GHAITH AKKAD

UI/UX Lead · Product Design Lead

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ABOUT

I've spent 20+ years designing consumer products people actually use. Mostly high-traffic platforms where content is dense, attention is short, and every screen has to earn its keep. I still open Figma every day, but I also build the teams, systems, and rituals around the work. I'm drawn to product environments where design shapes how people discover, compare, and decide, and where shipping fast and learning from real behavior matters more than polished decks.

WHAT I BRING

- Product Strategy & Discovery.
- End-to-End Product Design.
- User Research & Usability Testing.
- Research Triangulation (Qual/Quant/Behavioral).
- Stakeholder Influence & Communication.
- Accessibility & Inclusive Design (WCAG).
- Mentorship & Career Development.

- Cross-functional Leadership (PM, Eng).
- Design Systems at Scale.
- Prototyping & Interaction Design.
- Experimentation & A/B Testing.
- Business Metrics & ROI Ownership.
- Design Ops & Team Rituals.
- Agile/Scrum & Iterative Delivery.

EXPERIENCE

Product Design Lead & UI/UX Lead · e& UAE (Etisalat) · 2017 – Present

- Led product design across 15+ consumer-facing platforms used by millions, working closely with Product and Engineering to continuously ship and improve features across web and mobile.
- Still actively designing key flows and prototypes in Figma, from early discovery sketches through high-fidelity screens and developer handoff via Zeplin.
- Owned the UX direction for high-traffic B2C products where users browse, compare, and transact. Every design decision was tied to customer behavior and business outcomes.
- Dug into research across the board: market and user, qualitative and quantitative, behavioral and attitudinal. Focused on root causes, not just symptoms, and used those insights to shape features that actually moved product metrics.
- Built and maintained a unified design system and component library in Figma. Improved handoff speed by ~40% while keeping brand consistency, scalability, and WCAG compliance in check.
- Worked inside cross-functional product squads with PMs and engineers, co-owning discovery, prioritization, and delivery through dual-track Agile.
- Set up and ran experimentation programs (A/B testing via Adobe Target and Google Optimize, behavioral analytics through GA and Hotjar) to iteratively improve conversion across the product.
- Ran continuous discovery workshops to validate ideas before engineering committed. Cut development rework by about 30%.
- Put design quality gates in place: structured reviews, critiques, and validation checkpoints. Nothing ships without meeting accessibility and brand standards.
- Integrated AI where it actually improved the product: personalization, predictive analytics, and a conversational assistant that reached 90% resolution accuracy across 300K+ monthly interactions. Cut average handling time by 65%.

Team Leadership & Visibility

- Mentored designers from junior through senior and into lead roles. Built career frameworks, ran regular 1:1s, gave honest feedback. Supported people in becoming autonomous product partners, not just executors.
- Ran design rituals (reviews, critiques, workshops) and kept delivery visible and on track through Jira.
- Aligned OKRs for design with Product, Engineering, and Leadership.

- Guided stakeholders toward user-centered decisions by showing research and test results, not just presenting opinions.
- Owned the team's internal communication to the wider company: wrote update emails, produced video demos of design work, and ran our booth at company events. Made sure design had a voice beyond the product org.
- Contributed to hiring and onboarding. Helped shape how the design org grew and matured over time.

Lead Product Designer & UX Manager · Advance Digital Media · 2015 – 2017
- Ran a large-scale product consolidation, merging 7 separate media platforms (TV, radio, news, magazines) into one unified consumer product. Shipped in 2 months.
- Worked with PMs and executives in product squads, co-owning the roadmap and connecting UX decisions to revenue.
- Built modular component libraries and adaptive design systems that could handle very different content types, essentially a design system for a multi-brand, content-heavy product.
- Led user research and usability testing. Result: 50% improvement in user satisfaction, 20% faster page loads.

UI/UX Design Lead · Picasso Interactive · 2011 – 2015
- Designed the Showtimes.ae app, which won 'Best UX Design in Dubai 2016' (Shortlist Middle East). 500K+ users in 6 months, 35% better retention than competitors.
- Set up UX governance, design standards, and review processes. Mentored designers on growth and delivery quality.
- Ran research, built personas, validated features. Prototyped early AR experiences that lifted retention 30% and session length 25%.

Web Designer & Developer · Awal Solutions / Data-CD · 2003 – 2011
- Designed high-traffic websites and interactive experiences for GCC clients. Built one of the region's first 360° virtual tours.

SELECTED PROJECTS

ADO.ae – Media Ecosystem Unification: 7 platforms into one consumer product. Adaptive headers, modular component libraries, 2-month Agile delivery. Balanced multiple brand identities with usability and content discoverability.

STARZPlay – Navigation Redesign: End-to-end discovery: interviews, research, card sorting, competitor analysis, prototyping, testing. +30% discoverability, +15% retention, +25% interaction.

Cinema Showtimes – Award-Winning App: Discovery, personas, design, mobile optimization. 500K users in 6 months. 'Best UX Design in Dubai 2016.'

e& AI Experiences: Predictive analytics and personalization in product flows. GenAI assistant with 90% resolution accuracy, 300K+ monthly interactions.

Biometric Authentication UX: Multi-modal biometric flows across 42 retail stores, 5K+ daily transactions. Reduced validation costs 20%.

TOOLS

Design: Figma (Expert), Sketch, Adobe XD, InVision, Zeplin, Photoshop, Illustrator
Research & Analytics: Google Analytics, Hotjar, Adobe Target, Google Optimize, Adjust
Product & Delivery: Jira, Azure DevOps, Scrum, Kanban, OKRs, Dual-Track Agile
Front-End: HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript, jQuery, Angular
AI: OpenAI, Anthropic Claude, Azure Cognitive Services, Predictive UX, Streamlit

CERTIFICATIONS

- AI Management System Lead Implementer (ISO/IEC 42001:2023), BSI, 2025

EDUCATION

- BSc Computer Science & Engineering, Aleppo University
- Diploma IT & Business Administration, Tishreen University

AWARDS

- CTIO Star of the Month, e& UAE (2024)
- Best UX Design in Dubai, Shortlist Middle East (2016)
- Monthly Excellence Award, Etisalat (2018–2019)

LANGUAGES

English: Fluent · Arabic: Native