



Smita Pawa

Creative Director at Photon

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





With over 15 years of experience in product design and strategy, I have built a career on delivering impactful, user-centered digital experiences across diverse industries. Beginning as a 3D Texturing Artist, where I contributed to **Emmy** and **Cannes award-winning** projects, I discovered my passion for UX/UI design while creating engaging educational products for children at Jumpstart. This foundation sparked my commitment to crafting meaningful, human-centered designs.

Today, as a Creative Director at Photon, a **leading digital** and **AI** agency serving **40% of Fortune 100** companies, I lead a multidisciplinary team to design best-in-class products that generates **millions** in revenue. My leadership has earned me multiple **recognitions** for outstanding performance, quality output, and innovative approaches.

I specialize in leading product design, UX research, and experience strategy, aligning user and business needs to deliver impactful solutions. With experience collaborating with global brands, I've led projects that simplified user experiences, impacted **billions of users**, and generated **millions** in revenue. A strong advocate for design excellence, I foster team collaboration and innovation through empathy and people-focused leadership.

Beyond my professional work, I actively contribute to the design community as a mentor, speaker, and judge, sharing insights with organizations such as AIGA DFW, AIVA, Orpetron, and the 100 Successful Women in Business initiative.

CONTACT

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EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts - CSJM
University, Kanpur, UP, India

3D Certification - MAAC,
New Delhi, India.

SKILLS

- Leading Design & Research
- End-To-End Process Building
- Facilitating Creative Workshops
- Public Speaking
- Design Mentorship
- Career Development
- Building Design Team
- Client Management
- 1-1 Design Consultation
- Budget & Resource Planning
- Introducing Industry's Best Practices.
- Leading Usability Testing

TOOLS

- Figma
- Miro
- Sketch
- Adobe Suite
- Jira
- Microsoft Office 365

COMPANIES

- Photon
- Citi
- Jack Henry & Associates
- Sabre
- Intone Networks
- Jumpstart
- Technicolor

BRANDS/CLIENTS

- Krispy Kreme
- Nothing Bundt Cakes
- Go To Foods (Moe's, Jamba, McAlister's Deli, Schlotzsky's, Auntie Anne's, Cinnabon, Carvel)
- Classic Collision
- Pelican
- Symitar
- Labcorp Lab Diagnostics
- Optima Health Insurance
- Sentara Healthcare
- Etihad Airways
- Virgin Australia
- Ethiopian Airways
- Kulula Airlines
- Air Serbia
- DreamWorks
- Nickelodeon
- Lego
- EA Sports
- Marvel

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KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Recognized in **Forbes** for pioneering a design process that optimizes cost management, budgeting, and timeline efficiency, ensuring streamlined project execution and delivering exceptional value.
 - I serve as a jury member for **AIVA, W3 Awards, The communicator Awards, Davey Awards & Orpetron**, some of the prestigious global creative and design communities, evaluating and celebrating the most exceptional work from around the world, showcasing innovation and excellence in the field of design.
 - Invited as a speaker at the **100 Successful Women in Business** conference organized by the Global Trade Chamber, a renowned organization with a 15-year legacy of empowering businesses worldwide. Presented on the transformative impact of design in driving business success and growth.
 - Invited by **AIGA DFW**, a leading design organization dedicated to fostering opportunities and creative inspiration for designers, to serve as a career advisor, portfolio reviewer, and mentor. Shared industry insights and provided guidance to help aspiring designers grow and excel in their careers.
 - Honored with **three awards** by Photon, recognizing excellence in design leadership, delivering high-quality outputs, and fostering exceptional client engagement.
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EXPERIENCE

Photon Infotech

Dallas, Texas

Creative Director, 04/2024 – **Current**

- Oversee multiple client products and portfolios valued in the millions, ensuring each project aligns with client objectives and delivers measurable, impactful outcomes that drive business success.
- Facilitate client workshops to gain in-depth product insights, gather comprehensive requirements, and foster collaborative, innovative solutions.
- Lead the product design strategies and oversee the entire program lifecycle, from inception to successful implementation.
- Implemented streamlined design processes that ensure all requirements are met efficiently and seamlessly, driving clarity, consistency, and effectiveness throughout project execution.
- Recruit top industry talent and provide mentorship, guiding team members in their career development and fostering a high-performance culture.
- Accountable for the overall quality of design deliverables, ensuring adherence to timelines, effective resource management, and budget optimization throughout the product lifecycle.

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Associate Creative Director | Product Design Manager, 04/2022 - 03/2024

- Facilitated collaborative workshops with clients and internal teams to deepen product understanding and gather comprehensive requirements.
 - Drove the creation of product strategies and oversaw end-to-end program planning, from initial concept through to implementation.
 - Managed a diverse team of designers, researchers, UX content writers, and usability testing moderators to ensure cohesive and high-quality outputs.
 - Collaborated effectively across business, technology, and design teams to maintain a seamless, integrated product design process.
 - Possessed hands-on UX expertise and stayed current with industry trends and tools to continually enhance design quality and relevance.
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Citi Group Irving, Texas

Creative Director, 04/2021 - 03/2022

- Led product design for Citi's Service Domain, a high-visibility and complex domain providing digital access to over 1 billion Citi account holders, with a focus on improving customer experience. Key flows included fraud handling, dispute resolution, and card replacement.
- Guided the design team in creating accessible, user-friendly designs that reduced customer service call volumes and promoted digital platform adoption, driving revenue growth for Citi.
- Was recognized with a promotion for exceptional performance during COVID-19, as digital self-service became crucial for customer satisfaction.
- Conducted design thinking workshops for detailed requirements gathering and collaborated closely with developers to align the product vision with business objectives.
- Oversaw recruitment and mentorship of top design talent, supporting designers in developing efficient designs, wireframes, mockups, process flows, and prototypes.
- Fostered a culture of innovation by encouraging team members to generate ideas for continuous improvement.
- Mentored designers in career development, helping them set and achieve professional goals.

Associate Creative Director, 10/2019 - 06/2020

- As a Design Lead, oversaw the product's overall user experience and visual design, ensuring a cohesive and engaging user interface.
- Collaborated with UX researchers, data analysts, engineers, and product managers to create applications that were intuitive and user-friendly.
- Leveraged research data to inform and support critical design decisions, aligning design strategies with user insights.
- Reviewed wireframes, mockups, and design flows, and contributed to the creation of high-quality UI/UX prototypes.
- Coordinated resource allocations in partnership with project managers to optimize project efficiency and team performance.

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Jack Henry & Associates

Allen, Texas

Sr. Product Designer, 05/2018 – 10/2019

- Developed a scalable white-label product tailored for over 650 credit unions, providing each institution with a customizable, branded experience while maintaining core functionality and design consistency across platforms.
 - Enhanced and developed product strategies that positioned the organization as a leader in simplifying complex application design.
 - Conducted contextual inquiries with credit unions to gain insights into end users' needs and pain points, driving user experience improvements.
 - Collaborated closely with the development team to understand customization requirements, ensuring scalable product solutions tailored to client needs.
 - Translated business requirements into interactive, clickable prototypes for review by product and development teams, facilitating efficient design implementation.
 - Developed and maintained a design system library and guidelines to ensure visual and functional consistency across the product.
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Sabre

Southlake, Texas

User Experience Designer, 02/2016 – 05/2018

- Designed white-label products for major airlines, including Etihad Airways, Virgin Australia, Ethiopian Airways, Kulula Airlines, Air Serbia, and others, creating seamless desktop and mobile experiences for booking and managing flights.
- Was recognized with a Certificate of Appreciation for outstanding performance, following requirements gathering, competitive analysis, and market research, along with wireframe and user flow design to deliver high-fidelity prototypes.
- Led usability and accessibility testing with users from diverse demographics to ensure broad accessibility and a user-friendly experience.
- Spearheaded a human resources learning and development project for Sabre, which impacted over 10,000 employees, and received formal appreciation from HR and the UX VP.
- Organized and facilitated cross-functional training sessions with business leaders to educate UX designers, researchers, marketers, developers, and QA on KPIs, ROI, revenue growth, and product pain points, fostering a deep understanding of product goals to improve user experience.
- Was recognized as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) for a pilot initiative that introduced Accessibility standards for mobile apps and websites, setting a foundation for inclusive design.

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Intone Networks

Iselin, New Jersey

UX/UI Designer, 09/2012 – 01/2016

- Worked as part of the core design team to improve the overall UX/UI experience of the client's product.
 - Responsibilities included understanding business requirements, designing wireframes, mockups, and low- and high-fidelity design prototypes.
 - Collaborated across business, design, and tech teams to achieve the desired results.
 - Worked across all platforms—iOS, Android, and web—from inception to implementation.
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Jumpstart Games

Bangalore, Karnataka

UI Designer/Concept Artist, 07/2011 – 09/2012

- Designed and successfully delivered e-learning websites for kids, including Math Blaster, Jumpstart, and Knowledge Adventure.
 - Contributed to designing web applications and collaborated with producers, developers, and test teams through to the product release.
 - Had the opportunity to work on the DreamWorks project as a designer.
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Technicolor

Bangalore, Karnataka

3D Texturing Artist, 07/2009 – 09/2010

- Worked as a Character and Background Texturing Artist for renowned clients such as DreamWorks, Nickelodeon, Marvel, LEGO, and EA Sports, and contributed to projects that earned prestigious accolades, including Emmy and Cannes awards.
- Projects included –
 - Shrek commercials,
 - Kung Fu Panda TV Series,
 - Lego Atlantis,
 - Back at the Barnyard TV series,
 - The Penguin of Madagascar TV series,
 - Marvel 4D Trailer,
 - EA Spore online game.