

From Ad Agencies to Animations

The Path To Creating the Way

What do you want to be when you grow up? For me, the dream was to be a chef.

Reality? When I was coming into my career, being a chef meant you were a slave to the kitchen, worked opposite hours from the majority of the world, and there was no such thing as making it big as a celebrity chef. That's why I f'ing wanted to be a chef!

But, I studied advertising instead. I know what you're thinking, but working in an ad agency is not much different than being a chef. The BTS of creating something that people will love and doing it against the norm is what I love.

I learned some relevant, but now nearly 20 years later, dated information. However, my interest in consumer strategy was set into motion through these lenses. I love creating with the thought in mind: how will the end viewer see it?

A Peek Into Agency Life As I Knew It

The late '90s birthed a technology boom that took creative production to new levels and laid a runway for a type of mass consumption that Andy Warhol could only dream of.

Flash forward to the agency life I embarked on in the early 2000's, kinda like Mad Men with a layer of the new generations' stealth digital and social media advertising takeover. The world was shifting towards fast micro-content. No more were the days where you could have a big idea that would last for a 5-year campaign.

This opened the path of cutting out the agency middleman and creating the content directly for big brands. What does this mean? You may not have realized it, but as eComm, Social Media, and Streaming were taking over, we no longer needed big campaign commercials to tell us what to do. Unless it's the Super Bowl...still need those commercials, apparently.

The Big Content Shift

When that shift began to happen, no one needed ad agencies in the same capacity. I'm always five steps ahead, and I caught on to the path not yet paved for global content production services – running multi-million dollar content studio operations. These photo and video studios were posed to deliver on the promise of fast content. It was innovative creative at its inception. Then, as a commercial photographer turned Founder Entrepreneur, Brad Tuckman and his mix of industry executives (including me) pioneered the business of creative content production at scale.

Through my time at global content production studios, I learned how to surf the crazy wave of the creative industry, changing from boutique to enterprise. But damn, a brutal grind. For 7 years, I worked to build several studios' innovative operations to expertly deliver effective and efficient creative content for brands such as Under Armour (my pride and joy), Petco, Clinique, Hilton Worldwide, Lowe's, and Fabletics.



So why did I get into the mix? I had no idea how to run studios?!

Why not? I knew what the outcome needed to be, and I loved assembling teams and delivering the creative strategy. Tell me the goals, and I'll create the way. My favorite movie is Top Gun because there's this idea of no rules, excitement. You can still be in a niche where you're the best, but you also get to

scrape your knees and butt up against the system. Top Gun taught me to never be afraid of failure. Go. Try. Be. Do. Otherwise, you're going to get stale.

The time spent in global content production companies had its pros, but mainly a lot of growing pains. The new business of creative also had a bottom line and red tape. It plagued me, literally. I wanted to make a difference among people and companies making a difference in the world with their brands. But, between the stress, travel, and my die-hard personality, I was burnt out.

So what's a maverick like me to do?

My IDGAF Break Away

Quit. Downshift. Start a mobile cocktail bar for dog parks. Consult with other innovative entrepreneurs about their content production and workflows. And as I began to communicate this to EVERYONE in my network, the officiant at my wedding (thanks Pablo!) told me there was an innovative animation studio I had to connect with.

Looking back, Jon Briggs, Owner, and Managing Director, originally wanted a CMO. But that wasn't me. Yes, I had agency experience, but I focused on creative content productions and ensuring it was well oiled, innovative, and had the right mix of creatives. I could see this animation studio was doing great things, but it needed structure. Plus, I insisted that if we build from the inside out, the marketing will happen through outstanding work, great creators, and advocacy.



Joining Food Fight Studios

TL, DR: [Bell sound] I joined Food Fight Studios, a short-form-award-winning-global [animation](#) studio to support creative productions. I loved the idea of an [animation-first studio](#),

and I was excited about how novel it was for this industry. I was obsessed with taking the foundation and shared values Jon and his team set, filling in the cracks, and building off it. What happened after I joined became so much more.

I started socializing “mixed media,” “creative strategy,” “visual branding,” and calling these concepts “beyond animation” from the jam-pack learnings of my career battles past. In the early days, it seemed experimental working on an [EMMY® Nominated Wyclef Jean](#) concert at the Apollo Theater, a book trailer for best-selling author Mark Schaefer, or an app launch for celebrity wellness trainer Robert Brace, but with Jon’s immersive strategy approach to content production and alignment in vision of being the un-agency, we put on some bold and unconventional productions.

The LAB – Backed by Sharon’s Philosophy

I saw the opportunity to [build something huge](#), but I needed a team to rally. The how required the who’s to add into the recipe. Adding to the mix, I brought on Creative Direction and Graphic Design with [Taylor Peterson](#) and [Payton Micewicz](#), plus our newest addition [Anna Klawitter](#). We squaded up under the vision/direction of Jon plus the super talented team of animation, motion graphics, and video editors to start creating kick-ass, bold, immersive, experimental content.

Our team is creating the way to something different and better. I see 5 steps ahead. Once you tell me the big picture, I can break it down into pieces and mix them into something more bold, experimental, and immersive. This is how The Lab at Food Fight Studios was launched. Even for our mission of The Lab, we went through a long road of fine-tuning the branding, positioning, messaging, and creativity. Early naming options included Strategic Content Lab. The Visual Impact Lab. The Speakret Seezy (now an internal group chat).



I Get **It Done

I've been the go-to throughout my life, especially for creative problems. I continue to be obsessed with the next. I could be a director of account services at some ad agency and bored to death. But I choose non-traditional content and creative challenges here.

Someone should make me a graphic-T for the holidays saying, "give me a creative challenge; I can't say no." (Hint. Hint.)

How did I get here? I'm not by the book... But I love what I do and love paving the way for great things to unfold. It's not easy and takes a lot of perseverance. But those of you who know me know I get shit done. If anyone is looking for me as their go-to, I'll be in The Lab at Food Fight Studios, ready for action.