

**WE'RE
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ARE
YOU?**



Studio Design Lead

Position Description

Team:	Customer, Product & Brand Passenger	Location:	Wellington
Reports to:	Senior Marketing Manager, Passenger		
Role Type:	Permanent		

About Us

KiwiRail's Role in Aotearoa, New Zealand

KiwiRail, a proud State-Owned Enterprise, delivers sustainable and inclusive growth for our customers, communities, and people.

For more than 150 years, rail in New Zealand has connected communities, delivered freight and passengers around the country, and showcased our spectacular scenery to the world. Our purpose—Hononga Whaikaha, Oranga mo Aotearoa (Stronger Connections, Better New Zealand)—speaks to connection with our customers and the future needs of their businesses, connection with the communities we serve and operate in, and connection with each other. KiwiRail is carrying this legacy into the future, delivering connected rail and shipping transport services that create economic, social, and environmental value for New Zealand and New Zealanders.

Our Workplace

At KiwiRail, our values define the behaviour we expect from everyone. We have a team of over 4500 people, and every connection we make with each other, our union partners, our customers and all our stakeholders must be of the highest standard.

Safety, health, and well-being are our number one priority, ensuring our people return home safe and healthy every day.

About the Role

Purpose of the Role

The Design Studio Lead translates Passenger's brand and marketing strategy into compelling creative concepts and consistent execution across Interislander and Great Journeys New Zealand.

Reporting to the Senior Marketing Manager, the role leads creative development, visual storytelling, art direction and design quality across campaigns, digital channels, partnerships, products and physical customer touchpoints. It contributes early to planning, using customer insight, brand positioning and commercial objectives to shape creative approaches before production begins.

The role leads the in-house Design Studio and two Designer roles, managing intake, priorities, capacity, workflow and quality assurance. It personally delivers selected complex or high-priority work while maintaining sufficient capacity for creative leadership, coaching and concept development.

Working with Marketing, Content, Digital Revenue, Product, Customer Experience and Operations, the role ensures creative work meets brand, customer and channel requirements. It uses performance feedback to improve execution and develops the studio's capability across digital design, video, motion and content production, drawing on approved specialist suppliers where required.

The Senior Marketing Manager owns Passenger consumer brand and marketing strategy. The Design Studio Lead owns its creative interpretation and execution within approved KiwiRail brand governance.

Key Accountabilities

Within the area of responsibility, this role is required to:

Creative Strategy and Brand Execution

- Translate approved brand positioning, customer propositions and marketing objectives into creative concepts, visual narratives and execution approaches.
- Contribute early to campaign, product, partnership and customer experience planning.
- Present creative recommendations that explain the intended audience, brand expression and customer or commercial outcome.
- Lead art direction across internal and commissioned work.
- Maintain consistent creative expression across digital and physical customer touchpoints.

Design and Creative Delivery

- Personally deliver selected complex or high-priority design work.
- Direct the development and adaptation of creative assets across digital, social, print, video and physical formats.
- Ensure output meets the brief, brand standards, accessibility requirements and production specifications.
- Use customer insight and channel performance to improve creative execution.

Studio Leadership and Operations

- Lead and develop the two Passenger Designers.
- Manage studio intake, prioritisation, work allocation, workflow and quality assurance.
- Maintain clear visibility of capacity, approvals, commitments and delivery risks.
- Resolve routine studio decisions and escalate material conflicts through the Senior Marketing Manager.
- Transparency of workload and timings to the wider team

Capability and Specialist Resources

- Review the studio's capability mix against Passenger's future requirements.
- Build capability across digital design, video, motion, content production and relevant UX/UI design.
- Brief and direct approved external specialists where internal skills or capacity are insufficient.
- Improve efficiency through reusable assets, templates, processes and approved technology.

- Utilise AI where appropriate to improve efficiency.

Key Challenges

- Balancing creative leadership, team development and studio management with hands-on delivery.
- Supporting two brands with different audiences, propositions and market requirements.
- Translating strategy into creative work that is distinctive, accessible and effective across channels.
- Managing competing requests transparently across Passenger.
- Building future capability while maintaining reliable delivery of existing requirements.
- Connecting brand expression with digital performance and customer experience requirements.
- Maintaining quality, permissions and production discipline while delivering at pace.
- Bringing defined brand guidelines into creative expressions.

Key Success Measures

Success in this role will be demonstrated through:

- Creative concepts that clearly express the relevant brand proposition and agreed customer or commercial objective.
- Early studio involvement in priority campaign, product and customer experience planning.
- Coherent creative execution across relevant digital and physical touchpoints.
- Priority work delivered to agreed timing, specifications and quality.
- Clear visibility of studio capacity, priorities, approvals and delivery risks.
- Reduced avoidable rework, version errors and duplicated production.
- Evidence that customer insight and performance feedback inform creative improvements.
- Increased capability and independence across the Designer team.
- Effective use of approved internal and external resources.
- An agreed capability development plan addressing future studio requirements.
- Routine decisions resolved within the studio, with timely escalation of material issues.
- Adoption of AI where appropriate.

Specific targets will be agreed with the Senior Marketing Manager through goal setting and quarterly planning.

Key Relationships Here are the key relationships relevant to this role		Manage /Lead	Deliver to	Collaborate with	Advise or inform
Internal	Head of Customer, Product, & Brand		x	x	x
	Senior Marketing Manager		x	x	x
	Designers	x	x	x	x
	Content and Social, PR and Media, and Marketing Activation roles			x	x
	Product, Customer Experience and Operations		x	x	x
	Revenue Generation and E Commerce		x	x	x
	Enterprise Brand and Communications			x	x
	Procurement, Finance, Legal and Safety				x
External	Freelance designers and specialist creatives		x	x	x
	Creative, video and production agencies		x	x	x
	Printers, fabricators and installers		x	x	x
	Photography, illustration, motion and asset suppliers		x	x	x

Leadership of external suppliers relates to commissioned work within approved contracts and delegations.

What you will do to contribute

Health Safety and Wellbeing	• Promote safe working practices and wellbeing within the studio. • Consider customer, employee and operational safety when developing creative work. • Identify risks associated with signage, installations, events and physical collateral. • Ensure content capture and production at operational locations have appropriate approvals. • Ensure suppliers meet relevant KiwiRail safety requirements. • Manage workloads sustainably and raise risks, incidents and near misses promptly.
Customer Focus	• Understand the audience, customer need and intended outcome before developing creative solutions. • Apply accessible design and clear visual communication across channels. • Work with Product, Customer Experience and Operations to ensure creative work reflects the experience Passenger can deliver. • Challenge briefs where the proposed approach may not meet the customer need. • Use customer feedback and research to improve concepts and execution. • Maintain distinct and appropriate expression of the Interislander and Great Journeys New Zealand propositions.
High Performing Teams Skills	• Set clear expectations for creative quality, delivery, ownership and collaboration. • Lead, coach and develop the two Passenger Designers. • Allocate work transparently according to priorities, complexity, capability and capacity. • Provide constructive creative reviews that strengthen ideas and develop confidence. • Encourage Designers to contribute concepts and take ownership from brief through delivery. • Assess capability gaps and agree development priorities with the Senior Marketing Manager. • Build skills across digital, social, print, video, motion and approved technology. • Maintain a sustainable balance between production, creative development and team learning.
Commercial Acumen	• Plan internal and external resources to deliver agreed Passenger priorities efficiently. • Assess the customer and commercial purpose of creative requests.

- Consider cost, capacity, reuse and value when recommending delivery approaches.
- Prepare clear supplier briefs and manage approved costs, schedules, quality and outputs.
- Engage external resources only within approved budgets, procurement processes and delegations.
- Recommend stopping, simplifying or deferring low-value or insufficiently defined work.
- Reduce unnecessary expenditure through stronger internal capability, templates and asset reuse..

Creative Strategy and Brand Execution

- Translate approved brand and marketing strategy into concepts, storytelling and visual approaches.
- Participate early in campaigns, product initiatives, partnerships and customer experience planning.
- Develop creative recommendations that connect audience needs, brand positioning and intended outcomes.
- Lead art direction and maintain a coherent creative approach across channels.
- Work with the Content Marketing Specialist to connect visual storytelling with messages and copy.
- Develop practical creative guidance and templates within agreed brand standards.
- Apply brand expression across websites, campaigns, onboard environments, terminals, signage and partner spaces.
- Work with Digital Revenue on creative variants, landing-page requirements and performance-informed improvements.
- Escalate material changes to positioning or departures from approved standards to the Senior Marketing Manager.

Design and Creative Delivery

- Personally deliver selected complex or high-priority work while retaining capacity for leadership.
- Guide concepts, design execution and adaptation across relevant formats.
- Review work for customer clarity, accessibility, brand consistency, channel suitability and technical quality.
- Direct photography, video and motion requirements, including briefs, shot requirements, formats and reuse opportunities.
- Brief specialist capture or production support where required.
- Collaborate with the Website and Technology UX Lead on visual and interface design within agreed platform and UX responsibilities.
- Ensure final assets are accurate, approved and production-ready.
- Ensure commissioned and reused content has appropriate permissions and usage rights.

Studio Management and Production

- Operate one clear studio intake process and maintain an accessible work queue.
- Ensure briefs identify objectives, audiences, deliverables, specifications, approvals, timing and priority.
- Agree priorities and capacity commitments with the Senior Marketing Manager through integrated planning.

- Allocate and sequence work across Passenger requirements using consistent criteria.
- Set realistic delivery dates and communicate changes promptly.
- Resolve routine brief and delivery issues directly with stakeholders.
- Escalate unresolved priority, capacity or approval conflicts to the Senior Marketing Manager.
- Maintain briefs, status records, versions, approvals, source files and final assets.
- Maintain asset libraries, templates, specifications and production checklists, including relevant rights and expiry information.
- Coordinate production requirements across teams so commissioned assets can serve multiple purposes where appropriate.

Technology and Continuous Improvement

- Use approved digital and AI tools to support ideation, variation, adaptation and production administration.
- Check output for accuracy, privacy, copyright, accessibility and quality.
- Identify recurring requirements suitable for templates, reuse or guided self-service.
- Use customer feedback, usability findings and channel results to improve creative work.
- Review studio capability against future requirements, including video, motion, content capture and UX/UI design.
- Recommend training, different work allocation or external support where needed.
- Review workflow, capacity and delivery through Passenger's quarterly planning cycle.
- Implement practical improvements without compromising creative standards.

Decision Making

The Design Studio Lead is accountable for creative interpretation, concepts, art direction, studio workflow and execution quality within approved strategy, priorities and delegated authority.

The role makes decisions on:

- Creative concepts, visual approaches and routine application of approved brand standards.
- Studio intake, sequencing, work allocation and delivery timeframes.
- Whether briefs contain sufficient information, approval and resources to proceed.
- Returning or pausing work where requirements are incomplete or conflict with agreed priorities.
- Routine design and production quality assurance.
- Internal delivery methods and recommendations for specialist support.
- Templates, asset-management practices and approved production tools.
- Team development recommendations.

Material changes to brand direction, investment or cross-functional priorities are referred to the Senior Marketing Manager. External expenditure remains subject to approved financial and procurement authority.

The Senior Marketing Manager owns Passenger consumer brand and marketing strategy. Campaign owners retain accountability for campaign objectives and outcomes. Digital Product retains platform and UX decisions, and Operations retains operational implementation and safety responsibilities.

Hands-on design remains part of the role, with workload planned to allow for creative leadership, coaching and quality assurance.

Human Resources Delegations	People Leader
Direct reports	2
Finance Delegations	Nil
Budget (operating and capital)	Nil
Travel Delegations	Nil
Statutory powers	Nil

Physical demands and the nature of work

This role is primarily administration and design-based and requires:

- Sustained computer use and screen-based design work.
- Regular meetings, creative reviews and collaboration across locations.
- Carrying a laptop and light work materials.
- Occasional handling of design, signage or production materials.
- Visits to operational locations, events, supplier sites or installations.
- Approved travel to support creative and production activity.

Operational activities must follow applicable access, induction and safety requirements.

Your role may include other tasks suited to your level, as your manager directs. This job description shows your current duties. We'll review and update it with you if your responsibilities change.

About you

Knowledge and Experience

- Significant senior-level design experience across digital, social, print and physical formats.
- Demonstrated ability to translate brand and marketing strategy into creative concepts and execution.
- A portfolio showing concept development, visual storytelling, art direction and practical design capability.
- Experience leading a small studio or creative team while remaining hands-on.
- Experience directing photography, video, motion or specialist creative production.
- Working understanding of UX/UI design, accessibility and collaboration with digital product specialists.
- Ability to use customer insight and channel performance to improve creative work.
- Strong briefing, feedback and stakeholder-management skills.
- Experience managing workflow, approvals, versions, assets, suppliers and production deadlines.

- Knowledge of production specifications, copyright, permissions and usage rights.
- Experience working within established brand frameworks.
- Practical experience using approved technology to improve creative and production efficiency.

Ways of Working / Work-related Qualities

- You combine creative leadership, brand thinking and storytelling with practical delivery.
- You explain creative recommendations clearly and connect them to customer and business objectives.
- You take ownership from concept through to final delivery.
- You make transparent priority decisions and communicate constraints early.
- You challenge unclear briefs constructively.
- You balance creativity with accessibility, accuracy and production requirements.
- You coach others and encourage shared ownership of quality.
- You collaborate across functions and respect agreed decision rights.
- You maintain disciplined workflow and asset-management practices.
- You use evidence and technology to improve effectiveness.

Other Requirements

- Ability to travel to KiwiRail locations, operational sites, suppliers and events as reasonably required.
- Current and valid New Zealand driver licence.
- Ability to meet applicable KiwiRail safety, drug and alcohol, and employment requirements.

Qualifications

A relevant tertiary qualification in graphic design, visual communication, digital design or a related creative discipline, or equivalent significant professional experience.

Experience leading creative work or a small design team while maintaining practical design responsibility is required.