

ADVERTISING STAR



## Partner and Copywriter at Ad Agency zig: Kevin Lynch

[By Robin Salisian]

"In college I was kicked out of marketing, journalism, and psychology before meandering into advertising," says Kevin Lynch, partner and copywriter at ad agency zig. "In hindsight, it was a perfect curriculum." But his meandering was as far from feckless as California is from New York. For today, Lynch thrives in the advertising world. Get this. If he had an extra hour in the day, he would spend it — *making better advertising.*

"So why advertising?" he continues. "[Because] [i]t lets you be the same person Monday through Friday that you are on Saturday and Sunday — and that makes work feel less like work and more like life."

Graduating from Michigan State University in 1989, Lynch received his degree in advertising. In 2001, he and Steve Carli began Hadrian's Wall, a creative boutique, before "[merging] with some like-minded friends of [theirs] and becoming part of zig."

Today, Lynch, as copywriter and partner of zig, "heads up the creative department in the Chicago office."

"Our titles are very purposeful," says Lynch. "[T]he 'partner' part lets clients know they're dealing with a senior practitioner. And the 'copywriting' part says that, in spite of receiving far more promotions than I deserve, my value to a client is often as a writer, not a manager."

Located in two cities, Toronto, Canada, and Chicago, IL, zig was founded in 1999 as a communications company. The relatively small ad agency is home to 70 employees. And along with its de-glow orange background, zig's website cracks jokes and offers witticisms wherever you point your mouse.

For example: "While our employees are split between Toronto and Chicago, we work together as if it's one office," says the site. "One office with an 838 kilometer (or 521 mile) hallway."

zig's philosophy? "[We are] a communications company that creates ideas in their most powerful form. ...Simply put, we offer clients the unique combination of big brand sophistication from senior practitioners in an agency environment that's small and responsive."

And how true this is. Labeled as the "small agency working for big brands,"

zig has racked in high-profiled clients such as Ikea, Best Buy, Harvard Business School Publishing, and Virgin Mobile. Its category experience is equally impressive. From automotive, apparel/fashion, and entertainment, to food and beverages, health, media packaged goods, and public service (to name a few), zig's work caters to clients everywhere.

"We don't seem to be doing many traditional campaigns these days, which keeps things interesting" says Lynch about their current clientele. "For the Elysian (soon to be Chicago's premier hotel), we're creating interactive construction site signage."

"For WMS (an innovative slot machine manufacturer), we created a promotion where people compete by playing online games inspired by some of WMS' new slot machines," he continues. "To promote their new Wizard of Oz game, for example, you play the part of a twister, and you have to pick up as many things around the Kansas countryside as possible."

But Lynch refuses to reveal all of his secrets and evasively finishes with, "[And] [f]or Lithia (one of the nation's largest car dealer groups) and the National Geographic Channel ... well, we're not telling what we're doing."

**Q. What do you do for fun?**

**A.** Right now, I'm learning guitar.

**Q. Throughout your lifetime, what movie have you watched the most?**

**A.** *A Few Good Men*, but only because it's on every other night.

**Q. What was the last book you read?**

**A.** *People* magazine

**Q. What music is on your iPod / in your CD player right now?**

**A.** The new Radiohead.

**Q. If you had an extra hour in the day, what would you spend it doing?**

**A.** Making better advertising.

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He does, however, share on two important issues, including the best advertising tactics in the industry and the rise of TiVo.

“The best tactics are always the ones that reflect the brand or brand experience. For example, for a quirky, personal brand like MINI, having a billboard that greets you by name makes perfect sense. If a bank used that, it’d be creepy.”

And of the latter, Lynch believes that “[a]nything that puts consumers in more control of what they view is good for advertisers.” In other words, TiVo is a *good* thing. Why? According to Lynch, “[I]t demands that messages be more engaging, relevant, surprising. For smart companies, technology creates the opportunity to create even deeper relationships with your audience by actively engaging them in your message. When that happens, their interest isn’t bought; it’s earned.”

Lynch and zig must be doing something right. Recently, zig was recognized at “The Design Club of Canada” for the following.

- **Advertising Broadcast — TV Campaign, Retail:**  
Silver for Mr. Sub “Stavros/Fire Walker/Grilled Hands”
- **Advertising Broadcast — TV Single, 30 Seconds:**  
Silver for IKEA Canada “Fight”  
Merit for Best Buy Canada “Best Dad Ever”
- **Advertising Broadcast Crafts— Animation:**  
Silver for Dare Food Ltd. “What”  
Silver for Mr. Sub “Stavros/Fire Walker/Grilled Hands”
- **Advertising Broadcast Radio— Radio Single:**  
Merit for Corus Entertainment (W Network) “How you doin’?”

To see the entire list, visit: [zig’s blog](#)

So go ahead and meander into advertising. Look how well it worked out for Lynch.

“It’s a great time to get into advertising. Seriously,”

adds Lynch. “Because advertising is spilling over into so many different areas — entertainment, video games, psychology, architecture, product development ... . So come on in — it’ll be fun. Just know that the more broadly your experience or interests are, the better off you’ll do.”

### ON THE NET

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[www.ikea.com](http://www.ikea.com)

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[www.theadcc.ca/home.asp](http://www.theadcc.ca/home.asp)

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