

If you say “yes” to any of the following questions you may have the makings of a strategist.

- Do you often start a conversation by saying “I just read an interesting article on . . .” or “What if we look at the problem this way . . .”
- Does going into a stranger’s house and asking them how they plan their family’s dinner sound like a good time?
- Would it be fun to shoot and produce a mini-documentary about clowns?
- Do you turn down Super Bowl party invites so you can watch the commercials without interruption?
- At the airport newspaper stand, rather than decide between People, Harvard Business Review, Entertainment Weekly, Fast Company, Vanity Fair or Wired, do you get all of them?
- When given a choice between solving problems or seizing opportunities, do you answer “Both please?”

WHAT ALUMS SAY

“You can’t teach how to do advertising – in the same way you can’t teach how to do art, or even business for that matter. What you can teach is how to think about advertising, how to question it and how to distinguish between good and bad advertising. And the Brandcenter is amazing at it.”

– Gautam Ramdurai, Insights Lead, Google

“The Brandcenter education is like a buffet- you get taught lots of different styles and methods, and you can pick and choose which ones you like and which ones play to your strengths. It allows you to become the planner you want to be. It was important for me to be in an educational setting, where I could try out different planning styles without running the risk of angering a boss or getting fired.”

– Johnny Roelofs, Brand Strategist, Venables Bell & Partners

“The strategy track at the Brandcenter is not just about how to solve business problems, although you’ll learn that. It’s not just about inspiring great creative work, although you’ll learn that too. It’s about how to interpret and shape the vast and vibrant culture in which we all participate.”

– Cliff Adams, VP/Planning Director, The Martin Agency

FROM THE DIRECTOR

“Using quantitative & qualitative tools of inquiry to explore and understand culture and consumers, strategists look to define and seize the advantage of business opportunities.”

– Helayne Spivak, Director, VCU Brandcenter

WANT TO LEARN MORE?



CONTACT

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VCU Brandcenter

STRATEGY

Track

Like many life-altering decisions, you may want to take a few moments to think about it.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW



The Virginia Commonwealth University Brandcenter in Richmond, Virginia is an innovative, two-year graduate program that brings the creative, strategic, business and technology sides of advertising and branding together. The Brandcenter offers a highly creative, uniquely collaborative environment for students concentrating in five tracks: Copywriting, Art Direction, Strategy, Creative Brand Management, and Experience Design. Students earn a Master of Science degree in Business/ Branding. Brandcenter alums work at some of the best agencies in the world such as R/GA, Mother, Droga5 and Wieden + Kennedy. On the client side our alums are helping to build brands like Target, Apple, Google, Nike and Coke. Innovation, design and entrepreneurship are tightly woven into our curriculum resulting in graduates who have gone on to launch successful start-ups and product ideas. Just imagine where you could go from here.

TRACK DESCRIPTION

Storyteller. Budding anthropologist. Culture maven. Predictor of the future. Solver of problems. Insightful generator of ideas that inspire. Big picture painter. All of these hats, and more, you will learn to wear in the Strategy track. The goal is to take these skills and use them in an impactful way to help agency and client teams create meaning and value in the marketplace.

CURRICULUM 2015*

SEMESTER

01

- / Business of Branding
- / Creative Thinking
- / Strategic Thinking
- / Introduction to Planning

SEMESTER

02

- / Strategy & Design
- / Visual Storytelling for Strategists
- / Brand Analytics
- / Comms Planning/UX

SUMMER

There are no classes during the summer between your first and second years of the Brandcenter. Many students intern for 8-10 weeks during this time. The school assists students with internship placement by compiling and curating a list of paid internship opportunities. Most internships are in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago.

SEMESTER

03

- / Brand Experiences
- / Creative Fusion
- / Cultural Impact

SEMESTER

04

- / Innovation
- / Insights & Implications
- / Creating Gravitational Pull

* Please note the curriculum regularly evolves given the ever-changing nature of our industry.

JOB PLACEMENT

The job placement rate at the VCU Brandcenter is generally 75% within three months of graduation and 97% within six months of graduation. Brandcenter graduates are in demand, and we are lucky to have amazing support from our industry. Strategists typically go on to roles with the strategy or planning department of an advertising agency. However, more strategy graduates are finding their way to brand consultancies, PR agencies, and consumer research companies. After working for a few years, our strategy grads also make the shift to client-side positions.

THE FACULTY

Brandcenter classes are taught by full-time faculty who are all experts in their disciplines. Our faculty bring a wealth of practical experience to the classroom. Prior to teaching, our professors have worked as creative directors, planning directors, brand managers, agency and company presidents, editors, directors, experience designers, among other roles. Most faculty members continue to consult in their respective fields, which helps to ensure they stay current in an industry that changes by the minute. Combined, our faculty have over 250 years of experience in the world of advertising and brand management.

WHAT THE INDUSTRY SAYS

"Taught by professional strategic planners from ad agencies, VCU is the only totally immersive master's program in strategic planning that trains and prepares its students for jobs in advertising, providing the conceptual framework around branding, marketing and creativity plus hands-on experience working on real world problems through case studies and projects. VCU grads are recruited by ad agencies and corporations as some of the best young talent available to the industry today."

– Ada Alpert / President / Alpert Executive Search, Inc.

"The VCU Brandcenter manages to continually produce the planning talent that is desperately needed today – that rare mix of fresh thinking of what brands and communication need in order to thrive today, combined with the practical understanding of how business and agencies work. As a result, they hit the ground running faster and contribute far more than you could hope for."

– Gareth Kay / Founder / Chapter San Francisco

