PRODUCTIVE MACHINE

We're a brand and digital development agency with a strong focus in the B2B tech and energy sectors.

We partner with innovative leadership teams to strategically position, message, image, market, and govern their brands for sustainable growth.

Agency Background

Who we are, what we're about, and our services

What great companies do, together with us.

Our clients have included many of the world's leading enterprise hardware, software, analytics, cloud data management, AI, and energy brands.

We're known as great situational navigators, collaborators, moderators, and solvers of tough strategic, design, and digital challenges.

We work closely with our clients to establish benchmarks and goals for every initiative we undertake, and we continuously measure our contributions to their business growth and to their bottom lines.

Our strong focus on brand and digital governance helps them to protect the significant investments they make with us.

B2B Tech + Energy Industry Experience

Current and recent brand representation

actifio®	APPRISS®	Cangrade	DELL EMC
ez cater	Google	Hewlett Packard Enterprise / simplivity	IBM
kaminario.	liquidhub	NETWITNESS	ppl
Safari Energy	SAP	vmware®	xiotech

The foundation determines the height.

We run on partnership, transparency, and service excellence.

For us, it's all about building trust and relationships. Listening to each other. Thinking strategically and putting plans in place to maximize every dollar and detail, to achieve greatness.

Superior Value

Understand the goals of our client executive teams, and focus continually on delivering excellent operating results.

Strong Partnerships

Develop and maintain close, long term relationships with our clients, their investors, and other valued stakeholders and colleagues.

Mutual Trust

Build trust by being transparent with our clients, and taking responsibility for our actions, decisions and results.

Entrepreneurial Spirit

Always exert a positive bias for action, and focus on what will make the most significant impact in the least amount of time.

Teamwork and Collaboration

Draw upon the diverse strengths of all agency and client team members to create exceptional outcomes.
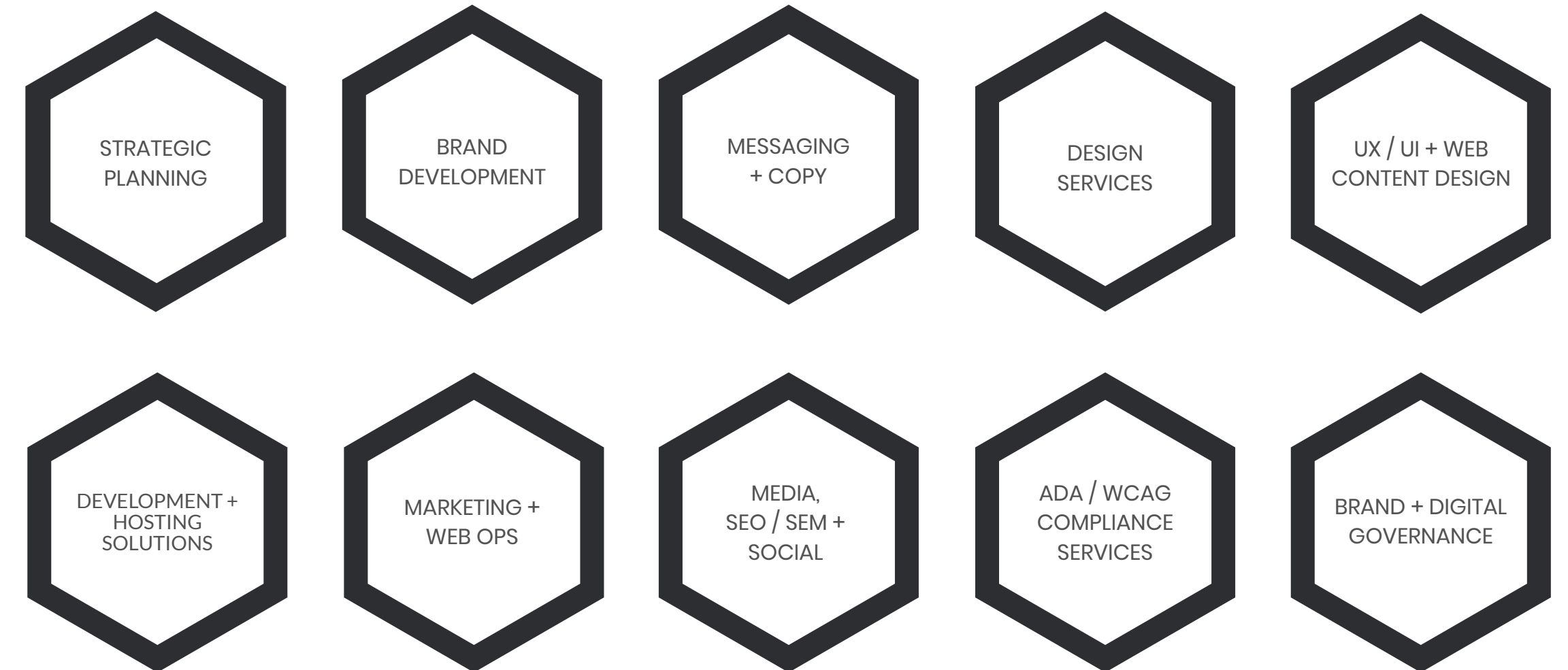
Respect and Results

Be mindful of individuals' interests and passions, and create an environment that ensures their success and personal growth in the pursuit of commercial results.

Our services

Though we don't provide the full range of services outlined below for all of our clients, for many we do.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

BRAND DEVELOPMENT

MESSAGING + COPY

DESIGN SERVICES

UX / UI + WEB CONTENT DESIGN

DEVELOPMENT + HOSTING SOLUTIONS

MARKETING + WEB OPS

MEDIA, SEO / SEM + SOCIAL

ADA / WCAG COMPLIANCE SERVICES

BRAND + DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Thoughtful discovery at the start of our relationship, and continuously thereafter, helps us to gain an accurate understanding of your current state and goals. By assessing your situation, problems and opportunities in detail, we can determine their relative priorities and develop appropriate project recommendations and budgets. This type of approach also helps to establish a solid, predictable ongoing working cadence together.

BASELINE EVALUATION

We're interested to understand how your organization exists in the world presently, and will often kick things off by conducting a sort of audit of your audiences, benefits and differentiators, current prospect and customer journey / experience, competitive landscape, goals, and review what has and has not worked for you previously.

We'll study every document and data point you put in front of us. If we hear about something you haven't put in front of us, we'll ask you for it or go and find it ourselves. Seeing where you are today allows us to clearly know our starting point for development of detailed recommendations.

Along the way, we'll typically talk directly with all your key executives, and often some of your more interested board members and investors too, to hear what's on their minds and use that information to help us form our recommendations.

Effective strategy starts with listening, to gain a deep understanding of your environment and your competition. We're experienced enough to partner effectively across your entire organization, and we bring significant tech industry domain expertise to the table.
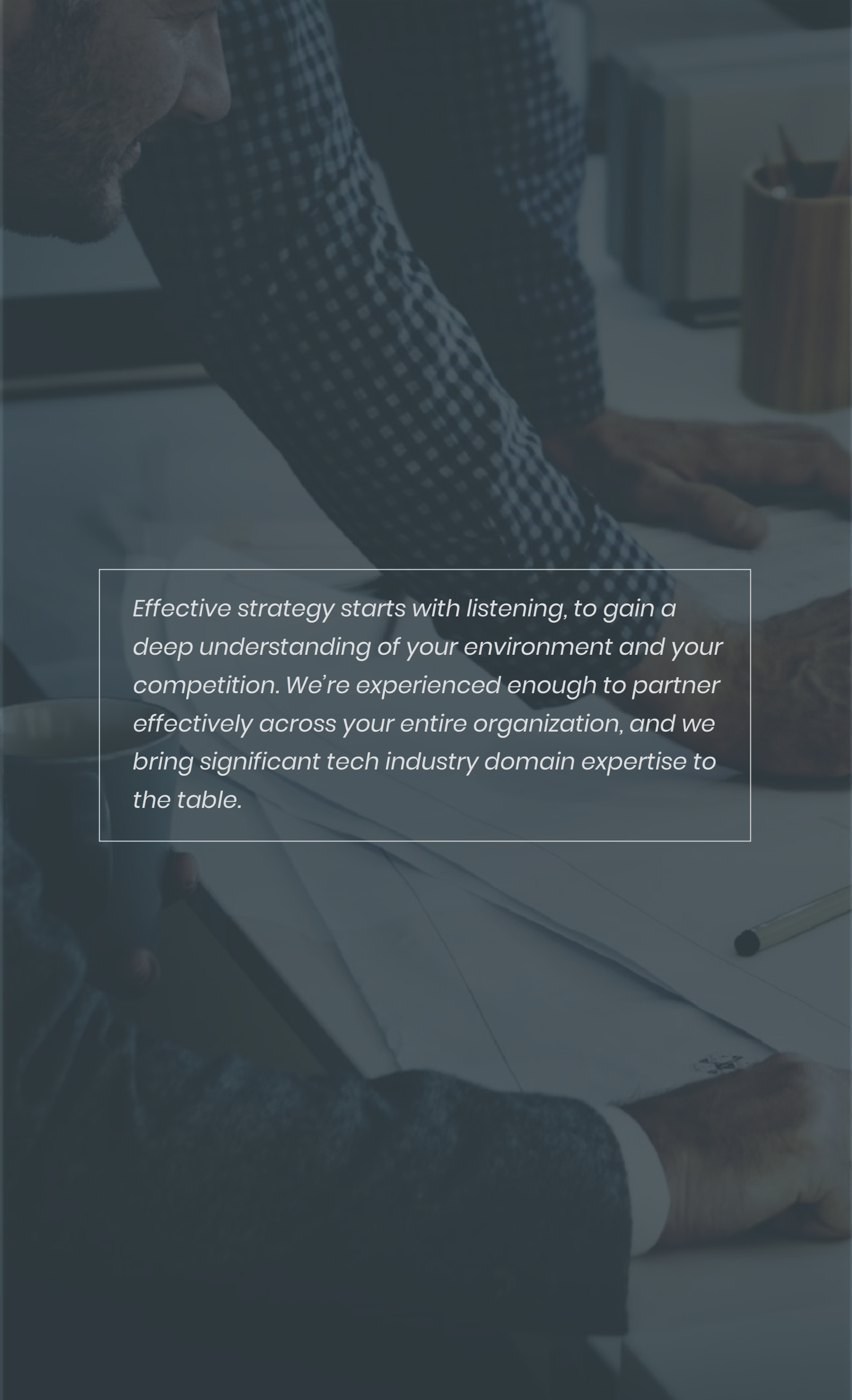
PRIMARY RESEARCH + ANALYST REPORTS

During our evaluation process, we usually find it helpful to perform (or acquire) select independent qualitative and quantitative research into your existing or future markets, competitors, SWOT, audiences, customers, and specific points of current brand interaction more thoroughly. This can give us a clearer picture in order to present you with fully informed recommendations.

OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS AND PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

Spending time with you to learn about your industry positions us to offer insights about how we can best impact your business, and help you to shape the direction of your brand, product, or services. We work with you to really understand your market and your business to identify your best opportunities, then we prepare highly detailed execution plans and budgets for your consideration and approval.

BRAND DEVELOPMENT - RATIONAL

A brand is much more than a logo — it's the sum total of how people perceive your organization. *Branding* is about shaping that perception, and building out a promise delivery system that your team can consistently live by — wherever in the world they may operate.

VALUE FRAMEWORK - APPROACH

Whether we're going to work on a new brand or an existing one, we're always out to define the intersection of what your customers need most, and what you do best.

Our main job as your agency partner is to help you find your way, using a proven value framework workshop tool we've had great success with.

We push you to reflect thoughtfully on your lines of business, uncover critical customer pain points, tell your story well in any situation, and frustrate the efforts of your competition.

It all starts with a solid framework. If you and your executive colleagues can trust (and survive) the process, working with us to form the new positioning and messaging that result from this work, you'll find yourselves in a new and probably very much better place.

1- The Before Scenario
Paints a picture of an undesirable state of being, illustrative of the customer's prototypical pain points.

2 – Negative Consequences
The bad things that result from the Before Scenario; often expressed in terms of unfavorable operational or financial outcomes.

3 – The After Scenario
Creates a stand-in-the-future vision of how life could be better for the buyer after working with you.

4 – Positive Business Outcomes
The good things (e.g. financial or operational performance improvements) that result for the buyer from the After Scenarios; quantifying the value of the solution.

5 – Required Capabilities
The solution capabilities buyers require to achieve the Positive Business Outcomes; these often appear as requirements in customer RFPs.

6 - Metrics
Key performance indicators (KPIs) indicating how effectively the Required Capabilities drive the Positive Business Outcomes.

7 – How We Do It
Describes how your solution satisfies the required capabilities; outlines major product or service offerings.

8 - Better
Your leadership claim; how your product and service offerings satisfy the Required Capabilities better or differently than competitive offerings.

9 – Proof Points
Verifiable evidence that you can satisfy the Required Capabilities in a way that advances the Positive Business Outcomes.

BRAND DEVELOPMENT - EXPRESSIVE

The creative part. What does that rational brand look and feel like in the wild? How would it be personified as a human archetype? Hero? Ruler? Outlaw? Explorer? Sage? Magician? Or some combination of these? This is the starting point for visual brand exploration.

DESIGN REFERENCE

Once you have an idea of your emerging brand persona, it's always helpful to perform design reference exercises to help decide on the type of look and feel that fit your direction.

Great reference examples can come from anywhere, including outside your immediate industry or sector. In fact, we encourage looking beyond your current neighborhood, stretching your imagination and looking for exciting ways to differentiate your brand.

We'll lead you through this process, lending you our thoughts and advice as to art direction, typography, and related topics like photographic, videographic, and animation styles, iconography, and much more.

VISUAL IDENTITY + BRAND ASSETS

The basic design elements you need to put your best face forward. This includes your core visual identity — logotype, mark, secondary typography, and color palette. Once we're clear on visual identity, we can start to expand on your comprehensive visual experience. This is where your brand may require additional elements like photography, iconography, illustration, motion, patterns, and more.

VISUAL GUIDELINES

This technical guide helps you live long in-brand. It includes specifications around sizing, distortion, whitespace, and other design specifications. It will be an invaluable resource to designers and marketers on your team to ensure brand consistency and integrity over time.

EXECUTION AND EVOLUTION

We collaborate closely with our client partners to create a seamless and unified brand experience across all communications touchpoints — digital, physical and social. Continual evolution is crucial for all brands, no matter how well established they may be, in order to remain at the top. So we help our clients to always keep looking forward, always planning for the future.

MESSAGING + COPY

A visual brand experience can take you only so far. A distinctive verbal experience is crucial to a fully expressed, cohesive brand. Your audience's loyalty to your brand is largely determined by the voice you use and the messages you convey — this is often underrated in today's strongly visually driven world.

VERBAL IDENTITY AND GUIDELINES

Without definitions of brand voice, tone, and tempo, ideas seem disjointed and lacking in consistency and coherence.

We dedicate effort and process to defining these values with you, then building out a custom communications style guide — a set of technical composition rules — that anyone writing internally or externally on behalf of your company can use to evoke your brand's distinctive personality.

MESSAGING

Messaging aligns what your company does, who you serve, and why it matters. *Messaging architecture* helps organizations with a more extensive or complex story to unpack it all in an organized, logical way.

We help you to logically structure and create an interesting, unified messaging structure for your market that maximizes clarity, minimizes potential confusion, and always places emphasis on consistency.

COPYWRITING + EDITING

The right words wield real power, connecting and bonding people with your brand story.

Our writing team dives deep to understand your product or services offerings, and tap into your company's inner character. We infuse your narrative with the type of prose that best speaks to your audience and their interests through all appropriate channels.
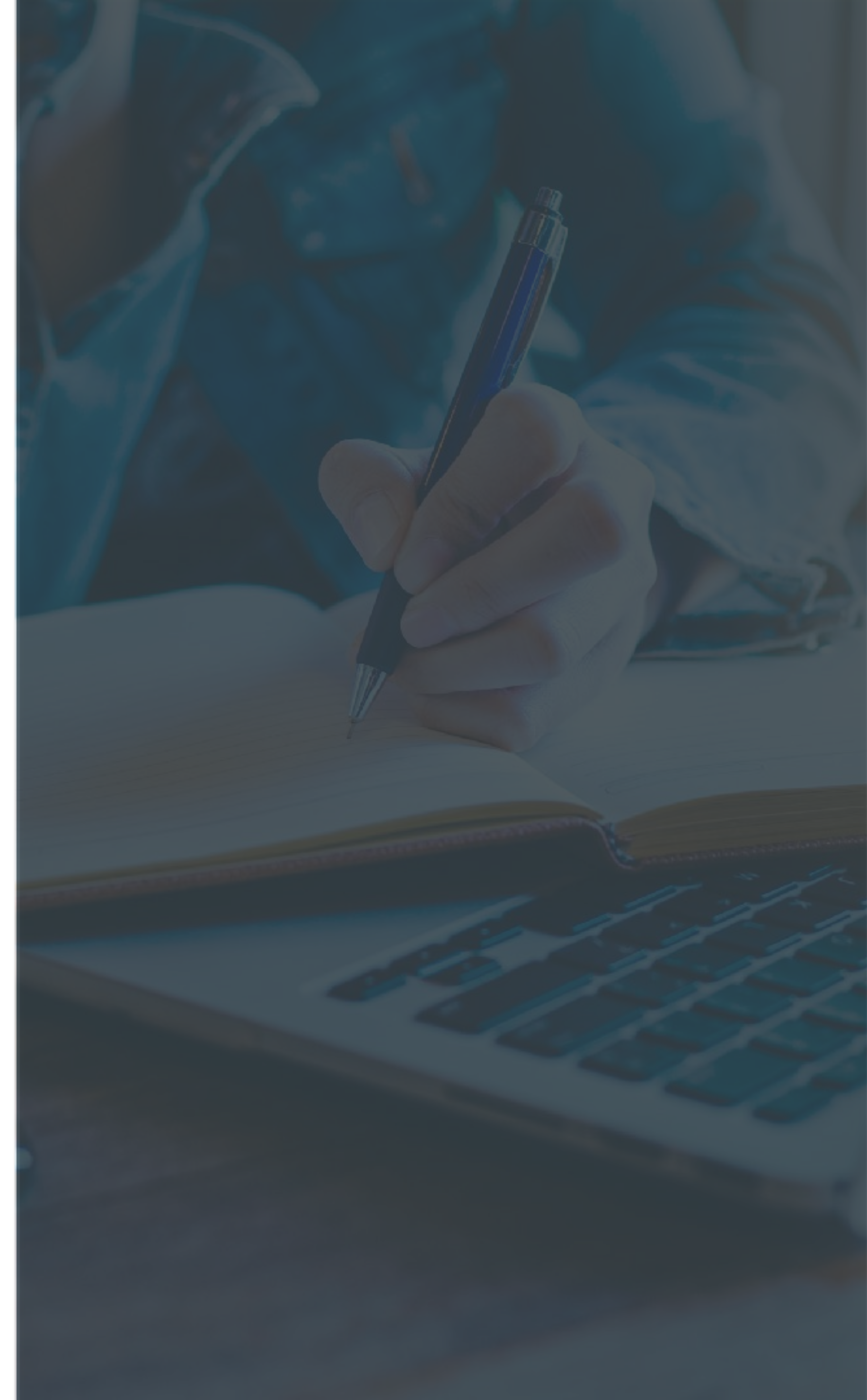
DESIGN SERVICES

Art direction, illustration, photography, videography, and motion graphics are powerful means by which to introduce your brand to the world. They help communicate your ideas, offerings, values, and energy to your clients or customers. Exceptional design and compelling content are the hallmark of any great brand experience, regardless of the medium.

HIGH LEVEL ART DIRECTION / AESTHETIC DESIGN

Establishing or evolving your brand's design aesthetic is crucial to stay in step with changing trends, especially in the digital medium —and especially when you're a technology based business. Our highly accomplished design team has deep experience in the B2B tech space, and is completely in touch with the current expectations of prospects and customers in hardware and software-oriented industries.

CAMPAIGN CONCEPTING AND CREATION

We actually treat campaign work as a hybrid discipline, leveraging both visual and editorial creative talent in tandem — we've learned over time that it's impossible to predict which side of the creative mind the next big idea will come from.

Something we're completely certain of, though, is that when trying to convey a strategic message, stock content almost always fails to frame the message perfectly within your visual brand and voice. We're skilled in conceptualizing and producing targeted content that's unconventional and engaging, using photography, videography, stop motion, or animation.

PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEOGRAPHY, AND CUSTOM MOTION GRAPHICS

Custom media not only melds with your visual aesthetic and brand strategy, it also fits perfectly within important touchpoints like your web UI , advertising, or live conferences and events. Strong yet simple imagery evokes emotion instantly and is almost always useful in conveying complex ideas, how a product works, or process flows.

Bringing a brand to life through motion can often put things into a new perspective, not just for your target customers but often for you as client, too. Motion design makes things relatable and interactive: it can set the pace as part of an increasingly interconnected global storytelling experience. We build kinetic designs that speak to people and stir connection and action.

PRINT COLLATERAL + SALES ENABLEMENT TOOLS

No matter how digital a world we live and work in today, traditional print collateral (also offered digitally of course) like data sheets, case studies, and white papers provide extremely valuable reasons for your customers to believe and buy.

This is most important in technology based businesses, where purchasing decisions happen over time in a highly considered way, rather than by impulse.

Adobe® Creative Cloud™

UX / UI + WEB CONTENT DESIGN

We bring brands, products and services to life on the web by creating interfaces and interactions that make sense. We do relevant research to learn to think like your users, enabling us to present the right information, tools, and actions where, and how, they look for them.

CONTENT STRATEGY

Content strategy provides the map and instructions for producing and maintaining valuable content, and is central to creating the connection between your business and your users. During "CS", we add clarity and structure to your storytelling, setting the stage for a logical, rewarding user experience.

USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

During UX design, we combine user research, content strategy, design principles, industrial engineering, and technical considerations to create a foundation and rationale for the overall interactive user experience.

As a complex, variable, and highly specialized discipline that's evolved tremendously in the past five years or so, UX serves to define points of user interaction and flows, to produce the blueprints for a truly meaningful user journey.

USER INTERFACE DESIGN

When most people think of website design, they're thinking of UI design. Using content strategy, UX blueprints, and brand guidelines, we create a visual design for the website, product dashboard, or mobile app, and work with other teams to produce the content assets called for in the design.

CONTENT DESIGN

Once we're clear on interaction and visual design, we can start to expand on delivery of your comprehensive interactive experience.

This is the point at which we begin to pair great UX and overall visual design with additional components like motion, photography, videography, and implementation of "UX copywriting".

Copywriting in strategic combination with on-page SEO also creates exciting new opportunities for tech brands, especially those with a lengthy or complex story to tell.
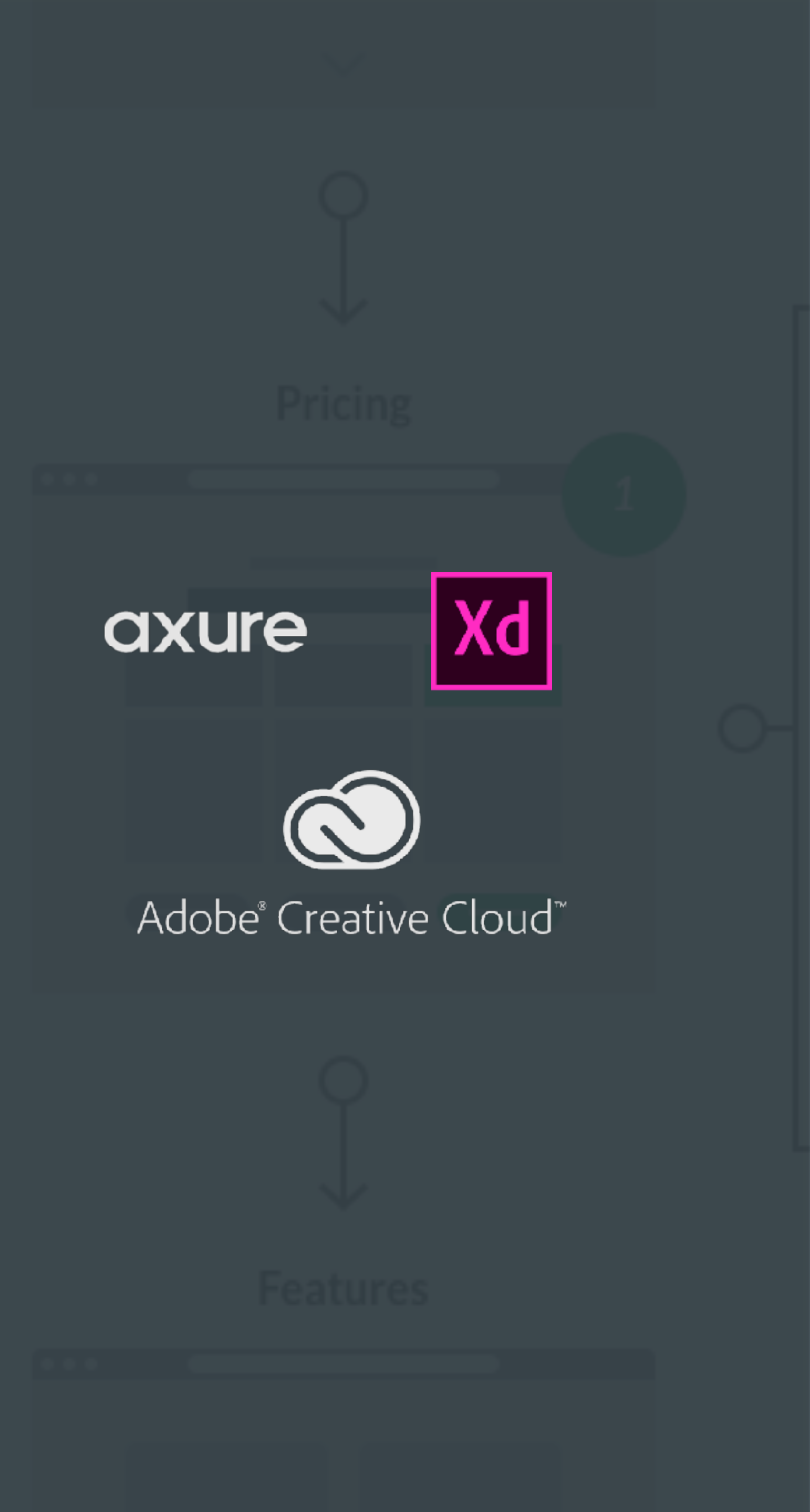
DEVELOPMENT + HOSTING SOLUTIONS

Development might be a topic that's near and dear to your heart, or it might be a total mystery to you. Regardless of your comfort level with this corner of the technology world, our team is ready to dig deep into your needs and provide development support. Ranging from advisory consulting, to full front-end and back-end development, to web operations management, our services and hosting partnerships are here to make it happen.

DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING

Sometimes you don't need a partner to execute required development work. What you may need, though, is a brand- and business-centric perspective to help guide and direct your internal development team. In-house teams can often benefit from our outside perspective, before investing internal time and capital. We've had the opportunity to partner in this way with many great dev teams over the years.

FRONT-END DEVELOPMENT

Organizations face significant challenges translating well-designed user interfaces into properly engaging experiences across a range of modern devices. Our front-end development team is second to none in making this happen. With expertise in all modern coding frameworks (especially PHP and Javascript), we're well equipped for creatively elevated scratch builds, or simply to step in and manage / evolve existing site code.

CMS DEVELOPMENT

We build our client sites on some of the most user friendly and accessible content management systems on the market. We're considered pioneers in our implementation of WordPress at global enterprise scale, and are among a very small group of agencies to have already deployed three very large sites on the latest version of the WordPress platform — Gutenberg. We're also very experienced integrating CMS with third-party applications (such as MA / SFA / CRM) and other external apps and data sources.

SUPPORT + MAINTENANCE

No website is ever completely "finished". Site and server performance optimization, uptime monitoring and response, continuous security management, user experience enhancement, and more create definite need for attention following initial site launch. Our support and maintenance services ensure the reliable management and integrity of your website / CMS investment well into the future.

OUR PREFERRED MANAGED HOSTING PARTNERS

MARKETING + WEB OPS

When it comes to managing marketing automation platforms, and daily duties like database marketing, email campaigns, and web content management, many clients are equipped with the people and skills to handle things internally. But just as many aren't — in that type of situation, we're a partner you can trust to do it all for you.

MARKETING AUTOMATION

In most tech industry product and service categories, where sales cycle are long and thoroughly considered, a sales prospect reaching a sales person (one of your most valuable resources) directly isn't always a good thing.

Enter marketing automation, a primary component of our marketing and web ops offering.

The concept is simply this — turn Leads Into Opportunities and then Customers with less effort by automating much of the upfront process. Let prospects service themselves, while you score their potential value in real time as they interact more and more with your web content over time.

Give each lead a personalized stream of purchase-influencing content. With the robust email tools and drip campaigns available today on platforms like HubSpot and Marketo (now Adobe), you can queue up a series of progressive emails that give leads everything they need to become paying customers.

Every interaction with your content can be engineered to trigger the perfect follow-up or next step automatically — based on rules that you establish (through real-life selling experience). Then decide when the time is right for a human sales intervention, and route that scored lead to a seller or partner to go and nail down the business.

ROUTINE + NON-ROUTINE WEB / CMS UPDATES

Not every marketing staff has, or needs, a full time body on staff to handle website updates. Code development frameworks are constantly changing, coming, and going, so it's hard to keep up with this branch of technology.

Because of the prevalence of this type of situation, we decided to launch a "web ops" offering that provides clients with ready access to our team for site and CMS updates — both small and large.

Our service is SLA-based, so clients can determine the level of staff availability they want to have in place, and this in turn guides our staffing model and contract response times. Depending on your activity level, service requests may be handled using a professional ticketing system on platforms like Asana, or SmartSheet.

MEDIA, SEO / SEM, SOCIAL

We feel the key in these specialized branches of marketing is to develop a tailored approach that ensures brand goals and objectives are met — and also the needs of a brand's most passionate, information-seeking customers.

When it comes to maximizing results and getting the most out of your spend, we strongly recommend the capabilities of our colleagues at CTP Boston to help our clients reach critical customers in an increasingly splintered and noisy media landscape.

For the past two years, as an example, we've worked in close partnership collaboration with CTP at our Actifio client, where we at Productive Machine have long served as brand / digital / web agency of record. Working side-by-side at all times, we've never had as positive a media / search / social agency working partnership as we've had with CTP.

You can contract them through us, or you can contract them directly — just contract them.

· Notable tech industry clients include:
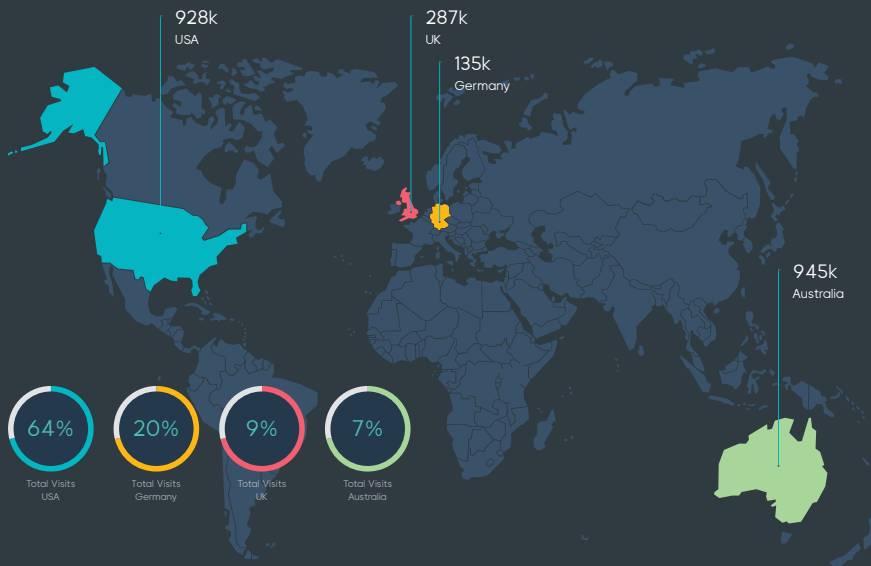
ADA / WCAG COMPLIANCE SERVICES

In 2018, over 2,200 lawsuits related to website accessibility violations were filed under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) -- a 181% increase from 2017. Data for 2019/2020 is not yet fully available, but the number is likely to have increased significantly again. According to industry sources and service providers specializing in website accessibility, the lifecycle of a typical ADA lawsuit follows this general pattern:

· A typical lawsuit is filed by a single individual towards a single website. That lawsuit will include a list of issues found with the website, and a declaration of key features not available to the user. For example, keyboard accessibility or captions on a video.

· Most judges will require the plaintiff to show that there was some form of harm – e.g. that they were not able to obtain vital information, or to complete a form to make a purchase or submit other types of requests.

· Most of the lawsuits filed in the 2018 were filed by blind individuals who were unable to properly navigate a website with a screen reader, and 82% of these suits were filed by just 10 law firms that heavily target this space.

· Most organizations that are targeted in lawsuits are large and/or publicly held companies, or companies that do business with federal and state government entities.

· Website-related lawsuits usually explicitly reference specific WCAG 2.0 standards.

· When an organization receives a lawsuit, the first thing they typically do is refer it to in-house counsel or retain external counsel with expertise in accessibility.

· The parties to the lawsuit usually enter into negotiations and either agree to settle the matter outside of the courts (95% of web accessibility lawsuits are settled), or to proceed with the litigation process. Typical settlements involve the plaintiff and one website.

· Settlements typically include a plaintiff award and an agreement to remediate. Most companies are given up to two years to remediate their website to WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards. Websites are also typically required by settlement to publish a formal website accessibility statement, assuming none predates the settlement.

· In certain cases, organizations can also be required to test their websites with the disability community and/or a third-party company, to verify their compliance.

We provide a full range of accessibility compliance services for both publicly traded and privately held client organizations. Our services include initial assessment, advisory and support services, direct remediation, and ongoing monitoring / lifecycle risk management.

BRAND + DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

Brand and digital governance protect your organization and the significant investments you make in these areas. So it's important to take a formal, policy-based approach to standards and compliance, especially in growing organizations doing business globally.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GUIDELINES

Simply put, brand and digital are the public face of any company. The goal should always be to create pleasing, unified, easy-to-use, and useful experiences (regardless of the medium) that are consistent with your organization's brand and values.

When it comes to the web, for many of your visitors it will be their very first interaction with your organization, increasing the importance of delivering an outstanding, consistent user experience. It's crucial to deliver on-brand messaging and a frictionless user experience that strengthens the organization, and supports your customers and other stakeholders.

HOW WE HELP

With extensive experience serving in the roles of brand agency of record and/or digital agency, we're always very focused on helping our clients to protect the great work we've done together.

We help our partners to create formal guidelines and policies to ensure a consistent look and feel for their brands across all media, both physical and digital. And we're great at helping them to gain adoption across even highly decentralized global organizations.

Standard processes, roles, responsibilities, best practices, and continuous compliance evaluation all play an important part in making these types of guidelines successful.

Honors

Things our clients are saying about us

Honors

Things our clients are saying about us

"I have been consistently impressed with Productive Machine's work. I've worked with Jeff extensively in the past, and he and his team have always come through with creative, edgy (when needed), technically cool work. This has ranged from general rebranding efforts to digital, and everything in between."

Alan Atkinson, SVP Commercial Sales / CTO
*Dell Technologies*

Honors

Things our clients are saying about us

"I've had the good fortune to work with Jeff and the Productive Machine team for nearly twenty years. Their work continues to exceed expectations across all facets of marketing -- from strategy development to brand execution to tactical demand generation programs.

They will always be one of my first calls when the need arises, and even before then, as I count them among my most trusted advisors."

Brian Reagan, Chief Marketing Officer
Actifio, Inc.
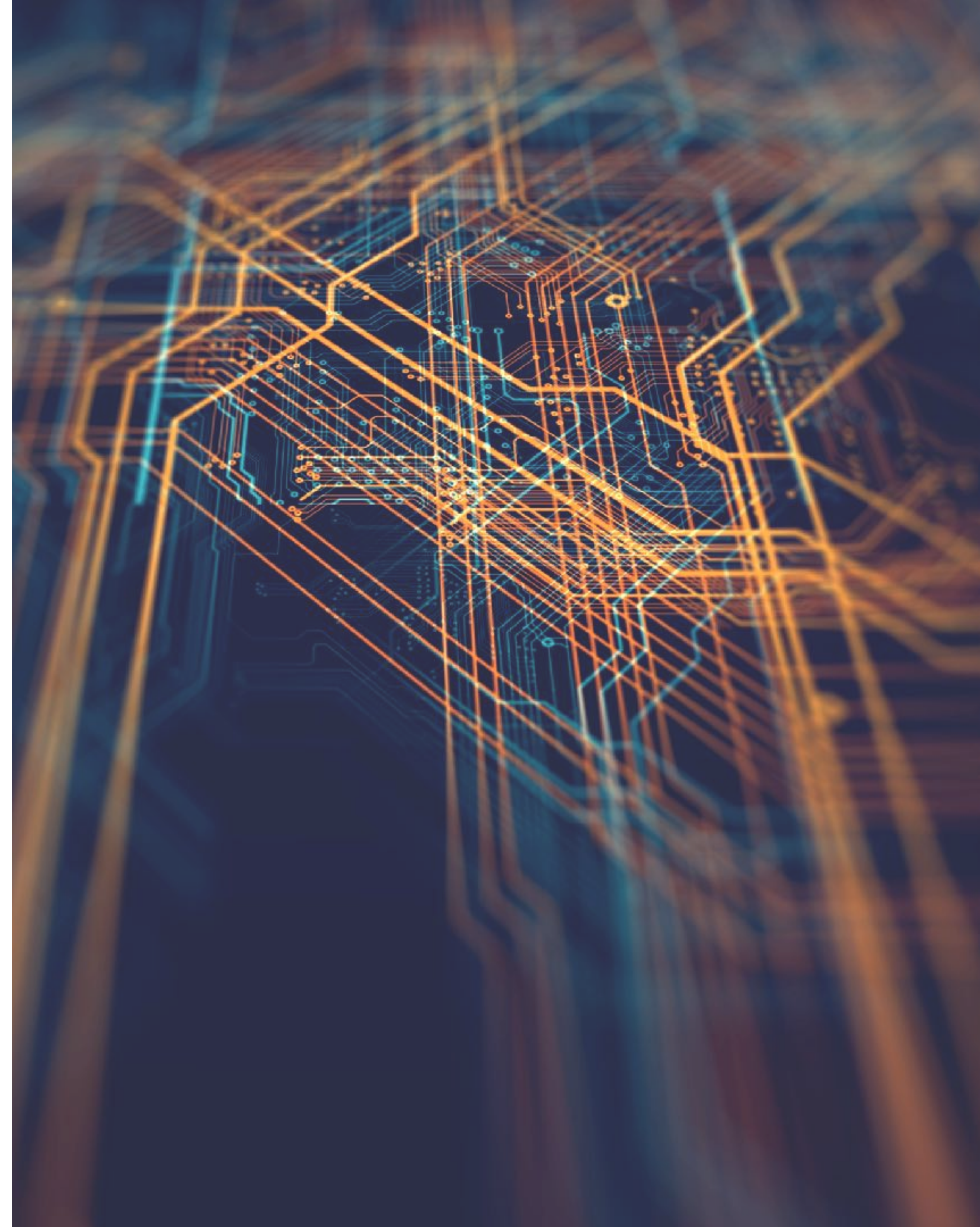
Honors

Things our clients are saying about us

"In 2016, I began the process of evaluating various creative agencies for the task of a major rebranding and website re-build project. After several months of review, we ultimately selected Jeff Foster and his team at Productive Machine.

SOW for this project was pretty significant as we were completely overhauling our brand and messaging, along with evolving our out-dated website from one to four public facing sites.

Jeff and his team excelled at the challenge, hand-holding a team of executives through the various discussions that were necessary for this type of fundamental brand development. In the end, we have a very comprehensive brand and digital presence that represents three distinct business units as well as our corporate brand. Productive Machine continues to be our agency of choice for all things brand-related and I expect that relationship to continue growing."

Aaron Davis, Director of Corporate Marketing
Appriss, Inc.

MOVE MOUNTAINS

Thank you for considering Productive Machine

484.991.8878
hello@productivemachine.com