

Helen West

Design leader (product strategy)

CONTACT

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PORTFOLIO

www.helenwest.info

CORE CAPABILITIES

Product strategy

Cross-functional leadership

Team leadership

DesignOps

User research

EDUCATION

Dip. UI Design and Evaluation
Open University

BA (Hons) Graphic Design
Southampton Institute of HE

PROFILE

Product-focused design leader specialising in problem definition and product strategy. Experienced in leading teams and aligning design, product, and engineering to bring clarity to complex environments. Skilled at balancing user needs with business and technical constraints to shape direction, prioritise effectively, and deliver meaningful outcomes.

EXPERIENCE

Principal Designer

Foolproof | November 2021 to November 2025

Led product design across client engagements, working closely with multidisciplinary, globally distributed teams and stakeholders to shape direction and solve the right challenges. Brought structure to ambiguous environments by establishing effective ways of working, facilitating workshops, and aligning user needs with business and technical constraints.

As UX Guild lead, shaped the practice's direction through collaboration, continuous improvement, and knowledge sharing, while also supporting business development.

Led a team on a 10-month project, delivering a new digital procurement platform that processed over \$2 billion in contract value within a month.

Managed the growth and development of a team of four, all of whom were promoted.

Head of Design

Molo Finance | August 2019 to August 2021

Set product design direction for a complex financial product, working closely with product, engineering, and customer support to identify underlying problems, shape strategy, and improve end-to-end customer experience. Used data, user insight, and behavioural analysis to challenge assumptions and prioritise the most valuable opportunities.

Built and led the design function, hiring and developing the team, and establishing ways of working that improved collaboration, research, decision-making, and delivery across teams.

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

EXPERIENCE

Experience & Research Lead (freelance)

Fing | April 2019 to 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, with consistently strong feedback on the work.

Experience Design Consultant (freelance)

Publicis.Sapient | July 2017 to 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 to June 2017

Led an open banking proof-of-concept, collaborating with senior stakeholders to create and validate three concepts for customer-contributed data products, presented to the Executive Committee to secure project funding.

Funding approved for all three projects.

Experience Design Consultant (freelance)

Google | March 2016 to July 2016

Led UX research and design strategy for Google Brand Studio on an educational site for 8-11 year-olds.

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

Proposition Lead UX (freelance)

4finance | July 2015 to January 2016

Led design for a new refinancing product at 4finance. Provided UX guidance to an Agile team with limited UX maturity and helped business stakeholders prioritise user needs.

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

Various design roles

1996 to 2015

Worked with leading agencies including Rufus Leonard, SapientNitro, and AKQA, and in-house at HSBC, ABN AMRO, and Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP in various design capacities.