

FRED LAENNA

CREATIVE DIRECTOR & PRODUCT DESIGN LEADER

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Creative and design leader with 20+ years of experience shaping brands and experiences across media, retail, and premium subscription businesses. I've led high-performing design teams to deliver cohesive brand systems, digital platforms, campaigns, and content that connect storytelling with structure. Known for elevating craft, mentoring talent, and translating complex business goals into clear, compelling experiences across physical and digital touchpoints.

EXPERIENCE

McGraw Hill Higher Education | Director of UX Design Contractor | August 2025 – Present | New York, NY

- Provide design leadership across McGraw Hill's Higher Education digital portfolio, setting vision and execution standards for enterprise learning platforms, including Connect, SIMnet, GO, Virtual Labs, and LMS integrations, supporting millions of instructors and learners globally.
- Lead and mentor a distributed team of 10 UX designers and researchers, improving ownership, collaboration, and delivery consistency across multiple agile product teams.
- Champion the evolution and adoption of the design system, partnering with product and engineering leaders to improve scalability, accessibility, and cross-platform consistency.
- Partner with executive stakeholders, product, data, and AI teams to shape AI-driven learning experiences, ensuring new capabilities are thoughtfully integrated into existing platforms to enhance clarity, trust, and usability.
- Advocate for accessibility and inclusive design, embedding WCAG-aligned practices into workflows, reviews, and system components to improve compliance and usability across the Higher Education ecosystem.

Macy's Inc. | Director of UX Design | November 2020 – June 2025 | New York, NY

- Led UX design for loyalty and personalization platforms, driving digital and in-store experiences supporting \$400M+ in annual revenue across Macy's and Bloomingdale's.
- Directed UX for monetization initiatives across the Macy's Media Network, supporting \$150M+ in retail media revenue while balancing advertiser and customer needs.
- Led zero-to-one innovation initiatives, including Live Video Shopping, AR Try-On, Virtual Shopping Advisor, and Subscription experiences, from concept through launch.
- Built, coached, and scaled high-performing UX teams, fostering strong craft standards, collaboration, and career growth.
- Partnered with executive leadership, product, engineering, and marketing to define UX vision, roadmaps, and multi-horizon strategies aligned with business outcomes.

Shutterstock Inc. | Senior Director of UX & Product Design | Jan 2020 – April 2020 | New York, NY

- Led UX and product design across Shutterstock's digital platforms, supporting global content discovery, licensing, and subscription experiences.

- Partnered closely with product, engineering, and marketing teams to evolve the end-to-end user experience for contributors and customers.
- Helped modernize design processes and collaboration models, strengthening alignment across product teams and improving delivery efficiency.
- Contributed to design system thinking and reusable patterns to improve consistency and scalability across platforms.

CNBC (NBCUniversal) | Director of UX Design | August 2006 – January 2019 | Englewood Cliffs, NJ

- Led UX, product design, and digital branding for CNBC Digital, serving 80M+ monthly users across web, mobile, OTT, and emerging platforms.
- Built and managed a multidisciplinary design organization spanning UX, UI, research, prototyping, and information architecture.
- Directed major redesigns of CNBC's digital platforms to improve content engagement, usability, ad integration, and loyalty.
- Provided UX leadership for flagship products, including CNBC Pro, Warren Buffett Archive, CNBC Make It, and CNBC Prime.
- Oversaw UX/UI design across iOS, Android, Apple TV, Roku, Fire TV, Samsung TV, Alexa, and Google Assistant platforms.
- Served on the Comcast / NBCUniversal UX leadership council, aligning enterprise-wide UX standards and strategy.

Arc Worldwide | Associate Creative Director | May 2004 – August 2006 | New York, NY

- Led cross-functional creative teams delivering integrated advertising, brand, and digital campaigns for global clients, including Cadillac, Johnson & Johnson, Diageo, Kellogg's, and McDonald's.
- Directed visual design, interaction concepts, and brand storytelling across print, in-store, and digital channels.
- Art directed photo shoots and commercials, collaborating with writers, strategists, production teams, and external partners to execute high-impact campaigns.

EDUCATION

Manhattan University

Bachelor of Arts, Communications / Film & Fine Arts / Bronx, NY

SKILLS & FOCUS AREAS

Creative Direction • Design Leadership • Strategy & Vision • Design Systems • Accessibility & Inclusive Design • AI-Enabled Experiences • Platform & Ecosystem Design • Personalization & Loyalty • Cross-Functional Leadership • Agile & Lean UX

HONORS & AWARDS

Emmy Award Nominee – Boom, Bust & Blame: The Inside Story of America's Economic Crisis" Special Report

Edward R. Murrow Award – Best Website – Radio Television Digital News Association

Winner CableFAX Best of the Web Award – CNBC.com: NetNet with John Carney

Webby Award Honoree – CNBC Digital

Digiday Publishing Awards Finalist – Best Mobile Innovation