

# Sean Johnson — Principal Product Designer (AI-Native)

Portfolio: [seanjohnson.uk](http://seanjohnson.uk) | LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/seanjohnsonuk](https://www.linkedin.com/in/seanjohnsonuk) | Email: [hello@seanjohnson.uk](mailto:hello@seanjohnson.uk)

---

## Professional Summary

Principal product designer and AI-native practitioner with 25+ years across agencies, startups and enterprise. I work end-to-end across discovery, definition and design, delivering measurable user and business outcomes in complex and regulated product environments. I bring genuine AI fluency and design taste across the full design process, applying agentic experience design (AX) and AI-assisted workflows to solve problems faster, with greater depth and less friction than traditional approaches alone. I operate as a player-coach, shaping design strategy and aligning stakeholders at senior level, while staying close to the work to drive quality execution. I thrive in cross-functional collaboration with product, engineering and business teams across SaaS, B2B and B2C.

---

## Skills

### Product Design & AI:

AI-Powered Product Design, Agentic Experience (AX) Design, Human-AI Interaction, Design Taste, Prompt Engineering, Rapid Prototyping for Complex Interactions and Data-Heavy Logic, UI & Visual Design, Accessibility (A11y, WCAG 2.2)

**Preferred Stack:** Figma (Advanced), Claude Code, Paper, Cursor, Framer, Github, Vercel

**Continuous Evaluation:** Codex, ChatGPT, Google AI Studio, Replit, v0

### Research & Strategy:

Product Strategy and Vision, Product Discovery, Problem Framing, Opportunity Mapping, Generative User Research, User Interviews, Moderated Usability Testing, Research Synthesis, Experience and Journey Mapping, Service Blueprinting, Information Architecture (IA)

**Stack:** Claude, Perplexity, Gemini, Userlytics, Maze, Optimal Workshop, UserTesting, Miro, Figjam

### Design Systems & Governance:

Enterprise Design System Architecture, Token Structuring, Figma Variables to Code Token Alignment, Component Libraries, Scalable Design Patterns, Documentation, Multi-Team Adoption, Contribution and Governance Models

**Stack:** Figma, Token Studio, Zeroheight, Storybook, Supernova

### Design Leadership:

Player-Coach Delivery, Stakeholder and Executive Alignment, DesignOps, Process Improvement, Workshop Facilitation, Cross-Functional Collaboration, Agile and Dual-Track Delivery, Mentoring, Hiring, Competency Frameworks, Structured Critique

**Certified Facilitator:** AI Design Sprints™ | Workshopper™ Master | Design Sprints 2.0

---

## Experience

### Principal Product Designer & AI Facilitator – Sprints Ahead | Nov 2025 - Present

Independent practice spanning AI-native product design and AI Design Sprint facilitation.

Fractional and contract engagements with start-ups, scale-ups, in-house product teams and agencies.

- Facilitated design sprint to identify opportunities for a residents' self-service app, built fully functional AI-powered prototype in 1 day, validated with residents, **opened up a £1.4m programme of work**
- Auditing and restructuring client design systems for AI readiness: Figma variables, component architecture and layer naming optimised for AI coding agents, via Figma MCP
- Facilitating structured workshops that move teams from AI anxiety to AI fluency fast
- Designing and building AI-powered lead generation triage and conversion funnels for marketing websites

### Experience Design Lead – MMT Digital / MSQ | Feb 2020 - Oct 2025

- Led design initiatives across multiple concurrent projects, from research and strategy through to delivery
- Built the Digital Experience Accelerator (DXA): a paired Figma UI kit and React component library with full design token parity and WCAG 2.2 AA compliance embedded from the ground up, **cutting project spin-up time by approximately 75%**
- Defined governance and contribution models for enterprise scale design systems with multi-team adoption
- Scaled rapid UX audits as a new-business entry point, converting them into larger transformation engagements
- Grew and mentored a design team from 3 to 8, introducing competency frameworks, playbooks and structured critique

**Clients:** Vodafone, Cancer Research UK, Royal British Legion, CFA Institute, Translink, Elanco

## UX / Product Design Lead (Freelance) | Feb 2010 – Jan 2020

10 years of IC design and design leadership. Discovery, definition and design across agencies, startups and enterprise.

### Selected engagements:

#### *Fractional Head of Design - B2B SaaS Startup (NDA) | 2019*

- Established design function from scratch; hired and grew team from 0 to 6 covering UX, UI, and content design
- Created 5-level competency framework to assess design maturity and structure hiring

#### *UX Lead - Smart Pension / Legal & General | 2018-19*

- Smart Retire™: designed end-to-end service blueprint, stakeholder workshops, task flows, wireframes, prototypes, UI and usability testing. **Winner of Retirement Innovation of the Year, Professional Pensions Awards 2019**
- Legal & General pension drawdown app: mapped existing paper-based regulatory journey, then designed the full digital-only flow; managed dual stakeholder structure (Smart Pension and L&G simultaneously), and compliance liaison

#### *UX Lead - Possible (WPP) / HSBC | 2017*

- Led UX research and design for an **award-winning e-learning platform** and **HSBC FutureFocus** pension information platform
- Heuristic evaluation and UX audit for **Canon Pro** website redesign

#### *Lead UX / Service Designer – Shelter | 2016*

- **38% increase in donations** from redesigned online donations journey

*Clients: HSBC, Canon Europe, Volkswagen, Seat, Skoda Cycling, Unilever, Specsavers, Nutmeg, Hublot*

*Agencies: Tribal Worldwide DDB, Possible, Huge Inc, Hugo & Cat, Golin*

## Head of Design — E4education | Sep 2005 – Jan 2010

- Scaled design studio from 2 to 15 during four years of rapid business growth in the education sector
- Introduced UX methods to the design process and embedded a user-focused culture across the business
- Line management, hiring, coaching and mentoring

## Early Career — Various | 2000 – 2005

Various web designer and front-end developer roles across agencies and in-house teams, building the technical foundation that underpins my design practice.

---

## Certifications & Education

Certified Workshopper™ Master | AJ&Smart (2026)

Certified AI Design Sprints™ facilitator | 33a (2025)

Certified Design Sprint 2.0 facilitator | AJ&Smart & Jake Knapp, creator of GV design sprints (2018)

BTEC National Diploma in Graphic Design and Visual Communications

---

## Testimonial

“A difficult brief, a complex domain and the client stakeholders weren’t well aligned. Sean excelled in the role. He communicates at the right level for the room. With execs he’s clear, direct and commercial. With the team he’s a coach. That range is rare.”

~ **Dr Harry Brignull, Head of Innovation, Smart Pension**