

FRED PENSOM

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Head of UX / Product Design Leader / Design Ops & Transformation

Senior design leader with 15+ years' experience building UX capability, leading high-performing teams, and embedding design as a strategic function in complex, global organisations. Proven at raising design maturity, aligning UX with business outcomes, and operating credibly at exec level.

Executive Summary

- Led UX and design across enterprise-scale, regulated, and industrial organisations
- Built **Design Ops, design systems, and operating models** from the ground up
- Trusted partner to executives on **digital transformation and change**
- Known for **calm leadership, clarity, and sustainable impact**, not theatre

Experience

Spirax Sarco / Group Head of User Experience

2023 - PRESENT

Global industrial engineering group with multiple brands and regions.

- Established UX as a **group-level strategic capability**
- Designed and implemented a **Design Ops operating model** (governance, standards, ways of working)
- Led creation of a **scalable design system** used across brands
- Authored a **Digital Innovation Playbook** adopted across the Group
- Built, coached, and led a distributed UX team across regions
- Shifted UX from delivery support to **outcome-focused leadership**

Impact

- Increased consistency, speed, and confidence in digital delivery
- Improved exec understanding and pull-through of UX
- Created shared language and standards across historically siloed teams

Curtis Fitch Ltd / Head of Product & Design

2019 - 2022

- UX and product design leadership across large digital transformation programmes
- Partnered with senior client stakeholders on strategy, operating models, and delivery
- Built and mentored senior designers and emerging design leaders
- Accountable for design quality, team health, and client trust

Notable work

- UX leadership on De Beers Group's enterprise-scale digital transformation
- Financial services, energy, and highly regulated environments

Senior UX & Product Design Roles

Various organisations & consultancies | Early career

- UX strategy, research, and delivery across platforms, services, and enterprise tools
- Strong foundation in complex systems, stakeholder alignment, and delivery under constraint

Leadership Strengths

- UX & Product Strategy
- Design Ops & Design Systems
- Design Maturity & Capability Building
- Team Coaching & Leadership Development
- Executive & Stakeholder Engagement
- Digital Transformation
- Responsible, pragmatic use of AI in design leadership

Selected Outcomes

- Built sustainable UX capability where none previously existed
- Introduced design operations that scaled across multiple brands
- Coached designers into senior and leadership roles
- Helped organisations move from **output-led to outcome-led** thinking

Writing & Thought Leadership

- Author: *How to Use AI for UX Design - And When Not To* (forthcoming)
- Mentor and advisor to designers and design leaders

Special projects

Cheltenham Design Foundation / Trustee

2019 -2024

ADPList / Mentor

2021 - 2023

Education

University of Gloucestershire / BSc Computing with Multimedia

2000

Other

A UEFA qualified football coach, I volunteer at Gloucester City where I lead the U13 girls.