John Murray

Design Leader / Strategist / Mentor / Facilitator

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About me

I've been in the industry since 2007 and taught myself design and front end development back before code camps and Google Chrome were a thing — back when we all had the title "web designer". Nowadays, I spend my time leading and mentoring designers of all ages and abilities.

As a design leader I work directly with product leadership at every level: product managers, development managers, and c-suite executives. I build and manage those relationships and work with leadership to strategize and drive the product roadmap. I work with my design teams to deliver excellent user experiences for our users and to advocate for the user at ever stage of the process.

Being in design leatdership puts me right where I want to be. I'm at the intersection of product design, product strategy, and product management, and I get the opportunity to mentor folks along the way.

When I'm not leading my product team, I'm planning and facilitating design thinking workshops either through IBM or my local AIGA chapter. I've led workshops of all types and sizes, from Intro to Design Thinking to remote product team sessions with folks spread all around the world.

Day-to-day Responsibilities

- Work with product management, development, and business executives to formulate product strategy and translate that into actionable design deliverables.
- Build and maintain relationships between design, product management, and development in order to demonstrate the value of design through proper UX process and design thinking.
- Ensure design and brand consistency through regular design critiques with my team and our design leadership, including design managers and our VP of design.
- Coach and mentor the members of my team to create and deliver innovative user experiences that meet pre-determined release schedules.
- Coach my team to use design thinking and other collaborative design methods to ideate and explore new ideas alongside our product managers and product team developers.
- Take an active interest in the career development and ambitions of designers across our broader design organization, not just my team.
- Outisde of my product team, I identify broader design organization needs and look for solutions (coach teams on design ops and the integration of design thinking and agile, promote and educate aspiring design leaders on the fundamentals of design leadership, create a design thinking facilitation guild).

Work experience

Hybrid Cloud Developer Experience Design Lead   Aug 2017 - Present
IBM

The Developer Experience team has a number of missions:

- demonstrating the value of IBM's products to existing customer's developers
- explore and capture new developer market segments
- drive them to adopt IBM runtime environments

Our current product is Microclimate, and end-to-end developer experience tool for creating microservice-based applications that can be deployed in both on-premise and cloud environments, including the IBM Cloud Platform.

VMware Design Lead

Nov 2016 - Apr 2017

IBM

IBM has a strong partnership with VMware. My team redesigned and improved the UX for the VMware runtime inside of IBM's PaaS offering, Bluemix. I used my development experience to provide technical guidance to our Beijing developers as they sought to move from an outdated Dojo Javascript framework to the more modern React framework.

IBM Swift Design Lead

May 2016 - Nov 2016

IBM

I worked on IBM's partnership with Apple to promote the adoption of server side Swift development, called Swift@IBM. The offering was a runtime which ran inside of Bluemix. But there was a package catalog, a browser-based IDE—Swift sandbox, and server-side framework—Kitura. My team oversaw the all of these assets and was tasked with creating a consisten user journey from one part of the ecosystem to the next.

Advisory Front End Developer, Bluemix

Aug 2015 - Apr 2016

IBM

As a front end developer at IBM I got the chance to help develop the UI for Bluemix. I also worked on creating a unified UX for elements of Bluemix's product catalog, and I was an early member of the Carbon Design System team.

Design Lead, Telco Vertical

Feb 2014 - July 2015

Red Ventures

I ran the customer experience design team that worked on AT&T marketing and direct response assets. In this role, I guided the team to deliver work in bi-weekly sprints; design, developed and delivered projects of my own; and managed the career development of all the designers on my team and was responsible for mentoring them and helping them move up in the organization to become senior-level designers. I worked directly with our customer experience analysts to define the strategic initiatives that would ensure success for the clients we had.

Senior UX Design & Design Lead, Insurance Vertical

Oct 2013 - Jan 2014

Red Ventures

As both a senior UX designer and a design lead I managed all the designers and front end developers that worked in my companys' insurance vertical. With client relationships like Safeco, The Hartford, Travelers, and Liberty Mutual, it was my job to ensure that designers were not only staying on-brand but were creating direct response webistes and landing pages that got measurable results during A/B testing.

Mid-level UX Designer, Insurance Vertical

April 2012 - Sept 2013

Red Ventures

As a UX designer working on the insurance vertical I created direct response websites that met specific KPIs. Through a sprint-based design and development schedule, I consistently delivered engaging, high-quality work with little direction from my design lead. I worked directly with our customer experience analysts to define and iterate a direct response marking strategy.

Junior UX Designer, Insurance Vertical

Jan 2012 - Mar 2012

Red Ventures

I was one of the first designers to work on this business unit. As a result, I was able to build out a number of websites for our early insurance vertical customers.

Junior UX Designer

Aug 2010 - Dec 2011

Red Ventures, Insurance Vertical

As a junior designer I created designed and developed direct response websites and landing pages for some of our biggest clients, including DIRECTV.

Web Designer
Oct 2008 - Aug 2010

Mojoe.net

At this small startup-like shop, I had the autonomy to propose and design the online and print experiences that I felt would bring success to the small business customers we had. Not only did I deliver the bulk of the creative deliverables, but I sat in client meetings and worked with customers to meet their needs.

Web Design Intern
Mar 2008 - Oct 2008

Locke Design Omnimedia

This was my first professional design job. I worked part-time here while also working full-time at The Greenville News in Greenville, SC because I was transitioning between careers.

Education

Bachelor of Arts, Journalism
2005 - 2007

University of South Carolina

I graduated with a degree in print journalism and a minor in business administration

Bachelor of Arts, Journalism
2003 - 2005

North Greenville University

I did my general education classes here before transferring to USC.

High school diploma
1999 - 2003

Christian Brothers High School

I went through all four years of high school at this prestigious Catholic preparatory school for boys. With nearly 150 years of experience preparing young men to make a difference in their school, their home and their community, CBHS gave me an extraordinary range of knowledge and experiences that continue to guide me down my career path to this day.

References

"John is a rockstar. I haven't always had the pleasure of working with someone who I can always trust to bring their A-game and hold me accountable to do the same. John is an awesome manager of things, leader of others, and doer, maker, thinker and honestly my only regret is that we have never worked together on a team. If we did it would be the best team, ever. In the work we did together for AIGA, John came in as a volunteer and came out a mentor of many and leader of all. All I needed was a facilitator and what I got was much more. I think that is evidence of his ability to restlessly reinvent through feedback, unite and get it done now through his willingness to roll his sleeves up and do the work or lead, delegate, and mentor others so that they get a chance to practice what John preaches. He also shares his successes with his teammates and others who supported the great outcomes he is attached to."

— Amber Atkins, Co-Director of Education and Mentorship, AIGA Austin

"John is the quintessential team player, always looking to do whatever the team needs, pushing others to do better, and pushing himself above all to be the best he can be. Hard working, loyal, and dedicated, he sets goals, keeps his eye on the ball, and adapts as needed to get himself and his team across the finish line. He has been one of my favorite people to work with and mentor in my career and I would be excited to have him as a teammate on any project I am working on."

— James Huston, mentor, former colleague, and Director of Platform Engineering at Red Ventures

"John pushed me to be the best version of myself when I felt the most insecure in my career. He has mentored me from a timid designer full of fear to a confident leader. Over the past few years he has been the one person who I could turn to with questions that would give me the brutal and honest truth. Even after he moved and we were no longer able to talk face-to-face; the advice, friendship, and guidance has not stopped."

— Andrew Cilley, Senior Designer / Team Lead at Red Ventures

Volunteer Experience

AIGA Board Explorer, July 2017 - Present

AIGA Member, 2016 - Present