STEVEN AUSTIN

CULTURAL MARKETING LEADER | SOCIAL, INFLUENCER & PARTNERSHIPS | CPG BRAND BUILDING

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CAREER SUMMARY

Cultural marketing and social strategy leader with 10+ years of experience building culturally relevant, social-first, integrated programs for leading CPG, restaurant, entertainment, and technology brands. Develops end-to-end channel strategies, leads high-performing social and creative teams, and translates cultural and audience insights into distinctive brand opportunities. Integrates social across brand, creative, PR, influencer, and partnerships while managing multimillion-dollar investments and developing award-winning work recognized at Cannes Lions, D&AD, and the Shorty Awards.

EXPERIENCE

ASSOCIATE STRATEGY DIRECTOR **Molson Coors VOLT Studio** / (Remote) Chicago, IL /Mar 2026 - Present
Own end-to-end social strategies, channel plans, content calendars, and creative briefs for a portfolio of beverage brands, translating business priorities and cultural insights into social-first opportunities. Lead and mentor a team of four community managers, establishing clear workflows and ensuring day-to-day engagement reflects each brand's voice and strategic positioning. Partner across brand, creative, influencer, PR, media, and production teams to develop integrated campaigns, activate emerging trends, and optimize performance through ongoing reporting and audience insights. Work with PR, legal, and brand stakeholders to assess cultural conversations, identify potential social risks, and guide timely brand responses. Coordinate integrated campaign planning across brand, creative, influencer, PR, media, production, and retail stakeholders, aligning calendars, priorities, deliverables, and real-time cultural opportunities.

- Clients include Keystone Light, Miller Lite, Monaco, Simply Spiked, and ZOA Energy
- Developed the social launch strategy for Keystone Kapple, generating 3M TikTok views and driving a record 540% increase in the brand's TikTok followers.
- Led social strategy for Miller Lite's Matchball campaign, driving 2.08M owned organic impressions and 43.2K engagements while helping the broader campaign generate 2B earned impressions.

INFLUENCER + SOCIAL STRATEGY CONSULTANT **ViralStevenLLC** / (Remote) Chicago, IL /Sep 2022 - Apr 2026
Operated a part-time independent consultancy concurrent with full-time roles, managing more than $7M in creator and influencer investment across CPG, entertainment, technology, and gaming clients. Led social and creator strategy, talent selection, negotiations, briefing, content development, approvals, reporting, and optimization. Developed channel recommendations, recurring content franchises, and measurement frameworks designed to strengthen brand relevance, audience engagement, and campaign ROI.

- Clients included 7UP, Bai, Bethesda, Clamato, Core, Gusto, Hawaiian Punch, Hulu, Intel, Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams, Keurig, Mott's, Nex Playground, Pandora Music, The Original Donut Shop, Wingstop, Xyience, and WNBA Star Kamilla Cardoso

SENIOR INFLUENCER STRATEGIST **McKinney** / (Remote) Durham, NC /Jul 2023 - Oct 2024
Developed and launched influencer strategies for leading CPG, restaurant, technology, and consumer brands, driving awareness, engagement, and measurable conversions. Built trusted client relationships, led cross-functional collaboration, and managed and developed junior strategists through campaign guidance, creative feedback, and ongoing support across client deliverables.

- Clients included Ad Council, Combat, Conair, Dial, Little Caesars, Microsoft, Persil, and Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen

CO-OWNER & HEAD OF MARKETING/PEOPLE OPERATIONS **KC Mac N' Co.** / Kansas City, MO /Jan 2019 - May 2024
Developed the original restaurant concept and led its brand development, social media, email marketing, digital marketing, and community partnerships. Hired, trained, and developed more than 75 employees over five years while managing a peak team of approximately 30.

- Built a social audience of more than 10,000 followers and generated hundreds of thousands of organic content views.
- Helped the business surpass $1M in annual gross revenue during its peak year in 2022.

DIRECTOR, SOCIAL MEDIA **Robeson Parks** / (Remote) Los Angeles, CA /Jan 2022 - Jan 2023
Directed organic social strategy, content development, publishing, trend activation, and community management across entertainment brands including Hulu, Pandora, and SiriusXM. Led and developed a nine-person social team, establishing channel strategies, creative standards, workflows, and evergreen content plans while ensuring execution remained aligned with brand voice and audience behavior.

- Led social support for Season 3 of Wu-Tang: An American Saga and helped Pandora secure its first artist reshare in years.

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SENIOR MANAGER, SOCIAL + PARTNERSHIPS **Wingstop Restaurant Inc.** / (Remote) Dallas, TX /Jan 2021 - Sep 2022
Led organic social, community, and creator strategy for Wingstop's eight-million-follower ecosystem, overseeing brand voice, content development, cultural activation, paid amplification, PR integration, and agency collaboration. Managed and developed a social team through regular feedback, quarterly performance reviews, and individualized growth planning. Developed the evergreen #WingstopPartner influencer strategy, managed briefs, trend analysis, and cross-functional coordination with field teams and agency partners.

- Created Wingstop's first major viral social moment, driving 27,000 new followers, 12% total follower growth, a 1,491% week-over-week increase in impressions, and a 698% lift in engagements.
- Led social execution for the 2022 Cannes Lions Grand Prix-winning Thighstop campaign, shaping platform strategy, brand copy, celebrity content featuring Rick Ross, and launch planning across channels.
- Expanded the #WingstopPartner program from $300K to $5M in annual investment and led creator campaigns including Lemon Pepper 1's, the Women on the Wings collegiate NIL program, and the Latto Meal partnership, which helped the featured flavor reach 10.5% of Wingstop's overall flavor sales mix.

INFLUENCER TALENT MANAGER **Ion (Ayzenberg)** / (Remote) Los Angeles, CA /Jul 2020 - Dec 2020
Led end-to-end campaign development, from timeline creation and launch strategy to detailed presentations outlining objectives, tactics, strategy, budget, and influencer selection. Directed performance reporting and analysis, and oversaw influencer invoicing. Built and presented executive-ready strategy decks covering campaign objectives, cultural insights, talent recommendations, budgets, activation plans, and performance results.

- Clients included Xbox Game Pass, Xbox Game Pass For PC, Microsoft Store, and Niantic (Pokémon GO)

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER **VML** / Kansas City, MO /Apr 2018 - Feb 2020
Led real-time community engagement for Wendy's across Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, translating audience conversations, emerging trends, and cultural moments into timely, platform-native brand responses. Helped develop Wendy's award-winning social, gaming, and esports strategy, including the brand's expansion onto Twitch and its "Keeping Fortnite Fresh" activation.

- Awards included Cannes Lions Grand Prix, two Gold Lions, five Silver Lions, one Bronze Lion, and a D&AD Wood Pencil for Wendy's "Keeping Fortnite Fresh."
- Clients included Wendy's, NBA, SKYY Vodka, and Chuck E. Cheese's

SENIOR CONTENT SPECIALIST **BARKLEY** / Kansas City, MO /Dec 2016 - Mar 2018
Developed organic social and real-time engagement strategies for CPG, restaurant, travel, and lifestyle brands. Used cultural and audience insights to create and optimize platform-native content, identify creator partnerships, and inform new-business pitches. Produced monthly content calendars, analyzed performance, and delivered actionable recommendations to clients and executive leadership, helping campaigns generate millions of impressions while doubling average engagement.

- Awards included a Gold Award at the Shorty Awards and three AAF Gold Awards for Wingstop's Rap Battle, plus an AAF Silver Award for Dairy Queen's Le'Veon Bell Combine influencer activation.
- Clients included Anheuser-Busch, Coleman, Dairy Queen, Hershey, Nat'l Turkey Federation, SodaStream, Spirit Airlines, and Wingstop

QUALIFICATIONS

CORE CAPABILITIES

Cultural Strategy • Integrated Campaign Planning • Social Strategy • Influencer & Creator Strategy • Events & Partnerships • Collegiate/NIL Marketing • Real-Time Marketing • Cross-Functional Leadership • Calendar & Workflow Management • Executive Presentations • Performance Reporting

EDUCATION

B.A. Communication, Mass Media Emphasis
B.S. Psychology, Statistics Emphasis
University of Missouri, 2016

PLATFORMS & TOOLS

Meta (Facebook and Instagram), LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitch, X, and YouTube
CreatorIQ, Hootsuite, NetBase, Socialix, Khoros, Social Studio, Sprinklr, and Sprout Social
Adobe Creative Suite, Canva, Google Workspace, and Microsoft Office