Sarah Whinnem

Product design leader with 15+ years of experience turning complex systems into thoughtful, human-centered solutions. I bring deep expertise in user experience strategy, systems thinking, and collaboration – with a track record of shaping product direction, streamlining workflows, and scaling impact. I thrive on meaningful problems and enjoy challenges that demand both vision and execution.

Portfolio at madysondesigns.com · sarah@madysondesigns.com · New York, NY

Professional Experience

Freelance

Product Design Consultant/Sabbatical • 2023–Present
- Took a purposeful sabbatical to recharge, reflect on long-term goals, and provide design mentorship and strategic support to early-stage teams – now focused on rejoining a mission-driven team with fresh clarity and intent.

Flatiron Health

Lead Design Systems Manager • 2022–2023
- Shaped Flatiron's design systems strategy by creating, hiring, and leading the dedicated 3-person team supporting 40+ contributors and 20+ products.
- Led the shift from a grassroots effort to a funded team supporting internal tools, scaling consistency, efficiency, and design quality across the org.
- Collaborated closely with engineering and product stakeholders to define contribution models, governance, and long-term system evolution.

Lead Product Design Manager • 2018–2022
- Owned the product design function as an IC across multiple customer-facing teams, supporting products used by 4,200+ clinicians and 5M+ patients.
- Drove product direction and improved patient and provider experiences while managing 2–3 designers and mentoring across a 25+ person team.
- Shaped team vision, hiring strategy, and collaborative processes as the team scaled from 5 to 25+ designers.
- Led early design efforts as *Senior Product Designer*, driving strategic product improvements across core product areas.

Fundera

Principal Product Designer • 2017–2018
- Designed and launched Fundera's first dashboard experience for 20k small business owners, providing a central hub for managing financial tools and data.
- Created a scalable framework that enabled ongoing feature development and improved the long-term customer experience.

Betterment

Lead Product Designer • 2011–2017
- Founding designer at Betterment, growing design from early marketing work to full-stack product leadership across teams and platforms.
- Led key product expansions – including the advisor platform and 401k – while building the first design system to support rapid scale.
- Contributed to company growth from 12 to 200+ employees and scaled the customer base from ~10K to 250K+.
- Supported early-stage product, brand, and frontend growth through roles as *Senior Product Designer*, *Software Engineer*, and *Graphic Designer*.

Education

BFA, Graphic Design

American Intercontinental University · 2005
Concentration In Visual Communication & Digital Design

Core Skills

Strategy & Research
UX Research
Product Strategy
Service Design
Information Architecture

Product Design
Interaction Design
User Experience Design
Accessibility

Visual & Systems
UI Design
Design Systems
Prototyping (Figma & Code)
Brand & Print Design

Technical Collaboration
Agile Practices & Tooling
HTML/CSS/React Fluency
Responsive Design
Developer Handoff

Leadership & Management
DesignOps
Workshop Facilitation
Mentorship
Team Building

Outcomes & Impact
Data-Informed Design
Cross-Functional Partnership
Storytelling