

STEVEN OAKES

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LOCATION
Manchester, UK.

PROFILE

Board-level marketing leader with 25+ years' experience scaling brands in high-growth, investor-backed businesses. Proven in building performance marketing engines, unifying brand narratives, and delivering ROI-driven growth across tech, education, and consultancy sectors.

EXPERIENCE

FREELANCE

Support founder-led and growth-stage businesses across SaaS, tech, hospitality, consultancy and service sectors with board-level marketing strategy, go-to-market planning, mentoring and commercial focus.

November 2025 - Present

FRACTIONAL CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

- Provide board-level marketing leadership to founder-led and growth-stage businesses on a fractional basis.
- Advise on positioning, proposition, go-to-market strategy, demand generation, and marketing effectiveness across SaaS, tech, consultancy, hospitality, and service businesses.
- Work directly with CEOs and leadership teams to improve pipeline generation, conversion, reporting, and the link between marketing activity and commercial outcomes.
- Lead strategic initiatives including website strategy, messaging, campaign planning, funnel optimisation, dashboarding, and sales-marketing alignment.
- Mentor founders, marketing leaders, and in-house teams to build stronger capability, sharper decision-making, and more commercially focused execution.
- Help businesses build clearer priorities, stronger marketing functions, and more sustainable growth without needing a full-time CMO.

NORTHCODERS GROUP PLC

www.northcoders.com

AIM listed PLC specialising in coding bootcamps and technical consultancy, with £9m revenue in 2024 and offices across the UK.

January 2024 - November 2025

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER & BOARD MEMBER

- Lead group-wide marketing strategy across Northcoders, Tech Returners, and Counter®, positioning marketing as the growth engine for the business.
- Built and scaled a **performance marketing function**, driving significant increases in lead generation, conversion rates, and customer lifetime value.
- Developed and embedded a **unified brand narrative** across three distinct business units, ensuring consistency of messaging and visual identity.
- Launched the **Data Engineering, AI & Machine Learning Bootcamp**, creating a new revenue stream and expanding market reach.
- Introduced **Counter®**, a technical consultancy brand, achieving rapid adoption in target markets and establishing a distinct market position.
- Delivered measurable commercial impact: **57% revenue growth to £9m, 51% gross profit uplift to £5.9m**, and application volume doubled since 2022.
- Implemented scalable **marketing infrastructure** including CRM integration, marketing automation, and campaign analytics to optimise ROI.
- Played an active role in SLT and Board decision-making, influencing overall business strategy and market expansion plans.

July 2022 - December 2023

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING

- Developed and executed **multi-channel marketing strategies** for Northcoders' tech bootcamps.
- Designed and delivered **data-driven digital campaigns** across paid media, SEO, content, and partnerships to drive applicant growth.
- Partnered with product and delivery teams to support multiple successful **new product launches**.
- Shaped brand messaging and creative that contributed to **over 2,000 career changers** transitioning into tech roles.
- Introduced enhanced **campaign tracking and reporting frameworks** to measure ROI and inform future investment decisions.

STM GRP

www.stmagency.co.uk

Independent marketing group with five specialist agencies and a combined £6.5m turnover, offering integrated brand, digital, media and performance marketing services.

June 2019 - July 2022

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR & BOARD MEMBER

- Ran the day-to-day operations of a full-service marketing agency, with full P&L responsibility and accountability for performance, delivery, people, and growth.
- Led digital strategy across STM Group, overseeing digital work across five agencies with a combined turnover of £6.5m.
- Played a key role in post-merger integration, improving ways of working, raising delivery standards, and introducing group-wide centres of excellence across a 90+ person team.
- Increased digital project value by 1200% through stronger commercial focus, improved service delivery, and the adoption of new processes and technology.

December 2016 - June 2019

HEAD OF DIGITAL MARKETING

- Directed digital operations, taking a loss-making department back to profit by increasing the value of digital projects and expanding the agency's digital capabilities.
- Grew the digital team from two developers to a multi-skilled team of 10, introducing e-commerce, SEO, and PPC capabilities, which significantly enhanced client offerings.

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EXPERIENCE

RED C MARKETING

Manchester-based digital marketing agency with £2m turnover, working with brands like Jet2, Royal London and N Brown Group.

April 2015 - December 2016

HEAD OF DIGITAL

- Directed digital initiatives for a full-service marketing agency, overseeing the digital team and ensuring the successful delivery of high-profile projects.
- Pitched and secured new business with Manchester City Football Group, creating websites for their global operations in Australia, Japan, and the US.
- Managed top client relationships with brands such as Swinton Insurance, MCFC, and Bupa, working closely with the board to define the agency's future direction.

BAUER MEDIA

One of Europe's largest media companies, with a UK portfolio spanning radio, magazines and digital brands including Kiss, Absolute Radio and Grazia.

July 2011 - April 2015

DIGITAL TEAM LEADER

- Managed and delivered large-scale digital projects, generating significant revenue through innovative, cross-platform solutions.
- Worked closely with sales teams to develop creative campaigns that drove engagement and revenue, achieving over £2m in non-traditional revenue in 2014.

HIDDEN CREATIVE

Specialist Augmented Reality agency working with Fortune Global 500 firms across engineering sectors.

June 2010 - July 2011

DEVELOPMENT TEAM LEADER

- Led a team of 3D developers and designers, delivering cutting-edge immersive technologies, including augmented reality projects for clients such as BBC, Channel 5, and ABB Power.
- Managed client relationships, coordinating with third-party suppliers and technical teams to deliver innovative digital solutions.

UNIVERSAL MUSIC

The world's leading music company, representing global artists and labels across recorded music, publishing, and merchandising.

September 2003 - June 2010

DIGITAL SERVICES MANAGER

- Acted as the principal point of contact for digital services, working with A&R to enhance artist profiles and revenue through strategic partnerships.
- Established and nurtured relationships with key platforms such as iTunes and mobile operators, amplifying artist profiles and boosting revenue through innovative digital strategies.

DESIGN ESTI

Manchester-based digital marketing agency specialising in web development and digital marketing for the music industry.

September 1999 - August 2003

FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR

- Founded and led a digital marketing agency specialising in the music industry, producing websites and promotional material for major record labels such as Sony, Universal, and EMI.
- Developed digital strategies for well-known artists, including Liberty X, Elbow, and Stereophonics, earning a Music Week marketing award nomination in the first year.

BRAND EXPERIENCE



RECENT EDUCATION



Grade A with Distinction - 3rd out of 922 globally.

"This is how you set up your brand. It's **my favourite brand plan of the year**. I thought it was beautiful, with a big red line running throughout it. It really was an impressive bit of work."

Professor Mark Ritson