

GINA CUSANO

Product & UX Designer

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20+ years of multidisciplinary design experience, specializing in turning complex products, services and information into intuitive digital experiences. I combine UX strategy and systems thinking with deep visual design expertise, shaped by 13 years leading my own design studio and 100+ client engagements.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Founded and led an independent design studio for 13 years, growing revenue 80% over two years through expanded services and long-term client partnerships while serving 40+ clients across corporate, technology and nonprofit sectors.
- Defined the design direction for a 100+ page B2B website, connecting four cornerstone industries, services and projects into a cohesive experience that earned client approval and became the foundation for the production site.
- Became the go-to design partner for a marketing and communications company, supporting repeat enterprise engagements for clients including Gilead, AWS and Silicon Valley Bank; a Gilead senior leadership program led to a follow-up course and an additional design engagement.

EXPERIENCE

Thinking2

Remote

Product & UX Designer

Jun 2024 – Present

Small, full-service digital agency delivering UX, brand, web design and development for B2B and service-sector clients across manufacturing, industrial, utilities, entertainment and hospitality

Selected Clients: Acme Vial • Arcosa Crushed Concrete • Triunfo Water & Sanitation District • Wesley Thomas • Millions of Books • Resource 4 Signs • Regional Event Venues • Restaurant & Hospitality

- Serve as the design lead within a three-person core team, owning UX and visual design across 25+ B2B and service-sector client engagements focused on modernizing digital experiences, improving product discovery and clarifying complex products and services.
- Conduct stakeholder discovery and audit existing digital experiences to uncover business goals, content and usability challenges, translating findings into information architecture and design recommendations.
- Defined UX and visual direction for a complex commercial construction website, connecting four cornerstone industries, services and projects while balancing an ambitious visual concept with WordPress constraints; high-fidelity designs earned client approval and established the direction for the 100+ page production site.
- Define information architecture, user flows and responsive navigation for large B2B product catalogs, including a 238-item glass packaging catalog organized across 13 product categories to help customers find exact products by type, measurement and volume.
- Create reusable UI patterns and implementation guidance through Figma styles, annotations and WordPress component references, helping developers extend designs consistently through production.
- Partner with developers before design begins to identify technical constraints, evaluate WordPress capabilities and available plugins, and make informed UX and interaction decisions that balance creative ambition with implementation feasibility.

- Guide clients through key design decisions, presenting visual recommendations, explaining tradeoffs and incorporating feedback to build alignment and secure approval before development.

California Lutheran University
Senior Visual Designer

Remote
Oct 2023 – Jun 2024

Private university supporting institutional marketing, admissions, advancement and alumni engagement through digital experiences, editorial publications and integrated marketing campaigns.

- Led the design and production of four 40-page editions of the university's flagship alumni magazine across print and digital formats, transforming complex editorial content into engaging, brand-consistent publications.
- Partnered with the Art Director and editorial team to shape story hierarchy, visual flow and reader engagement, selecting photography and designing custom editorial layouts for feature stories and themed multi-page spreads.
- Introduced structure to an ad hoc magazine production process across four editions, advising the team on pagination and content planning, identifying repeatable page patterns and establishing reusable templates for the cover masthead, table of contents, headers and footers, recurring sections and feature layouts to support future editions.
- Translated creative briefs into design solutions for campus partners including University Marketing, Advancement & Fundraising, Social Justice and Campus Ministry, helping stakeholders clarify communication needs and determine the appropriate creative direction.
- Designed integrated communications across web, email, social, print and editorial, including department identities, event materials, brochures, signage and campaign assets supporting admissions, advancement and alumni engagement.

Pennymac
Creative Designer

Hybrid
Aug 2023 – Oct 2023 (contract)

Leading U.S. mortgage lender providing home loan origination, servicing and customer experiences.

- Designed and delivered 30+ digital assets across web, email, landing pages and digital campaigns during a three-month contract within Pennymac's fast-paced in-house creative team.
- Produced responsive, production-ready creative across multiple digital channels and devices, maintaining consistency within established enterprise brand standards.
- Created wireframes and prototypes in Figma and Adobe XD to explore concepts and secure stakeholder approval before final production, including a geographically targeted email campaign informed by regional research and tailored to city, county and state business leads.

Design Suburbia, Inc.
Founder & Principal Designer

Onsite Los Angeles, CA & Remote
May 2009 – Nov 2022

Independent UX, branding and digital design consultancy partnering with more than 80 organizations, from startups and nonprofits to Fortune 500 companies and government contractors.

Selected Clients: AWS • Alteryx • Silicon Valley Bank • Northrop Grumman • Gilead Sciences

- Built and led an independent design studio serving 40+ clients, leading UX, visual design and digital initiatives that modernized digital experiences, launched new offerings and made complex products and services easier for customers to understand and navigate.
- Recommended and designed an interactive alternative to Gilead's proposed static learning catalog, using progressive disclosure to guide employees through course, language, time-zone and

scheduling choices; independently learned the technical capabilities required to build and deliver the experience.

- Designed UX for two Northrop Grumman Facilities tools, translating complex operational requirements into iterative Adobe XD prototypes for a nine-step project-ordering system and six-step event-planning wizard; established and secured approval for foundational interaction patterns the developer carried through implementation.
- Led end-to-end brand and visual design initiatives, from new identities and brand refreshes to integrated digital and print campaigns, infographics, environmental graphics and product packaging, creating cohesive experiences across customer touchpoints.
- Managed all aspects of a 13-year independent design consultancy, including client acquisition, project scoping, proposals, contracts, budgeting, billing and long-term client relationships that generated repeat engagements and referrals.
- Increased revenue 80% in two years through service expansion and long-term client partnerships

Graphic & Web Designer
Creative Circle

Los Angeles, CA
Aug 2008 – 2009

Creative staffing agency supporting enterprise brands and agencies with design, marketing and web.

- Delivered web, digital marketing and branded communications across fast-paced agency engagements for enterprise clients including NFL and Norwegian Cruise Line.

EDUCATION

Designlab

UX/UI Designer Certification (ID: BC1BAD)
Apr 2025

Cal Poly State University San Luis Obispo

Bachelor of Science, Art & Design
Graduated Magna Cum Laude

CORE STRENGTHS

Product & UX

UX Strategy & Discovery
Information Architecture
Interaction Design
User Flows & Prototyping
User Research
Research Synthesis
Usability Testing
Prototyping

Systems & Design

Design Systems
UI Patterns & Components
Responsive Web Design
Visual Design
Accessibility
Developer Handoff & Implementation

Leadership & Collaboration

Design Decision-Making

Stakeholder Facilitation

Client Consulting

Cross-Functional Collaboration

Developer Collaboration

TOOLS

Design & Prototyping

Figma

Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, XD)

Framer

Research & Collaboration

Optimal Workshop

FigJam

Notion

Miro

AI-Assisted Design

ChatGPT (concept ideation, information architecture, research synthesis)