

ANN WILLIAMS

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SUMMARY

Footwear subject matter expert with 30+ years of experience in both corporate and consulting sectors.

- Design and develop commercially successful and industry-recognized footwear across all categories, price points, distribution channels, markets, and genders.
- Provide expert testimony and litigation support on footwear product and industry related matters, including intellectual property and patent infringement.
- Build and manage diverse, cross-functional teams.
- Consistently deliver tangible results for organizations large and small, domestically and overseas.

I've held vital roles within the footwear industry, ranging from designer to Director of Product and Design for a leading global brand.

As a consultant, my work ranges from initial research and design concepts to comprehensive, multi-year contracts serving as a full-service creative department, handling all stages of design, development, and commercialization.

As a subject matter expert, I provide expert testimony and litigation support on footwear related matters; build, integrate and manage design teams, train staff, integrate design and sourcing, review and implement design and development processes.

Available for media interviews, panel discussions and speaking engagements.

HIGHLIGHTS

In a multi-year, extended contract, I played vital role in establishing and building client's direct footwear business, bringing design in-house from a previously outsourced 3rd party agent. Managing a full staff of designers and overseeing the footwear design process, I was able to dramatically grow the line over multiple seasons, from 1 style to over 300, accounting for 6 million+ pairs of footwear annually.

As part of a long-term contract with a leading international footwear factory group, I led the design process for the group's largest North American account, a classic American lifestyle apparel brand. The business grew dramatically from its initially limited scope, expanding into new categories and ultimately accounting for the majority of the brand's footwear business across all categories and genders. This included the #1 selling shoe over multiple seasons.

I collaborated closely with legal counsel, providing specialized footwear expertise and litigation support in a major, landmark footwear intellectual property / patent infringement dispute brought before the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC).

In corporate, I was quickly promoted from Senior Designer for a single brand to Director of Design and Product Management for multiples brands and key initiatives, including new product launches, licensing partnerships, capsule collections with major retailers and technology concept development and implementation.

EXPERIENCE

Co-Founder and Creative Director

Schwilliamz Creative Consultants - Footwear Design, Development and Strategy

www.schwilliamz.com

Oct 2003 - Present

Director of a leading footwear industry consultancy, designing and delivering creative strategies and commercial solutions for clients worldwide. Leveraging over 30 years of direct industry experience, my areas of expertise include:

- All stages of the product design and development process, from consumer and market insight, trend research and initial concepts all the way through product launch
- Project management
- New business initiatives and product offerings, market expansion and go to market strategies
- Branding and licensing
- Team building, advising and leadership
- Global industry insight and best practices
- Career guidance, professional development, and mentoring

Uniquely equipped to consult on-site and/or remotely, throughout the US, Europe (specifically in the UK), and the Far East, given my professional and personal ties to these markets.

BRANDS IN MY PORTFOLIO INCLUDE:

Sperry, Converse, Stride-Rite, Ecco, Lands' End, Clarks International, Easy Spirit, Keds, Nine West Group, White Mountain, Reebok, Fisher-Price, BBC International, Muck, Sears Holding Corporation, Start-Rite U.K., Dockers, Marc Fisher, Kuru, Aetrex Worldwide, Viakix, ICB, TIEM, William Lamb.

Subject Matter Expert - Footwear product and industry

Schwilliamz Creative Consultants - Footwear Design, Development and Strategy

Oct 2003 - Present

Litigation Support and Expert Testifying Witness

Provide expert testimony and litigation support on footwear product and industry related matters, including intellectual property and patent infringement.

Experience working directly with counsel includes:

- Providing expert witness testimony at depositions
- Preparing subject matter expert reports
- Researching, reviewing, and analyzing prior, present and potential case work
- Advising on footwear intellectual property, patent infringement and related matters.

Clients include: Kilpatrick Townsend LLP

Director of Product and Design

Stride Rite

1999 - 2003 (4 years)

Actively designed product and managed staff of 8-10 designers and product managers through the entire footwear design and development process, from initial strategy and concepts to final product delivery. Collaborated closely with Senior management, as well as product licensing, marketing, domestic and overseas development, and merchandising teams.

Responsibilities included design related operations, including calendars, timelines, budgets, processes, design reviews and seasonal internal and external sales meetings, travel, off-sites, staff development.

Developed new product initiatives; coordinated closely with external partners on licensed product for complementary categories including eyeglasses, hosiery, apparel, and home goods; developed and implemented new technologies.

Recipient, "The Stride Rite Best Award" 2002, "In recognition of outstanding dedication, exceeding day to day expectations, while respecting and valuing others." Selected by peers and senior management.

Footwear Designer

Reebok

Mar 1997 - Apr 1999 (2 years 2 months)

Designed unique and original footwear, offering features, benefits and aesthetics while also staying true to core Reebok DNA. Redesigned and reengineered adult "hero" footwear to meet the unique needs and demands of children, while also ensuring feasible and cost-effective production.

Collaborated closely and simultaneously with both internal and third-party agent development and licensing teams and related overseas production facilities, balancing different processes, timelines, and duty rulings. Communicated global corporate design direction, standards, palettes, and deadlines to external agents, and ensured adherence to same.

Footwear Designer

Clarks International

Jun 1993 - Mar 1997 (3 years 10 months)

Earned coveted design internship while still in university; hired full time upon graduation. Promoted quickly to lead design of the brand's "First Shoes" line, a comprehensive collection of footwear for children aged 6 months to 2 years representing the consumer's vital first experience with the Clark's brand. The extensive line consisted of main range and seasonal product, designed for both the domestic UK and Continental European markets.

Notable accomplishments include designing the #1 selling girls shoe in the UK.

EDUCATION

De Montfort University

BA (Hons), Footwear Design, with Honors

1990 - 1993

Coursework emphasized the crucial relationship between design and manufacture and the needs of the footwear industry and consumers. Technical expertise in all aspects of footwear design, construction, materials, development, and commercialization. Direct interaction with leading industry professionals and major brands to gain practical experience and valuable insights into new products and technologies.

HONORS, AWARDS & PUBLICATIONS

2023 Global Footwear Design Award™

Received a pair of 2023 Global Footwear Awards for work in the Fashion Sneakers and Sandals categories.

Acknowledging ground-breaking footwear designs with the highest global recognition, the GFAs honor the best in the footwear industry, addressing creativity, innovation, sustainability, and social impact.

Design Museum Magazine

"Designing for a Cause: One Colorful Step at a Time"

Summer 2022, Issue 022

Footwear Plus Award – Children's Footwear 2003

Recognized for design excellence in Children's footwear. The Plus Awards are the only accolades determined by the votes of industry members and consumers.