

# Nathan Forness

Business Value Design  
User Experience Strategy  
Operational Leadership

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## Education:

- BFA, Fine Arts & Design, University of Missouri – Columbia, MO
- MIT Sloan Business School | MIT's Design Thinking: Product and Service Design

## Certifications & Training:

- 24 Interaction Design Foundation certifications in AI, UX, User Research, and Design Leadership
- IBM Design Thinking Practitioner
- Bayer E.S.P. Leadership Training
- New Balance Senior Leadership Program (1 year)
- Stadia Ventures Sports Accelerator Advisor
- InsideOut | Design Leadership Member

## Leadership & Transformation:

- Data-Driven Decisions
- Problem Solving
- Creativity Coaching
- Product Design Leadership
- Co-Creation & Collaboration
- Communication
- Product Development
- Innovation / Design Thinking
- Design Systems Leadership

## UX & Research Strategy:

- Journey Mapping, Blueprinting, & Service Design
- Human-Centered Design
- Rapid Prototyping & Validation
- Web and Mobile Design
- User Research
- Usability Testing

## Tools:

- Figma
- Adobe Creative
- Suite MS 365 Suite
- Mural, Miro, FigJam
- Qualtrics, ReCollective, UserZoom

## Design Studio Lead, Manager | Bayer

St. Louis | April 2020 - Present

As the Bayer's Design Studio Lead across Pharma, Crop Science, Consumer Health & Finance divisions, I drive product innovation and UX strategic leadership, focusing on enhancing user experience and delivering measurable outcomes.

### Product innovation and strategic leadership:

- **Co-Creation and Restructuring:** Led the discovery process to identify pain points, restructuring the studio with seasoned design strategists, user researchers, and UX/visual designers to enhance collaboration and output.
- **Deliverable Excellence:** Ensured top-quality deliverables for R&D and customer product teams, consistently meeting strict outcomes.
- **Budget Management:** Oversaw a budget of over \$5 million annually, optimizing resource demand through strategic internal investments.
- **Global Customer Experience:** Enabled end-to-end discovery of customer experiences for a \$350M investment plan, validating capabilities and blueprinting services to drive ROI.
- **Objectives & Key Results (OKRs):** Led a working group of technology VPs to define and align the organization's OKRs with business goals, ensuring strategic coherence.
- **Enterprise Design System Management:** Managed the transition of Bayer's enterprise design system to a unified Figma stack, supporting 300+ designers globally and achieving \$2 million in savings by streamlining workflows.
- **Accessibility Champion:** Advocated for internal and external accessibility standards to enhance employee and customer experiences. Implemented software and expert to assess functional compliance for end-users.

### Design & research operations direction across Bayer:

- **AI Creative Council:** Established the AI Creative Council to define the design tool stack for impactful Gen AI experiences, setting enterprise-wide standards.
- **Team Management:** Hired, onboarded, and managed all design and research team members, fostering a culture of growth and collaboration. Grow studio team from 4 to 16 in three years based on successful outcomes and increased demand. Established a separate five-person team for our Bio Science division making way for a new design lead role.
- **Global Design Community of Practice:** Founded a Design Community of Practice & Center of Excellence, providing training, coaching, and mentoring for design-minded stakeholders across the organization. Drove support initiatives by establishing communities of practice, enhancing collaboration among design professionals.
- **Designer Onboarding Experience:** Led the development of a top-tier global onboarding experience for remote employees, ensuring a seamless transition into the organization.
- **Design Thinking Framework:** Defined the organization's design thinking approach and created essential resources, including a design research toolkit, journey mapping framework, and persona library.
- **Career Development:** Built job profiles and career paths for design team members, encompassing design, research, and strategy roles that previously didn't exist in our global organization. Plus, my unique innovation designer mentorship.
- **Intern Program Launch:** Initiated Bayer's first UX intern program, fostering new talent in the design field.

## Senior Design Strategist | Edward Jones

St. Louis | Nov 2019 - April 2020

This was a temporary role as a principal innovation designer while I searched for my next leadership role. Led design strategy for a new business segmentation cohort, employing IBM's design thinking.

- Visualized end-to-end experiences for potential high-value clients through new service creation, experiential prospecting, turn-key enrollment, and asset transfer.

## Director, UX & CX Product Owner | Scrubs & Beyond LLC

St. Louis | Jan 2018 - Sept 2019

Led the e-commerce digital experience for [scrubsandbeyond.com](https://scrubsandbeyond.com) with a focus on optimizing the purchase funnel, enhancing site retention, and increasing conversion rates.

- **Website Redesign:** Spearheaded a complete redesign of [scrubsandbeyond.com](https://scrubsandbeyond.com), achieving a 12% increase in conversion rates within the first month post-launch, significantly boosting sales performance.
- **Brand Experience Overhaul:** Conducted comprehensive remote and in-person UX studies to define a strategic brand experience, resulting in an improved SEO score from 43 to 91. This enhancement drove increased visibility and conversion through meticulous data and funnel analysis.
- **CMS Implementation:** Successfully implemented a new Content Management System (CMS) that hosted product profiles and imagery, facilitating more intuitive product categorization and enhancing the accuracy of the recommendation engine. This initiative streamlined user navigation and improved overall customer satisfaction.
- **Product Customization Redesign:** Redesigned the product customization experience, leading to an 18% increase in purchases. This improvement not only enhanced user engagement but also contributed to higher average order values.

## Senior Manager, Digital Experience Innovation | New Balance Athletics, Inc.

St. Louis | Oct 2012 - Jan 2018

As UX director for [NewBalance.com](https://NewBalance.com), I led the global digital e-commerce strategy, focusing on budget management, workflow optimization, and enhancing customer experiences.

### *Strategic leadership and ROI*

- **Experience-Driven Conversions:** Pioneered initiatives that generated \$100 million annually in experience-driven conversions, significantly impacting overall sales performance.
- **Apparel Sales Growth:** Achieved a remarkable 400% growth in apparel sales within a single quarter by implementing dynamic user experiences that captivated and engaged customers.
- **Custom Shoe Business Expansion:** Drove a 250% increase in the lifestyle/sports custom shoe segment by enhancing both online and in-store customization experiences, effectively bridging the gap between digital and physical retail.

### *Innovative Digital Touchpoints*

- **Future Store Concepts:** Created experimental global future stores featuring virtual interactions with Olympic athletes, elevating brand engagement and customer interaction.
- **Digital Product Development:** Conceptualized and executed innovative digital sports products, such as the NB smartwatch, and established strategic partnerships that expanded the brand's digital footprint.
- **Athlete Marketing Experiences:** Developed personalized marketing experiences for NB athletes through dedicated websites and apparel collaborations, enhancing brand loyalty and advocacy.
- **Digital Transformation of Team Sports:** Successfully digitized the NB Team Sports division, transforming an analog store into a virtual platform and achieving sales growth from \$300,000 to 3 million in the launch year.

### *Recognition*

- **Leadership Program Selection:** Selected for the exclusive New Balance Signature Leadership Program, reflecting my commitment to innovation and excellence in the brand's digital strategy. Recognized as "team of the quarter" member nine times.

## Digital Creative Director | Momentum Worldwide

St. Louis | January 2000 - August 2012

I transitioned from graphic design to leading the delivery of high-impact marketing strategies across various domains, including experiential, industrial, digital, customer research, and global brand management.

### *Strategic Leadership and Revenue Growth*

- **Global Brand Management:** Managed marketing teams for major global brands, including Nikon, AB InBev, Microsoft & Xbox, SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, and the Coca-Cola Company, ensuring alignment with brand goals and delivering exceptional results.
- **Microsoft Expansion:** Successfully grew a \$300,000 project to a 9 million annual relationship. This achievement demonstrated my ability to foster strong client relationships and drive substantial revenue growth.
- **Leadership Program Participation:** Selected to attend the prestigious McCann World Group Leadership Series, enhancing my leadership skills and strategic thinking capabilities.