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GET CERTIFIED AND GET NOTICED — REAL-WORLD GRAPHIC DESIGN SKILLS LEAD TO SUCCESS

Kai Charvet receives a coveted internship with R&R Partners after winning the Adobe Certified Associate World Championship.



PARTNERS

"The competition and certification proved that I had skills that can't be measured any other way"

- Kai Charvet

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Kai Charvet was in her senior year of high school at Southwest Career and Technical Academy in Las Vegas when she submitted a project for the Adobe Certified Associate U.S. National Championship. She had no idea that a single graphic design project would provide a springboard for her future career in design.



Kai earned the Adobe Certified Associate certification in Adobe Illustrator at school, a prerequisite for the competition. The certification, combined with an impressive vector portrait she completed for a school project of one of her favorite musicians, David Bowie, made her a U.S. Champion and won her an invitation to the Adobe Certified Associate World Championships. A few months later she traveled to Anaheim, California to compete against the top 47 finalists from 24 countries.

In California, Kai was given 8 hours to create a 16 by 20-inch poster in both print-ready and digital format for Iridescent, an education non-profit that trains professional engineers, scientists, and parents to deliver cutting-edge STEM education to underserved girls, children and their families. The intense competition is designed to mirror a real-world experience, so designers are asked to complete the projects quickly while meeting high client standards. Competitors must have a solid understanding of Adobe Creative Cloud along with a keen eye for design to perform well.

Kai's poster demonstrated her impressive use of Adobe Illustrator with vector drawings and a beautiful design using Iridescent's messaging.

"When they announced second place, for a second I thought they weren't going to call my name," says Kai. "But then it happened. And I freaked out."

Kai won a first-place trophy, a multi-year subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud, and a \$7,000 scholarship - perfect to help her pay for her first year studying graphic design at UNLV.

RECEIVING MORE THAN AN AWARD

After Kai became the first American to win the Adobe Certified Associate World Championship, she received quite a bit of publicity, particularly in her hometown of Las Vegas. The Las Vegas Review Journal interviewed her and published an article about the win, and the emails began to come in.



"I got an email from the recruiting manager at R&R Partners," says Kai. "They said they had seen the article and asked me to tour their office and speak to some of the creative team."

R&R Partners is a full-service communications firm with about 300 employees across 9 offices in 2 countries. They are well known for the Las Vegas "What happens here, stays here" campaign.

"I had seen an article in our local paper about a high school student winning the ACA Championship. I sent it to our design team and said 'future R&R employee?'" says Kristen Hart, R&R Partners Designer. "We look for in employees and interns who are passionate about marketing and design. Kai winning the competition and putting her own personal time into developing these Adobe design skills perfectly exemplified that."



Sarah Catletti, R&R Marketing Supervisor, agreed that Kai was exactly the type of talent they look for in both interns and employees. "We use Adobe on a daily basis, that's what we live in. If she's Adobe certified and she's winning an international competition, we thought she had to be pretty skilled."

A few weeks after the meet and greet Kai got

an email saying she had scored a paid internship with R&R Partners. "It was all pretty exciting," Kai says. "The competition and certification proved that I had skills that can't be measured any other way - it showed that I can work under high-pressure conditions, be timely, and still maintain creativity. I actually received a couple more job offers in addition to the internship."

PROVING HERSELF

Kai started the R&R internship as she began her freshman year at UNLV, working a few days a week and taking on client work right away. She was given her own projects to be routed through the designer and creative manager for approval and critique. One project was a flyer for the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

"Kai gave us five options for the flyer, and the client loved them and chose two of them," says Kristen.

In the marketing industry, everything moves very quickly. R&R Partners responds to both emergencies and standard customer needs quickly. Sometimes designers only have four hours to complete a job.

"When I read that Kai had 8 hours to complete the competition, I knew she could work on our timetables and she has done a great job,"

- Kristen Hart, R&R Partners Designer

Kai admits that once she started the internship, she did have to have a crash course on Adobe InDesign since it was crucial to the workflow and she had previously focused on Adobe Illustrator. "It wasn't too tough a transition and I'm constantly learning new things about the Adobe programs the more I use them," she says.

But Kristen has been impressed with Kai and says she didn't have to teach her anything about any of the Adobe programs. "She's farther along than most designers getting out of college."

UP NEXT

Kai was hired for a 3-month internship and R&R hopes to continue their relationship at the end of that timeframe. "She's a full-time student so we want school to come first," says Sarah. "She works three days a week for a few hours, but she moves pretty quick, so she is able to get a lot done."

The firm takes interns seriously and the goal is to hire them eventually, but most are not college freshman like Kai. "Kai has been a wonderful asset, we are hoping to support her development as she moves through school," said Sarah. "The interns we hire are usually at least juniors, so she is a special case. We do what we need to do to get talent in the door and we were glad to catch her while she's just getting started."

Kai agrees that school always comes first, and she's set on getting her degree. "I love my job, and I'm grateful that I can do what I love. For now, I'm just learning as much as I can at the internship and plan to work towards earning a position in the future after I graduate."