

Christo Claassens

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Director/VP-level product design leader with 25+ years of experience shaping strategy and delivering modern digital platforms in complex, regulated environments. Trusted partner to product and engineering executives; builds and scales UX teams, design systems, and operating models that improve consistency, accessibility, and delivery effectiveness.

Leads portfolio work from discovery through delivery—aligning customer needs, business objectives, and technical constraints into clear roadmaps, scalable patterns, and shippable outcomes across multiple teams.

Known for strengthening design practice through hiring and coaching, design system governance, and accessibility leadership (WCAG/AA), while building alignment across stakeholders in highly matrixed organizations.

Core competencies: Product design leadership · UX strategy & vision · Portfolio & roadmap alignment · Design systems & governance · Research & insights · Accessibility (WCAG/AA) · Cross-functional operating model · Stakeholder management · Talent development

Vanguard

Malvern, PA

Apr 2021 – Present

Manager, UX Design & Strategy

- Own UX strategy and experience direction for the core experience of the Personal Investor brokerage platform; influence priorities and execution across 10+ scrum teams with product, engineering, research, and content leaders.
- Leading the largest client-platform redesign, defining an AppShell approach to enable consistent, modular experiences; partnered with technology teams to align architecture and implementation to design intent.
- Drive product discovery and delivery operating rhythms with Senior Product Managers (intake, prioritization, capacity planning, and governance) to keep multi-teams' work aligned to roadmap and client outcomes.
- Directed the modernization of the core authenticated experience to responsive, accessible, brand-consistent experiences; accelerated adoption of the Constellation design system and established governance for reusable patterns.
- Built strong stakeholder partnerships across Secure Site and the broader organization to advance the One Vanguard initiative; expanded team focus from Self-Directed to supporting all client segments (cross-over, Advised, and Workplace Solutions).
- Coach and develop designers through regular 1:1s, growth plans, and feedback; foster a psychologically safe, high-accountability team environment aligned to crew standards.
- Hire and build collaborative teams that prioritize outcomes over ego; advocate for talent, create clear expectations, and promote readiness for next-level roles.

Investnet

Berwyn, PA

Oct 2016 – Apr 2021

Digital Product (UX) Director

- Set UX vision and product design strategy across a wealth platform portfolio; partnered with product and technology leadership to balance client value, usability, and risk/compliance constraints.
- Recruited and developed UX designers, practitioners, and researchers; built a team with strong craft plus the flexibility to work across disciplines as priorities shifted.
- Managed the Berwyn team and day-to-day collaboration with an offshore (India) design team, establishing effective operating rhythms and shared quality standards.

- Built a mature UX practice from the ground up, including a scalable [design system](#) enabling consistent delivery of complex software while remaining maintainable for a lean team.
- Established accessibility as a product requirement; led adoption of W3C/WAI guidance to target AA-level conformance for future Envestnet products.
- Influenced strategic initiatives by articulating future-state workflows and enabling capabilities for a next-generation wealth platform.

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.

In this role I lead client workshops (itBit/TrendSetter), designed information architecture (Motivate Design internal) created wireframes and interactive prototypes (itBit/Chic-fil-A/Voya).

Pershing

Jersey City, NJ

Jul 2012 – Jun 2014

UX Design Team Manager

In my role as Interaction Design manager, I oversee the design process from concept through to final design deliverable. I coordinate closely with the UX team with the Global UX Manager, UX Architect, and the Visual Design team. Outside of the UX team I synergize with Product Team, Development Team and other stakeholders involved in our platforms.

Our primary responsibility is focused on our platform for financial advisors, NetX360, and our client solution NetXClient

BlackRock

Princeton, NJ

Oct 2000 – Jun 2012

Global UX and Interaction Design Strategy 2011 – 2012

Web Strategy and Presentation Layer Management 2010 – 2011

User Experience & Design Manager 2007 – 2010

Progressive leadership roles spanning UX strategy, interaction design, and presentation-layer management, supporting global teams and enterprise digital platforms.