



Contact Information

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I am an experience **designer, strategist, educator, and entrepreneur**. I passionately create high performing teams that deliver innovative experiences to market using **design thinking, lean-agile, and business design** methodologies. As a facilitator, coach, mentor, and educator my intention is to support inclusive environments that empower all participants to contribute. Accomplishments include the launch of Walgreens' first Webby Award winning mobile apps as well as the establishment of design teams to support projects for **American Family Insurance, BMW, Esurance, Grainger, and Walgreens**. I am also an award-winning graphic designer.

My first design office, **Simple Interfaces**, was started from freelance work and grown to over a dozen designers working on multi-year \$1M+ projects for education clients and select not-for-profit organizations. It became the lead office for the Scott Foresman Reading Street program — a \$100m launch effort. In 2005, the education market was on the precipice of decline, so my focus was placed on the coming mobile device market. I quickly became a leader in designing and architecting mobile apps. **Walgreens** and **Grainger** provided me the opportunity to rapidly deliver these services to our clients. More recently, I have led lean-agile innovation projects for organizations including **American Family Insurance, BMW, and esurance**. My entrepreneurial efforts are continuous.

Innovative design efforts require high performance teams with the ability to influence business. My experience forging a path towards innovative results, across multiple industries is proven. Most recently, I stood up a 10-person, customer-focused experience design team at American Family Insurance. This team has grown to 20. As a principal design strategist, I now lead a smaller team in defining future insurance service experiences.

My goal is to grow as a practitioner, leader, mentor, educator, and entrepreneur. Lean/agile, design thinking, and business design processes are my tools for understanding people and their problems. Recent start-ups including **Betty**, and currently **Hitchhike**, allow me to experiment with business ideas.

Work History

American Family Insurance—*Principal Design Strategist/Team Lead* {3/2020–}

AmFam and Kforce recruited me as a Team Lead to stand up and operationalize a new customer-focused design organization within Marketing. My central goal was to empower our Digital Experience team to create great customer experiences. We were able to succeed under difficult circumstances including a decentralized organization and no dedicated designers. I also helped grow the Kforce engagement contract by 50%. My current role is intended to focus on strategic initiatives. We require visibility and influence in order to be most effective. I accomplished this goal by guiding a number of strategic efforts including the following:

- Future Multi-Channel Sales Experience (epics, capabilities, and designs)
- Build an innovation and UX roadmap and backlog in Targetprocess
- Implement an AmFam Design Thinking Playbook
- Facilitate workshops as part of the AmFam Design Thinking Guild
- Establish a strategy discipline within the Digital Experience team
- Guide and support the AmFam Enterprise Design System
- Envision an industry leading customer experience
- 2025 Vision and supporting storytelling videos
- Mobile North Star Strategy
- Create a monthly status reports for review between Kforce and AmFam Marketing leadership
- Create resourcing plans to staff designers and researchers across efforts
- Establish a design and research team in the new Covid-19 environment



BLDG 20 Innovation—*Managing Director* {1/2019–}

BLDG 20 is a holding company to support independent research, strategy, and design efforts with clients as well as for entrepreneurial efforts. The longer-term plan is for BLDG 20 to be a space for facilitating design thinking workshops and supporting entrepreneurial efforts. Recent work has included:

- Design Thinking support for the Center for Public Impact and Bloomberg Philanthropies on the 2021 Global Mayors Challenge (this is contractually confidential)
- Pro-bono research, prototyping, and experience design exploring the patient engagement for Heartland Health Centers
- Strategy workshops for leadership at Gogo
- Design Thinking workshops for Tyson Innovation Labs
- User research identifying opportunities in the rideshare space
- Retain director-level partners for project support

Betty—*Co-Founder* {10/2015–12/2019}

Betty empowered customers to receive beauty services in the home via a mobile app. From the initial insight that led to the business idea to the final tests to determine viability, I was instrumental in designing, strategizing, and testing the business assumptions. My project contributions included:

- Research and development of on-demand business models and business objectives
- Brand development, marketing design, and application design
- Development of progressive business design tests, including marketing, acquisition, engagement, repeat business, and service expectations
- Synthesis of research and learnings to support business model design
- Recruitment of technology, sales, and community support contributors

Vokal—*Experience Design Director* {10/2017–10/2018}

The opportunity to build an innovation-driven experience design and development offering was presented to the leadership at Vokal along with an implementation plan. The objective was to sell a Design Sprint model with development execution. Smaller organizations with similar capabilities were commonly purchased by Salesforce and similar companies. My work included:

- Development of a business design for Omron Health including investment models
- Structured design thinking to identify future opportunities for Chamberlain
- Presentations that highlighted capabilities to potential clients
- Contract/proposal development support
- Recruitment of designers and researchers

Manifest—*Experience Design Director* {5/2015–8/2016}

Manifest recruited me as a consultant to lead design sprints for BMW. I continued on as contributor to new business pitches, developer of design culture, and staff design director focused on large efforts. Much of the work was formative to my career. Work included:

- Agile transformation for esurance as split UX Lead and Product Manager
- Design sprint plans and client coaching that applied to agile methodologies
- AMC Theaters mobile app pitch presentation
- Design sprints with BMW using both agency and client staff
- Research prototypes for connected car technologies in BMW dealerships
- Incremental and cumulative readouts to BMW leadership in Munich
- Proposals for second phase of project
- Staffing plans for the growing BMW Technology design group



mind x motion—*Founder* {1/2012–12/2015}

Since studying design in Switzerland with Wolfgang Weingart, I dreamt of creating a tactile design tool. Plak was the app and the iPad offered a great platform for the concept. Efforts to support this project included:

- Design and prototyping of app in development code
- Launch of a Kickstarter campaign to support the project (unsuccessful)
- Creation of brand designs and campaign videos

Grainger—*Mobile Experience Design Manager* {8/2011–2/2014}

Grainger recruited me as a consultant to design new mobile products and services. After converting to a full-time manager, I grew the mobile design team to support multiple product lines and e-commerce platforms. Our research and ideation resulted in the building of an innovation practice as well as influenced the website redesign. This work included:

- Launch of their iPad app on the new Hybris platform
- Research and prototype design exploring customer e-commerce needs
- Development of a tightly integrated agile design development environment
- Project planning in both agile models and traditional PM tools to support staffing
- Design of iPhone, Android, and mobile web experiences across both Hybris and Broadvision e-commerce environments
- Recruitment and management of design team

Walgreens—*Mobile Experience Design Team Lead* {6/2010–4/2011}

Walgreens recruited me as a consultant to lead the design and development with an offshore group to rapidly bring their mobile apps to market. I hired design resources to support additional projects including an iPad app for pharmacists. Efforts included:

- Interaction design of the Walgreens iPad app including photo editing features
- Management and design of an iPad app for pharmacists
- Management of in-store display, kiosk, and mobile payment app designs
- Design of iPhone app and management of feature additions and updates
- Refill-by-Scan became 50% of all on-line refills in 3 months, and 85% in 6 months
- Recognition for Best Integrated Mobile Experience in Webby Awards for multiple years

Modoku—*Founder* {1/2009–12/2012}

Founded a mobile app startup which created a template-based native app design and deployment system targeting e-commerce, media, and publishing markets. We launched multiple music experiences for labels such as Bloodshot Records, Minty Fresh Records, and Victory Records. The project included:

- Platform ideation and creation of deployment tools
- Prototypes designs to pitch to agency and external clients
- Project and marketing concepts sold to clients and partners
- Design and development of apps in code using platform tools
- A design-by-numbers tool-set for automating the app design process

Simple Interfaces—*Partner* {1/1995–5/2005}

Simple Interfaces began with my freelance design work, and my selling larger projects than anticipated. I recruited a business partner to support the effort and we rapidly built a solid reputation with the high-end of educational publishing. Our office was retained to work on high-profile projects for clients including Houghton Mifflin, Scott Foresman, McGraw-Hill, Pearson, Great Source Education, Harcourt/Harcourt Supplemental, Silver Burdett Ginn, Everyday Learning, and SRA. Products included books, packaging, interactive content, and websites.



I managed multi-year, seven-figure projects and was highly organized in project management, ensuring billable resources were compensated for across months and years. We grew the business from two to over a dozen design professionals. Simple Interfaces was the lead office on the 2005 Scott Foresman Reading Street program. At the conclusion of the project, it was apparent that the publishing landscape would change drastically. This inspired me to change my career path. Accomplishments included:

- Large-scale design and production efforts sold to most of the educational publishers
- Highly successful programs designed for top publishers
- Design of the Scott Foresman Science program; produced two grade levels
- Design of the New England Book Club winning Great Source American Government Program; large website production including assessments and quizzes
- Lead Design Office for the Scott Foresman Reading Street program
- Internationally sourced and produced packaging program for Pearson Education
- Print design for Rigby/Harcourt packaging

Lincoln Park Zoo—*Designer* {3/1993–6/1994 approx.}

My first full-time design job was at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago. It was a great experience. My future business partner was the Senior Designer. I worked many hours for low pay, and typical for me also freelanced and worked part time in a Kinkos. Just getting to the end of my resume makes me wistful. Some of the work I designed included:

- Redesign of all Membership publications
- Design of Annual Report
- Design of banners and environmental signage

Nicholas Paredes Design—*Principal Consultant* {1/1992–}

My expertise is to identify design business opportunities and act to achieve the goals set by my clients and partners. Throughout my career, award winning work across multiple disciplines and business sectors has been accomplished. This work continues as we head into a new epoch of artificial intelligence, sustainability, and inclusion. Some of my accomplishments are as follows:

- Branding and website for Connect Search
- Branding and collateral for Correlation One
- Design research and prototyping for Northern Trust Innovation Labs
- Asset repository design for Underwriters Labs (agency client)
- Receipt experiences for Sears IRL
- App research and design for Life Fitness
- Pharma sales app for Abbott (agency client)
- Chicago Art Journals for the University of Chicago
- Northwestern University Leadership Circle capital campaign collateral
- Grant Thornton women's recruiting book and communications collateral
- Adventure book and video packaging for Disney Vacation Club (agency client)
- Everyday Math prototypes for McGraw-Hill
- Joffrey Ballet Posters and Banners
- Children's Defense Fund promotional calendar
- Loyola Publishing ancillary materials
- Scott Foresman Reading program design (agency client)



Teaching & Coaching History

Institute of Design—*Adjunct Professor* {9/2020–}

This appointment is intended to create and teach an introductory class to support new masters students in beginning their journey at the Institute of Design. The class, an Introduction to Design Practice, combines design history with futures studies. Students are expected to identify topics of interest in design and project the future of design using STEEP factors. The class prepares students to initiate a reading practice, create strategies, develop design themes, and articulate engaging stories for possible futures.

Design for America—*Coach* {5/2016–}

As a coach, I support design thinking programs through Design for America. I also assist DFA staff in creating content for use in lectures and workshops. Most importantly, I coach student teams at major universities throughout the United States to apply the design thinking process to social challenges. Undergraduate and graduate student teams have supported projects for the Aspen Institute, the Feinberg School of Medicine, Rush Medical College, the Watson Foundation, and most recently the YMCA.

CEDIM—*Visiting Professor* {1/2017–3/2020}

I supported the CIDT program at CEDIM in Monterrey and Mexico City as a Visiting Professor. The program is divided into four modules—Strategy, Research, Ideation, and Prototyping. My primary focus was on Module 4: Prototyping, but had also taught Module 2: Research. Community lectures were provided to support the school and its programs.

University of Chicago—*Lecturer* {9/2017–12/2018}

These appointments supported a new User Experience class in the University of Chicago's cross-curricular Masters Program in Computer Science (MPCS). My approach was to provide a full breadth of the design process from research and problem identification, through sprint planning and implementation. Outcomes included communicating the reasons for design decisions, communicating the design impacts, and managing the entire design process.

Academic Background

I studied at the **Institute of Design** at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago from 1987 through 1991. Interests included product design, information design, and interaction design. Later, I attended the Advanced Workshops at the **Basel School of Design** in Switzerland from 2004 through 2012. In 2015, I graduated from the Master of Product Design and Development Management (MPD2) program in the **Segal Design Institute** at Northwestern University. Measuring design outcomes is being considered for a potential PhD. topic. My topic proposal is currently being reviewed.

Public Speaking

I spoke at the 2016 IDSA Midwest Design Conference on the topic of Connected Experiences. I have also hosted the Connected Experiences Meetup in Chicago.

Personal Interests

Cooking and gardening is a passion. Some have referred to me as “the paella guy.” My paella is made over a fire pit in a 32 inch steel pan. I am a certified yoga instructor and an Illinois Master Gardener. Music, travel, photography, art, and trying to learn classical guitar occupies my time outside of work. I always have a project to work on!