

MICHAEL HELMAN

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[LinkedIn Profile](#) | [Online Portfolio](#) | [UX Case Studies](#)

SUMMARY

Accomplished UX design leader with 25+ years of experience creating impactful digital products and enterprise platform experiences for complex organizations. Build and guide multidisciplinary teams to deliver intuitive, data-driven enterprise platform experiences. Drive user experience strategy, cross-functional leadership, digital transformation, product innovation, and rapid prototyping. Leverage emerging technologies, such as AI, to maximize product impact and inform strategic decisions. Translate business goals into actionable design initiatives, elevate outcomes, and foster continuous innovation. Forge collaborative partnerships across functions and mentor talent to achieve superior results.

Key strengths: UX & Product Strategy • User-Centered Design • UX/UI Design & Usability • User Research & Insights • Information Architecture • Design Systems • Prototyping & Validation • Enterprise SaaS Products • Cross-Functional Leadership • Team Development & Mentorship • AI-Assisted Product Design

EXPERIENCE

SUREFRONT

Remote / San Marino, California

Principal Product Designer (Contract).....March 2025 - June 2026

- Led UX strategy and design for a retail-focused SaaS platform that combined PLM, PIM, and CRM into one system, creating a cohesive experience for all device types that improved usability and increased product adoption by 30%.
- Designed high-fidelity wireframes, prototypes, and detailed design specifications in Figma, streamlining handoff to developers, slashing rework by 45%, and speeding up release cycles by aligning design with development.
- Integrated AI-assisted design and research tools, including generative prototyping, automated user journey mapping, and AI-powered analytics, to accelerate UX discovery, improve decision-making, and enhance the overall design process.
- Led UX strategy and design for AI-powered enterprise experiences, including conversational AI onboarding, PLM/CRM workflow assistance, and intelligent product creation and recommendation capabilities. Designed natural language interactions, AI-driven recommendations, automated product variant generation, and AI-generated product imagery that simplified complex workflows, reduced manual data entry, improved data consistency, and accelerated catalog, quote, and order creation. Partnered with Product and Engineering to define AI interaction patterns and validate solutions.
- Coached and mentored teams while implementing scalable workflows, design standards, and collaborative frameworks that improved team productivity and delivery efficiency by 25%.
- Created a cohesive UX vision for intricate, data-driven workflows, using FigJam's whiteboarding to drive collaborative ideation sessions. Achieved a 75% boost in feature adoption and enabled more informed product roadmap decisions by delivering data-backed UX insights.
- Refined the enterprise design system using Figma and zeroheight, enabling faster prototyping and slashing UI inconsistencies by 40%. Created reusable components, governance standards, and standardized documentation to ensure smoother user experiences and consistent implementation.
- Communicated design rationale clearly to executive and cross-functional stakeholders, strengthening alignment and contributing to higher stakeholder certainty and more decisive product investments.

US FOODS

Rosemont, Illinois

Senior UX Manager, Digital Commerce.....May 2019 - July 2024

- Built, led, and mentored a multidisciplinary team of 12 UX designers, researchers, and front-end developers, fostering a collaborative, high-performance culture.
- Served on the Digital Commerce leadership team, owning UX strategy across web and digital product initiatives while partnering with executives to align roadmap priorities, customer engagement goals, and business outcomes.
- Developed and championed a design vision for new features, integrating AI specifically to personalize user experiences. Applied AI algorithms to generate tailored content recommendations. Designed adaptive interfaces that responded to specific user behaviors and preferences.

- Established a Figma design system based on atomic design, with key elements, flexible components, inclusive patterns, and a clear interaction guide. This cut design inconsistencies by 70% and improved the user experience and operations.
- Managed and communicated design strategies, guidelines, and maintained style guides and UI libraries. Conducted detailed user research employing surveys, interviews, and A/B testing to drive data-informed design decisions, enhancing user satisfaction and approval.
- Advocated for accessibility and inclusive design across product teams, driving solutions that enhanced usability, reduced barriers, and improved the overall customer experience.
- Analyzed competitive landscape and market trends to identify product gaps, delivering recommendations that shaped roadmap prioritization and improved feature adoption.
- Conducted user research with 100+ participants across B2B customers and internal stakeholders, surfacing insights that drove design iterations and increased satisfaction scores by 30%.
- Proactively advanced professional skills through industry events (e.g., Figma Config), completed LinkedIn Learning courses, and engaged with leading UX resources such as Nielsen Norman Group, UX Planet, and UX Collective.

US FOODS

Rosemont, Illinois

Senior Manager, UX Design and DevelopmentMay 2015 - April 2019

User Experience ArchitectJune 2013 - April 2015

- Led the design, execution, and branding of digital products and mobile apps for both customers and employees. Kept everything consistent to improve user experience and support business goals.
- Defined and executed UX strategy across web, mobile, and Salesforce-based platforms, leveraging customer insights, analytics, and usability testing to drive adoption and growth.
- Drove user research initiatives, such as interviews, usability testing, journey mapping, and persona development, shaping product direction and design decisions.
- Directed the creation of wireframes, user flows, prototypes, and visual mockups for complex enterprise applications, ensuring design excellence and user-centric solutions.
- Established and scaled UX processes, reducing design rework by 65%, accelerating delivery timelines, and enhancing cross-functional collaboration.
- Championed accessibility and WCAG compliance through regular audits, design reviews, and accessibility enhancements, resulting in more inclusive digital experiences.
- Managed project portfolios, budgets, and vendor relationships, while driving innovation through the evaluation of emerging technologies and Agile/Scrum delivery practices.

RETROFIT

Evanston, Illinois

Art Director (Contract)June 2012 – April 2013

- Championed the creative direction for the corporate website and all marketing campaign pages, ensuring a visually engaging and cohesive brand presence.
- Led end-to-end marketing strategy and content development, guaranteeing brand consistency and messaging alignment across all channels.
- Authored and implemented a comprehensive brand style guide, establishing consistent standards for all digital platforms and marketing materials.
- Forged strong partnerships with external vendors, designers, and search engine marketing specialists to execute high-impact campaigns and deliver measurable results.

HCSC / BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF ILLINOIS

Chicago, Illinois

Senior Web Designer and Front-End DeveloperNovember 2009 – May 2012

- Led the design and development of a public website used in multiple states. Oversaw information architecture, managed CMS-based web delivery, guided visual design, and ensured the site worked well across different browsers for a large digital project.
- Managed QA and testing efforts while working closely with engineers to set up usability best practices.
- Established and governed global UI components, and documented workflows to support scalable product development and design excellence.

FREELANCE EXPERIENCE

FLYING MONKEYS STUDIO

Founder & Principal Designer/Developer1997 - Present

- Oversee and manage end-to-end business operations, driving client acquisition, revenue growth, and the development of high-impact promotional assets, including branding and web solutions.
- Lead the end-to-end strategy, creative direction, and execution of high-impact visual projects across digital, print, and experiential channels, driving brand consistency, audience engagement, and business growth through data-informed design decisions.
- Secure new business through strategic proposals and consultative client engagement, ensuring alignment with objectives, timelines, and budgets.
- Design, develop, and optimize responsive websites and digital platforms using WordPress, Drupal, HTML, CSS, and modern front-end development techniques. Deliver brand identities, digital marketing campaigns, presentations, motion graphics, and multimedia experiences that strengthen brand presence, improve user engagement, and support measurable business growth.

EARLIER CAREER EXPERIENCE

AMERICA'S BEST COMPANIES

Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois

Creative Director and Information ArchitectMay 2008 - May 2009

SHOPLOCAL (TEGNA/Tribune Media Co.)

Chicago, Illinois

Senior Graphic and UI DesignerMarch 2006 - May 2008

DIRECT ADVANTAGE

Chicago, Illinois

Senior Graphic / Flash DesignerDecember 2004 - March 2006

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Technical Tools: Adobe Creative Suite, Figma, Sketch, InVision, Zeplin, Balsamiq, Axure, ChatGTP, Replit, Claude

Coding Skills: HTML/HTML5, CSS/CSS3, JavaScript, WordPress

Analytics and SEO Tools: Google Analytics, Adobe Analytics, SEO

Collaboration and Management Tools: Jira, Confluence, SharePoint, Adobe Experience Manager, Lucidchart, zeroheight, Microsoft 360

EDUCATION

COLUMBIA COLLEGE, Chicago, Illinois

Bachelor of Science, Communication Arts

Graphic Design, Animation

MORaine VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE, Palos Heights, Illinois

Associate of Arts, Liberal Arts