MATTHEW SCHAEFER

Experiential Leader · Executive Producer & Client Lead

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13+ years in experiential · 35+ activations · Budgets to $7M · $5M experiential P&L owned · National field teams led

SUMMARY

I lead experiential marketing where brand vision has to become a measurable business result. Over 13 years I've built permanent flagships, multi-city tours, creator summits and cultural moments for Meta/Instagram, TikTok Shop, COVERGIRL, Olay, SEIU and Absolut Elyx. On agency partnerships I'm usually both the client lead and the executive producer, owning the relationship, the budget, the team and show day.

CORE EXPERTISE

Strategy and pitch · Budgets to $7M · Fabrication and vendors · Permits and union labor · Creator and livestream production · On-site operations for 100–10,000 guests · Production systems · Team leadership

EXPERIENCE

Things That Fly, LLC — Founder & Executive Producer · Los Angeles — Mar 2014 – Present

Independent experiential practice, working directly with brands and as executive producer and client lead on agency-led programs.

- Built the production system: one master workbook drives the critical path, production schedule, run of show and call sheet, with one owner per line and fixed lock dates.
- Led 35+ activations for 100–10,000 guests, with program budgets from $50K to $7M.
- **Selected programs:**
  - **Olay, NYC Marathon recovery lounge (Nov 2026, agency-led):** Shops at Columbus Circle; ~30 staff; reservation system; 463 guests, 1,500 samples, 374 headshots, 411 keychains and 362 shares.
  - **Instagram, Camp Edits (May–Jun 2026, agency-led):** sole client lead for a camp for ~100 creators on the Edits app (vs. CapCut); four feature stations; 50 + 50 cohort format.
  - **SEIU, Labor Is Art (Mar–May 2026, agency-led):** the "Anti-Met Gala": a Meatpacking District runway with worker-models; covered by The New York Times, Harper's Bazaar and Fast Company.
  - **TikTok Shop, Miami Swim Week Creator Summit (Apr–May 2026, via Groundswell):** ~400 creators; hydraulic pool runway; 20 seller booths; 2 live-selling activations.
  - **Lovable, NVIDIA GTC (Mar 2026, agency-led):** on-site lead for product demos, an interactive activation and F&B.
  - **COVERGIRL, Gabby Thomas (Sep 2025 – Jan 2026, agency-led):** creative director and executive producer; mascara-wand high jump, branded track and podium; 107M+ reach.
  - **Clean Creatives, Cannes in a Can (Apr–Jun 2025, direct client):** pop-ups in New York, Chicago and London; Adweek coverage.
  - **Haus Labs × TikTok Shop, Coachella (Feb–Apr 2025, direct client):** strategy and production plan; the presence moved to tour merch.
  - **TikTok Shop, Creator Education Series (Nov–Dec 2024, via Groundswell):** Atlanta and Dallas; shop-building stations and a go-live section.
  - **El Pollo Loco, Día de los Muertos (Sep–Nov 2024, direct client):** three-day Hollywood Blvd takeover; 110 guests; 3.8M TikTok views; 48 placements.
  - **Blue Bunny, Twisted Taste Test (Jan–Jun 2024, via Vitro):** 5-city mobile tour at Great Wolf Lodge, plus the campaign commercial.

Copalli Spirits, Inc. — Director of Marketing / Trade Marketing — Jan 2023 – Feb 2024

- Owned a $5M experiential P&L and led a 16-person national team: six market managers and ten brand ambassadors.
- Built measurement into planning with a three-market brand lift study and a 1,039-consumer packaging test; 12% year-over-year profit growth.

Demeter Group — Director of Trade Marketing — 2019 – 2020

- Led a national field team of six market managers and 12 brand ambassadors; built KPIs, bonus structures and operating cadence.

Legacy Marketing Partners, for Absolut Elyx — Senior Brand Agent Oct 2014 – Sep 2018

- Lead producer for the $12M, 36-month Absolut Elyx Brand Home in the Hollywood Hills, including Grammys programming; +174% sales.

Earlier: MONK Provisions, VP Product Marketing (2020–22) · Kurvana, Director of Sales & Marketing (2018–19) · Chateau Marmont, Beverage Director (2013–14)

EDUCATION

Indiana University, Jacobs School of Music — B.S., Music Performance · UCLA — Film Orchestration Certificate