

TESSA Z FISH

ABOUT ME

Empathetic design leader with 10+ years building and guiding multidisciplinary teams that turn complexity into clarity. I bring together product, engineering, and content partners to co-create experiences that serve real people and deliver measurable business outcomes. My approach balances curiosity, rigor, and humanity – leading through listening, mentoring through trust, and designing through collaboration.

CONTACT

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LOCATION

North SF Bay & Sonoma County

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LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

- **Scaled global design orgs** (Pearson, Vonage, TokBox) across research, product, content, and systems – cultivating psychologically safe, feedback-driven cultures.
- **Unified fragmented experiences** into cohesive design systems meeting accessibility and brand standards, improving efficiency and consistency.
- **Balanced user empathy and business outcomes**, transforming insights into strategy that increased engagement, conversion, and retention.
- **Mentored and developed designers** through structured growth frameworks, coaching, and cross-disciplinary collaboration.
- **Built trust across functions** by communicating design intent through storytelling, evidence, and shared understanding.

EDUCATION

ACADEMY OF ART UNIVERSITY

Masters of Art, Digital Design,
& Graphic Design, 2017

UC SANTA CRUZ

Bachelor of American Studies, 2005

WORK EXPERIENCE

PRINCIPAL EXPERIENCE DESIGNER

BRIGHT & EARLY DESIGN

2023 - 2025 • SONOMA COUNTY

- Self-employed running a design consultancy serving startups, small businesses, and nonprofits seeking user-centered digital presence.
- Designed, launched websites, mobile apps, and brand systems and connected clients authentically with their audiences via digital experiences reflecting their mission & values.
- Led end-to-end UX and brand strategy engagements from research through high-fidelity design and development.
- Balanced multiple client projects while maintaining craft quality, strategic thinking, and on-time delivery.

SKILLS

LEADERSHIP & CULTURE

- Design Strategy
- Mentorship
- Team Building
- Feedback Culture
- Cross-Functional Alignment

EXPERIENCE DESIGN

- Human-Centered Design
- Interaction & UI Design
- Prototyping
- Accessibility
- Design Systems

RESEARCH & INSIGHT

- User Interviews
- Customer Journeys
- Quant & Qual Analysis
- Persona Development

OPERATIONS & TOOLS

- Process Definition
- Design Operations Management
- Current Design Tools
- Agile Collaboration
- Storytelling & Marketing

GROWTH

RECOGNITION

- RTC UX Hackathon Win 2019
- Scribd Best 50 websites 2017
- Merit Art Award, Seattle U 2014
- Bank of America Art Award 2001
- CCA Merit Award 2001

CONTINUING EDUCATION

- Leading Effective Teams Certificate
@ Columbia Business School
- UX Strategy & Research Coarse
- @ Center UIE
- UX VP Director Course @ NNG
- Front End Web Dev Course @ GA

SR DIRECTOR PRODUCT DESIGN

PEARSON EDU TECH

2021 - 2023 • SF, NJ & LONDON

- Led a large design organization spanning UX, Research, Content, and Systems Design collectively accountable for Digital Channels and eCommerce serving educators, students, and medical practitioners.
- Re-established an inclusive, collaborative team culture grounded in empathy, feedback, and learning.
- Delivered unified experiences across Pearson.com, Pearson Plus, and Clinical Assessments, improving usability and conversion for 4M+ users.
- Introduced rituals (critiques, retros, design reviews) that improved transparency, connection, and velocity.
- Partnered with Product & Engineering VPs to align design strategy with company OKRs and roadmap priorities.
- Scaled and governed Pearson's global design system, ensuring accessibility (AA/AAA) and brand cohesion.
- Collaboratively delivered high quality designs, content, and research insights generating \$330M+ in annual revenue.

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT DESIGN & RESEARCH

VONAGE BUSINESS TECH

2018 - 2020 • SF, NYC & LONDON

- Defined design and research strategy for enterprise communications platforms post-acquisition.
- Built Vonage's first global UX Research organization to amplify the customer's voice company-wide.
- Unified product design teams across time zones and cultures through shared principles of curiosity and respect.
- Collaborated closely with PM and Engineering leads to deliver cohesive B2B and API experiences used by 1M+ developers and administrators.
- Introduced design operations processes that improved quality and reduced delivery friction.

PRODUCT DESIGN & BRAND LEAD

TOKBOX & TELEFONICA

2014 - 2018 • SF & MADRID

- Led product, visual, and marketing design for a global real-time communications platform establishing UX Research practices and customer-driven personas informing company strategy.
- Elevated design from executional to strategic driving business outcomes while unifying team.
- Defined collaborative processes, managed design operations, and developed mentorship internship program.