RICHARD ALVAREZ

AUX Strategy & Design Leader | AI-First Experience Design | Agentic Experience & Intelligent Design Systems
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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

AUX strategy and design leader with 25+ years helping organizations design digital products people trust and use. Lead a global practice of 30+ strategists, researchers, and designers delivering AI-first experience design: structured AI adoption, intelligent design systems that both people and AI agents can follow, and multi-agent workflows that move work from discovery to production code faster without giving up design judgment. Trusted partner to senior client and executive stakeholders across life sciences, financial services, and commerce. Track record of building design practices from the ground up, growing revenue, and coaching multidisciplinary teams across the U.S., India, and Europe.

CORE COMPETENCIES

AI-First Experience Strategy • Agentic Experience (AX) Design • Intelligent Design Systems • Multi-Agent Design Workflows • Design-to-Code Delivery (Figma to React) • Structured AI Adoption • Experience Design Strategy • Service Design & Journey Mapping • Design Research • Digital Product Strategy & Roadmaps • Executive Stakeholder Alignment & Readouts • Global Practice Leadership & Mentorship • Proposals, Solution Shaping & Practice Growth

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

AUX Strategy & Design Service Line Director

Apexon | Chicago, IL | 2021 - Present

- Lead the AUX Strategy & Design service line and set its AI-first direction across Agentic Experience (AX) design, Intelligent Design Systems, and human-centered strategy. Grew the practice from a single practitioner to a global team of 30+ across the U.S., India, England, and Ireland, with a portfolio of nearly $5M in annual revenue.
- Lead client-facing experience strategy engagements for life sciences and enterprise clients including IQVIA and Johnson & Johnson, translating user insight and business questions into executive recommendations, design strategies, and product roadmaps.
- Served as engagement and UX lead for a leading global pharmaceutical company's clinical supply control tower, consolidating multiple supply chain tools into one platform alongside AWS Professional Services and the client's business, data, and subject matter experts.
- On that engagement, built an intelligent design system in React for both people and AI agents, and a multi-agent design workflow connected through MCP that cut a product design cycle from four weeks to just over one week; first release launched.
- Scale AI-first delivery with custom agents and structured, tool-agnostic AI adoption, connecting design to production through client React environments and a shared Figma library. Sponsored the same approach for Apexon's own applications, previewed to Apexon's president and senior leadership.
- Grow the practice through proposals, solution shaping, and thought leadership, including Faster Together, a five-part series on AI-accelerated product design, while coaching practitioners across a distributed team.

UX Research & Design Practice Manager

Saggezza (acquired by Apexon) | Chicago, IL | 2016 - 2021

- Established human-centered design practices across the organization, improving cross-functional collaboration and delivery maturity.
- Built a global UX team from the ground up, including hiring, vision and strategy, onboarding frameworks, and mentorship programs.
- Secured and led a $5M+ enterprise financial services UX engagement, translating executive vision into a scalable product and experience strategy.
- Led design research, journey mapping, and concepting work, presenting recommendations to executive stakeholders.

Director of Interactive Experiences

Method Engine | Chicago, IL | 2005 - 2015

- Directed strategy, design, and delivery of enterprise digital experiences and web platforms for national brands.

- Led creative and technical delivery of Lincoln Center's 50th Anniversary digital experience.
- Served as digital agency lead for Thermos, directing long-term digital strategy and product initiatives.

Lecturer, New Media

Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University | Evanston, IL | 2001 - 2016

- Developed and taught graduate courses in interactive media, digital storytelling, and emerging digital platforms.
- Mentored graduate students in multimedia journalism and digital product innovation.

AI-FIRST INNOVATION & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

- **Intelligent Design Systems (IDS):** Positioned AI-ready design systems as the engine of AI-first delivery, giving designers and AI agents shared guardrails through structured components, tokens, and written rules.
- **Agentic Experience (AX) Methodology:** Developed the practice approach for designing human oversight, trust, and transparency into AI-native products.
- **Faster Together Series:** Authored a five-part series on AI-accelerated product design covering design cycle compression, AI-readable design systems, multi-agent workflows, and the human bottlenecks that speed exposes.
- **Innovation Collaboration Framework:** Created a structured co-creation model enabling design, commercial, and technology stakeholders to align quickly on product direction.
- **Persona-Led AI Design Methodology:** Introduced a narrative-driven approach to AI-assisted product development in partnership with AWS.

SKILLS & TOOLS

Methods: AI-First Experience Design, Agentic Experience Design, Intelligent Design Systems, Multi-Agent Design Workflows, Experience Design Strategy, Service Design, Human-Centered Design, Design Research, Journey Mapping, Service Blueprinting, Design Thinking, Lean UX, Agile Product Development, Digital Transformation.

Tools: Figma, Figma Make, Miro, Mural, Adobe Creative Cloud, React (design-to-code), custom AI agents connected through MCP, generative AI tools for research and design, HTML, CSS, JavaScript

EDUCATION & LANGUAGES

- Bachelor of Arts, Communications, DePaul University.
- Languages: English (Native), Spanish (Fluent), Portuguese (Conversational).