

# DAVID HOUSTON

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transformational Strategic Executive, Marketing and Operations Leader with over 20 years of experience driving growth for Fortune 500 companies, startups, and agencies. Proven expertise in aligning business goals with cutting-edge marketing and operational strategies, leading to enhanced profitability, streamlined processes, and long-term client relationships. Adept at building high-performing teams and managing full-scale turnarounds, with a track record of delivering measurable improvements in client satisfaction, revenue growth, and market positioning.

## SKILLS

Transformational Servant Leadership and EQ-based Management  
Cross-functional Team Development and Stakeholder Integration  
Change Management and Process Optimization  
Strategic Planning, Brand, Agency and Organizational Strategy Development  
Financial Management, P&L, Cash Flow Optimization  
SEO, SEM, Digital, Social, AI, Omnichannel, Automation and Demand Generation Strategy  
B2B, B2C and B2B2C, Industry and Macro Trend Analysis  
Project and Marketing Operations Management

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### **The Houston Group, (THG), Waukesha, WI, USA 2013-Present** **Founder and Managing Director**

Founded and lead THG, a strategic consulting firm specializing in tailored marketing, operational, and business strategies, including fractional talent solutions and bespoke team development. We serve a diverse clientele, from startups to multi-billion-dollar corporations. Key achievements:

- **Demand Generation Strategies:** Developed funnel-based, demand-generation strategies for partner agencies and B2B/B2B2C clients, driving increased traffic, conversions, LTV, and volume while reducing CPL and CPA.
- **Integrated Marketing Planning:** Crafted comprehensive, full-journey marketing plans, integrating demand-generation tactics and brand awareness campaigns for long-term growth.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborated with multiple agencies to create marketing strategies for brands like BMW, Volkswagen, YouTube, Mercedes-Benz, as well as several mid-sized firms.
- **Industry-Specific Campaigns:** Led social campaign strategy, development, content creation, and execution for Banking, Manufacturing, and Food industries.
- **Global Market Entry and Experiential Activation:** Consulted on U.S. market conditions for an Indian firm and led international experiential marketing activations for a U.S. B2C client.
- **Fractional Marketing Team Development:** Created a bespoke ad hoc full-service marketing team for a B2B ingredient firm able to rapidly bring novel products from concept to shelf.

### **Margle Media, Milwaukee, WI, USA 2019-2024** **CEO and EVP Strategy (Under Contract with THG)**

Led the strategic transformation and growth of Margle Media, a high-growth digital and social media agency. Orchestrated an agency-wide repositioning initiative to drive sustainable growth and operational excellence for this VC-backed, Milwaukee-based, 20–30-person agency. Key accomplishments:

- **Turnaround and Strategic Repositioning:** Developed and implemented a turnaround strategy to cultivate a client-centric, retention-focused culture, creating scalable team structures and streamlined operational processes.
- **Client Experience and Retention Strategies:** Elevated client satisfaction and retention by optimizing resources to maximize returns on high-value accounts.
- **Revenue Growth Strategies:** Achieved a 10x increase in average client retainer and reversed structural losses, resulting in marked improvements in gross margins, EBITDA, and Net Revenue Per Employee (NRPE).
- **Financial and Risk Management:** Structured and negotiated contracts to optimize cash flow and mitigate risk.
- **Leadership Transition:** Following the successful repositioning, transitioned to EVP of Strategy in early 2023 as the owner resumed the CEO role, maintaining focus on strategic direction and growth.

## **GMR Marketing, Milwaukee, WI, USA 1998–2015**

### ***VP of Client Management: 2014-2015***

Directed the creation and execution of experiential and brand marketing programs for major global brands, generating up to \$22M in annual revenue from 16 national accounts. Oversaw an in-house marketing team of 15 and up to 400 staff (permanent and contracted) to deliver high-impact initiatives. Key accomplishments:

- **Strategic Multi-Channel Programs:** Developed integrated, cross-agency marketing strategies for large-scale national campaigns, maximizing brand reach and engagement.
- **Resource Optimization:** Achieved 100%+ resource utilization, surpassing margin targets for marketing initiatives.
- **Revenue Growth for Key Accounts:** Delivered consistent YoY seven-figure revenue growth for clients such as: Nissan, Weber, Polaris and Johnsonville Sausage.
- **Award-Winning Leadership:** Led efforts that earned the Ex-Award for Best Vehicle Design for Weber Grills.

### ***Sr. Director of Client Management: 2006-2014***

Focused on driving growth and boosting client and team member satisfaction amid economic challenges, with a strategic emphasis on account expansion, process optimization, and maximizing ROI.

- **Consistent Revenue and Fee Growth:** Drove an average 24% annual fee growth over eight years, maintaining 100% client satisfaction.
- **Innovative Experiential Metrics System:** Introduced a metrics system to measure experiential impact, creating a new revenue stream and a competitive differentiator.
- **PepsiCo Account Expansion:** Grew PepsiCo revenue by 1600% over six years, managing over 150 campaigns for Mountain Dew, Gatorade, Lipton, and Pepsi brands. Received 3 mobile marketing awards, including a Webby.
- **Nissan Account Development:** Played a crucial role in securing and expanding the account into a top agency revenue driver.
- **Enhanced Financial Oversight:** Instituted a budget training program and an ROI modeling system that were later adopted company wide.

### ***Director / Supervisor of Events Group: 2004-2006***

Led sponsorship negotiations, tactical planning, and operational efficiency.

- **Sponsorship Negotiation:** Managed a team of 10, over 8,000 unique sponsorships, and \$7MM in promotional fees annually nationwide.
- **Operational Efficiency Improvements:** Improved department efficiency through workflow streamlining and staff reorganization.
- **Financial Management Tools:** Created a client program profitability tracker and restructured the department's relational database to improve data management.

### ***Account Supervisor: 2001-2004***

Directed impactful experiential marketing campaigns for clients in diverse sectors, contributing \$30M in billings. Developed strategies to ensure goal alignment for brands including: Pfizer, Novartis, Johnson & Johnson.

- **Team Integration:** Led a \$17M nationwide health screening initiative funded by Pfizer's Lipitor brand, coordinating six creative agencies and 50+ staff to service 165,000 people in over 100 cities.

### ***Account Executive: 1999–2001 / Account Coordinator: 1998-1999***

## ***Momentum Worldwide, St. Louis, MO and Atlanta, GA, USA 1996-1998***

## **EDUCATION**

**Marquette University**, MBA - International Business, 2004

Credits from University of Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium.

**University of Wisconsin - Madison**, BA - History + Political Science (Honors), 1996

Credits from Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- **Board Leadership:** Past President, Waukesha STEM Academies Governance Board
- **Advisory Roles:** AllHealth Network CEO Advisory Board, Waukesha NAMI Board
- **Other:** Owner, Third Place Inc., dba Broad Street Coffee Co. 2006-2021