

# Internship

SilencerCo

*Web Design Intern - Wilson Christensen, Fall 2021*



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2.00" 1.50" 1.00"

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# Working At SilencerCo

Internship listings for companies that I actually wanted to work for seemed to be impossible to find. I decided that instead of filtering through available positions, I would reach out directly to businesses that I liked. I am passionate about the firearms industry, so I searched for Utah-based companies in that field. SilencerCo is the closest to home and makes products that I care deeply about. I sent them an email, offering them my talents as an intern. The timing was great, as they were in need of help at a very busy time. I couldn't believe that a simple email had actually worked; I was very excited.

## CULTURE

SilencerCo stands out from your typical factory/office workplace. One of the first things that you will notice are the friendly dogs that employees may bring with them into work. This solves a terrible problem for lonely dogs that have nobody to be with while their owners are away. And it really is a mood-booster to have them around.

There is a casual attitude when it comes to how you work in the office. There is no strict dress code or intrusive grooming standards. Management is relaxed with how you get work done and what time it happens. I was free to come into the office at eleven and leave at six

so I could avoid the worst of traffic and sleep in longer. As long as the work was being done, I could create my own parameters to maximize my efficiency and comfort. Although, it was difficult at times to coordinate our priorities on projects. A project manager of sorts was a desired addition to the team. A lack of structure was evident and often left me confused as to what needed to be worked on next.

## MARKETING

The marketing department consisted of a Marketing Director, Social Media Manager, Public Relations Manager, Video Production Engineer, Photographer, And Product Expert/Support. There was also a contracted Web Developer, and a contracted Graphic Designer, who both worked mostly remote. The graphic designer was my mentor during the course of my internship and worked with me the most. The office was in a room on the second floor above the factory in West Valley, Utah. The office seemed short handed at times and many of us "wore several different hats" to fulfill the needs of the department.

The team communicated regularly through meetings and email. We all had a access to a shared living Google document where we could report our progress. This

was viewed across many departments including warranty, accounting, costumer service, and the CEO. It was very helpful in keeping track of everything going on and showing us how we could support each other as a whole.

## PROJECTS

The company was very busy at this time. We were preparing for three major product launches: the Hybrid 46M suppressor, Harvester EVO suppressor, and the Gas-Defeating Charging Handle. The next year's catalog needed to be made, and there was also a big sale at the end of the year for a buy-one-get-one deal. I was able to support my coworkers on these projects in many different ways. This process book will show what I have accomplished during my internship at SilencerCo.



# Designs

## PRINT AND MERCH

I worked on several projects with the graphic designer related to materials that would be printed, and published on the website. I was challenged with creating new ideas for merchandise designs such as shirts, stickers, and patches. The graphic designer created a spreadsheet with projects I could work on when I had extra time. I performed many other specific tasks when needed, such as printing prototype packaging and ensuring its correct measurements, or preparing die cut stickers; for example.



"Retro" Hybrid 46M Design



# Retro Hybrid 46M

The graphic designer provided a stock image and asked me to create something new in the same style, but featuring one of the company's suppressors. I chose the newly released Hybrid 46M for its unique identifying features and current relevance. I started in Illustrator by closely copying the style of the reference, and then altering it into more unique variations. I received constant feedback as I made changes.

## USAGE

The final file set is ready for printing in two, three, and four color options. I made one file specifically prepared for screen printing on shirts. Stickers were made and PVC patches planned. A quote was sent out for shirts to be ordered and sold in the employee store, and possibly to the public through the website.



Stock reference



Hybrid 46M



Variations



Sent for approval



Final version

# Samples



Sticker



PVC-Patch mockup



Custom T-shirt mockup



# Snake Sticker

The graphic designer wanted me to come up with a design involving an animal. The Gadsden flag snake came to my mind as it is a well-known symbol among the consumers. I threw together a quick concept and tested the Photoshop technique I wanted to use on this project. My mentor sent back a suggestion sketch with an original snake design having more direct contact against the product. I used a photo of a Glock from our assets and made a new snake based on the sketch provided, retaining the Gadsden snake's scale pattern to pay respect to its meaning.

I used both Illustrator and Photoshop to design this artwork. I started by drawing the snake in Illustrator, then passed it into Photoshop to combine with the Firearm photograph. Photoshop was good for shading and simplifying. I used a tool in the filters named: Cutout. I then passed it back into Illustrator to trace and expand into a vector graphic. I then fine tuned the lines, shapes, and colors from there.

## USAGE

I designed this with use as a sticker in mind. The company produces stickers to give away to employees and participants on social media very often.



First concept of idea



New version sketch



Sticker mockup





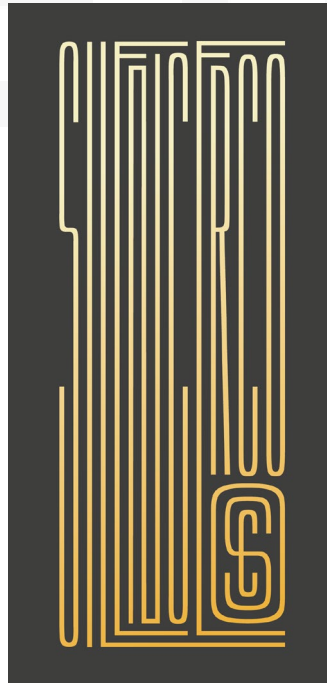
# Mega-Condensed

I had enough free time one week to work on an idea of my own. I love condensed typefaces, and wanted to implement one with the company name/logo. I started by searching through condensed typefaces until I narrowed down to one that closely matched what I had in mind. (Mostly straight lines with short curves)

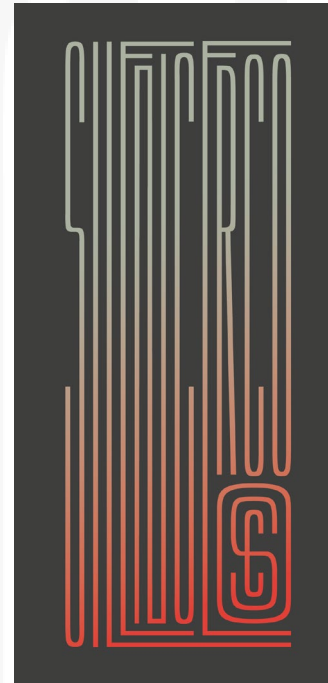
I typed out the letters in Illustrator and then expanded them to manipulate them as desired. I stretched out the vertical lengths, redefined its horizontal alignments, and corrected consequential skews in the curved segments. I cut out the shapes to reveal various gradient background options.

## USAGE

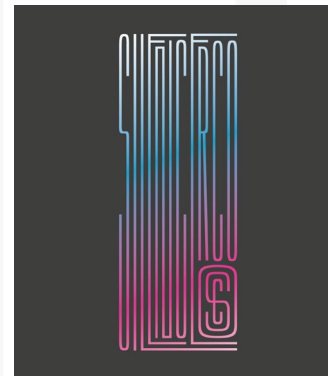
I submitted the design to my mentor and she was very impressed. We briefly discussed the possibility of a poster, but more uses for the design could be explored later as other opportunities for it arise. I made a couple of die cut stickers which were very satisfying to peel.



Gold variation



Brand-colors variation



Holographic variation



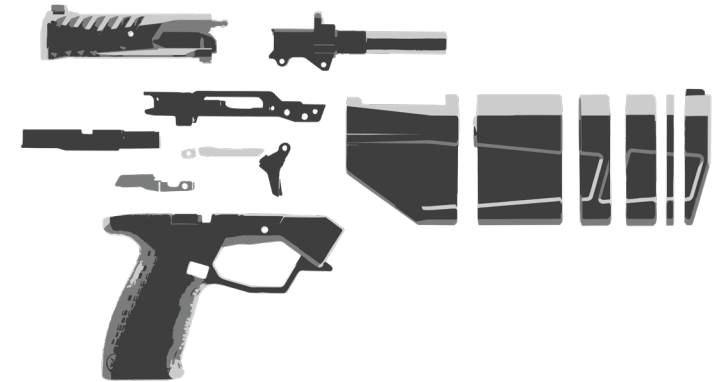
Green variation

# Miscellaneous Graphics

I grew in confidence and skill with my graphic design abilities during my internship. It was a challenge to work through problems with Illustrator and be creative in ways that I was not used to. The most difficult was having only one day to design a sticker for the employees. My mentor had a strong background in this type of work, so she was able to teach me well. These are some of the many graphics I worked on. I also became very familiar with the process of making die cut stickers from start to finish.



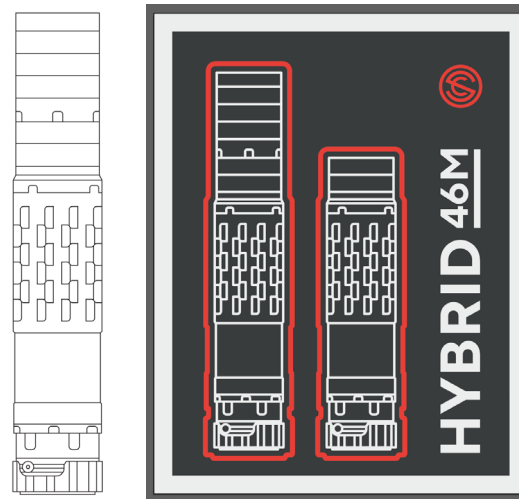
Holiday sticker for employees



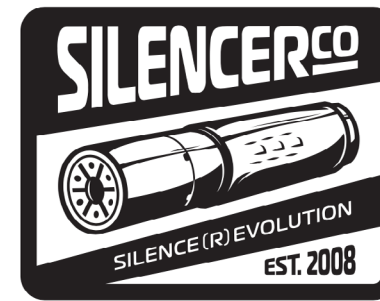
Maxim 9 exploded



New Photoshop painting technique experiment



Hybrid 46M laser-cut and pvc patch



Die cut stickers

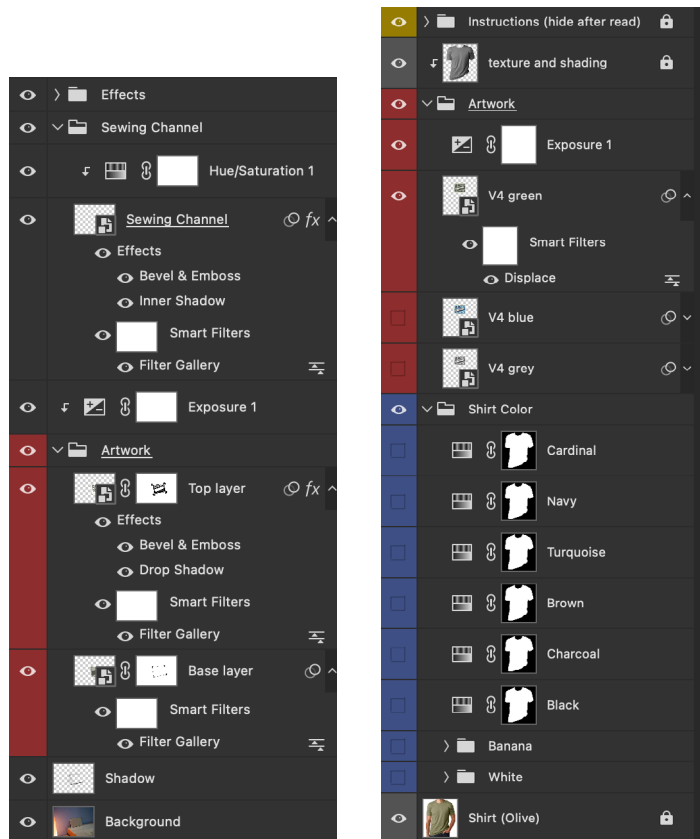


# Mockups

I created some Photoshop mockup files for showcasing design concepts as potential products. The t-shirt file is setup for easily replacing the design with a new one, for convenient repeated use. The pvc patch file is much more complicated and will require in-depth knowledge to reuse as a base for new designs.

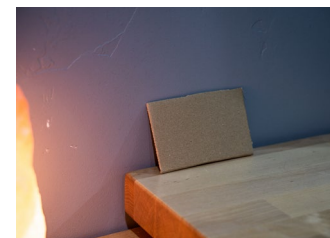


T-shirt mockup (color options display)

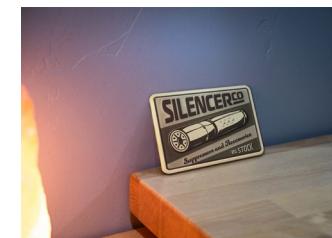


Pvc patch layers

T-shirt layers



Background photo



Completed pvc patch mockup



Simple sticker mockup



# Catalog

The graphic designer asked me to research ideas for a unique catalog design, and to draft a concept based on the previous years' catalogs. My idea was to implement diagonal crops parallel with the firearms in photographs. I setup the document with proper masters, layers, and paragraph styles for easily maintaining consistency throughout the project. I was also asked to make more "documentary style" photographs with the "gritty green" filter to be used throughout the catalog.

My strong background in typography and InDesign was very helpful in picking up some early momentum for the project.



Early spread concept



Final design direction



Early spread concept

# Final Catalog

I completed my internship a few months before the Catalog was finished and published. The graphic designer made all remaining decisions for the design.

My typography styles and rules, the diagonal crops, and my photos in the locations I placed them were kept. My influence had a heavy impact on the final catalog.



Final spread



My photo inserts



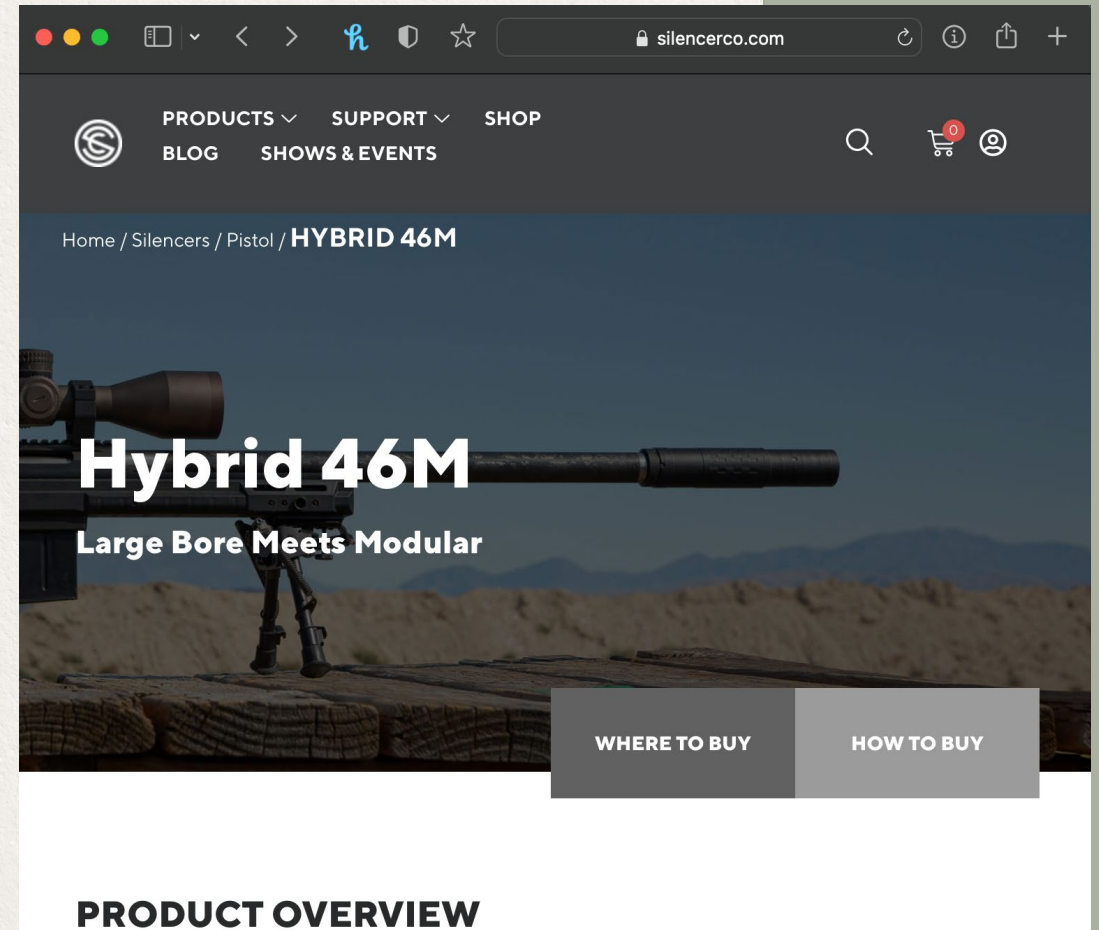
Final spread



# Website

## FRONT-END

SilencerCo's website lives within a Wordpress environment. The front end was built using a highly reputable theme: Elementor. I was given access to make changes to the front end and view analytics. I was able to do a wide variety of tasks involving the site. I managed assets using the content library, made various grammar and spelling corrections, optimized the mobile view on certain pages, made similar elements display more consistently across pages of the same category, assisted in the creation of new product pages, implemented custom css to solve a user-experience problem, and many other small jobs to help out when needed.



First new page launched during employment



# User Experience

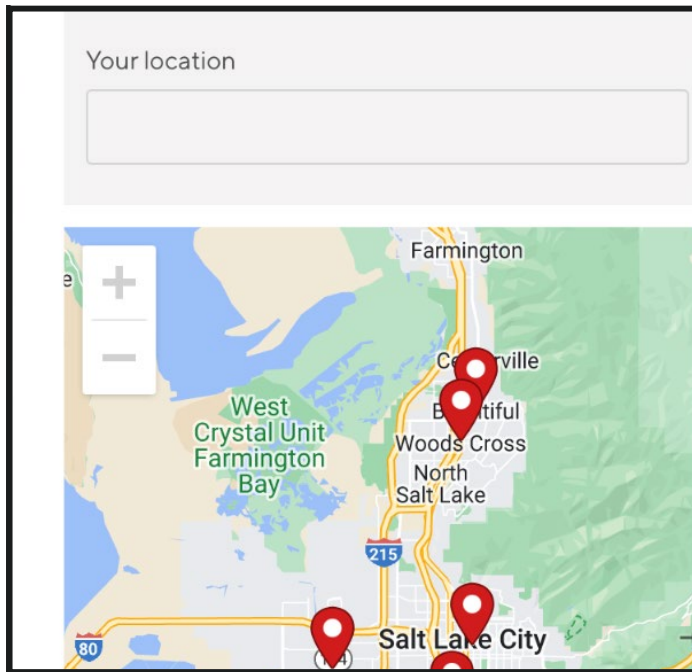
Someone from customer service visited the marketing office to ask for help in solving a user experience issue with the site. I was happy to take on this project myself.

Customers had been repeatedly calling in to ask for help finding "SPEQ dealers": gun shops that offer a discount program for veterans and law enforcement. Most customers would arrive to the "Dealer Locator" page by clicking on a link that suggested that it took them to SPEQ dealers. They were confused and lost when they arrived at this page as what they were looking for was not immediately visible, and what they did see was misleading. All dealers were shown by default, and the option to filter out non-SPEQ dealers was hidden within a drop-down menu that wasn't even visible on mobile devices.

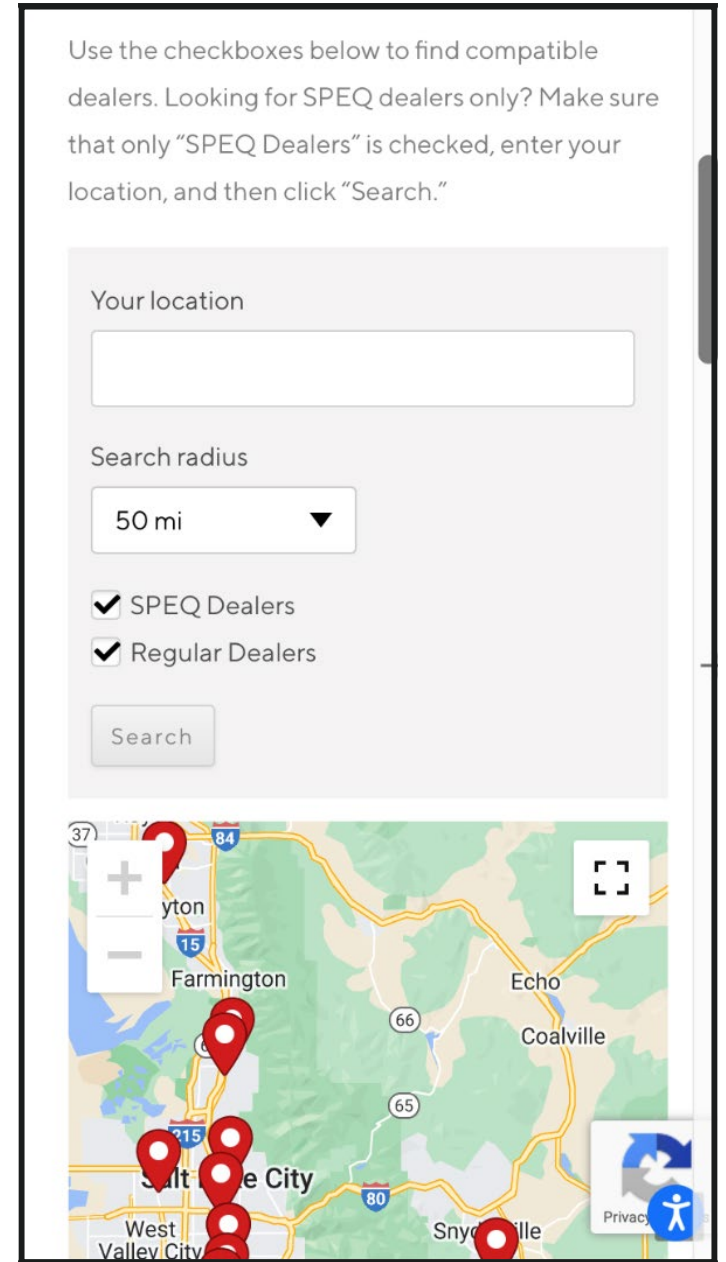
I added a brief paragraph preceding the map that clearly explains to these users on how they can find what they are looking for. I replaced the drop-down selection with a check-box list to clarify what the map displays by default. Most importantly; I mended the mobile view using some simple css.

```
/** STORE LOCATOR **/  
#wpsl-search-input {  
  background: white;  
}  
  
@media screen and (max-width: 700px) {  
  .wpsl-search * {  
    flex-flow: column;  
  }  
  
  #wpsl-wrap {  
    width: 100% !important;  
  }  
}
```

css



Mobile view before

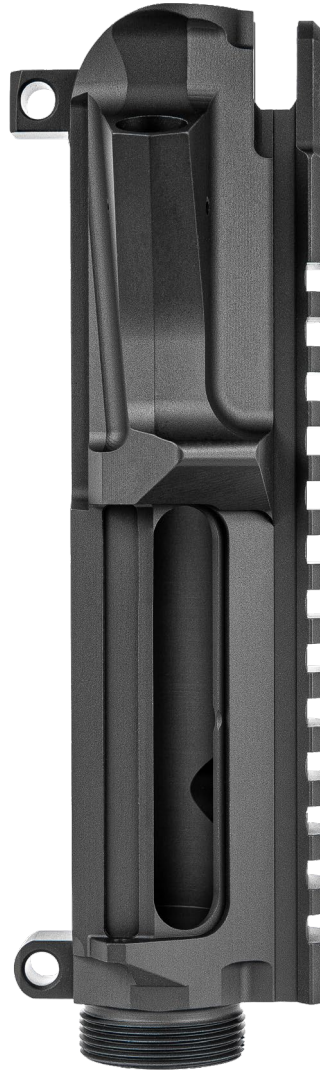


Mobile view after

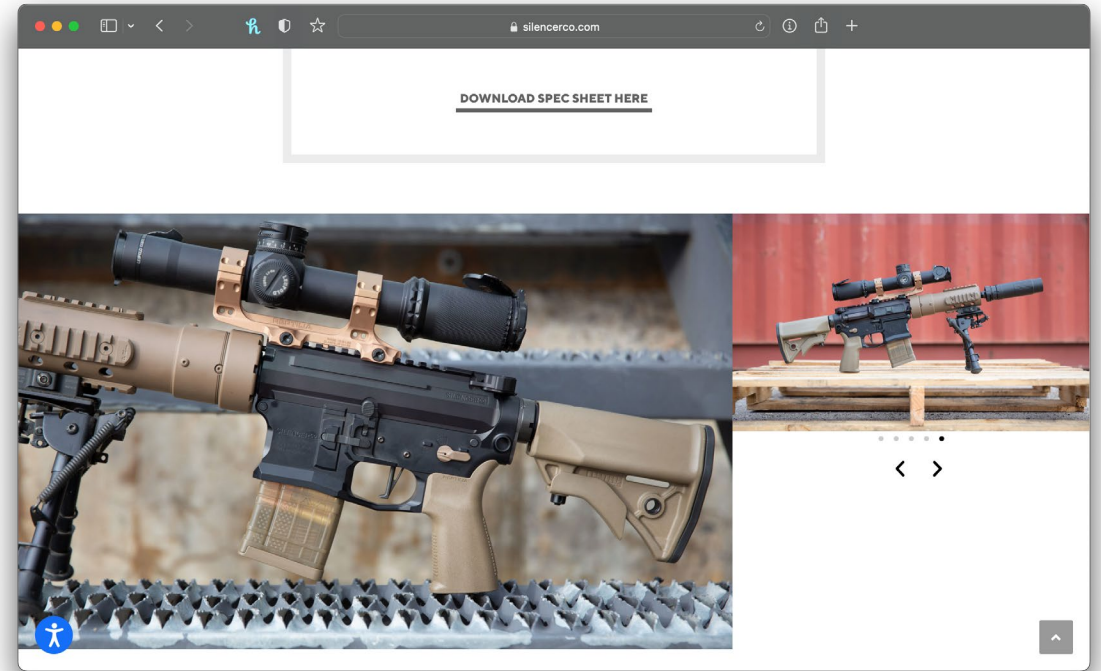
# Upper Receiver

I was tasked with uploading the photos for the new upper receiver into the Wordpress media library. I cleaned up the mask in Photoshop for the main image of the product. I got the work started on a new "sell sheet" page for the receiver based on a template used for other products.

I communicated and coordinated between the graphic designer and web developer to get new pages such as this prepped and ready to be published.

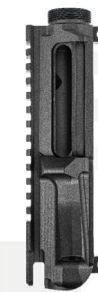


Improved Mask



Web page

## SCO 15 UPPER RECEIVER



### Specifications

SKU	ACS065
UPC	816413028001
Model	SCO15
Description	Billet AR-15 Upper Receiver
Material	7075 Aluminum
Finish	Type III Hard Anodize

### Features

- M4 Spec 1913 Picatinny rail
- M4 feed ramps
- Compatible with mil-spec forward assist and dust cover (not included)
- 
- Designed for use with standard mil-spec lower receiver
- 
- Machined in-house by SilencerCo out of 7075 Billet Aluminum

**SILENCERCO**  
info@silencerco.com  
801.437.5384  
SILENCERCO.COM

Sell sheet

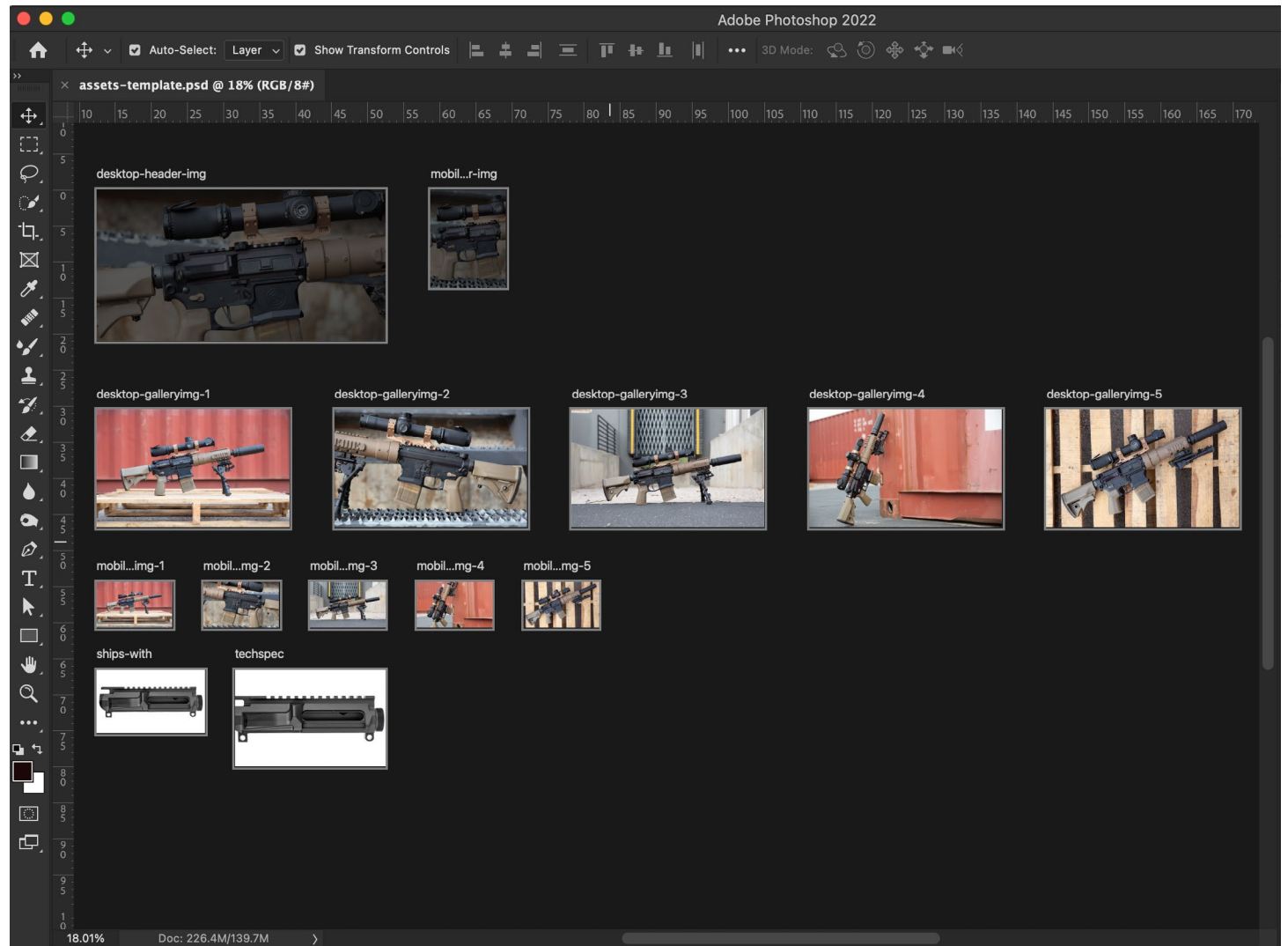
# Asset Management

The company used a cloud service called Box to store all of the assets used for marketing. I spent a lot of time uploading, organizing, and collaborating within Box.

We had a template psd file for easily optimizing photographs for use on the website.

I became very familiar with the strong file infrastructure that was built and maintained at SilencerCo

We also used Slack to communicate on specific projects, alongside email.



Template psd file



# Photo

## DIGITAL IMAGING

I shadowed much of the media production that took place during the course of my internship. I had several opportunities to produce photography on my own for the company as well.

I used both my own camera (Sony mirrorless) and the company camera (Canon full-frame DSLR).



Taken on the Harvester EVO video shoot



# Photo Journalism

Writers from the firearms community come to pre-view upcoming products in order to publish articles on them the day they are released. I filled in for the photographer while he was sick, and took photos for well-renowned, Tom Beckstrand, my first week. I had confidence to accomplish this despite the stress and anxiety of being thrown into it so suddenly without knowing what to expect. The photos I took that day have been used in publications and advertising in the most popular of gun literature, such as: “Guns&Ammo” and “Shooting Illustrated”.



Shooting Illustrated ad



Tom Beckstrand outdoor shoot Hybrid 46M





Shooting range decibel testing





Decibel readings



Gas Defeating Charging Handle prototype



Outdoor shoot Hybrid 46M





Outdoor shoot Harvester EVO



# The Hunting Wire

Another writer I took photographs for was Dan Larsson of “[The Hunting Wire](#)”. This day was much easier after having done this once before and knowing what to expect. What I learned most this day was about being the face of the company when working with outside entities. It is important to remember what each employee represents. Keeping conversations as professional and on-topic as possible while on the job is essential for maintaining the business’s reputation.



1911 with Hybrid 46M



Dan Larsson outdoor shoot Hybrid 46M















# Special Event

One day there was a presentation on the unique device that connected all the data across the machines in the factory floor. Many representatives and owners from businesses using similar machines came to see the tech showcased. I was tasked to photograph this event so that it could be well documented.



Break-room before meeting



Presentation on the tech that connects all the machine's data at the company





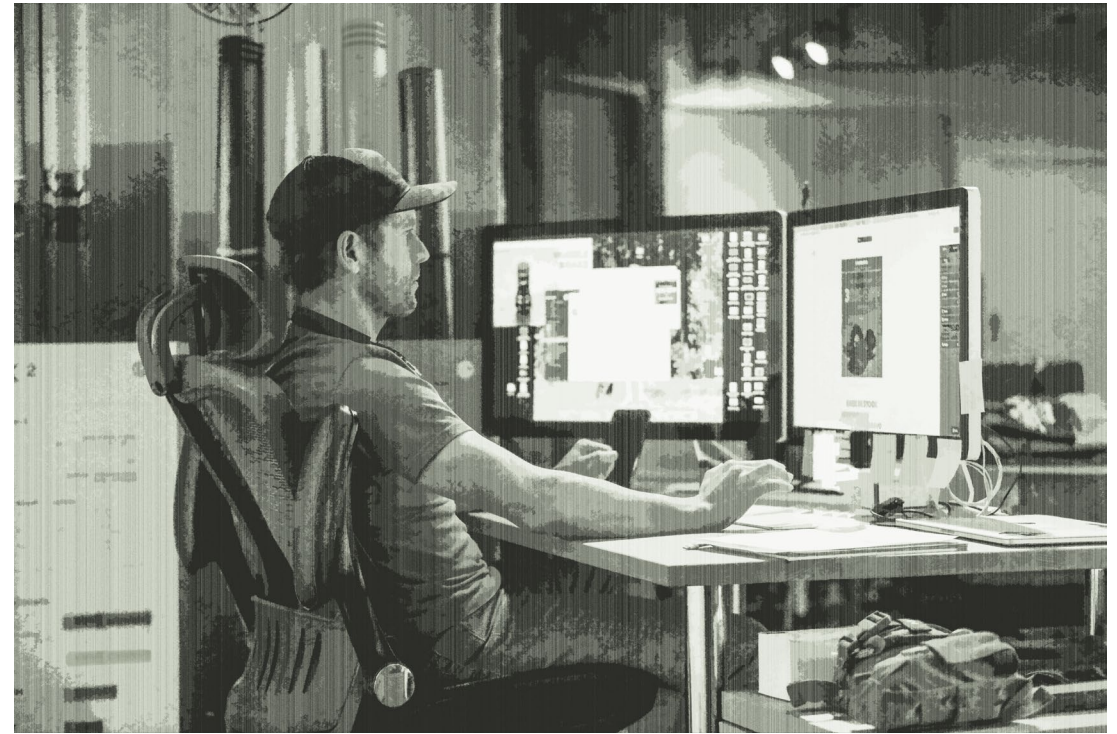
Tour of the products in action



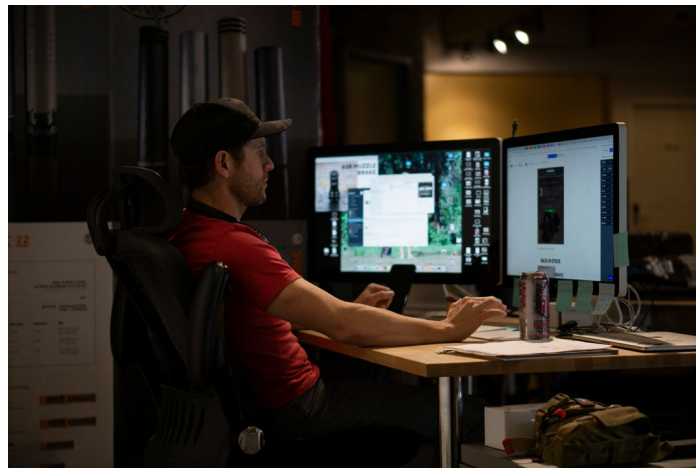


# Catalog Images

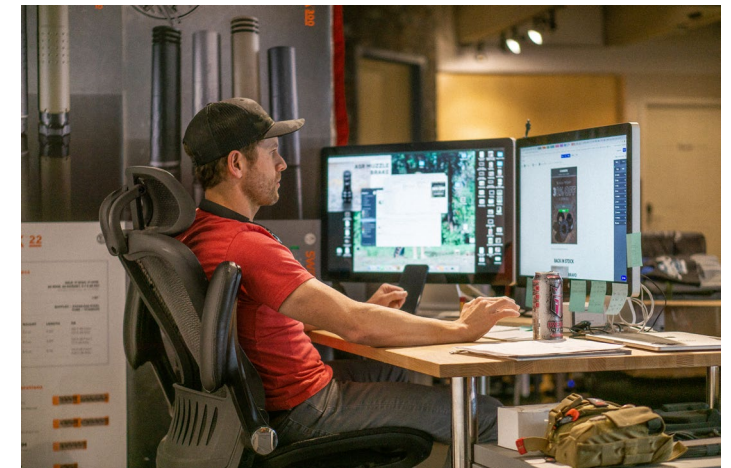
The graphic designer was impressed with my stylistic photo in my catalog concept and asked me to make more. I took several candid photos of employees at work in the office, and downstairs on the factory floor. I processed them each through Lightroom and Photoshop for a grainy effect in the brand's shade of green. I copied and fine-tuned this for each image and placed them into the catalog in InDesign.



Final psd file



Raw photograph

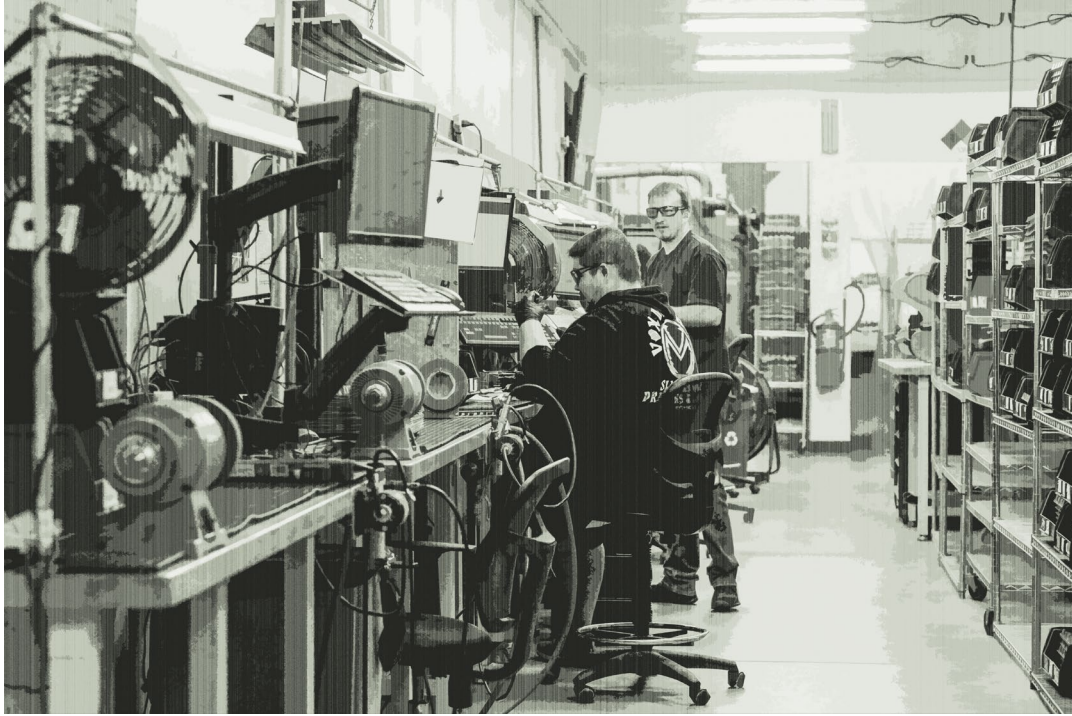


Lightroom pass









Metal finishing



Drill bits



Machining





Working on video in the marketing office







# Video Shoots

I was part of the film crew for two significant product launches: the Hybrid 46M Soundscapes video, and the Harvester EVO Launch short film. My main responsibility was as the boom operator. I insured audio was being properly captured for each shot. I helped with packing gear and carrying equipment. Getting out of the office and taking a trip out into nature to film the products in action was a great experience.



Frame from the Hybrid 46M Soundscapes video



Setup for a shot



Still from standing in place to frame a shot





Setting up for the opening shot



Opening shot from the Hybrid 46M Soundscapes video



Photo on location for the Harvester EVO shoot



Closing shot from the Harvester EVO launch video



# Conclusion

## LEARNING SUMMARY

It was an honor to work for such a big company with such an impactful brand for my internship. I am so grateful for the opportunity I had to be a part of it for a brief moment. I'm proud of the growth I made both in my design work and communication skills. I feel that the experience I gained was crucial to starting my career.

One valuable lesson I took away from my internship was how to handle unexpected obstacles. The team relationships in the office can be awkward or uncomfortable at times. There is quite a difference between coworkers and classmates, friends and colleagues. It is often more important to be professional and focus on the job that needs to be done than to enjoy the time spent in the office; finding that right balance can be a challenge.

I learned how important it is to take initiative. I shouldn't wait for someone to tell me what needs to be done. I can always be looking for ways to implement my own unique contributions and collaborations.



Gizmo, the good dog