



Justin Ahrens

Principal/Creative Director

As founder and principal of Rule29, Justin Ahrens lives the firm's philosophy of Making Creative Matter®.

Like any creative professional, Justin enjoys digging into a business problem and designing a strategic solution. But he gets a bigger charge out of seeing the positive impact that solution can make—for the client and for the world.

Justin speaks the languages of both business and design, guiding Rule29's strategic and creative direction on every project. He fosters the collaborative approach—the heart of the firm's relationships with clients, which range from Fortune 500 brands to nonprofits to small startup companies.

Throughout his career, Justin has upheld a commitment to give his time and talents to help his fellow creative professionals and support important social causes. He's served on the board of advisors for various groups including the industry-leading HOW Design Conference and professional organization AIGA. He occasionally serves as an adjunct design instructor and most recently has helped with senior- and graduate-level design and strategy classes at Notre Dame and Kent State University, where students and professionals work together to tackle social problems. A passionate speaker, he regularly speaks at design and business conferences about creative inspiration, leadership and design strategy. These audiences range from thousands of listeners to intimate groups, but each audience leaves with an understanding for how design can create positive change in the world beginning with the individual.

Justin has also served as an advisor to the nonprofits Life In Abundance and EPIC (Engaging Philanthropy, Inspiring Creatives). His work with LIA and Lifewater has increased awareness and raised funds to aid people living in the urban and rural slums of Northeast Africa and Asia.

Justin and the Rule29 team have authored several books, including *Life Kerning* (Wiley), *The Best of Business Card Design 9* (Rockport) and *Urban &*

Rural Hope (Life In Abundance International). Leading publications and organizations such as *HOW*, *Communication Arts*, *Print*, AIGA, *Graphic Design USA* and *Graphis* have published Rule29's award-winning strategic creative work.

His passion for design second only to his passion for being a partner to his wife, Sarah, and father to their four amazing kids (who think Dad's job is listening to music, drawing pictures and playing on the computer).

A sampling of talks:

Experiencing Wonder

All good art possesses a bit of wonder. Design, however, often tells the viewer what to think, rather than inviting them into an encounter with wonder.

Seeing Different

As creatives, we are built to see the world differently than most. It's one of our unique, innovative traits. We all say we want to be a part of changing the world, but how do you actually accomplish this?

Life Kerning

In graphic design, kerning is the fine-tuning or adjustment of space between letterforms. Life Kerning applies this concept to both the lives and careers of business professionals.

Storytelling 101

This session will explore how a better understanding of story (through film) can lead us to create our most powerful and memorable work.

Other topics presented:

- *Designer Sobriety*
- *Making Creative Matter*
- *Collaboration: The Two Headed Monster*
- *Self Promotion*
- *From College to Career*
- *Culture & creativity*

Justin has presented at:

- *Brand New Conference*
- *TEDx Naperville*
- *AIGA National Conference*
- *AIGA Gain Conference*
- *HOW Design Conference*
- *STA Design Events*
- *AIGA Chapter Design Events*
- *Adobe MAX Conference*
- *ADFED Groups*
- *Design Schools*
- *In-house Art Departments*
- *Marketing Groups*
- *Corporate Boards*
- *College & Universities*
- *Creative Process Consulting*

"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see."

—Henry David Thoreau

Please contact
Rule29 for Justin's
availability and any
fees or expenses.