

Anthony “Tony” Bynum

MBA · MDM

Growth and Innovation Strategy | Design Capability Building | Executive Education

GROWTH & INNOVATION STRATEGIST · EDUCATOR · ADVISOR

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DESIGN	INNOVATION	BUSINESS
Founded the Design Thinking Center of Excellence at Northwestern Mutual, a Fortune 500 financial services organization. Directed experience design across product, service, and operational initiatives.	Led category reinvention, consumer experience, and innovation programs for national retail and consumer packaged goods clients. Named inventor on four granted United States patents, with one application pending.	Delivered twelve executive cohorts across Johnson & Johnson, Northwestern Mutual, and Sanofi. Advises clients on growth strategy and innovation portfolio decisions.

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Strategist and educator with more than 25 years of experience helping organizations identify growth opportunities and build the internal capability required to pursue them. Founded the Design Thinking Center of Excellence at Northwestern Mutual and served as Principal Senior Director of Experience Design. Directed the Executive Academy at the IIT Institute of Design (ID) and continues that work as an associate partner while teaching as an Associate Professor of Practice. Founder of LYMNL LLC, a growth and innovation strategy practice serving corporate, nonprofit, and academic clients. Named inventor on four granted United States patents, with one application pending.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

LYMNL LLC (formerly Nine Dot Square)

CHICAGO, IL

Founder and President — [YEAR]–Present

- Advises corporate, nonprofit, and academic clients on growth strategy, innovation portfolio decisions, and the adoption of human-centered design methods across the organization.
- Designs and facilitates executive education programs, capability-building sprints, and strategy sessions for senior leadership teams.
- Developed proprietary frameworks in active client use, including Insights to Impact, Map the Room, Design-Led Dexterity, the Application Gap, and the Encore Value Arc.

IIT Institute of Design (ID)

CHICAGO, IL

Associate Partner, Executive Academy — [YEAR]–Present

Associate Professor of Practice — [YEAR]–Present

Director, Executive Academy — [YEAR]–[YEAR]

- Builds executive education experiences that pair live business challenges with design research, strategic foresight, and distributed leadership models.
- Designs and delivers the Capability Building Series, comprising the Navigator and Practitioner programs, which are the Executive Academy's two flagship offerings and are available in on-site, virtual, and blended formats.
- Structures each program in three phases, aligns learning objectives to the client organization's performance metrics, and co-creates rubrics that measure how well new skills are integrated into daily practice.
- Develops program formats including global immersion programs, capability-building sprints, and cross-disciplinary learning labs for senior leaders.
- Created a unified design curriculum built on work-integrated learning, closing what he defines as the Application Gap between training and applied practice.

Northwestern Mutual

MILWAUKEE, WI

Principal Senior Director, Experience Design — 2020–2023

Internal Design and Innovation Consultant — 2018–2020

- Founded and led the Design Thinking Center of Excellence, establishing the internal design capability, standards, and practitioner training for a Fortune 500 financial services organization.
- Directed experience design across product, service, and operational initiatives.
- Coached executives and cross-functional teams through the planning, delivery, and adoption of design-led initiatives.

RTC Industries

ROLLING MEADOWS, IL

Director, Innovation and Client Strategy — 2008–2018

- Led category reinvention, consumer experience, and innovation programs for national retail and consumer packaged goods clients.
- Named inventor on the In-Store Item Alert Architecture patent family, which covers networked shelf-label devices that sense shopper presence and deliver contextual alerts. Four United States patents in the family are granted and one application is pending.

Gensler Architecture and Design

CHICAGO, IL

Workplace Strategist — [YEAR]–[YEAR]

- Conducted space planning, human-factors research, and design strategy for corporate workplace clients.

12 cohorts across three organizations, ranging from 8 to 30 participants each.

Six **Johnson & Johnson, surgical products.** Design Thinking Certification delivered through the Rutgers University Professional Development program. Six cohorts of **15 to 30** senior leaders drawn from product, research and development, marketing, and engineering.

Five **Northwestern Mutual,** Design Thinking Center of Excellence, customer experience practice area. Two Navigator cohorts of **15** leaders each at the senior director through vice president level, and three Practitioner cohorts of **20 to 25** program managers, product owners, and project managers.

One **Sanofi Pharmaceuticals.** One Navigator cohort of **eight** senior customer experience leaders.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Associate Professor of Practice, IIT Institute of Design, Chicago

Adjunct Professor, Northwestern University, MMM Business and Design Innovation program

Faculty Co-Chair and Instructor, Design Thinking @ Rutgers, Rutgers University

Visiting Professor, CEDIM The School of Design, Mexico City and Monterrey

Adjunct Professor, Lake Forest College, Entrepreneurship and Innovation

EDUCATION

Master of Design Methods (MDM), Design Planning — IIT Institute of Design, 2007

Graduate coursework, Organizational Psychology — The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, 2006

Master of Business Administration (MBA) — Lake Forest Graduate School of Management, 1999

Bachelor of Science, Business Administration — University of Wisconsin-Stout, 1993; minors in Public Relations and Graphic Arts Management

SPEAKING, PUBLICATIONS, AND MEDIA

Fortune Brainstorm Design, Macau, on-stage panelist before a global audience, 2025.

STEM Connector Forum, “Beyond Skills: AI Powered Insights to Fuel STEM Engagement,” 2025.

Design Observer, “The New Era of Design Leadership with Tony Bynum.”

The Summit of Business Design, featured speaker.

Experience Inbound, “Insights to Impact: A Practical Design Thinking Framework for Marketing and Sales Growth.” Session covered by Stream Creative in “What If Your Team Is Solving the Wrong Problem?”

“Why Learning While Doing Is Now a Leadership Imperative,” IIT Institute of Design, Medium.

“How to Build Organizational Dexterity: Calling an Audible When Markets Shift,” IIT Institute of Design, Medium.

“Most Companies Won’t Reach 10 Years: Six Lessons from Enduring Organizations,” IIT Institute of Design, Medium.

“Helping Organizations Change,” video conversation, IIT Institute of Design.

Chicago Graphic Design Club podcast, episode 65.

Northwestern University, “Designing with Equity in Mind,” 2022.
