

Christo Claassens

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I am a well-rounded product design leader with 20+ years' experience leading all aspects of the digital product creation process, including defining and executing product strategies, building out UX design practices, and managing successful teams.

My product design approach focuses teams to utilize an inclusive design process for their digital solutions, starting with a refinement of business ideas, evaluating user needs, executing in the creative studio, and validating in the marketplace. I believe a well-defined strategy seeds all successful solutions.

My experience in interaction design, information architecture and client-side web technology put me in a position to drive innovative digital products. I am passionate about the usability of products, I revel in championing user's needs, cannot get enough of usability testing, and put a premium on web and accessibility standards.

Vanguard Malvern, PA

Apr 2021 – Present

Manager UX Design Vanguard Retail Secure Site

- I lead a 20+ person design Studio across the Vanguard Retail Secure Site experience. As Studio leader I oversee the overall strategy and design execution across 10 scrum teams. Each scrum team include a full stack UX team with Strategist, Designers, Content Strategists and Researchers. As such, I manage design capacity and am responsible for hiring of all design resources.
- Vanguard is very committed to the ongoing investment of our Crew (talent). I love being a mentor and coach for my staff. We meet regularly in one-on-one meetings to create formal touch points to get to know one another and grow together. My servant leadership style dovetails well with the culture here at Vanguard.

Investnet Berwyn, PA

Oct 2016 – Apr 2021

Digital Product (UX) Design Director

- Provided strategic direction for making products useful and usable while also working in the confines of a complex financial system.
- Recruited UX practitioners, designers and researchers, focusing on those with a well-rounded portfolio who would be able to pick up tasks outside their comfort zone without being overwhelmed.
- Supervised our Berwyn team and also managed the day-to-day activities of an offshore (India) design team to form a highly collaborative and effective relationship.
- From scratch, built out a mature UX practice with a working [design system](#) that would enable the team to create complex software, but also be nimble enough that a small team can maintain it.
- Led the initiative to ensure that all future Investnet products would conform to AA level of the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative standards.
- Envisioned what a next generation wealth platform could look like and how it would function, which laid the groundwork for several of the strategic product initiatives that I delivered.

Motivate Design New York, NY

Aug 2014 – Jul 2016

Senior Experience Designer

As a senior team member, I had responsibilities as both an individual contributor and as a team lead on client accounts. Although my focus was on a future state Pharmacological mobile app, I also lead workshops, brand identity workups, and mentored junior staff.

Pershing Jersey City, NJ

Jul 2012 – Jun 2014

UX Design Team Manager

As team lead, I had to manage the day-to-day activities of the global interaction and research team members. My team was responsible for project work on Pershing's entire suite of client (NetX360 – PC, web, mobile) and investor facing (NetXInvestor – web, mobile) platforms.

- Financial Advisor and Investor mobile platforms.
- Led a redesign of investor financial platform with 2 million investment accounts. New features added include online account opening, asset movement (ex. digital check deposit) and a robust trading platform.
- Collaborate with UX management team to set strategy for the team.

BlackRock Princeton, NJ

Oct 2000 – Jun 2012

Global UX and Interaction Design Strategy

2011 – 2012

- Coordinated UX & design strategic direction working with design teams in geographically dispersed offices.
- Mentored designers and provide guidance on design work.

Web Strategy and Presentation Layer Management

2010 – 2011

- Set front-end development strategy for online platforms.
- Managed presentation layer coding process.

User Experience & Design Manager

2007 – 2010

- Managed the UX&D team that designed and iterated BlackRock's award-winning Financial Professionals' website (ranked #1 by kasina in 2009, 2010, 2011).

SKILLS SUMMARY

Design Direction

Requirements analysis, Sprint management, Product management, Journey mapping

Interaction Design

Experience flow diagrams, Wireframes, Prototypes, Design personas, Information architecture

Usability Engineering

Task analysis, Test scripts, Testing Moderation.

Design/Prototyping Software

Figma, Sketch, Axure, InVision, Photoshop

EDUCATION

BA (Hons)

University of Stellenbosch 1994

MDiv

University of Stellenbosch 1997

MA

University of Stellenbosch 1998