

Elizabeth Hafner

Design Strategist

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Professional Profile

Leveraging over a decade of experience blending interior design, user research, and project management, I have driven measurable improvements in design efficiency and user experience across diverse industries. By synthesizing qualitative insights and quantitative data, I've optimized space utilization, integrated innovative technology, and maintained code-compliant design solutions. Skilled in visual storytelling and cross-functional collaboration, I translate complex design challenges into actionable strategic goals that align with organizations' priorities while fostering agile, human-centered design solutions.

Key Skills

Workplace strategy · Workplace interior design · Project management · User research · Client advocacy · Research + data analysis · Empathy + data-driven design · Design strategy · Deep listening + observation · Detail-oriented execution · Strategic problem-solving · Design guidelines + standards · Process improvement · Team player · Visual storytelling · Clear written + visual communication · Mentoring and coaching · Drawing QA & QC · Construction Administration · Accessibility standards · Building codes · AutoCAD · Revit · Bluebeam · Adobe Creative Suite · Google Workspace · Slack · Miro · Figma

Career Summary

- Designer + User Researcher** · Freelance Consultant · Remote 2021 - Present
- Through strategic design decisions and clear pricing plans, constructed a functional environment that enriched client experience by 15% and aligned with the company's long-term growth objectives while meeting expedited 4-week schedule.
 - Conducted client satisfaction surveys and workplace observations to identify areas for improvement, developing in a 20% boost in employee productivity and a 10% increase in client referrals and satisfaction ratings.
 - Conducted heuristic evaluation and data analysis of an NPO's website, identifying critical pain points that informed a complete redesign. This effort improved user flows and boosted donation conversions, surpassing fundraising goals and benefiting over 200 women.
- UX/UI Design Teaching Assistant** · University of California – Berkeley · San Francisco, CA 2021 - 2023
- Supported a 6-month online UX/UI Design boot camp for 40+ students by delivering tailored feedback that strengthened design skills and job readiness. Developed 3 focused activities to address imposter syndrome, contributing to a boost in student confidence and job search effectiveness.
 - Developed and delivered tutorials on leveraging data analytics for user research, empowering students to effectively analyze and apply data insights to their UX/UI design processes.
- Interior Designer** · Unispace · San Francisco, CA 2020 - 2020
- Redesigned office layout to augment staffing capacity by 8% and incorporate 4 new amenity spaces within existing square footage, enabling the client to meet increased headcount goals on schedule and boosting overall client satisfaction.
 - Utilized evidence-based data to create detailed annotated plans for 5 clients to implement COVID-19 safety measures, resulting in a smooth office re-entry process and generating \$30,000 in follow-up consultation revenue.
- Project Manager** · HOK · San Francisco, CA 2019 - 2019
- Facilitated the strategic planning for an energy company's lab renovation, engaging 4 key stakeholders to gather user requirements, conducting comprehensive code-compliance research that uncovered over 10 violations, and establishing a minimum scope of work that decreased projected costs by 6%.

- Oversaw a portfolio of 30+ capital improvement projects across 12 buildings, successfully renovating 20 meeting rooms by standardizing AV/VC systems, resulting in improved communication and collaboration across locations.

Job Captain · IA Interior Architects · Seattle, WA

2015 - 2018

- Launched a project tracking system that sharpened workflow efficiency, allowing for the simultaneous handling of multiple design phases across 5 different projects without compromising quality.
- Mentored 5 junior designers, cultivating critical design-thinking and application skills, which minimized repetitive corrections and boosted project efficiency. This yielded saved billable hours, improved staffing projections by aligning designers' strengths with project needs, and streamlined project timelines and costs, ultimately enhancing long-term project outcomes.
- Led 5 collaborative workshops with stakeholders, capturing insights from 3 key contributors, leading to a 5% improvement in project alignment with client vision and a reduction in design revisions by 10%.
- Developed and executed a 4-phased buildout plan within 3 days for client's new full-floor office expansion, securing permits in 1 week for phase 1, meeting the tight 45-day deadline for 125 new hires. This enabled timely occupancy, saving the client from costly temporary solutions and strengthening the long-term client relationship while maintaining access to building core functions during future phase buildouts.
- Managed the implementation of roll-out program for a new financial food service concept, coordinating with cross-functional teams to ensure timely execution of 2 locations within 12 months.
- Led a cross-functional team to create visual storytelling presentations that effectively communicated design concepts, increasing client approvals by 25% and decreasing project revisions.

Senior Interior Designer and Project Manager · Collective Architecture · Washington, DC

2010 - 2015

- Led evidence-based research to assess client's 90k sf headquarters, uncovering inefficiencies and proposing strategic departmental adjacencies. Created a new workplace strategy through a detailed programming plan and blocking diagram optimizing space by 35%, increasing headcount by 45 seats, and improving overall daily workflow, resulting in better use of facilities and positioning the firm as a trusted partner for ongoing and future work.
- Utilized visual storytelling to present data-driven design solutions to 3 senior executives, clarifying project impacts, aligning with current and future needs, and securing stakeholder engagement. This initiative expanded project scope and increased revenue by 15%, enhancing the firm's reputation for client-focused service.
- Streamlined the due diligence review process by organizing cross-discipline site visits and implementing a standardized checklist, resulting in an average 30% increase in efficiency and enhancing the clarity of information presented during Project Kick-Off meetings.
- Implemented a streamlined presentation process for test fits that reduced approval times by 25%, while maintaining adherence to design standards and program specifications, significantly improving project timelines.
- Collaborated with cross-functional teams to establish new service delivery guidelines that enhanced operational efficiency, leading to a 15% increase in client satisfaction while safeguarding the company against budget overruns.
- Created and facilitated monthly training workshops for a team of 35+ designers on drawing templates and standards, resulting in a 35% reduction in drawing corrections and an 80% decrease in revisions, which contributed to a 15% increase in client satisfaction and enhanced project delivery efficiency.
- Successfully led the recruitment and hiring process of over 10 junior designers, resulting in a 30% increase in project efficiency and a 45% improvement in repeat clients.

Education

University of California-Berkeley | UX/UI Design Boot Camp Certificate

Remote

Cornell University | Project Management Certificate

Remote

The George Washington University | Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA)

Interior Design

Washington, DC