

Shahed Syed

Design Director

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SUMMARY

- Design Director with 15+ years delivering high-impact product experiences for Fortune 500 companies across fintech, insurtech, restaurant tech, and logistics.
- Hands-on leader with deep UI craft, 0-to-1 product experience, and a consistent record of tying design decisions to revenue growth, retention, and operational efficiency.
- Proven across enterprise and mid-market: from building design systems from scratch to shipping AI-powered products that cut costs by 40-90% and drove millions in added revenue.

EXPERIENCE

Design Director — Focused, NJ

Jul 2021 - Present

Led end-to-end product design for enterprise and mid-market clients across restaurant tech, logistics, and insurtech — from discovery and research through launch — in close partnership with C-suite leadership, product managers, and engineering teams.

- Designed conversational AI agents for a multi-location restaurant group that reduced customer support tickets by 40% and cut response times by 90%, enabling front-of-house teams to redirect their focus to in-person hospitality.
- Drove a 23% increase in sales for a national restaurant group by redesigning their React Native mobile app around personalization and loyalty mechanics, informed by user research and behavioral analytics.
- Increased conversion rates by 5-30% across top-of-funnel and booking flows for a leading moving and storage company by pairing design research with data analytics, resulting in millions of dollars in added annual revenue.
- Built a design system from scratch and led a full redesign of the operations platform for a specialty insurer, cutting submission intake time by 50% and reducing input errors by 18% — enabling agents and underwriters to process significantly more business per day.

Lead Designer — E*TRADE from Morgan Stanley, NYC

Feb 2018 - Jul 2021

Led product design for the Stock Plan participant platform, serving millions of users across web and mobile, within a cross-functional team of PMs, engineers, and UX researchers.

- Increased asset retention among stock plan participants by leading a full redesign of the web dashboard, introducing personalized financial education modules covering taxes, savings, and investing strategies.
- Partnered with UX Research to define and execute a research strategy — including usability testing and quantitative analysis — that generated actionable insights adopted across multiple product verticals.
- Expanded the design system by collaborating with product and engineering to ensure design parity between web and mobile, accelerating delivery and reducing inconsistency across product teams.
- Elevated accessibility across all UI components and data visualizations to WCAG 2.1 AA compliance, with a dedicated focus on screen reader compatibility for a platform serving a diverse user base.

Senior Design Consultant — Publicis Sapient Global Markets, NYC

Apr 2013 – Feb 2018

Designed complex transactional and data-intensive interfaces for leading financial services firms, embedded within cross-functional client teams across wealth management, capital markets, and asset management.

- Led end-to-end design of a web-based alternative investment portal for a major asset management firm, enabling wealth managers to surface advisory services and portfolio solutions — measurably increasing client access and trust.
- Improved investment managers' daily workflow efficiency by partnering with business analysts and engineering teams to design, prototype, and user-test desktop trading applications for capital markets clients.
- Delivered a live event mobile app for a global financial conference by coordinating across brand, content, and engineering teams to maintain parity between physical and digital attendee experiences.

Founder + Creative Director — Puzzle Out Room, NJ

2016 – 2018

Founded and led the first escape room experience business in Hudson County, NJ — designing all physical and digital touchpoints from concept through operation.

- Generated \$2 million in top-line revenue by designing immersive game experiences that earned an average 4.8/5 customer rating across all locations.
- Designed and owned the full player journey — spanning brand identity, digital marketing, online booking flows, in-game props, and physical puzzle design — delivering a seamless end-to-end experience.
- Built and led a team of 10 game operators, establishing operational standards and a coaching culture that sustained consistent experience quality at scale.

Designer + Developer — Freelance, Global

2010 – 2013

- Increased traffic and conversion rates for marketing agency clients globally by designing and developing websites, mobile apps, interactive presentations, and data-driven infographics.

EXPERTISE

Methods // User Research • Usability Testing • Discovery • Problem Framing • Wireframing • Prototyping • Design Systems • Data Visualization • Accessibility (WCAG 2.1 AA) • DesignOps • Brand Identity

Leadership // Strategy • Visioning • Team Management • Mentorship • Coaching • Stakeholder Management • Facilitation • Cross-functional Collaboration

Tools + Tech // Figma • Framer • Adobe Creative Suite • Miro • React • React Native • Tailwind CSS

EDUCATION

New Jersey Institute of Technology

Master of Science (M.S.), Civil Engineering + Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch)