

I'm a second generation design leader building world-class products and organizations that integrate research and data with human-centered design methods to drive a long-term vision and near-term business impact. I'm also the host of the award-winning The Crazy One podcast and an international keynote speaker.

As a leader, some of my greatest work will never appear in my portfolio because it's the teams I've built, the leaders I've helped develop, and the companies I've helped grow over the past 15+ years at Starwood Hotels, Citi, InVision, WW, and McCann Erickson. I have a proven record of founding, building, scaling, and leading world-class teams ranging from 15 to 300+ people. My style balances being a leader with working alongside my teams as a hands-on designer and strategist where I can use my experience in creating industry-defining digital experiences, integrated global advertising campaigns, and Fortune 100 brands.

My work has been recognized with 150+ major design awards, and my app designs have been named one of the World's 100 Greatest Apps. Apple has featured my work in 10 keynotes, 4 TV commercials, Apple Stores, on Apple.com, the iTunes Store, and the Human Interface Guidelines. I am a member of The International Academy of Digital Arts and Science and an annual Webby Award judge.

[You can find detailed case studies, and more about my leadership at StephenGates.com](#)



#### **SOME OF MY GREATEST WORK WILL NEVER APPEAR IN MY DESIGN PORTFOLIO.**

I've spent 15+ years building and leading global agency and in-house teams with a combination of creativity, business strategy, and political skill. I've led small but highly specialized agency teams to founding, building, and leading design, UX, strategy, research, operations, and design systems teams of hundreds of full-time, freelance, and agency contributors.



#### **I LOVE HELPING PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THEIR CREATIVITE PROCESS AND BECOME BETTER LEADERS.**

I create coaching cultures, my podcast, and keynotes to help people with imposter syndrome, the lack of mentorship, and leadership training. I have fought to overcome paralyzing stage fright to become an international keynote speaker and award-winning podcast host.



#### **I CREATE AWARD WINNING, AND INDUSTRY CHANGING PRODUCT STARTEGY AND DESIGN WORK.**

I have experience across multiple industries creating award-winning integrated global advertising campaigns, Fortune 500 brands, and innovative digital experiences. My work has been recognized with 150+ major design awards, my designs have been named one of the World's 100 Greatest Apps, and Apple has featured my work in 10 keynotes.



#### **I USE MY VOICE TO HELP EMPOWER THE COMMUNITY AND STAND UP FOR WHAT MATTERS.**

My speaking engagements and podcast gave me a platform where I can use my voice and influence to take on long-standing industry issues like lack of global mentorship, making space, and being an ally for Black, Brown, Indigenous, and/or LGBTQ+ voices, and more.

# Professional experience

Feb 2021 - May 2022



## **SVP, Omni-Channel Product Design** **WW (formerly Weight Watchers)**

I lead WW's product design, omnichannel experience insights, product research, service design, and applied behavioral science teams. We work at the heart of our Member experiences, across all digital, virtual, and physical touchpoints, designing an unbeatable Wellness Experience that recruits new members while retaining existing members. Our work is created in deep partnership with our Product, Tech, Clinical Science, and Brand partners to ensure our members are successful in their pursuit of behavioral change to achieve weight loss and wellness, across all of our membership plans, whether delivered digitally, virtually, or physically.

Mar 2019 - Feb 2021



## **Head of Design Evangelism and Transformation** **InVision**

I work hand-in-hand with InVision's Enterprise clients to weave together the best methodologies, processes, information, and tools into a comprehensive strategy that elevates the business impact of design, creates cultural change and builds stronger leadership at companies including Google, Amazon, The Home Depot, Bank of America, Facebook, Rolls Royce, American Express, Frog Design, EY Partners, and many more.

I was also the lead author of the Quarterly Design Trend reports, which looks at the latest global trends in creativity, leadership, culture, and design. Contributing author of the InVision groundbreaking Design Maturity Model, New Design Frontier report, and created InVision's Thought Leader in Residence program, which is a think tank that focused on new design through leadership through 6-month residencies with the world's best design leaders.

Sep 2015 - Apr 2018



## **SVP, Global Head of Design** **Citi**

Led and helped to create Citi Design, made up of multiple in-house design studios and external agencies creating global experiences in digital, branding, and advertising included the re-design of Citi.com, Citi mobile app, updating the Citi brand, creating a new digital design language, and working with IDEO to create our Design Thinking with agile methods.

I was one of the 40 founding members of Citi FinTech, a small start-up inside of the Global Consumer Bank dedicated to creating mobile-first solutions to a variety of problems and working as the tip of the spear to change the way the company thinks and operates. The Citi innovation labs work to design and prototype new ideas and emerging technologies from various external partners. The team also works on all aspects of the global consumer bank to create a unified design and creative vision across the entire consumer bank.

Jun 2015 - Sep 2006



## **VP, Global Brand Design, Digital and Innovation** **Starwood Hotels and Resorts, Inc.**

I led the digital design, content, and film & video teams for Starwood Global Brand Design for all 10 of their brands as well as leading all design for the Starwood Preferred Guest loyalty program. Over the course of my time at Starwood, I transformed these teams from production-focused service organizations into world-class creative teams who were responsible for some of the biggest recent digital innovations in the hospitality industry. I did it by establishing all new standards and culture that drove innovation and built the trust with our clients and the C suite that allowed those innovations to launch to consumers.

Notable innovation included Aloft in SecondLife, the state-aware design of the SPG smartphone and iPad apps, SPG Mobile Check-in, and SPG Keyless Entry for iPhone and Apple Watch. Apple featured this work in 8 keynotes, 4 TV commercials, on Apple.com, in Apple Store, in the Human Interface Guidelines, and more.

Aug 2006 - Jan 2003



## Digital Creative Director Temerlin McClain (McCann Worldgroup)

I worked as a leader bridging traditional and digital advertising to create integrated work. My team was made up of art directors, writers, information architects and freelance staff and I defined the strategy, direction and goals for online advertising and web site development projects. I developed team members skills by identifying and providing the needed training, coaching and mentoring so they were able to grow their skills and creativity.

**Clients:** American Airlines, Exxon Mobil, Subaru, Sprint, Toshiba, Texas Instruments, Texas Tourism, Nortel Networks, Adams Golf, University of Houston, Verizon Superpages.com, VanCliburn Foundation, Bell Helicopter,, oneworld airline alliance, Mariloff Diamonds Planet Cancer, IgoUgo.com and Nationwide Insurance

**New business won:** Venetian Hotel and Casino, , ExxonMobil, Verizon SuperPages, Sprint Business solutions, oneworld global airline alliance, PayDay One on-line, AvidGolfer Magazine and ProStaff

Birth - Jan 2003



## Creative Director, Designer, Art Director, 3D Animator, Typesetter, and Junior Letterpress Operator

I was literally born into design and advertising with a father who was a creative director and a mother who was an artist. I learned typography on a cast iron letterpress in the basement of our house and I've been working as a designer since I was 13. I cut rubylith, studied Computer Graphics at Syracuse, worked as a 3D animator and then blended all of those skills into my digital work.

**Clients:** Serta, Disney, Motorola, AMD, Intel, Price Waterhouse, Honda, Acura, Toyota, American Dairy Brands, Garden Ridge, EDS, i2 Technology, U.S. Air Force, M.A.D.D., Pizza Hut, TGI Friday's, Mattress Firm, Subaru, Toshiba, Tribal DDB,

## Education

### Syracuse University

College of Visual and Performing Arts - *Studied Computer Graphics*

### Carnegie Mellon University

Pre-college certificate (completed in high school) - *2 year certificate in Fine Art and Computer Graphics*

## Thought leadership

### The Crazy One podcast host

The Crazy One podcast shares how to become a better leader, be more creative and innovative. I share my experience, challenges and successes leading design for multiple Fortune 500 brands and take on a variety of topics including leadership, creativity, innovation, career advice as well as design and technology trends. The 100+ episodes have been recognized with a Webby Award for Best Technology podcast, has been downloaded over 1 million times, has listeners in over 160 countries, and an average 4.9 star listener review on all global podcast platforms.

**For more about the show please visit [TheCrazy1.com](http://TheCrazy1.com)**

### International keynote speaker

I've spoken at events ranging from talks for companies like IDEO, Apple, Google, Amazon, The Home Depot, GE and many more; to large international keynotes at SXSW, HOW Design Live, Awwwards, Pausefest, FUSE, Tech Open Air, Fifteen Seconds Festival and more alongside speakers like Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, Nest founder Tony Fadell, Martha Stewart, Zappos.com CEO Tony Hsieh, and John Maeda. I also love working with students and universities having been a guest lecturer at Yale, Princeton, MIT International Design Center, School of Visual Arts, Parsons and more.

## Community leadership

### **Amazing Design People senior advisor, community partner, and mentor**

In April 2020 in response to the COVID pandemic, I helped Felix Lee and James Baduor found the Amazing Design People List which has grown into a global platform connecting over 5,000 vetted and verified global design leaders with people looking for 1 on 1 or group mentorships, to improve their skills and find jobs. I work with and advise the founders, work as a community partner to create new initiatives, and give portfolio feedback, and give free mentoring to designers through the site. **Learn more at [adplist.org](https://adplist.org)**

### **#ShareTheMicNow episodes**

I joined #ShareTheMicNow because I see there has never been an equal playing field because companies and events default to listening to white men who dominate leadership positions, board seats, and event stages. Being a white ally means getting out of the way, making space for Black, Brown, Indigenous, and/or LGBTQ+ people to set the vision, and stepping up to support that work in ways that are meaningful for them. This ongoing series of episodes invites Black, Brown, Indigenous, and/or LGBTQ+ people to create episodes of The Crazy One podcast sharing their insights, experiences, and perspectives with no involvement from me.

### **Author, judge, board member, advisor and more**

Frontier Design Report co-author

General Assembly board member helping to share the future careers of designers

'Transformation by Design' documentary executive producer

Member of The International Academy of Digital Arts and Science and annual Webby Awards judge

## Leadership style

### **16 Personalities results:**

#### **Personality: Assertive Protagonist (ENFJ-A)**

Assertive Protagonists are Extraverted, Intuitive, Feeling, Judging and Assertive. These warm, forthright types love helping others and have the creative energy to achieve their goals.

#### **Role: Diplomat**

Diplomats focus on empathy and cooperation, shining in diplomacy and counselling. They're imaginative, warm, empathic, and influential people, often playing the role of harmonizers.

#### **My strategy: People Mastery**

People Masters seek social contact and have very good communication skills, feeling at ease in social events or directing others. They're confident and readily express their opinions.

**Mind: Extraverted 54%**

**Tactics: Judging 56%**

**Energy: Intuitive 64%**

**Identity: Assertive 51%**

**Nature: Feeling 83%**

### **Clifton Strength Finder results:**

**Relator:** Working hard with friends.

**Learner:** Desire to learn and continuously improve.

**Responsibility:** Takes psychological ownership of what I say I will do.

**Individualization:** Can see how different people can work together productively.

**Strategic:** Can quickly spot the relevant patterns and issues.

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