

SMITA PAWA

UX/UI Director | Director of Product Design | Head of Product Design | Sr. Manager of Product Design | Product Design Manager | Creative Director (UX/UI) | Product & UX Strategist (AI)

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Product design (UX/UI) leader with 16+ years of experience building human-centered digital products, both enterprise and customer-facing, across in-house teams and global consulting. My work has reached over 1 billion users and driven multi-million-dollar revenue. As Creative Director at Photon (serving 40% of the Fortune 100), I build and scale design teams and processes that turn complex products into intuitive, accessible experiences with measurable business impact. I bring hands-on AI fluency across research, ideation, and prototyping to accelerate delivery and elevate quality.

COMPANIES / CLIENTS

Photon • Citi • Jack Henry & Associates • Sabre • Jumpstart • Technicolor • Krispy Kreme • Go To Foods (Moe's, Jamba, McAlister's Deli, Schlotzsky's, Auntie Anne's, Cinnabon, Carvel) • Classic Collision • Pelican • Etihad Airways • Virgin Australia • Ethiopian Airways • Kulula Airlines • Air Serbia • DreamWorks • Nickelodeon • LEGO • EA Sports • Marvel • Labcorp Lab Diagnostics • Optima Health Insurance • Sentara Healthcare • Symitar

CORE COMPETENCIES

Leadership & Strategy: Design Leadership, Product & UX Strategy, Vision & Roadmap Development, Cross-Functional Leadership, Stakeholder & Client Management, Executive Communication, Design Advocacy

UX & UI Design: User Research, Information Architecture, User Interface (UI) & Visual Design, Design Systems, Web & Mobile Application Design, Interaction Design, Designing for AI & Human-AI Interaction, Accessibility & Inclusive Design

Research & Insights: UX Research, Journey Mapping, User Interviews & Usability Testing, Persona Development, Data-Driven Design, A/B Testing, CX Strategy

Team & Org Leadership: Building & Scaling Design Teams, Design Mentorship & Coaching, Design Operations (DesignOps), Hiring & Talent Development, Performance Management, Workshop Facilitation

Product & Business: B2B SaaS Product Design, KPI & Metrics-Driven Design, Product Planning & Roadmapping, Design Across the Product Lifecycle, Agile / Lean Delivery, AI-Augmented Design Workflows, Design Thinking, Innovation Strategy

Consulting & Delivery: Client Engagement & Multi-Account Delivery, Cross-Functional & Engineering Collaboration, Design QA & Handoff, End-to-End Product Design

Tools: Figma, Miro, Adobe Creative Suite, Jira, Confluence, Microsoft Office 365, AI Tools (ChatGPT, Claude, Figma Make, Copilot, Google Stitch, Nano Banana, Midjourney)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Photon Infotech

Creative Director

Dallas, TX

04/2024 – Present

- Promoted and recognized multiple times with awards for leading multi-million-dollar digital product portfolios, ensuring each aligns with client objectives and delivers measurable business outcomes.
- Lead end-to-end product design strategy and user interface design, partnering with product and engineering stakeholders on product planning across the full program lifecycle.
- Implemented streamlined design processes and design operations (DesignOps) that improved clarity, consistency, and delivery efficiency across project execution.
- Recruit top design talent and provide mentorship, guiding team members in career development and fostering a high-performance culture.
- Accountable for overall quality of design deliverables, resource management, and budget optimization throughout the product lifecycle.

Associate Creative Director

04/2022 – 03/2024

- Managed a cross-functional team of designers, researchers, UX content writers, and usability testing moderators to deliver cohesive, high-quality outcomes.
- Drove product design strategy and oversaw end-to-end design planning, from initial concept through implementation.
- Facilitated collaborative design workshops with clients and internal teams to deepen product understanding and define requirements.
- Partnered across business, technology, and design teams to maintain a seamless, integrated product design process.
- Maintained hands-on UX expertise, staying current with industry trends and tools to continually elevate design quality and relevance.

Citi

Creative Director (Contract)

Irving, TX

04/2021 – 03/2022

- Led product design for Citi's high-impact Service Domain, serving over 1 billion account holders across critical flows including fraud, disputes, and card replacement.
- Delivered accessible, user-friendly solutions that reduced call volumes and increased digital adoption, contributing to revenue growth.
- Promoted during COVID-19 for strong performance as digital self-service became business-critical.
- Led design thinking workshops, partnered with engineering and business teams, and recruited and mentored designers, fostering a culture of innovation and career development.

Associate Creative Director / Design Lead (Contract)

10/2019 – 06/2020

- Designed and oversaw the product's overall user experience and visual design, ensuring cohesive, engaging interfaces.
- Collaborated with researchers, analysts, engineers, and product managers to build intuitive, user-friendly applications, using research insights to guide key design decisions.
- Reviewed design artifacts, contributed to high-quality prototypes, and coordinated resources with project managers to optimize team performance and project outcomes.

Jack Henry & Associates

Sr. Product Designer

Allen, TX

05/2018 – 10/2019

- Designed a scalable white-label product for 650+ credit unions, enabling customizable, branded experiences while maintaining core functionality and design consistency.
- Led design strategies to simplify complex applications and conducted contextual research to understand user needs.
- Translated business requirements into interactive prototypes and built a design system with guidelines to ensure consistency across the product.
- Partnered with engineering to support scalable customization.

Sabre

User Experience Designer

Southlake, TX

02/2016 – 05/2018

- Designed white-label desktop and mobile booking experiences for major airlines including Etihad, Virgin Australia, Ethiopian Airways, Kulula, and Air Serbia.
- Led usability and accessibility testing across diverse user groups, serving as the accessibility SME who introduced standards across mobile and web platforms.
- Spearheaded an HR learning platform impacting 10,000+ employees at Sabre.
- Facilitated cross-functional training on KPIs, ROI, and product goals. Recognized for excellence in research, analysis, and high-fidelity prototyping.

GAMING AND PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE

Apostek Software — Game UI Artist, Bangalore, India (09/2012 – 10/2014). UI/UX design for gaming applications across iOS, Android, and web.

Jumpstart — Game UI Artist, Bangalore, India (07/2011 – 09/2012). Children's e-learning experiences (Math Blaster, JumpStart), including a DreamWorks project.

Technicolor — Texturing Artist, Bangalore, India (07/2009 – 09/2010). Textures for DreamWorks, Nickelodeon, Marvel, LEGO, and EA Sports on Emmy- and Cannes-recognized projects.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP & RECOGNITION

- Mentioned in a Forbes Technology Council article on reducing overall product development costs by utilizing a 7-step UX process for digital product design.
- Executive Board Member, American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA), supporting and mentoring emerging design professionals.
- Invited speaker at the International Conference on Innovation in Visual Arts, Amity University, India.
- Design-competition judge across national and international programs, including the A' Design Award, AIVA, and Orpetron.
- Recipient of six Photon awards for excellence in design leadership, high-quality outputs, and client engagement.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts, Fine Arts & Computer Science — CSJM University, Uttar Pradesh, India

3D Animation Certification — MAAC, New Delhi, India