships to strengthen relationships and enhance the sense of place. Led teams of up to 10 employees, driving increased foot traffic and overseeing creative development across various marketing channels, including social media, experiential marketing, digital campaigns, event planning, retail leasing, and tenant branding.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Gensler | Washington, DC

June 2021 - Present

Brand Design Manager

Global architecture, design, branding, and planning firm. Lean on background in real estate marketing and lead a real estate-focused brand practice. Manage 10 FTEs (graphic designers, copywriters) specializing in marketing strategy and branding of 12-15+ active projects in flight at all times. Operated in strategic partnership with high-profile clients, including Amazon, Nestle, Venture Realty, and Boston Consulting Group.

- **Envisioned new social media and activation strategies for new mixed-use development, Atlantic Park in Virginia Beach, a Venture Realty project.** Leveraged background in real estate development and marketing mixed-use destinations to energize stale social media management and community outreach.
 - Relaunched the property, showcasing retail leasing opportunities with elevated photography, graphic design strategy, branding, and marketing collateral.
 - Architected activation innovations during construction to alleviate neighbors' perception of the site. Brought placemaking to the area and planned partnerships with local artists and Food Truck Fridays with live music to connect the community.
- **Oversaw multiple brand projects and interior graphics for Amazon's HQ2 in Arlington, VA.** Taking on environmental graphic design, led delivery of this \$850K+ project, producing customized experiential graphics reflective of Amazon's brand across 22 stories and 2.1M SF.
- **Wove brand strategy into Nestle's headquarters (14 floors, 300K SF) in Arlington, VA and new 650K SF facility in Glendale, AZ.** Brought in Nestle's branding at intentional points throughout both locations, spearheading strategic leadership and brand management, and showcasing 2K brands.
- **Strategically influencing foot traffic and business promotion through digital marketing strategy, social media marketing, and community engagement,** built a reputation for strategic leadership and galvanizing vendors and creatives behind common goals.
 - Construction Specialties: Created marketing collateral, reimagining their product catalog and website design.
 - Charlotte Airport: Led brainstorming and developed a new space, the Overlook, complete with exhibits, graphics, and branding supporting the airport. Activated community relations and tourism.
 - Rosslyn BID: Planned integrated branding throughout the business district, adhering to accepted colors and logos. Seized opportunities to activate entry points and energize high-traffic areas.
 - Nemaocolin Resort & Turning Stone Resort and Casino: Added signage and new logos, elevating destination tourism brands.
- **Partnered with hundreds of clients across diverse industries** to navigate complex brand challenges, delivering strategies that aligned with business goals and transformed global brand identities.
 - Managed budgets exceeding \$3M and contributed to capturing \$1.8M in new revenue.
 - Ensured projects met deadlines, budgets, and client goals.
 - Fostered clear and effective communication with clients and oversaw vendor management.

JBG SMITH | Bethesda, MD

April 2017 - June 2021

Retail Leasing Associate & Marketing Coordinator

Real estate investment trust (REIT) in DMV specializing in mixed-use properties, including commercial, multifamily and retail assets. Initially began in marketing, playing a pivotal role in developing and executing marketing campaigns, projects, events,, and activations. Promoted in 2019 to lead retail leasing across all urban mixed-use developments.

- **Drove economic impact through destination marketing and retail development,** with the biggest retail leasing push at Amazon's HQ2.

Diligently evaluated potential value-added opportunities within the portfolio, including upgrading tenant mix and strategically repositioning commercial spaces to enhance overall value and performance.

- Reviewed and negotiated letters of intent, leases, and related documents to ensure clarity and fairness in agreements.
 - Crafted comprehensive merchandising plans for new developments and existing assets to optimize property presentation and appeal.
 - Scouted innovative retail concepts from other cities with the goal to attract unique tenants to our developments.
- **Added value to multiple communities with a rare mix of retailers.** Kept community engagement in mind and ensured existing tenants were satisfied, meeting their revenue objectives and leasing obligations.
 - **Created integrated marketing campaigns for diverse audiences,** attracting residents, businesses, and visitors. Balanced branding and messaging across mixed-use developments' residential, retail, office, and public space components. Conducted individual meetings with retail tenants to understand their unique challenges and identify opportunities for collaboration.
 - Led JBG SMITH's Artscape and Wayfinding Project in DC's Shaw Neighborhood: Focused on placemaking to elevate the community's identity and visibility. Organically branded Shaw while emphasizing key retail assets.
 - Partnered with retailers to design tailored holiday marketing campaigns, leveraging events and promotions to enhance visibility and attract customers.
 - Organized community-driven events and promotions to boost foot traffic, creating a vibrant shopping experience that benefitted both retailers and the surrounding neighborhood.
 - **Supported a companywide rebrand in 2017** during merger with Vornado as well as navigated transition from private to public company.
 - Redesigned the ICSC booth, serving as a traveling meeting space at industry conferences. Following the company's rebrand in 2017, elevated the space with creative touches and a modern, bright environment reflective of the brand and quality.

Retail Sports Marketing (RSM) | Charlotte, NC

August 2016 - April 2017

Account Executive

Sports marketing agency. Created experiential events and experiential marketing experiences for a single high-profile account, Stanley Black & Decker. Focused on brand activations embedded within the sales organization and developed turnkey programs executed across the world.

- **Executed marketing programs for Stanley Black & Decker,** responsible for ideation, creative design, budgeting, digital marketing strategy, and event planning. Exceeded the client's goals and expectations, orchestrating NASCAR, Walt Disney World Resorts, Major League Baseball, Professional Bull Riding, and music and entertainment events.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Marketing | Winthrop University (May 2016)

NCAA Division I Lacrosse

Semester at Sea Program through University of Virginia (2015)

KEY SKILLS

Real Estate Brand Strategy | Mixed-Use Development Marketing | Multichannel Marketing | Tenant Engagement Strategies | Brand Positioning | Community-Centric Branding | Destination Marketing | Competitive Market Analysis | Social Media Strategy | Content Marketing | Public Relations | Digital Marketing Campaigns | Email Marketing Automation | Influencer Partnerships | Event Planning | Tenant Relations | Stakeholder Engagement | Community Outreach | Strategic Partnerships | Retail Lease Negotiations | Revenue Generation | Salesforce | ESRI Analyst | Adobe Creative | Microsoft Suite | Contract Negotiation | Vendor Management

INVOLVEMENT

Urban Land Institute (ULI) Member: Involved in Youth Mentor Program for four consecutive years and currently on the Case Study Committee

District Ambassadors Leader: DMV-focused real estate networking group

CityWorks DC Volunteer: NPO focused on reshaping the landscape of education and career development opportunities for DC youth

Portfolio:

samanthapontius.com