

Michael Elyanow
(he / him)

elyanow@me.com • 773.531.3748 • michaelelyanow.com

A creative director and brand strategist with a storied background in storytelling. Over 15 years of experience in leading teams, mentoring writers, guiding campaigns. Fluent in all channels of marketing and advertising. Champion of collaboration, clarity, and creative risk-taking. Passionate about promoting DEI in the workplace — and world.

Creative Director • UnitedHealthcare

08/2016 - today

I was hired to help build the first-ever in-house creative department for UHC's Employer & Individual division. As a brand strategist focused on copy, I keep the UHC story in check, on point, and forward moving. Currently, I lead a team of 20+ copywriters and designers. On any given day, I can be found shepherding any of the 3,000+ national, regional, and local campaigns that impact and engage UHC's 45 million members worldwide.

Creative specialties and skills include:

- Leading strategic voice and tone messaging for the UnitedHealthcare brand team – reviewing and approving projects, building creative guidelines and best practices to ensure artistic standards are met.
- Fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion – as co-founder of Uplift DEI, an internal group dedicated to activating, engaging, and accelerating practices across the enterprise, including creating DEI guidelines.
- Filling gaps in creative – using data and analytics to improve messaging, overhauling style guides, creating content playbooks, programming storytelling forums.
- Developing marketing strategies and sharpening creative briefs – helping to build organic campaigns that align with business goals and yield results.
- Overseeing and reviewing external creative agency work.

Leadership specialties and skills include:

- Guiding the improvement of systems and processes to build a more efficient and effective workflow.
- Inspiring and developing employee growth and engagement.
- Improving the quality of creative work through affective mentorship and routine presentations – such as storytelling workshops on emails, how to build emotion through punctuation, and more.
- Analyzing finances, working within budgets, writing acquisition requests.
- Creating accurate job descriptions and working with talent acquisition to hire the best candidates.

Senior Copywriter • Quality Bicycle Products

12/2015 – 08/2016

While I wasn't fluent in "bicycle" when I started working for QBP, executive leaders recognized I was fluent in the language of storytelling. They brought me in to mentor their team of copywriters, with the goal of refining and strengthening their voice and tone.

The creative and managerial mission included:

- Developing storytelling workshops for writers and designers, helping to create a process where imagination has rules and the dynamic trio of concept, messaging, and strategy can fully unite.
- Reviewing and editing copy – from landing pages and print catalogues to online articles and videos.
- Creating and evaluating campaign strategies with directors across QBP's 17 different bicycle brands.
- Instituting systems and review processes to help improve the content review experience for art directors.

**Freelance Copywriter • Go East • Hunt Adkins • Intercross • Mithun • Padilla • 2010 – 2016
Scales • The Guthrie Theater • The Playwrights' Center**

Above is an alphabetical listing of the agencies and organizations I've worked with as a freelance copywriter since moving to the Twin Cities back in 2010. From commercials and industrials to print and digital to packaging and POS, I covered a lot of writing ground.

A majority of my agency work was on 3M projects – highlights included:

- Originating the US voice and brand identity for Latchways, a UK-based fall protection company.
- Writing instructional video scripts, commercials, brochures, and more for 3M's full line of disposable and reusable respirators.
- Conceiving and rebranding Scotchgard's re-introduction of their protector product line.
- Creating print ads, videos, tradeshow displays, and more for 3M's privacy filters and screen protectors.

Storyteller • A Writer's Life

2000's – 2010

I started off writing for the stage and screen in Chicago, moved to copywriting for agencies and theaters on the east coast, taught creative writing at colleges like Emerson, Hampshire, and Carleton. Along the way, I was Associate Chair of Northwestern University's Creative Writing for the Media Program and helped create their Graduate Program in Writing for the Stage + Screen.

For more, visit michaelyanow.com.

Education

Northwestern University • MFA in Screenwriting
Clark University • BA in Graphic Design