

CARL FRANKE

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SENIOR PRODUCT DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT LEADER

❖ *Listen attentively, absorb thoroughly, and plan accordingly to execute successfully* ❖

Innovative, intuitive, and adaptable **Senior Product Design & Development Leader** offering extensive experience assessing market trends, identifying gaps, and creating unique solutions. Grasp the big picture, focus on essential details, and strategically manage multiple priorities in fast-paced environments. Collaborative leader who can develop, coach, and mentor high-performance design teams to realize their full potential. Recognized as a trusted advisor and business partner capable of cultivating strong relationships with all organizational levels, diverse personalities, and key stakeholders. Consistently exceed expectations utilizing critical thinking ability, analytical problem-solving, rational decision-making, and honest communication.

APPLIED SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Strategic Planning
- International Business
- Brand Development
- Art Direction/Illustration
- Adobe Creative Suite
- Project Management
- Product Marketing
- Product Lifecycle Management
- Client Relations
- Customer Service
- Talent Development
- Strategic Sourcing
- Negotiations
- Process Improvement
- Cost Reduction

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

SPENCER GIFTS LLC/SPIRIT HALLOWEEN - Egg Harbor Township, NJ ▪ 1996 – 2023

Provider of private-label novelties, décor, and gift items; with 600 stores, 30,000 employees, and \$1 billion in revenue.

Director of Product Development (2016 – 2023)

Led 10-person team (four product designers, two 3D designers, and four project managers) from initial brainstorming through design specification development for project release of Spirit Halloween products to manufacturing. Collaborated closely with China factory to review sample process, marketing staff to develop background storylines for animated props, copywriters to produce audio scripts, and quality department to troubleshoot and correct issues impacting product performance.

- Recruited and formed strong product management team from scratch including 3D digital sculptors to ensure designs complied with complex molding processes.
- Spearheaded in-house and global cross-functional teams to drive technical execution of Spirit Halloween Décor, from concept through production to ensure performance, cost, quality, and schedule adherence.
- Introduced highly unique animated props and accessories, generating 90% to 100% product sell through including:
 - Michael Myers H20, which led to new licensing opportunities based on product differentiation and superior quality, advanced overall animated prop brand, and exceeded annual financial goals by category.
 - Fortnite game brand, which won MGM Licensing LEO Award and launched new division for Spirit Halloween to become a wholesale distributor for licensed product.
 - Novel product line based on cult movie Killer Klowns From Outer Space and animated full-size Shorty character, named Licensee of the Year by MGM.
 - InSpirit Designs line of business for selling proprietary products to other retail outlets such as Amazon, Walmart, and Target.
- Originated and received design patent for Multi-Prop Remote Control, which activated numerous different Halloween props from a single device and became an evergreen item that sold over 100,000 units.
- Directed prototyping and proof-of-concept builds to mitigate risk and test new mechanisms through full product development lifecycle, significantly improving damage and defect rates.
- Developed more efficient communication channels for internal teams and external vendors to collaborate with China factory partners.

- Reengineered design specification sheet development for projects released to factories, resulting in:
 - Faster turnaround time to receive physical samples, timelier purchase order placement, earlier shipping possibilities, lower production costs, and extended product selling windows.
- Drove continuous improvement initiatives in 3D development awareness and training to improve engineering process efficiencies and lower sample making costs.

Senior Manager of Product Development (2004 – 2016)

Oversaw three-person design staff for both Spirit Halloween (including animated props) and Spencer Gift products. Designed and project managed all décor development from concept through production and shipping. Controlled and grew all outside vendor relationships for décor design and development. Designed and created printed graphics for costume fabrics. Created and recorded actual audio used in numerous animated props, as well as other licensed décor items. Directed copywriters, audio technicians, and voice talent, and wrote scripting as needed.

- Conceived first large-animated prop sold by any Halloween retailer.
- Designed and developed follow-up item after successful sales of first animated prop, which led to new product category that eventually turned brand into a must-destination for Halloween lovers.
- Created first Zombie Baby, an extremely popular line of animated and non-animated dolls, introduced in 2007, which subsequently received prestigious company Out of the Box Award.
- Imagined hundreds of winning concepts that became a perennial line of development, resulting in over \$15 million in sales, as well as online fan clubs reselling originals at hundreds of dollars each.
- Instituted bill of material cost spreadsheets (currently still in use) to identify similar parts of items from different factories used in production, helping to generate better cost analysis and increase overall margins.

Manager of Product Design (1996 – 2004)

Directed team of three designers after operating as an individual contributor for first three years. Partnered with buying teams from Halloween, Humor, and Rock & Roll departments and worked with their vendors to change existing offerings into more unique and exclusive products representing the Spencer brand. Designed and developed all packaging and printed collateral.

- Rebranded Spencer Gifts complete Halloween brand, which originated in mall kiosks called Halloween Headquarters.
- Launched and built the company's product development program from the ground up.
- Designed and developed Spencer Gifts brand of Rock & Roll licensed products by directly brainstorming concepts with numerous license owners.
 - Teamed with major celebrities including Pricilla Presley (Elvis brand) and Sharon Osbourn (Ozzy brand).
 - Partnered with Gene Simmons on Kiss merchandise collection, which was highly successful through Spencer Gifts and Kiss On-Line selling venues (many items are still being bought and sold on platforms such as e-Bay).
- Hand-picked by new CEO to be part of reinvention committee for rebranding Spencer Gifts in 2005.
 - Created targeted demographic (18-24 year-old female and male) and redesigned complete look and feel of retail stores to appeal to specific population sector.
 - Played key role in developing business model that is still in use today and helped Spencer Gifts become sought after retail brand within the challenging mall environment.
 - Established merchandise direction for buyers to pursue and expand.
 - Traveled across the U.S. and Canada to promote and educate groups of top-level divisional store managers on the new brand rollout.
- Created and received design patent for the U.D.O. (Unidentified Disco Object) novelty party light.

Prior Experience:

Art Director/Photo Art Director, CLOVER DEPARTMENT STORES (DIVISION OF STRAWBRIDGE & CLOTHIER)

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Illustration & Design, ART INSTITUTE OF PHILADELPHIA - Philadelphia, PA