

Introduction: Hi, my name is Brittany. I graduated in 2017 with a BBA in marketing.

Question 1: Can you tell us a little bit about your journey (and where your headspace was at) from your Emory graduation to your current role?

Response: If you look at my resume, graduation up to my full-time role before I became a designer, I basically worked with these super trendy, millennial women-driven companies. And because it's a full-time role, I worked 5/10 steps closer to the designer. I was like her right hand and she was my right hand. She was the closest coworker I had and I would just watch what she did every day. I learned about her processes and her perspectives. Because as a startup, there's so many responsibilities and, you know, I did so many things at that job. I did content creation, I did vendor management, I did e-commerce. But even with all those responsibilities, I found myself asking for responsibilities that were more design heavy. Like, *Oh, I can design that* or *Oh, I can create a visual mood more for that* or *oh, I can help with this kind of concept*. So after that full-time role—I was there for six, seven months. And then in January 2019, I got laid off, which was like a huge bummer. But to be honest, in hindsight, I was planning on leaving the opportunity anyway, just because I felt that I was already starting to outgrow my entry level role. And I knew that what I did there, I didn't want to do for the rest of my career. So all of 2019, I spent literally six-seven months full time job searching. I was freelancing, taking odd jobs here and there just to make some money. And it's actually funny because, you know, this entire time, my friend who I started the business in college with—her name is Audrey, she's also been in New York with me, by the way, this entire full time—she told me, *Hey, I'm really interested in this thing called UX design*. And she's been talking about it and talking about it. And I remember in 2019, one time we were just hanging out and she told me, *I think I'm really gonna commit to a course or a bootcamp and become a UX designer*. And I was like, *Oh, okay*. And she's like, *You should do it with me*. And at that point, beforehand she would mention it to me, but I wouldn't take it seriously because I kind of always assumed I would just be in marketing or brand marketing or something like that. Because I do enjoy brand marketing, I just never really seriously considered pivoting to design before. Because pivoting a career is really scary, even if you're in your early 20s or fresh out of college, pivoting in general is scary. But when she talked to me, I was kind of at my breaking point of applying to jobs and nothing really coming out, I wasn't really happy, and I was like, *Okay...* I thought for like a month and a half and then I signed up for a bootcamp. And so after that, 2020, I took the bootcamp in the first week of January—it was a very, very intensive course—and I graduated in mid-July. And so after I graduated, I've been really fortunate—it's the pandemic right now—really fortunate that one of my friends, she's a product designer, and she actually personally referenced me to the client that I'm working with now.

Question 2: What were things that were unplanned/unexpected but meaningful to your growth?

Response: Why I turned into a designer? My experience as a brand marketer and me doing business school at Emory—those weren't useless at all. If anything, it's helped me a lot. Because essentially what UX/UI design (which is what I studied at the bootcamp) is is the design of web and app design. That's a very simplified term but including in that, you work really closely with understanding how the user thinks and you also have to think like, *How can this product can work for the company's goals and also for the user's goals?* And so that's actually a big part of marketing. When I'm designing a website or an app I'm always thinking about how this is marketed to the user, right? How it's visually appealing,

how it actually meets the company's goals, and how I'm designing this. And then of course, before I did the bootcamp, I was working with multiple startups and I worked with a lot of different teams that involved different stakeholders. And that actually helped me during my time at the boot camp and also my current projects.

In terms of unexpected connections...So you know how I talked about my current client and how a friend actually personally referred me? I definitely made some good friends in business school. And so one of those friends—her name is Cindy—she actually graduated early, but we still kept in touch. She was actually the first friend I saw in New York. So we grabbed lunch and caught up and we just have kept in touch since graduation. And when I was actually at that Pilates startup, I was just hanging out with her every month or so. And she knew what I was up to and she said, *Hey, I actually know someone who worked at that startup.* And I was like, *Oh, really?* And she was like, *Yeah, I grew up with her.* And it was really funny because she told that friend—her name is Wendy—so Cindy told her other friend Wendy about me because we both worked at the same company. Wendy was an intern before I took on the full-time role that Wendy had. So New York is also just a small world. So in 2019, I was just thinking, *If you put yourself out there, like things will happen.* So for example, I signed up for a free biking class by myself because it was hosted by my favorite fitness brand. So I'm in line and signed in and I had a woman in front of me. She turns around and she just starts staring at me. And I was just like *Why is she staring at me? Do I know her?* And I'm just avoiding eye contact with her because I'm just uncomfortable. And then finally she goes, *Are you Brittany?* And I was like, *What?* And she goes, *I'm Wendy!* And I was just like, *Oh my god!* So actually, Wendy's actually one of my really, really good friends now in New York. And then Wendy actually introduced me to—okay, I know this is like a long web—Wendy actually introduced me to her friend Justin the next week. And then Justin introduced me to his friend Anne and then me and Anne have also become friends. And Anne is the one who gave me my first freelance client as a designer. And this all came from Cindy who is my friend in the business school.

Question 3: What advice do you have for your younger self?

Response: So advice that I would tell my younger self or people who are in college right now who also are still feeling uncertain or feel lost or want to pursue a creative field, but they don't really know how to... I think the greatest advice is trying to meet people outside of my college bubble. Now especially in a pandemic, it's so easy to meet someone online. There's so many websites, communities like social media forums, all that just meet people. Personally right now, I'm literally in like five or six Slack groups. And it's been really great because I've been able to meet a lot of people online like this. And I'm thinking, *I wish there was something like this for me as a college student*, which is like a network to find mentors, to find fellow people who have a similar mindset than me, but who don't necessarily have to be in the same space or college as me.

And then something that I would tell myself back then—I think is just so cliché, but it's so true—which is not to feel pressure to do a certain route or have a certain bucket list of items to be considered successful. Because once you graduate college, everyone's routes are going to go in wildly different ways. I'm three years out and everyone I know is in wildly different parts of their lives. You know, there are people like me, who are pivoting their careers or restarting their careers or doing something different. You know, there are other people who maybe have stayed at the same company or have changed

companies that they want to stay in the same field or there are people who want to have a similar job title, but want to be in completely different industries. I don't think there's any shame in being lost. Because also something I realized, too, because I have a lot of friends who I thought had it together in college and post graduation and I would talk to them and they're just as lost. They have a stable job but question, *Do I really want to do this? I don't know what I really want to do.* Literally everyone feels that way. Everyone feels that way. And then again, I was in business school. Senior year was rough because during the spring semester, I would see all these Facebook—not even just as a business major but just Emory in general—I would see a bunch of posts about people on LinkedIn getting amazing six figure job offers at this so and so company. People got into grad school, people went to med school. And in those moments, it's really hard not to compare yourself, but you're also just 20 or 20 something years old. This isn't a defining moment. Honestly, if you look up the career path of some of the most “successful people”, it's not conventional at all.