Tony Phillips

Product Design Leader & Executive

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Locations: **Remote in VA or Remote/Hybrid roles in CO, WA, OR, CA**

Summary

Design executive with **22+ years** of experience - leading product design orgs at the intersection of **AI, SaaS,** and **enterprise technology**. Built **three high-performing design organizations** from the ground up — growing teams from **0 to 7+**, establishing research and design ops practices, and shipping products that have driven measurable revenue growth. Known for translating complex product challenges into **clear design strategy** using refined design-research processes, **advancing human-centered AI practices**, and **building the cultures** that make great design possible.

Selected Achievements

- **Strategic Leadership:** Shipped two flagship products at Ozmo — **Conversational AI Support-Assistant** *(400%+ sustained daily conversations)* and **Remote Video Support** *(300% agent engagement lift)* — contributing to **$14.7M ARR** and opening **net-new revenue verticals**.

- **Leadership Outcomes:** Scaled design organizations from **0 to 7+** at three separate companies, building **research, design ops,** and **AI-focused capabilities** from scratch each time. Established cross-functional partnerships with Product and Engineering leadership at every org to embed design thinking into roadmap and strategy decisions.

- **Blockchain Innovation:** Directed UX for Voice (social platform), crypto exchanges and wallets at Block.one, shaping user interactions in decentralized ecosystems.

- **Thought Leadership:** Publish and opine regularly on AI and design ethics, influencing industry conversation on human-centered AI.

- **Operational & Cultural Leadership**: Managed org budget and CX metric tracking while building an inclusive, accessibility-forward team culture — reflected in near-zero voluntary attrition across a 5-year tenure. Encouraged and facilitated learning opportunities focused on emerging tech.

- **Discovery-Driven Impact:** Established a discovery-to-delivery research practice at Ozmo that produced **15+ strategic discovery efforts**, directly informing **20+ shipped features** and **reducing research cycle time by 66%**.

Education

- **MFA, Human-Computer Interaction** – Savannah College of Art & Design

- **BFA, Graphic Design & Multimedia** – Virginia Tech

Professional Experience

OZMO

Director of Product Design - *Ozmo*

2020 - Present
Industry Focus: **SaaS, Enterprise Tech Support, CX, Workflow Automation**

- **Founded Ozmo's design org from scratch, growing from 0 to 5** - building research, design ops, and product design capabilities that drove a **300% increase in agent engagement** across support tools. Design team observed a **near-zero voluntary attrition rate**.

- Launched **15+ research-driven** features *(Remote Video, Co-browsing, Conversational AI assistant, personalized troubleshooting)* that directly improved retention and unlocked new revenue streams in completely new verticals with ongoing expansion.

- Established **design-led, User-Centered Innovation and Discovery practices** used company-wide, aligning product vision with customer needs and accelerating delivery timelines. Reduced typical research time **by 66%** through refinement of the Design Research practice.

- Partnered with Product, Engineering, and Customer Success leadership to embed design strategy into executive roadmap planning — contributing to **year-over-year revenue growth** and **shaping company-wide innovation priorities**.

Product Design Manager - *Block.one* (now Bullish)

2018 – 2020
Industry Focus: **Blockchain, Fintech, Social Media, Startup**

- Led UX across three simultaneous product lines — **Voice** *(social platform)*, **Bullish** *(crypto exchange)*, and **Wallet apps** — while managing a team **scaling to 7** during **hypergrowth to 400+** employees.
- Championed **design systems built from coded components**, reducing design-developer cycle time and ensuring consistency across blockchain products.
- Directed research into **identity verification, content moderation**, and **in-app economies** — translating novel blockchain UX challenges into usable, trustworthy experiences at a platform scale.
- Introduced **data-driven design practices** and user validation testing, improving usability metrics and reducing friction in crypto onboarding flows.

Director of Product Design - *Exadel*

2016 – 2018
Industry Focus: **Enterprise, Custom Software, App Development**

- Directed and scaled a **design org of 5**, folding UX engineering into design to **boost delivery speed and cross-functional alignment**.
- Introduced **product discovery** and **validation testing frameworks**, reducing project rework and **accelerating delivery timelines by 3+ weeks per project**.
- Delivered UX strategy and execution for native apps, enterprise solutions, and investor materials that **won new client contracts and increased retention**.
- Spearheaded global rebrand engaging with international stakeholders, modernizing brand and digital experience for international client portfolio.

Adjunct Professor - *Virginia Tech*

Various semesters, 2010–2025 – Taught courses in UX, HCI, Design Thinking, User Research, HTML, CSS

Advertising & Interactive Career *(Condensed)*

2003 – 2016

Senior Art Direction roles at **Motive, Proof,** and **Modea**, won pitches, led campaigns and interactive UX for clients including **Pepsi, Gatorade, Verizon, 3M, Chiquita, Mtn Dew** and more, building an early foundation in digital **interaction design, leadership, storytelling**.

Certifications, Workshops & Conferences

- **Claude Cowork for Design Leaders** - CDO Course 2026
- **Strategic UX & Design in an AI World -** Maven (Jared Spool, 2025)
- **How to Elevate the User Experience of AI with Design Patterns -** IxDF Master Class (Vitaly Friedman, 2025)
- **Conversation Design: Practical Tips for AI Design -** IxDF Master Class (Elaine Anzaldo, 2025)
- **Human-Centered Design for AI -** IxDF Master Class (Niwal Sheikh, 2025)
- **Designing for AI: New Techniques -** Rosenfeld Workshop (Dan Saffer, 2025)
- **Designing with AI 2025, Advancing Service Design 2025 -** Rosenfeld Conferences 2025

Skills & Core Competencies

- **AI & Strategy:** Conversational UX, Human-Centered AI, Generative AI, Predictive Interfaces, AI/ML, Applied AI
- **Design & Research:** UX Strategy, Usability Testing, Product Discovery, Design Systems, User Research, Prototyping, Accessibility (WCAG), Design Thinking, Agile/SCRUM, Data-Informed Design, Competitive Analysis
- **Leadership:** Design Leadership, Product Design Management, UX Management, Team Scaling, Mentorship, Cross-Functional Collaboration, Design Ops, Storytelling & Stakeholder Alignment, CX Strategy, Product Strategy
- **Tools & Technology:** Figma, Figjam, Adobe CC, HTML/CSS, Generative AI Tools, Blockchain/Web3, Mural, Claude, Claude Code, Notebook LM, Chat GPT, Perplexity, Gemini
- **Industries:** SaaS, Enterprise, Tech Support, Fintech, Blockchain, Advertising, Customer Experience (CX)