

ClintonWard

Senior Graphic Designer // Art Director // SEO Guru & Creative Marketing Manager

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About Me...

I am committed to Creative SEO, Marketing & Design as a career.

Having worked in many challenging and varied advertising agency environments since **acing** my qualification from CPIT (ARA), I continue to enjoy a life of marketing and design. While currently on contract at the MetService producing Print Infographics for clients such as Stuff, NZME, APN, Allied Press, NZRB (TAB), NZX and MetService that you see in nearly all the newspapers around New Zealand, I also produced graphics for Australian TV channels, for example Prime7 and various corporate marketing collateral as seen in my CV. I concurrently run my own creative design and marketing business XDC.nz that encompasses all my favourite disciplines of Logo Design, B2B & B2C Marketing Management, Branding for Digital & traditional Print, Web Design, UX & CRM Management. Signage Design & POS are also creative I enjoy. My favourite tasks include creating logos and other brand graphics and materials, designing and preparing sales assets like brochures, calendars, flyers and menus, preparing layouts and placements for advertising, and creating and maintaining documents like brand guidelines/style guides and sales proposals. I possess highly advanced Digital Skills for example SEO & Digital Marketing Management, have a strong Conceptual and Content Writing and proofing skills/background (in running my own magazine) and have a very solid Business Acumen. I possess Advanced skills in almost all of the Adobe Apps, for example the "Big Three" InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop, Microsoft & Google Apps, and excel working on Mac OS. I also have extensive experience in MailChimp and many of the various website CRMs like WordPress, Rocketspark and Squarespace. I also use various other apps like Figma and InVision to produce prototypes etc. In my personal spare time I tinker with videography/video editing – I am always willing to learn – and like to keep learning hard practical skills, gain knowledge of emergent marketing technologies and theory.

Being armed with a massive skillset, I am now looking for a new challenge in my job-life.

From the third page onwards only shows a subset of relevant examples of my current work.

This is the link to my current online portfolio: <https://xdc.nz/design-art-direction-web-ux-portfolio/>

Why I am Perfect for the job

I am very loyal and a fun person to be around...

With exceptional leadership and graphic design skills, I have the ability to inspire and motivate cross-functional teams, foster collaborative and innovative work environments. Armed with a marketing and analytical mindset, I can adeptly interpret data and make well-informed decisions. I have excellent communication and interpersonal skills, coupled with a very customer-centric approach and can utilise my strong commercial acumen to identify market trends, consumer insights, and revenue opportunities. I am very effective at collaboration with other graphic designers and marketers in the team, internal and external stakeholders due to my experience in agency and corporate environments. I really enjoy collaborating with internal stakeholders and external partners to achieve marketing objectives that enhance brand positioning. I certainly can demonstrate the ability to thrive in a fast-paced environment, skillfully managing multiple priorities to deliver impactful results. I am very Creative and can turn my Marketing hand at just about any target audience while aligning with your brand values to make a significant impact on your business and drive revenue growth across your organisation.

Think of me as your Senior Designer with Advanced Marketing Prowess – your Marketing Manager with Advanced Design Abilities – an all-in-one Creative Executive.

I am here for you to play a pivotal role in driving your marketing strategies to new heights!

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Background

Since **acing** my qualification of a Diploma in Visual Communication – a double degree in Advertising Design & Marketing, and Photography, I was head-hunted to work at The MetService's Media Graphics Unit in Christchurch, and have been working there for over 25 years* as a Senior Graphic Designer and Information Presentation Specialist, a data-driven digital design role that has become increasingly more production orientated. So to offset that I have been running my own Creative Graphic Design and SEO Marketing business called XDC.NZ (XClint Design + Creative Limited) since 2005. I am very experienced in print, signage, logo design, web design, UX and digital marketing operating my design business. I run a Mac Studio (Apple M1 Max) computer with three monitors. I am an Adobe InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop guru – a good all-round Art Director and a great team player with a very strong "can-do attitude" being a Gen-X, combined with customer-centric business savvy SEO skills.

In my attached CV you will notice I have worked on all sorts of projects for Stuff, NZME, APN, Allied Press and the Ashburton Guardian to name a few. National projects included TV graphics, TAB (NZRB), Weather and Financial infographics. International projects included digital and print advertising campaigns. I am extremely experienced in newspaper and magazine requirements, as well as sheet-fed printing, and are very proficient as a WordPress designer for Web Design (a broad marketing experience, particularly within an eCommerce environment) and love SEO & SEM, DV360, Google Tag Manager, Google Analytics 4, Meta Business & Ad Manager. These skills and Key Requirements are detailed in the following pages. I am a very experienced Digital Designer (UX/Marketer) having a real passion for design and marketing, plus Signs, Packaging and POS. I have a real appetite for new technology and really engaging and communicating with consumers/customers. I have well-developed strategic and commercial acumen supported by strong analytical, dynamic and creative thinker and problem-solving skills. My passion is for creating Style Guides, Logo Design and Typography and I love to keep up-to-date with the latest design and Google tech trends.

In working with quite a few corporate clients like Prestige Commercial Vehicles and their guiding body Mercedes-Benz (which come with huge brand manuals and style guides to adhere to), I have had extensive experience in the discipline of creating and maintaining brand consistency and managing Branding Assets. Liaising with relevant internal and external partners is fun, especially to create their print adverts! In working with bigger businesses like Industrial Brake & Tracks, I manage their Google AdWords account and help out with their eDM's (MailChimp & Social Media to firstly get more clicks on the website, and secondly, reduce the monthly spend and the bonus is I can make a very compelling design with an irresistible Subject Lines. I Design and Deploy advanced SEO in many of the websites I design and build that yield far great results and Google rankings. I also manage the updates and security through various CRMs like WordPress, RocketSpark and Wix. For management the SEO deployment and Google AdWords I use a plethora of Google Apps.

I live in Rolleston and can be contacted anytime, I look forward to catching up.

Thank you,



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Key Requirements

I have more than three years of experience with Google Ads and SEO.

When Covid hit there was a huge drive to go on-line and get more traffic. There was a real movement by many businesses to perform better in that space (or to survive was the sentiment of the day). Good SEO therapy was needed to be done on 99% of businesses I have seen where they needed to be "found" or "ranked" higher to increase their traffic, hence Click Through Rates (CTR) to convert to new business faster. Or their previous AdWords account hadn't been resulting in good "Click Rates" or "Conversions" for new business. Many of my last few projects have been in updating client's keywords properly or correcting or making a new Google My Business listing account to work in conjunction with both their website and AdWords account. Google My Business (GMB) is now Google Business (GB). Especially with the change of Google's new algorithm now, on-site keyword content is now king! The upgrading of the client's SEO backend metadata etc was imperative in supporting this new SEO landscape. The longest running Google AdWords account has been XDC's and ticks away in the background with minor tweaks on competitive keywords. The most aggressive AdWords account has been a client called Industrial Brake & Tracks (IBT) where in fixing their previous mess of Broadmatch keywords was changing the intent and goal while reducing the budget to perform better (more results with savings). They spent 4K per month, now only 1K.

I have at least one year experience with an agency.

I worked at Saatchi & Saatchi in the 90s for a year and then Freelanced to the likes of Waves, Foote, Cone & Belding (FCB) & McMahon & Associates for example for a few years after. This was when the big boys moved to Auckland and I didn't want to move for personal reasons. This is when I was parked up at FCB for super-long days on their campaigns offering both mainly Design time and Website advice. Yes I am old, I remember when the Internet first came out!

Google Ads Certifications in Search, Display, and Shopping.

I do not possess these annual certificates as I am self-taught with real world skills. I am finding the combination of my Design, Marketing and SEO strengths extremely valuable for clients. There is not many places out there in the wild offering good design and marketing while adding good SEO to a sight while it is being built for example. The combination of strong experienced Design nous and SEO, for example optimising images and naming them properly with keywords (and adding Alt Text) is a real plus resulting in advanced SEO – monetising the business site as soon as it goes live. In one case with a slow build, I was getting traffic and pings on the dev server my SEO was so strong. In terms of certification, I am happy to learn all that high-end detail and theory.

Marketing Education and Background.

As a part of the CPIT's Diploma in Visual Communication I decided to target agency work and needed to think like them if I was going to be picked up and advance my career. To become a Creative Director was the goal. The raw creativeness in conjunction with my super-strong design ability made marketing easy for me. To identify the market needs, create a Point of Difference (POD) and Value Propositions for various clients, and hence target the new-found audience/market with great compelling design creating strong, impactful and meaningful results really payoff. Running my own business in terms of advertising and marketing B2B & B2C has really strengthened my experience and offerings. I help many different advertisers in my magazine (Selwyn Connection Magazine (SCM)) to sharpen their marketing messages and various other corporate and SME clients succeed. Sometimes I even go into their business to find the key offerings. *I find this challenge fun.*

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Experience in working with the following technologies:

Google Ads campaign creation and optimisation requires relevant keywords and at least three ways to bid for them, an achievable goal and a budget. Broadmatch keywords are actually what Google is wanting you to try and bid for, but that ends up in budget blow outs as this style is very expensive compared to Exact Match Keywords. Broadmatch keywords tend to put your money in their pocket for little results. Bidding and paying for random keywords that seem the same is expensive and achieve lower results or ROAS. Exact Match Keywords (it is what it sounds like where someone types in exactly what they are wanting to find), result in a lower spend for "hot" results. That's my marketing brain right there, trying to figure out exactly what the market is searching for and adjusting the campaign accordingly over time. Sometimes separating out the main campaign into separate targeted campaigns with a separate unique keyword. I find you 'nearly' get it right first time and it takes months to gain better results. A Google score of over 80% is achieved if done correctly, not using their recommendations to keep the marketing spend lower. Google AdWords Campaigns like change. This picks up more Clicks, and combine that with proper compelling on-site SEO, results in more Click Through Rates (CTR). The Google Ads Campaign needs to be supported by a Google Analytics (Google Analytics 4) account so you can monitor change. What device and where a click comes from is a fun part of the monitoring process.

Technical, on-page and off-page SEO. Carrying out SEO audits.

Google Analytics provide an excellent auditing platform to find the results for a website and a Google AdWords (GAW) campaign (as well as the in-built GAW guide). I find within a website's CRM, using a Plugin like Yoast, can build good robust on-site SEO, and report back instantly to it's predicted success. It works beautifully. Experience tells me in terms of on-site SEO, break out targeted pages and specialise in one thing works far better than a shotgun approach. That's a landing or home pages' job. It's a real art-form designing on-site content that reads well and is SEO-strong. Myself, I use a variety of tricks to gain better results like putting the keyword first in a sentence, first in the H1 Tag and first in the Metadata and Image Alt Text for example. Google comes along and goes check-check-check-check, that's what the site is all about and ranks it higher in it's Search Results Pages (SERP). Or in this case SERPage. Only 5-10% of people go searching on Page 2, you need to be on page 1. If you are not, you loose. I find the problem or lack of results by using GA and correct the marketing offering to contain one targeted keyword (long- or short-tailed keywords or a few similar keywords). Similar Keywords do count together now as Google uses AI and thinks that they are all the same, counts them and returns a pass or fail. If you have too many keywords, you loose! I match on-page SEO content with the back end of the website, the metadata and descriptions of a site etc. On-site SEO is essentially free as opposed to GAW PPC. Turn GAW off and your site will fail to rank high if you don't pay the man, without good website SEO. Tricks like typing into Google's Search Bar what you are wanting to find, Google returns a list in it's drop-down results. These are essentially the biggest ,best, most clicked on keywords and phrases. Grab them and use them first up. Common off-page SEO actions include building backlinks on associates sites, encouraging branded searches, and increasing engagement and shares on social media. Not hard selling, but truly helping out to get more shares on Facebook for example works wonders. Network groups, print or branding advertising activities done off of a website in an effort to increase the site's search engine rankings works – especially if you have great design and a Call To Action (CTR) offering. This SEO-business is a very dark art, but I love it and have had some great results. I often try to beat the local directory site for advertising clients. If I get second on Google's SERP, that's a pass, but if I get first in front of the SelwynConnect.co.nz site, A+.

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Google Tag Manager Configuration.

The Google Tag lets you send data from your website to connected Google product destinations to help measure the effectiveness of a website and/or ads. After I place the Google Tag on a website, it sends to linked Google product destinations, such as Google Ads and Google Analytics. I use a single Google Tag implementation for all my products and accounts. Before you configure the Google Tag settings, make sure you set up your Google Tag on every page on your website, this is the key. The Google Tag lets me send data from a website to connected Google product destinations to help me measure the effectiveness of a client's website and GAW campaign. I set up one Tag Manager account per organization and manage that account as a new user. For example, if an agency like XDC manages a tag on behalf of a company, then your company should create the Tag Manager account and add the agency's Google account as a user. Multiple users can manage the same Google Tag Manager account, and each user can be given different access permissions by the account administrators. Google Tag Manager 360 customers can add and control additional containers using zones. Google Tag Manager is a tag management system (TMS) that allows me to quickly and easily update measurement codes and related code fragments collectively known as tags on any given website. Once the small segment of Tag Manager code has been added to the site, I can safely and easily deploy Google Analytics and measurement tag configurations from a web-based user interface. When Tag Manager is installed, the website will be able to communicate with the Tag Manager servers. I can then use Tag Manager's web-based user interface to set up tags, establish triggers that cause a tag to fire when certain events occur, and create variables that can be used to simplify and automate my tag configurations. In Google Tag Manager, tags fire based on events, such as when a form is submitted or when a video is played. Triggers are used to listen for these events, and they govern when a tag is fired or blocked. A collection of tags, triggers, variables, and related configurations installed on a given website is called a container. A Tag Manager container can replace all other manually-coded tags on a site, including tags from Google Ads, Google Analytics. All in one place!

The best practice is to set up one container per web domain. However, if the User Experience (UX) and tags on a website span more than one domain, it's best to set up a single container that serves all the domains involved. Configurations can't easily be shared across containers without using container export and import, or by using the API. If the tags and firing logic is similar across domains, I use a single container. When the container publishes, all changes go live, regardless of domain. If I need to apply changes to one domain without affecting other domains, I use a different container for each domain. That said, I find the best practice for every Tag Manager implementation should be to start with an analytics strategy and tag implementation plan. If all of my tags fire as pages load, and each page has a unique URL, a basic container implementation is sufficient. If my tag firing scenarios are more complex, I need to implement a more customized container implementation. These custom solutions often implement a data layer, which is code that helps Tag Manager pass data from the site to my tags.

I set up Manage Auto Detection and Configure which types of events my Google Tag should automatically detect for measurement in associated destinations. Then I configure which domain for measurement. Another setting to Allow User Provided Data is turned on for more insights for GAW. Collect Universal Analytics events is good for GA. It collects an event each time a ga() custom event, timing, or exception call from Universal Analytics occurs on your website. I always turn on Define internal traffic to figure out the internal movement between pages on a site. This is great for Google Rankings. List Unwanted Referrers is good for filtering out unwanted traffic for example. This feature can be used to specify referral traffic that you don't want to affect your measurement in destination products.

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Adjust session timeout sets how long sessions can last which again is good for Google Rankings to be longer on a site and find which pages are working harder for you etc. Great for GA. Override cookie settings changes how long cookies last and how they are updated. Google Tags use first-party cookies for various purposes. These cookies have default expiration and update settings, but I can customize these settings by overriding them. Google Tags set and read cookies to identify unique users across browsing sessions. Cookies are small files saved on peoples' computers to help store preferences and other information that's used on web pages that they visit. Google uses cookies in various ways. Remarketing and Google Analytics both use cookies to help do things like run your ads or measure your success. The conversion measurement features of Google Ads and Campaign Manager also use cookies. To help you measure sales and other conversions from your ad, a cookie is added to a person's computer when the person clicks an ad. Page Views, Scrolls, Form Interactions and clicks are all valuable insights required for SEO and marketing purposes I find.

Google Analytics 4 Configuration.

I use this for leveraging Google Analytics 4 (GA4) and various data sources, such as the performance of my SEO services, effectively. If you're migrating from a Universal Analytics property, you'll also see additional migration tools under the > menu for some settings. You can also click the status in any row to compare your Universal Analytics status to your Google Analytics 4 status. Note, it does not backfill your new GA4 property with your Universal Analytics historical data. Your new GA4 property only collects data going forward. You can set custom campaign data in GA4. Campaign data values can be set via parameters in gtag.js and via Google Tag Manager (GTM) that can see and interact with GA4 tags. By adding a data stream, and adding a Google Analytics code for a website I gain valuable insights to things that I am adding to the website like SEO. In this current environment or digital age, data plays a crucial role in decision-making for businesses. GA4 is a powerful tool that enables me to gather valuable insights into user behavior. I typically set it up by default settings. The first step is to create a property in your Google Analytics account. This property acts as a container for the data collected from a website, making it essential for accurate analysis and reporting. Events like button clicks, video plays, form submissions can all be tracked. Enhanced Measurement is a feature that simplifies event tracking in GA4. It automatically tracks essential user interactions, such as outbound clicks and site searches, without requiring additional code implementation. Identifying and tracking conversions is vital for measuring the success of a website. I set up goals and conversion tracking in GA4 to monitor specific user actions, such as completed purchases, sign-ups, or form submissions, providing valuable data for optimization.

Looker Studio Dashboard Creation and Maintenance.

Looker Studio (previously called Google Data Studio) provides dashboards in real-time, equipped with data selectors and date ranges, to stay up-to-date with live insights. Automation for report exports streamlines my processes, saving me time and effort. Its customisability enables me to tailor special analytics to my unique needs. It's an all-in-one reporting tool that is king. I create beautiful, automated reports for my clients that they love, in minutes. Monitor clicks, shares, comments, and more across today's most popular social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, and more. Multi-Channel Reporting, Social Media Tracking, Live Campaign Results and Automated Reports. Track engagement across all clients' social channels with metrics like clicks, comments and shares. Use this information to understand which channels and social media marketing strategies perform best and pinpoint areas that need improvement and see if we are attracting the right followers.

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See what ad is performing better than the other one. Great for tracking Influence. Track engagement metrics and following over time to show clients how their social influence has changed. View intuitive graphs that show comments, likes, shares, impressions, and follower growth month-over-month.

Google Business and Maps optimisation.

Many of my last few projects have been in updating client's keywords properly or correcting or making a new Google My Business (GMB) listing account to work in conjunction with both their website and AdWords account. GMB is now Google Business (GB). Setting the correct data in the account is king, keeping the initial setup clean and almost vague, but predictable (minus the marketing speak). This gets it Verified quicker. Then, I add more optimised images that are named with relevant keywords. The same principle as SEO. GB is powerful and is a must to set up for the business in terms of "where and what are your prospects searching for to find you"). To be on the map and get clicked on first is my goal. Adding all the correct data amplifies your listing to be clicked on first like adding extra categories and offerings.

This takes your business to the next level and gains more meaningful and targeted interactions with customers. There are a few tricks to improve your local ranking on Google like entering complete data, adding a location of your business and it's radius for example and having local results favor the most relevant results for each search. Google's search results are getting more robust – with knowledge panels, answer boxes, expandable related questions, local results, and more. With so many ways to stand out, working for top ranking is well worth the effort, especially considering that traffic and CTR both fall off precipitously as one works their way down the SERPs. With answer boxes, the "People also ask" section, and local results showing contact information, maps, reviews, ratings, and descriptions, Google's SERP alone enables consumers to learn about, compare, and engage with your business far better even before clicking on your website. Consumers today have so many options to choose from, as well as access to all the information and tools they need to discover, vet, and make a decision about a business, you need to be everywhere and first on the list. Where do they go to kick off their research?

Google Maps, if they are trying to find the "best Business Near Me"! Getting on the first page of Google helps you to bring in those top-of-funnel leads but having a GB listing amplifies that! Google is not focused on quantity, but quality. As a result, a larger company or bigger budget does not equate to top rank. Not many business put in all the info required, but when you do, and do that properly and some (SEO), results are amplified. Having a proper logo, great looking images of what people are looking for (meaningful images that solve the pain point of what needs to be fixed are 1000 words) increase your CTR 10-fold. Having your targeted website URL and a phone number is king. I find using a unique phone number tracks Clicks from this source alone so it can be measured against your website or even your print campaign. Print campaigns done properly support the on-line presence. I know this as I run a magazine and the first step in servicing an advertising client is to see if they have a properly functioning GB. Fix that and their ad works wonderfully.

Google Search Console Configuration and Error Resolution.

Google Search Console (GSC) is a free tool that helps me monitor a site's search performance and technical SEO health. It reports on a variety of metrics, from search appearance to user experience (UX), which can help me improve a site and get more traffic from Google. I use it for identifying technical SEO errors and review how a site is performing on Google. I add a domain property which will provide the most comprehensive view of a website's

Key Requirements

information. Once I complete setup, I click "VERIFY" in Search Console. Sometimes this can take 48-72 hours. Depends on the DNS etc. I normally add a Verified owner, me. This enables me to see a sitemap file including all the website URLs you want Google to crawl and index. This is important because Google needs to crawl and index your pages in order to rank them. You'll get data from all URLs under the domain name, including all protocols, subdomains, and paths. To ensure a sitemap is working properly, I run a crawl-based audit of the website. Now I can see the "Performance" report that provides data about how a website is performing on Google. It shows four metrics: Total clicks: The number of times people clicked on your site from the search results; Total impressions: The number of times your site appeared in search results; Average CTR (click-through rate): The percentage of impressions that resulted in a click; and Average position: The average position of your site in search results etc. Two things I am looking for in terms of bettering my SEO: Low CTR: If your pages rank well but don't get many clicks, I consider writing better title tags and meta descriptions. This will make my pages more appealing to users; Missing keywords: If I don't rank for important keywords, my/your site might not have enough useful content that addresses them. In that case, I need to improve the content strategy and produce quality content targeting terms you want to rank for. Critical data on the URL Inspection Tool I am looking for is Index status: Whether or not the page is indexed by Google; Last crawl date: The date and time Google last crawled the page; and Mobile usability: Whether the page meets Google's mobile-friendly criteria. Typically I use GSC to force a website's reindexing after adding SEO content to an existing site or after making a new site.

Experience with SEO Software and Platform Software such as Screaming Frog, MOZ Pro, SEMRush etc etc etc... There are many CRM's I use like RocketSpark, depending on what client has what platform. The best SEO platform or Plug-In I commonly use on-site is Yoast in WordPress. This helps me build a solid foundation of SEO effectiveness for the site. SF, SEMRush and Hub Spot I use occasionally. They are just like riding a bike – follow your nose. Moz has a Full Suite of SEO Tools for Finding Keywords, Auditing Links and Finding Errors. Target the Best Keywords, Check Rankings, Find Backlinks, and Fix On-Site Issues for Free. SEMRush I use for an SEO audit. Position Tracking Visibility, On Page SEO Checker, Social Tracker, Social Poster, Backlink Audit, Link Building, PPC Keyword Tool for Traffic Insights and Organic Sessions. I use this if a client has a problem with bad rankings etc. SEMRush has a really cool tool, SEO Writing Assistant (SWA). This intuitive tool subtly provides me with optimisation ideas for my text just as I am bringing it to life. Getting recommendations about readability, words to use, title, word count, and tone of voice. Much like Yoast does within a WordPress site but SWA is like an ai for me. I prefer Yoast as it is there while I am creating the site because I already have the marketing goal and message to target organised. Hopefully Yoast will change according to Google's new algorithm where the site's metadata and description were the place Google looked at favourably, but is now preferring on-site copy to be king! Now that is something I have a knack for producing, being excellent at English and marketing simultaneously in creating content while presenting the right "image" with the right message targeting the right customers. That has the best conversion rate if done well. Look up Freeman Irrigation. This is a client I have fine-tuned their SEO and constantly ranks high. Latest Search Performance this month is +72 clicks, 264 Impressions and 2.1 as it's Average Position.

NB: <https://www.selwynconnect.co.nz/canterbury/rolleston/business/freeman-irrigation>'s position is number 3 behind Freeman Irrigations Facebook at position 2 v it's organic position, position 1!

Creative SEO is a thing of beauty!