CARI IRWIN

Marketing & Communications Leader: Strategy, Brand, Content and Campaigns for Mission-Driven Organizations

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cariirwin.com

PROFILE

Marketing and communications leader with 25 years of experience building brands, leading multidisciplinary teams, and developing integrated marketing strategies that drive engagement and growth. 15 years agency-side leading creative and production teams, creating data-driven acquisition, retention and loyalty programs for national brands including Nike, Disney, Apple and Adobe.

For the past decade, I have worked as an independent strategic partner to founders, executives and institutions across education, science, technology and sustainability, translating complex ideas into compelling brands, stories and campaigns. Also co-founded and grew an education product company to more than $1M in annual Amazon sales before its sale in 2025.

CORE SKILLS

Strategy & Leadership:
Integrated Marketing & Communications Strategy · Team Building & Coaching · Budget Management · Executive & Board Communications

Brand & Content:
Brand Leadership · Storytelling & Editorial Direction · Campaign Development · Copywriting · Website, Video, Photography & Print

Digital & Growth:
Website & UX Strategy · Acquisition, Retention & Loyalty Campaigns · Integrated Digital Campaigns · AI-Augmented Creative Workflows

WORK SAMPLES

cariirwin.com

EDUCATION

Wheaton College, Norton MA
BA, Fine Arts major

EXPERIENCE

PILOTHOUSE AGENCY, PRINCIPAL

2015 — Current

Senior brand and communications partner to founders, executives and institutions, leading positioning, storytelling, campaigns, digital experiences and creative teams from strategy through execution. Hire, direct and manage a team of freelance writers and designers across concurrent client engagements. Write and edit signature content, including landing pages, services copy, pitch narratives and executive messaging.

- **Science and sustainability ventures:** Built investor narratives and pitch strategy for dozens of science startups including TeOra, an aquaculture biotech developing feed-based biologics as an alternative to antibiotics and chemicals in shrimp farming, and for Rhea's Factory, which uses AI-designed enzymes to recycle mixed plastic waste. Supported Rhea's Factory from its 2024 founding through its entry into Berkeley SkyDeck and initial investments.
- **Berkeley SkyDeck:** Creative and brand strategy advisor since 2016 to 50+ startups on positioning, investor storytelling, brand systems and go-to-market creative.
- **UC Berkeley:** Led brand identity and website work for SkyDeck and Berkeley BEGIN and for the Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute; supported campaigns for the Sutardja Center for Entrepreneurship & Technology.
- **Lucas Education Research:** Directed visual identity, campaign development, print, photography and video to carry research findings to George Lucas, the board, educators and the public.
- **Amygdala and Quon Global:** Partnered directly with founders on brand identity, executive narrative and U.S. market positioning for AI platforms in political technology and healthcare.

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EXPERIENCE CONT.

TINKERING LABS, CO-FOUNDER AND PARTNER
2015 — 2025

- Co-founded and led all marketing and creative: brand identity, packaging, and go-to-market strategy for a physical product line sold direct, in retail stores, in museums such as the Exploratorium and Bay Area Discovery Museum, and on Amazon.
- Grew from GoFundMe of $60k for initial product launch to Amazon sales of more than $1M annually by year 3.
- Company sold in 2025.

NIMBLEFISH, STRATEGY AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR
2000 — 2015

- Led a creative and production team of ten across video, print, email, interactive and app design for acquisition, retention and loyalty campaigns. Directed creative for multi-year, data-driven, multi-touch acquisition, retention and loyalty programs for Fortune 500 clients, run on CRM platforms where message, channel and cadence adapted to each customer's responses and behavior. Worked from live performance dashboards with product and technical teams to read A/B split testing results and refine segments, offers and creative.
- Owned creative strategy and pricing through the sales process, then budget and project management through delivery, working closely with client product and technical teams.
- Clients included Nike, Disney, Apple, Adobe, AT&T, Wellpoint/Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, Lowe's Home Improvement, Best Buy and Marriott.
- Clients saw significant ROI and between 10-50% lift in pipeline, response and conversion rates. Demand generation programs for Apple, Capgemini, HP, and Oracle recognized by the DMA with ECHO awards.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

KENTFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD, PRESIDENT AND TRUSTEE
Dec 2022 — Dec 2026

- Serve as the public-facing spokesperson for the board, communicating board decisions, navigating sensitive community issues, and representing the district through periods of organizational change and public scrutiny.
- Governed through two voter-approved funding measures, a $48M facilities bond and a parcel tax renewal generating $60M through 2036.
- Repaired a badly fractured relationship among the board, superintendent and staff, restoring a functioning governance team.
- Partnered with the Kentfield Invests in Kids Foundation to raise $1.4M annually for our schools. Attended and spoke at fundraisers, wrote personal letters, and produced videos of teachers affirming the importance of academic and enrichment programs.