

Rick Carlson

Strategic design leader with 10+ years of experience developing packaging systems, brand identities, and retail merchandising for globally recognized CPG brands. Expertise in translating brand strategy and consumer insights into scalable visual systems and compelling consumer experiences across packaging, ecommerce, and retail environments.

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[Portfolio](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Bachman Brand Development, Milwaukee, WI — Sr. Design Director

JULY 2019 - 2026 (Hybrid)

- Directed a multidisciplinary creative team of five, managing agency and vendor relationships, timelines, budgets, resources, and deliverables across packaging systems, campaign assets, retail creative, and social marketing.
- Led packaging and brand design strategy across 20+ brands, aligning brand storytelling, shelf impact, and consumer engagement with strategic goals, consumer insights, and business objectives across physical and digital touchpoints.
- Partnered cross-functionally with marketing, product, and production teams to transform insights into scalable visual storytelling systems and omnichannel brand experiences.
- Oversaw creative execution within a virtual collaborative environment from concept through production, ensuring brand consistency, print accuracy, and high-quality delivery across packaging, ecommerce, and merchandising assets.

Bachman Brand Development, Milwaukee, WI — Sr. Designer

MARCH 2012 - 2019 (Hybrid)

- Managed 25+ concurrent packaging and brand design projects from concept through final production, delivering consumer-focused visual solutions aligned with retail strategy, production standards, and market trends.
- Developed and maintained brand standards guidebooks and digital asset management systems to ensure cohesive execution across packaging, merchandising, print, digital, and ecommerce.
- Owned packaging regulatory compliance, claims strategy, production specifications, proofing, color accuracy, and press checks across multiple CPG brands and product categories.
- Collaborated with vendors, marketing teams, and cross-functional stakeholders to deliver on-time, brand-consistent creative solutions with quality assurance from concept through execution.

Menard Inc., Eau Claire, WI — Creative Director, Package Design

JUNE 2005 - 2012

- Led a five-person package design team, managing workflow, timelines, budgets, and cross-functional collaboration across multiple private label brands.
- Developed packaging strategies that improved shelf presence, strengthened product differentiation, and supported a projected 15% increase in sales.
- Directed packaging, merchandising, print, digital, and broadcast creative for 30+ private label brands while maintaining consistent brand execution across teams and media.
- Created sustainability-focused packaging and claims-forward graphics aligned with regulatory requirements, consumer expectations, and business goals.

CORE SKILLS

Brand Strategy
Packaging Architecture
Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG)
Creative Direction
Visual Identity Systems (VBS)
Visual Brand Language (VBL)
Business-to-Consumer (B2C)
Retail Merchandising
Innovation Development
Consumer Insights
Ecommerce Creative
Retail & Shopper Marketing
Cross-Functional Leadership
Portfolio Management
Project Management
Agency Collaboration
Omnichannel Design

TOOLS

Adobe Creative Suite
(Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign)
Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Teams
Storyboarding tools or visual layout skills for concept communication
Web design knowledge
(Wordpress, Figma)
Monday.com, Workfront, Workamajig

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Fine Arts,
Graphic Design,
University of
Wisconsin-Stout,
Menomonie, WI