

MELISSA H KERN

UX DESIGN LEADER BRIDGING STRATEGY AND EXECUTION



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Engineer by degree, designer by practice, and user advocate at heart. With 20+ years in UX and Product Design, I specialize in building intuitive applications, leading design teams, and driving measurable business outcomes through user-centered solutions. I bring a rare perspective, having seen the evolution of UX from early-stage concepts to a driving force in enterprise and consumer application design.

Core Competencies

Design & Prototyping

Figma, Sketch, Adobe XD, InVision

Research & Strategy

Usability testing, Customer research programs, Usertesting.com, Userlytics.com, Journey mapping, Responsive design

Collaboration & Dev Tools

Jira, Confluence, Cursor, Slack, Teams

Technical

HTML, CSS, Accessibility Standards (WCAG)

Professional Strengths

Cross-functional collaboration, Stakeholder communication, Relationship-building with engineering teams, Strategic thinking

Education

University of Virginia
1992 - 1996

LinkedIn

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Varis

Oct 2021 - Aug 2025

Head of Design, Product Design Manager

- Helped build and scale the design function from the ground up, mentoring a high-performing team and establishing design standards that significantly increased usability across the platform.
- Defined and executed the creative vision for Varis' B2B eProcurement administrative platform, cutting the time for customer onboarding and marketplace stand-up in half
- Partnered with product & engineering to embrace an AI-native software development life cycle, redesigning workflows that cut feature release time from years to months.
- Delivered design outcomes from system-level architecture to polished UI, creating a seamless customer experience that boosted adoption.

Office Depot

Mar 2021 - Sep 2021

Senior Lead UX Designer

- Redesigned the business accounts' search experience to clearly highlight in-contract items, guiding end-user buyers toward compliant choices and decreasing rogue spend.
- Led the adoption of a modern search engine, aligning technical requirements with user needs to deliver a seamless interface.
- Established the first customer design feedback program, generating insights that directly influenced product strategy.
- Extended design impact beyond B2B, with solutions becoming the foundation for Office Depot's consumer eCommerce site.

Meridian Knowledge Solutions

Feb 2015 - Feb 2021

Senior Lead UX Designer

- Spearheaded UX strategy, aligning product design with growth goals and lifting customer satisfaction +15%.
- Translated user insights into solutions by integrating research with PM requirements, accelerating product evolution.
- Executed end-to-end user research, validating designs with real data and increasing adoption.
- Launched UX requirements framework, cutting rework and streamlining cross-team delivery.

Blackboard

Nov 2007 - Jan 2015

Design Strategist

- Shaped long-term vision for cross-platform education technology as part of UX leadership team.
- Drove design strategy across cloud applications, delivering consistent, intuitive experiences for students and instructors.
- Influenced product roadmap by embedding design priorities from feature inception through launch.
- Championed accessibility standards, enhancing usability for diverse learner populations across Blackboard's suite.

Xythos Software

Aug 2001 - Oct 2007

Manager, User Experience

- Owned UX for server and client content management applications as sole designer, shaping interfaces for admins and end-users.
- Designed and prototyped UI, authored functional specs, and partnered with PM to deliver feature-complete solutions.
- Maintained technical documentation, ensuring help content aligned with design and functionality.
- Drove adoption across enterprise and higher-ed clients through intuitive designs for both novice and expert users.