

MITCH JOHNSTON

Los Angeles, CA • 810.841.5918 • mitchhospitality@gmail.com • mitchhospitality.com • linkedin.com/in/mitchdjohnston

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brand & Commercial Strategy Leader | Integrated Marketing | Hotel Openings | Partnerships

Strategic marketing and brand leader with 10+ years driving revenue growth, brand positioning, and multi-property portfolio strategy across boutique hotels, lifestyle brands, and experiential concepts. Known for unifying creative storytelling with commercial performance — elevating visibility, accelerating demand, and shaping culturally resonant guest experiences. Career built from the ground floor: started at a hotel front desk and rose to portfolio strategy leadership.

Experienced in full commercial planning, multi-property revenue strategy, and cross-functional sales alignment. Partnered directly with Sales and Revenue leaders to shape segmentation, pricing, distribution, and market-mix strategies across leisure, corporate, group, and international channels. Skilled at translating revenue insights into integrated marketing and partnership programs that drive share, pacing, and profitability.

Expertise spans brand development, go-to-market strategy, performance marketing, CRM, UX, partnerships, F&B concept positioning, revenue strategy, and integrated PR. Proven ability to guide cross-functional teams, launch new hotels, negotiate high-impact partnerships, and build full-funnel programs that drive results across travel, CPG, and experiential markets.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

WICKED+ — Director of Brand Strategy & Content

Jan 2026 – Present

- Lead brand strategy and content for a strategic-creative agency focused on hospitality, residential, and destination brands, across a client portfolio including Orli La Jolla, Sunriver Resort, Secret Bay, and Trinchera Reserve & Lodge.
- Direct positioning, campaign narratives, offer strategy, and content systems across properties; translate each brand's commercial goals into creative direction and channel programs.

CASETTA HOTELS — Director of Marketing → Head of Strategy & Marketing

May 2024 – Nov 2025

Promoted into expanded strategic leadership role in 2025, overseeing portfolio-wide brand strategy, commercial alignment, partnerships, F&B positioning, and multi-property launches while continuing to lead all marketing functions. Dual marketing + commercial strategy ownership across Sales, Revenue, Distribution, and Operations.

Brand, Commercial & Portfolio Strategy

- Led integrated brand and commercial strategy for Casetta's multi-state portfolio (CA, NM, NY), owning full-funnel planning across paid, owned, earned, PR, partnerships, CRM, digital, and guest experience.
- Directed rollout of Casetta's brand evolution across all properties, aligning identity, messaging, and UX/UI upgrades with revenue and conversion goals.
- Developed demand-driving strategies for new openings including Hotel Willa (Taos), Hotel Marina Riviera (Big Bear), and Hotel Lucile — each achieving above-forecast ramp and pacing; Marina Riviera earned 20+ national press placements in its first three months.
- Partnered with Revenue & Sales on segmentation, pricing alignment, quarterly pacing, and promotional strategy tied to RevPAR and ADR goals.

Revenue Growth & Performance Results

- Drove 20% YOY revenue growth across established properties through integrated planning and digital performance optimization.
- Achieved full ADR + occupancy recovery at The Surfrider Malibu within 10 months of the Palisades Fire, outperforming the standard 1.5-year post-disaster recovery timeline; the property subsequently sold (Oct 2025) at approximately \$1.9M per key, among the highest per-key trades in Malibu history.
- Improved direct-booking share through UX refinements, CRM optimization, pricing adjustments, and acquisition strategy.
- Co-led multi-property sales strategy across leisure, group, corporate, and international segments; aligned pacing, segmentation, and channel-mix targets across six hotels.
- Built commercial plans tied to demand forecasting, RevPAR index opportunities, channel performance, and market segmentation insights.
- Collaborated with Revenue and Distribution teams to optimize channel mix, strengthen direct share, reduce OTA dependency, and improve profitability across all hotels.

Partnerships, Programming & Brand Amplification

- Negotiated and managed national and local brand partnerships across CPG, editorial, beverage, tourism, and experiential categories.
- Led seasonal programming and cross-property activations to increase revenue, visibility, and community relevance.

- Oversaw Curacity partnership delivering measurable results: 550 stays • \$211,285 revenue • \$278 ADR • 2.0 LOS • 17.4M+ emails • \$316,531 media value • 35.6:1 ROI at a 3.12% effective commission rate.
- Secured recurring placements in top-tier media including Food & Wine, InStyle, and Travel + Leisure through integrated campaigns.

F&B Concept Strategy & Leadership

- Developed brand narratives, PR messaging, and launch frameworks for new and existing F&B concepts; aligned menu strategy, pricing, and positioning with comp-set analysis and revenue goals.
- Served as senior liaison across Operations, Revenue, Sales, and Brand Experience; directed agencies, designers, PR firms, and digital partners; delivered executive reporting, pricing insights, and strategy recommendations to ownership.

THE GARLAND, RIO VISTA DEVELOPMENT — Director of Creative Development & Marketing 2018 – 2023

- Led brand voice, storytelling, creative direction, and asset production across hotel + F&B for a 257-room independent — a brand carried from its founding documents into a complete ecosystem spanning hotel, restaurant, retail, private dining, and events.
- Delivered 125% YOY direct revenue growth via digital brand overhaul and UX/UI redesign of thegarland.com and thefrontyardla.com; grew web ADR approximately 20% from 2021 to 2023.
- Managed \$1M+ annual marketing budget; achieved 23:1 ROAS on paid media.
- Conceived and delivered The Tangerine Room private dining concept from concept through construction; the room now generates \$1M+ in annual private dining revenue.
- Partnered closely with Sales and Revenue leaders to align marketing and pricing strategies, supporting transient leisure, local corporate, and group business through targeted demand generation.
- Managed the property's \$3.5M+ capital program (2020–2022), including a \$1.2M ballroom renovation completed early that drove a 20% YOY catering revenue increase, and a COVID-era outdoor investment program (~\$500K: cabanas, pool deck, courtyard, grounds) that positioned the property for LA's outdoor era.
- Built direct-to-manufacturer merchandise program, reducing costs by 70%; expanded on-site retail (The Store) and experiential programming through custom vendor collaborations.
- Produced nationally recognized events including Drag Yourself to the Valley, featured by Uproxx (Best Pride Events), LA Times, and LA Weekly.
- Recognition during tenure: six-time Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice (2017–2023), Travel + Leisure World's Best (2022), OpenTable Top Outdoor Dining in America for The Front Yard (2022).

EARLIER EXPERIENCE

- Rio Vista Development — Brand & Project Manager (2014–2018): began at The Garland's front desk before moving into ownership's offices as brand manager; led brand execution and property projects through the hotel's independent relaunch.
- OptionsHouse — Fraud & Operations Intern (2012–2013).
- Arts Alliance, Northwestern University — Technical Director (2011–2013).

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

- Northwestern University — Bachelor of Science, Theatre & Business Institutions.
- Cornell University, eCornell Certificates: Digital Marketing • Integrated Marketing 360 • Strategic Hospitality Marketing • Marketing Analytics.
- Professional Certifications: Agile Project Management • Google Ads Search • Google Ads Display • Project Planning (Coursera).

SKILLS & SYSTEMS

Core Expertise: Brand Strategy • Commercial Strategy • Partnerships & Negotiation • Hotel Openings • F&B Marketing • Integrated Marketing • CRM & Lifecycle • UX/UI • PR Strategy • Forecasting • Creative Direction • Cross-Functional Leadership • Market Mix Optimization • Sales Enablement • Demand Forecasting Alignment • Channel & Distribution Strategy

Platforms: GA4 • Revinate • Opera • Duetto • SynXis • Cloudbeds • Meta Ads • Triptease • Monday.com • Slack • Resy • OpenTable • Adobe Creative Cloud • Figma • Canva • Yext • WordPress