

Steven Vanden Heuvel

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SUMMARY

Principal Designer with 25+ years of experience across UX, UI, brand identity, and design systems. Currently designing merchant checkout experiences for PayPal's top 100 global brands. Previously grew from Art Director to VP/Creative Director over 18 years at MTG Media Group, leading a 6-person team across 7 publication brands and 6 web properties reaching 128,000+ users. Recognized with 4 Jesse H. Neal Awards (the B2B equivalent of the Pulitzer) and a Grand Neal nomination. Equally comfortable leading teams and doing the work myself.

SKILLS

UX Design | UI Design | Figma | Design Systems | Brand Identity | Frontend Development | Vibe Coding | Accessibility | Print | Adobe Creative Suite | Responsive/Mobile-First Design | AI-Assisted Workflows | Cross-functional Team Leadership

EXPERIENCE

Principal Designer, Dec 2025-Present | PayPal (via Magnit Global) | Remote, IL

- Design merchant checkout and payment experiences for PayPal's top 100 global brands within the Merchant Enablement program. Directly responsible for Home Depot, Nintendo, Target, The GAP, Canva, Best Buy, TikTok, Chewy, and others.
- Involved with merchant experiences for Shein, Sephora, Macy's, Etsy, Booking.com, Netflix, Google, Wayfair, Woolworths, Estee Lauder, Lenovo, Walmart, Temu, and others.
- Created the generic checkout process for small and medium grocers and retail. Involved in creating the same for subscriptions, retail, and restaurant verticals.
- Conduct screen audits, build service blueprints for merchant journeys, and work with product, engineering, and design program management in 2-week sprints.

VP / Creative Director, 2007-2025 | MTG Media Group | Northbrook, IL

Advanced from Senior Art Director to VP/Creative Director. Led a 6-person creative team producing 7 publication brands with 6 web properties.

Plate

- *Project: Blackbird* | Built an interactive oral history platform with 40+ interviews, original photography, illustrations, and video. Grand Jesse H. Neal Award nominee (top 4 nationally). Managed the full project while coordinating editors, videographers, photographers, illustrators, marketing, and sales.
- *Plateonline.com* | Won a 2017 Jesse H. Neal Award for Best Website. Responsive redesign serving 42,000+ professionals with 56,000+ monthly pageviews. 90% of subscribers reported the content influenced their purchasing decisions.

Alt-Meat

- Built a brand, magazine, and website from zero in under 8 weeks. First major B2B publication in alternative protein. Gained 22,000 registered users and opened a new revenue stream.

Meatingplace & Hotels

- 95% of Meatingplace readers reported taking action from content. Led digital transformation to responsive, mobile-first platforms across all brands. Redesigned Hotels magazine after its 2009 acquisition.

Design Systems & Operations

- Built design systems for 7 properties. Created reusable design tokens that improved consistency across departments.
- Transitioned the company to remote work during COVID (InCopy workflows, VPN, Teamwork PM). Zero deadlines missed. Managed departmental budget across multiple projects.

Freelance Designer, 1999 - 2007 | StevenDesignCo | Chicago, IL

- Designed brand identities, print collateral, packaging, and websites for clients across industries.

EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, B.A. in Art with emphasis in Graphic Design and Marketing