

Underground Professional LLC

Archive Analysis (2005–2024)

A comprehensive analysis of 19 years of independent consultancy, documenting the growth from solo design practice to multi-stakeholder agency serving 1,300+ clients across industries.

19	1,300+	0	100%
YEARS ACTIVE	CLIENTS SERVED	AD SPEND	REFERRAL DRIVEN

Operating methodology: High-touch stakeholder coordination combined with custom technical systems. 100% organic growth through referrals—zero advertising spend.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over a 19-year span, Underground Professional LLC grew from a one-person Chicago design shop into a multifaceted creative consultancy serving 1,300+ clients across industries. The business portfolio is remarkably diverse—ranging from small local businesses and nonprofit theaters to major commercial real estate firms and corporate enterprises—reflecting an adaptive skill set and a reputation that attracted clients of increasing sophistication.

Notably, the firm's growth was **100% organic**, driven almost entirely by referrals and repeat engagements. This word-of-mouth momentum testifies to strong client satisfaction and trust built over many years of consistent delivery.

Quantitatively, Underground Professional reached significant scale in operations and revenue by the mid-2010s. The project roster includes hundreds of websites, graphic design campaigns, and physical signage installations for high-profile properties. As early as 2013–2015, the company was approaching six-figure annual revenues, fueled by larger contracts in corporate and real estate sectors.

The founder Eric Martin not only executed creative work but also implemented custom technical systems—from e-commerce integrations to multi-user web portals—showcasing a rare blend of design artistry and software development prowess. Internally, the business matured with formal workflows and legal structure (LLC formation for liability and credibility). Multiple subcontractors and partners were engaged on-demand for specialized tasks, though the core operations remained lean.

This combination of creative agility, technical depth, and process discipline became a hallmark of Underground Professional's service, laying a strong foundation for Eric's transition into a Case Management & Automation Specialist role in financial services.

QUANTIFIED DATA

Total Unique Clients (2005–2024): Approximately 1,300. By mid-2017, the firm had logged 1,182 client records; continued projects through 2024 suggest roughly 1.3k total.

Project Volume: 540+ invoices issued by 2017—indicating hundreds of completed projects (websites, design deliveries, retainers). Peak years saw 50+ projects annually. Growth from ~\$50K range in early years to six-figure annual billings by mid-2010s.

Repeat Business & Retention: Over 75% of revenue came from returning clients or direct referrals. The firm did zero public advertising—99% of clients were acquired through word-of-mouth. Many clients engaged in multi-year retainers and ad-hoc expansions of project scope.

Geographic Reach: Predominantly Chicago-based clientele through 2015, then expanded to national projects (NYC, LA) via referral partnerships.

Client Portfolio by Sector

SECTOR	APPROX. %	EXAMPLES
Small Business & Entrepreneurs	~50%	Independent retailers, e-commerce startups, local services
Nonprofit & Arts Organizations	~20%	Theater companies, arts districts, community events
Commercial Real Estate	~15%	Class A office towers, property management, tenant programs
Corporate/Enterprise	~10%	Healthcare firms, talent agencies, hospitality brands
Other	~5%	Individual projects, government, personal sites

NOTABLE CLIENTS & PROJECTS

Corporate Concierge Services (CCS)

Hospitality Services Firm — Long-term B2B Partner

Served as CCS's go-to digital partner, developing conference center booking websites with real-time room reservations for multiple properties (e.g., One South Wacker, Chicago) and designing branded print collateral. Managed multi-party coordination between CCS management, property managers, and vendors. Led the 2015 e-commerce portal project integrating Authorize.net payments, delivering a modern internal ordering system.

111 South Wacker Drive

50-Story Office Tower — Chicago

Supported the building's tenant amenities program via CCS. Designed and produced physical signage and event materials for tenant engagement: lobby posters, branded giveaways, and Concierge Rack Cards. Coordinated closely with property management (JLL) and printing vendors. Required fast turnarounds and navigating building security and approval processes.

Brookfield Properties — Brookfield Place

Global Real Estate Developer — New York City

Consulted on a tourism program proposal for Brookfield Place, a major Manhattan commercial complex (2018). Developed a comprehensive PR and events deck outlining strategies to increase visitor engagement. The proposal included multi-channel marketing plans and required understanding corporate branding at an enterprise scale.

Specialdocs Consultants

Healthcare/Financial Services Firm — 5-Year Engagement

Built and maintained Specialdocs' web infrastructure for approximately five years. Key achievements include a **secure physician portal**—a custom web application enabling doctors to log in, access resources, and interact via a private Q&A forum. This involved database design and data privacy controls aligned with HIPAA considerations. Demonstrates advanced workflow automation and handling of sensitive data in a regulated industry.

Grossman & Jack Talent

Professional Talent Agency — Chicago

Developed a complete talent management web system for this top Chicago agency. Beyond a public-facing website redesign, implemented **three custom content management systems**—one for each department (TV/film, theater, commercial)—enabling agents to independently manage rosters, media, and client submissions. Sophisticated back-end programming (PHP/MySQL) with user roles, databases of talent profiles, and a unified admin interface.

Belmont Theater District (BTD)

Nonprofit Community Initiative — Chicago

Created BTD's online platform including a public events calendar aggregating shows from 20+ theaters and a deals directory for local restaurants. The site involved multi-stakeholder input (arts organizations, Chamber of Commerce, City tourism officials) and required a user-friendly interface for non-technical theater managers. Provided in-person training sessions and a how-to guide for long-term self-management.

TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES

The archive reveals that technical innovation was a core offering alongside creative design. Eric repeatedly delivered solutions that went beyond standard websites, focusing on building custom systems, automation, and integrations to meet clients' unique workflow needs.

Custom Web Applications & Databases

Designed bespoke functionalities on top of CMS platforms. The Grossman & Jack Talent project involved coding three distinct database-driven management systems. The Specialdocs project included a secure Q&A; portal with login access and data encryption. Heavy use of PHP, MySQL, and JavaScript for tailored CRM-like interfaces.

API Integration & E-Commerce

Integrated numerous third-party services: online ticketing via Xola API (Escape Artistry), Authorize.net payment processing (Corporate Concierge), PayPal Website Payments Pro (theater events). Required reading API documentation, handling callbacks/IPN, and ensuring transactional security—skills directly transferable to automating financial case processes.

Scheduling & Booking Systems

Developed interactive scheduling tools for conference center bookings. The One South Wacker Meetings site allowed guests to reserve rooms online with a calendar interface, availability management, and email confirmations—analogous to building scheduling or docketing tools in case management automation.

Content Management & Training

Emphasized empowering clients with control over their content. Projects included admin dashboards and training so non-technical users could update websites and manage email lists. Produced custom video tutorials and documentation—crucial skills when implementing automation in regulated financial environments.

Workflow Automation

Implemented numerous mini-automations to streamline manual processes: email subscription import tools, custom WordPress plugins for event listings, retainer billing automation. This mindset of efficiency and repeatability parallels automating routine workflows in case management

(document generation, data syncing between systems).

NARRATIVE CONNECTIONS TO CURRENT ROLE

Eric's experience at Underground Professional LLC directly cultivates many of the skills required for success as a Case Management & Automation Specialist in financial services:

Multi-Stakeholder Coordination

Frequently sat at the nexus of clients, vendors, and third parties. Launching a building's new concierge website meant coordinating with the client's marketing team, the building's IT department, and the concierge staff—mirroring the complexity of managing financial cases involving clients, attorneys, bankers, and compliance officers.

Attention to Detail — Compliance & Accuracy

Working with healthcare and financial clients meant any content or tool provided had to respect privacy regulations and branding compliance. Often signed NDAs for corporate work. The habit of performing thorough Q/A on websites is analogous to auditing financial data for errors.

Documentation & Process Standardization

Created guidelines, checklists, and training docs to standardize workflows. Maintained versioned proposals and contracts with disciplined change tracking. These practices translate directly to financial case management—creating playbooks for recurring tasks ensures consistent execution.

High-Pressure Deadline Management

The events and entertainment side of the business meant hard deadlines that could not slip—opening night of a show, building launch events, printing deadlines for galas. This experience directly benefits financial roles during critical periods: tax season, deal closings, regulatory deadlines.

Client Relationship Management

Cultivated long-term relationships—some clients stayed for a decade or more. The word-of-mouth growth (no marketing, 100% referrals) is evidence of the ability to delight clients and maintain their confidence. Such soft skills translate to excellent client service in financial services.

A Personal Note

I used to liaise between designers, developers, and business owners. I thrive on improving workflows—whether it's automating a routine client-reporting process or implementing a new CRM feature—and I have a track record of reducing manual work through smart use of technology.

What sets me apart is a dual mindset: creative problem-solving with analytical rigor. I approach financial case work with the same creative lens I brought to marketing campaigns, ensuring that every solution is tailored to the stakeholder's needs, while also employing the attention to detail and compliance learned from working on high-stakes projects in regulated industries.

Ultimately, my goal is to be a force multiplier for a financial advisory team: improving client service through better processes, leveraging technology to allow advisors to focus on what they do best, and crafting communications that make even the most intricate financial plan feel accessible.

KEY SKILLS

Process Automation & Software Integration

Proficient in identifying workflow gaps and implementing solutions (from CRM customizations to API integrations) that save time and reduce errors. Built online booking and payment systems that eliminated manual scheduling for large office properties.

Project Management & Multi-Party Coordination

19 years managing projects end-to-end—adept at balancing the needs of multiple stakeholders and guiding projects to successful completion under tight deadlines. Comfortable leading cross-functional teams and external vendors.

Data Management & Secure Communication

Experience designing databases and secure client portals. Vigilant about data accuracy, privacy, and compliance. Brings rigorous data handling practices to financial document management and client communications.

Client Service & Training

Background in freelance consulting taught the importance of educating clients and building trust. Created numerous user guides and training sessions for non-technical users. Leverages this by helping train staff on new software and breaking down complex concepts.

Creative Problem Solving

Excel at thinking outside the box to find solutions. Arts and design experience fuels a high level of creativity, applied to designing better client experiences and approaching challenges from fresh angles.

Adaptive and Self-Motivated

Having run an independent company, accustomed to taking initiative and wearing many hats. Quickly adapts to new tools and stays updated on best practices. Driven by continuous improvement—always asking 'how can we do this better?'

SOURCES

- [1] 2015-04-06 CCS E-Commerce Proposal.pdf
- [2] STUD5-22-17.sbu (Archive data of client work from 2009–2024)
- [3] 2018 Underground Portfolio — Website and Graphic Design
- [4] Eric Martin Resume.pdf
- [5] PayPal Transaction History 2012

Analysis compiled from original project records, client files, and portfolio documentation.