

BLAKE WILLIFORD

PRINCIPAL PRODUCT DESIGNER

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[Portfolio - BlakeWilliford.com](http://Portfolio-BlakeWilliford.com)

[LinkedIn](#)

SUMMARY

Passionate and entrepreneurial product designer with 10+ years in human-centered product design, including 0-1 product design in startups, and numerous AI products. **My last two full-time roles were leading design at ed tech startups** (ChalkCast and Polygence) and since then I have been working on my own products (mobile game, mobile educational app) while consulting with various companies on integrating AI into their product offerings. I'm currently looking for a full-time role.

SKILLS

UX / UI Design

Figma
Sketching
Wireframes
Prototyping
User flows
Typography
Design systems

UX Research

Usability testing
Semi-structured interviews
Focus groups
Surveys
Quantitative Analysis
Qualitative Analysis
Journey Mapping

Development

HTML
CSS
JS (Javascript)
React
C# (Unity)

EXPERIENCE

Freelance

Lead Product Design Consultant | July 2023 - Present

Responsibilities: Freelance visual design, UX design, UI design, UX research, and branding services with 10+ years of experience working on projects for more than 50 clients ranging from startups to more established corporations. Generally assisting with all stages of the user experience design process from concepting and strategy to research, data-driven design, and development. Analytical thinker and strong at communication.

Achievements:

- ✓ **Greatly improved UI design and visual design for sustainability startup *Ubuntoo*** and helped launch its initial website and web app in 2019 to 750+ key partners including major brands like CocaCola and Clorox.
- ✓ **Designed brand and helped launch website for *Titin***, an innovative fitness apparel company that was featured on *Shark Tank* and received a \$1 million investment from *FUBU* CEO Daymond John.
- ✓ **Assisted various other startups in launching world-class websites and apps**, designing better brand identities, and VC pitch decks that have **raised more than \$7,000,000 in venture capital**.
- ✓ **Led product design (contract) for *Radien*** - a product that leverages AI to analyze front-end code and find inconsistencies, inefficiencies, and dead code to clean-up tech debt. My collaboration with the founders and other stakeholders led to a redesign of the design system, produced concepts for VC pitch decks, and partnerships with major brands like *Indeed* and *SurveyMonkey*.
- ✓ **Led product design for *PreemptiveAI*** - an AI health tech startup specialized in preventative healthcare. I reimaged brand and design system for a simple, clean, and professional look appropriate

for the healthcare space. I also collaborated with the CEO, CTO, and mobile developers to redesign the mobile app from the ground up for better usability, and to reflect the new brand direction. It has resulted in 2 new partnerships with RPM (Remote Patient Monitoring) companies.

- ✓ **Led product design for a R&D project at Articulate involving using LLMs to create a next-gen personalized learning experience.** Collaborated with the CEO and a top engineer as a design strategist, and helped the team develop the initial MVP for the new product.
- ✓ **Most recently led product design at Kognitos and helped team design a vastly simplified next-generation version of their product using LLMs.** The new product allows for business automations to be created purely with natural language.

Polygence

Senior Product Designer | Mar 2022 - July 2023

Responsibilities: Led UX / UI design and UX research for this fast-growing agile ed tech startup focused on providing mentorship and passion project experiences for high school students.

Achievements:

- ✓ Designed and facilitated numerous shipped features to create a world-class passion project experience for mentors and students, including tools for sharing resources, scheduling sessions, and a brand new native app that was far more usable and robust, with better accessibility (**4.7 Rating on App Store**).
- ✓ Led UX research effort with dozens of students and mentors to discover customer and market opportunities which **led to new products and growth to over \$1,000,000 in monthly revenue.**
- ✓ **Mentored and inspired mid-level UX designers** on design best practices, responsive web design, UX research methodologies, Figma, better hand-off to engineering, etc.
- ✓ Facilitated a rebranding and visual design refresh of website, web app, and native app leading to a more **consistent and cohesive brand identity, iconography, and design system.**
- ✓ Company has helped more than **2400 students from 44+ countries** do passion projects and get into top-tier universities.

ChalkCast

Senior Product Designer | Apr 2021 – Mar 2022

Responsibilities: Led UX / UI design and UX research for this ed tech startup focused on building a virtual classroom tool for remote teaching. Led hiring of a junior design talent for my team.

Achievements:

- ✓ Designed and built high-fidelity prototypes for numerous features for remote learning including a quiz tool, an innovative chalkboard, automated attendance, session history, etc. which delighted teachers and **led to 300% increase in product trials.**
- ✓ Rebranded company and collaborated with mid-level UX designer to produce a **more consistent and cohesive design system** that also appeals to a broader and older audience.
- ✓ Conducted semi-structured interviews and **usability tests with more than 30 teachers and students which led to key strategic insights and better prioritization of features and business roadmap.**
- ✓ Designed and built the company's new front-facing brochure site from scratch (<https://www.chalkast.org>) (HTML/CSS/JS) which led to a **60% increase in sign-up conversions.**

Adobe

UX Design / Research / Development | May 2019 – Aug 2019

Responsibilities: PhD internship at Adobe Research in Seattle, Washington. Worked with Holger Winnemoeller in Creative Intelligence Lab of Adobe Research to invent, design, and develop a novel creativity-support tool for novices. The tool leverages touch interactions and modularization of Photoshop commands to make digital image manipulation easier for novices.

Achievements:

- ✓ **Filed for US Patent as co-inventor.** IP and underlying technology may be implemented in multiple products serving 12+ million customers.

Microsoft

UX Design / Research / Development | May 2018 – Aug 2018

Responsibilities: PhD internship at Microsoft. Worked with both Microsoft Research and an applied research / product group AI and Ink to conceptualize, design, and develop a novel sketch-based educational application and conducted a user study with 20 participants.

Achievements:

- ✓ **Filed for US Patent as lead inventor.**
- ✓ **Published findings from usability study which demonstrated improved drawing ability** at *Creativity and Cognition 2019* in San Diego, CA entitled “Drawing From Photographs: Assisting Novices in Drawing From Photographs.”

Medicare Pathfinder

Lead UX Designer | Apr 2016 – Jan 2021

Responsibilities: Led visual design, UX design, front-end development, and data visualization for this healthcare tech startup focused on helping seniors find the optimal healthcare plan for them based on data analytics.

Achievements:

- ✓ **Helped the company raise more than \$450,000 in venture capital** with numerous iterations of VC pitch decks and helped the company win "Best Startup" at *Healthdatapalooza 2016*.
- ✓ Designed and prototyped a simple and intuitive senior-facing application that gathers healthcare information and connects them to plans with the best possible coverage at the lowest cost, which **led to partnership with 4 insurance brokers as well as providers.**
- ✓ **Designed and prototyped innovative visualizations for a predictive analytics dashboard** that prevents providers from losing revenue.

Fjord

UX Designer | Aug 2015 – Apr 2016

Responsibilities: Collaborated on several client projects for the Atlanta studio of this service design firm. Work involved UX research, interviews, journey mapping, persona creation, sketching, wireframing, prototyping and visual design.

Achievements:

- ✓ **Conducted semi-structured interviews and focus groups with 20 USAA employees and customers,** and synthesized research to design a mortgage buying application concept.
- ✓ Designed various features for an award-winning *Florida Power & Light* mobile and web app which was **launched serving 4,600,000+ customers.**
- ✓ **Produced concepts which helped studio land a \$2,000,000 contract with *Celebrity Cruise Lines.*** Conducted semi-structured interviews and focus groups with 24 of their employees and customers, and synthesized research to inform their long-term business strategy and redesign their online booking experience.

Cardinal Web Solutions

Lead UI / Visual Designer | Jan 2012 – Jan 2014

Responsibilities: Led the design services of this growing digital agency as their first in-house designer.

Achievements:

- ✓ **Rebranded the company and its entire physical and digital presence,** leading to a more clear, concise, and cohesive brand identity.
- ✓ **Directed a wide variety of design projects for over 30 local and national clients** involving responsive web design, mobile site/app design, graphic design, and branding during a time in which the company tripled in size and revenue increased more than 5X

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Human-Computer Interaction (HCI)

Texas A&M

Aug 2016 - May 2020

Sketch Recognition Lab

M.S. Human-Computer Interaction (HCI)

Georgia Institute of Technology

Aug 2013 - May 2015

Interactive Product Design Lab

B.S. Industrial Design

Georgia Institute of Technology

Aug 2007 - May 2011

Dean's List