Helen West

Strategic product design leader

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PROFILE

Strategic product and UX design leader with extensive experience leading product design and strategy across B2B SaaS and consumer products, from Series A startups to global enterprises. Operates at senior stakeholder level, from startup founders to enterprise client leadership. Experience spans agency, consultancy and client-side roles across fintech, financial services, technology and legal. Combines systems thinking and hands-on design with team leadership, mentoring and cross-functional strategy. Track record includes recruiting, developing and promoting design teams while shaping direction on high-stakes, high-value engagements. Thrives on bringing clarity and structure to complex products and workflows, and raising design quality across organisations.

Core capabilities

Product design leadership | Complex workflow design | Product strategy | Product discovery | User research | Stakeholder management | DesignOps | Team leadership & mentoring

Design skills & tools

Figma | Framer | UX design | Interaction design | Information architecture | Prototyping | Responsive design | Usability testing | Design systems & components | Accessibility | AI-assisted design

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Product Design Lead (Freelance) — Teasel Studio

January 2026 – Present

Independent design practice providing product design and UX consultancy.

Principal Product Designer — Foolproof Zensar

November 2021 – November 2025

Led product design across complex client engagements at Foolproof Zensar. Worked hands-on within multidisciplinary, globally distributed Agile teams across product, engineering and business stakeholders to define problems, align teams and shape clear product direction. Conducted formative and evaluative user research across multiple client engagements, including interviews, usability testing and surveys, using findings to inform product and design decisions.

As UX Guild lead, led practice development across a global group of around 30 designers through critique, mentoring, knowledge sharing and continuous improvement, helping raise design quality and consistency across teams.

> **Led design on a 10-month B2B enterprise procurement platform spanning interconnected workflows for internal teams, clients and providers, processing over $2 billion in contract value in its first month.**

> **Line managed and developed a team of four designers, including one design manager. All four were promoted.**

Head of Design — Molo Finance

August 2019 – August 2021

Led product design and strategy for a fintech startup through a period of growth that culminated in Series A funding. Worked closely with product, engineering and customer support, reporting directly to the CPO and engaging regularly with other C-suite stakeholders, to define opportunities, shape strategy and improve the end-to-end customer experience. Combined hands-on product design and research with leadership responsibilities, using behavioural data and experimentation to inform decisions and prioritisation.

Built and led a design team of three designers and a UX writer, establishing ways of working, defining DesignOps standards that spanned all projects, and embedding research to create stronger collaboration between design, product and engineering. Recruited, line managed and developed designers while continuing to contribute directly to product strategy and delivery.

> **Implemented targeted UX design changes, reducing bounce rate by 60% and improving customer expectation alignment by 61%.**

Experience & Research Lead (Freelance) — Fing

April 2019 – August 2019

Established and led the product design function at IoT start-up Fing, defining priorities, shaping ways of working and leading moderated usability testing.

Experience Design Consultant (Freelance) — Publicis.Sapient

July 2017 – November 2018

Led experience design for Unilever projects, including an Alexa Skill for Recipedia.

> **Achieved a 15% uplift in users selecting recipe details on the Recipedia skill.**

Experience Design Consultant (Freelance) — Runpath / Experian

November 2016 – June 2017

Led an open banking innovation initiative, working with senior stakeholders to define opportunities, facilitate workshops, develop and validate concepts for customer-contributed data products. Combined product strategy, concept development, prototype design and user validation to shape product direction.

Created and validated three concepts for customer-contributed data products.

> **Funding approved for all three projects.**

Experience Design Consultant (Freelance) — Google

March 2016 – July 2016

Led product design strategy and research for Google Brand Studio's educational site for children aged 8–11.

> **Introduced usability testing to the project and used findings to shape product direction.**

Proposition Lead UX (Freelance) — 4finance

July 2015 – January 2016

Led design for a new refinancing product at 4finance, working with business and engineering stakeholders to define the proposition and shape the customer experience. Provided design leadership to an agile team with limited UX maturity, helping stakeholders better understand and prioritise customer needs within product and business decision-making.

> **Achieved an 80% sign-up rate within 3 months, with loan defaults decreasing by 19%.**

Additional client & agency experience

Additional experience across agency, consultancy and client-side environments, including AKQA, SapientNitro, Rufus Leonard, HSBC, ABN AMRO and Freshfields.

EDUCATION

Diploma in UI Design and Evaluation

Open University

BA (Hons) Graphic Design

Southampton Institute of Higher Education