KYLE PEPPERS

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GREATEST LESSONS

+ Living a curious life has taught me to treat ‘I don’t know’ as a start, not an end.
+ Leading teams for 10 years has taught me how much can be achieved through helping others shine.
+ Practicing human-centered design for 13 years has taught me to always ask ‘Who?’ first.
+ 10 years of capacity building taught me design teams create more impact as agents, not authorities.
+ Designing and facilitating innovation sprints for 10 years has taught me the impact of laughter and play.
+ Working remotely and asynchronously with teams for 11 years has taught me the value of trust.

CAREER LESSONS

DESIGN OPERATIONS LEAD
Steampunk
11.2024–Today

LESSONS: DESIGN OPERATIONS | CAPACITY BUILDING | AI-ASSISTED PROTOTYPING
Client: Federal Emergency Management Agency - Innovation Branch
About: A design-led federal technology company. Coaching delivery teams and building the tools that put Design Intelligence in their hands, so adoption grows and delivery improves.

+ Replaced a compliance check nobody trusted with DI SoundCheck, an enterprise-level, Cosmo-quiz-inspired assessment that gives teams an “album” of their delivery strengths and blind spots, and gives leadership its first honest read on delivery health. A deliberate change management plan landed it with 36 teams at 85% participation.
+ Built SoundCheck and its custom analysis tool with AI as my coding partner (I don’t code), then designed the rollout plan, turning raw survey data into coaching plans for project teams.
+ Coach project leadership and delivery teams to drop disciplinary silos and see themselves as unified systems; helping PMs, BAs, and discipline leads better recognize strategic impact opportunities.
+ Lead the FEMA Innovation project team to deliver a new service platform in less than 5 months by integrating super powers within the delivery team: including developers in design research, designers practicing Agile, and co-designing the experience with the client team.

SENIOR SERVICE DESIGNER
WeightWatchers
01.2023–08.2024

LESSONS: PROJECT LEADERSHIP | BUSINESS DESIGN | EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

+ Led a team to rescue a shelved community chat feature by reframing around member-driven support, designing a two-sided Coach-organized experience that scaled to 202K members, 1,200+ groups, and 2% sustained daily participation.
+ Pushed back on executive pressure to launch prematurely in order to run two market pilots that challenged assumptions about the Coach’s role, ultimately saving $1M+ in staff hours while designing an experience that better served both Coaches and members.
+ Designed and facilitated cross-functional workshops with executives and leads from across the organization, surfacing gaps between existing behavioral research and current member offerings; generated a year’s pipeline of experiments spanning new products, services, app features, and business models.
+ Functioned as an internal design consultant for the B2B team, using service blueprints and journey maps to reimagine insurance-funded memberships—balancing health regulations, business goals, operational realities, and member needs to deliver an operationalized future-state model.

CAREER LESSONS (cont.)

SR. SERVICE DESIGN LEAD
Steampunk
10.2020–12.2022

LESSONS: SERVICE DESIGN | TEAM LEADERSHIP | RESEARCH STRATEGY
Clients: United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Defense
About: Federal technology company fusing human-centered design with agile and DevSecOps delivery. Led service design, research, and cross-functional teams on modernization programs.

+ Second Steampunk team member on DCMA's modernization of its contract management system on Salesforce. Set the delivery plan, milestones, and managed subcontractor relations. Grew the team to 8, including the management of a service and UX/UI designer.
+ Introduced human-centered design to DCMA; establishing the research strategy spanning 8 IT and business teams with regular CIO briefings. One method, employees writing breakup letters to the system being retired, traveled all the way up to the commanding general.
+ Pulled the lead developer into discovery so he met users firsthand and I learned the platform's constraints. Surfaced a risk in the Salesforce contract that led the CIO to end it and keep Steampunk.
+ Led a team of 6 service designers and change managers on USCIS's immigrant application modernization. Found the system weeks from launch with no user research or change plan; pivoted to partner with 6 branches on change management, adoption research, and an in-platform feedback loop.

DESIGN + RESEARCH STRATEGIST
Curiosity Atlas
03.2015–10.2020

LESSONS: DESIGN STRATEGY | CURRICULA DESIGN | STRATEGIC DISRUPTION
Clients: Google, YouTube, Mozilla, Robinhood, Genentech, Princess Cruises, Oakland Public Library, ICI/Toyota Innovation Lab, Hannaford Grocery
About: A design firm that builds creative capacity through curiosity-driven experiences and training. Core partner on client programs, from strategy expeditions to a launched cruise experience.

+ Co-designed and led multi-day Curiosity Quests for Fortune 100 clients, immersive dives into strategic themes through sources as unlikely as freestyle jazz, federal prison programs, and professional cuddlers, to surface wonderfully uncomfortable inspiration.
+ Co-designed innovation processes, workshops, and curricula that paired human-centered design with Curiosity Atlas's own frameworks, creatively taxing leaders and executives to find inspiration outside their industries and turn it into actionable opportunities.
+ From ideation to launch, co-designed the Detourists for Princess Cruises, a new branded experience connecting cruisers to local cultures through discovery and play, successfully piloted and expanded to new ships around the Caribbean.

CERTIFIED LESSONS

MBA JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY CAREY BUSINESS SCHOOL

MA, DESIGN LEADERSHIP MARYLAND INSTITUTE COLLEGE OF ART (MICA)

BA, LIBERAL ARTS THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE

LIFE LESSONS

Over the course of my career, I have learned a lot of lessons; most of them enjoyable, many of them delightfully unexpected, each of them an outstanding story.

Laughing in the face of danger + Low-fidelity prototyping + Journey Mapping + Idea translation + Program management + Adobe InDesign/Illustrator/Photoshop + Design Thinking + Creative ideation + Team building + Storytelling + Strategic planning + Trends research + Mural + Journey mapping + Personas + Ecosystem mapping + Storyboarding + HCD workshop facilitation + Service Blueprinting + Field research design + Usability research + Ethnographic research + Survey creation & analysis + Stakeholder herding