

Karri Ojanen

TRANSFORMATION & EXPERIENCE LEADER · Systems Thinking, Service Design & Business Strategy (d.MBA)

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SUMMARY

Transformation and experience leader with 25+ years driving measurable business outcomes inside large, complex, regulated organizations — financial services, telecom, retail, and the public sector. I work at the systems level: connecting research, data, and operational signal into clear narratives, prioritized opportunities, and business cases that de-risk where an organization should invest next. A d.MBA gives me the commercial fluency to lead equally well from Transformation, Operations, Innovation, or Technology — and 25 years building and scaling design, research, and delivery capability give me an edge most leaders in those seats don't have. I build and coach high-performing teams, partner credibly with senior product, engineering, and operations leaders, and I'm equally comfortable owning a transformation mandate or leading a design and research practice directly.

CORE STRENGTHS

Transformation Strategy & Business Cases · Service Design & Systems Thinking · Organizational Design Maturity & Governance · Customer Experience (CX) Strategy · Team Leadership & Capability Building · Cross-Market & Cross-Functional Facilitation · Stakeholder Alignment & Executive Communication · Human-Centered, Evidence-Based Research

EXPERIENCE

Director, Transformation Design Coach (Global Experience Design)

Dec 2020 – Present

Sun Life Financial · Toronto, ON

- Lead the activation and scaling of human-centered transformation practice across Sun Life's business units, regions, and teams (Canada, US, Asia) — aligning how the enterprise designs for customers and employees with the business outcomes it needs to deliver.
- Coach senior leaders and cross-functional teams through large-scale transformation, integrating Agile, Lean, and human-centered ways of working into how the business operates.
- Partner with business leaders to shape customer and employee experience strategies that move measurable results, and build the business cases that get them funded.
- Build and scale design and delivery capability across business units, improving throughput, consistency, and outcomes.
- Facilitate alignment across distributed teams, functions, and geographies when priorities compete and the path forward isn't obvious.
- Oversee service design efforts focused on AI governance and automation — evaluating where AI can responsibly create enterprise value, and shaping how those opportunities get governed and delivered.

Instructor, Service Design & UX Design Certificate Programs

Sep 2017 – Present

University of Toronto, School of Continuing Studies · Toronto, ON (concurrent with primary role)

- Developed and teach certificate courses in service design and UX, building research, journey-mapping, and systems-thinking capability in working professionals.

Practice Lead, Interaction & Service Design

2018 – 2020

RBC Royal Bank of Canada · Toronto, ON

- Built and scaled a 32-person interaction and service design practice (7 direct reports), growing it from a single discipline into a full discovery-to-delivery function across RBC's digital, branch, and contact-centre channels.
- Influenced senior stakeholders across product, technology, and operations, using evidence and narrative to shift how the bank prioritized and funded customer experience investment.
- Championed cross-functional alignment, bringing design, business, and technology leadership around a shared set of customer experience goals.

Service Design Lead, Account Opening Initiative

2016 – 2018

RBC Royal Bank of Canada · Toronto, ON

- Diagnosed the breakdown in RBC's account-opening journey — roughly a quarter of new clients not activating, ~6% attriting within 90 days, and the majority never deepening their relationship with the bank.

- Led the redesign of the multi-channel account-opening experience spanning digital, branch, and contact-centre touchpoints, and built the business case that secured executive funding.
- The solution that launched helped significantly shorten the time it takes to open a new account, open up cross- and upsell opportunities, and improve client experience.
- Partnered with senior stakeholders to align the redesigned journey with onboarding, activation, and retention targets for personal and small-business clients.

Sr. User Experience Designer

2015 – 2016

Usability Matters · Toronto, ON

A deliberate hands-on chapter between leadership roles — UX strategy, research, and design across client engagements.

Director, Digital Experience

2014 – 2015

Momentum Digital Solutions · Toronto, ON

- Led a multidisciplinary team across strategy, research & analytics, UX, and creative design, delivering work for clients including FCA Stellantis, American Express, and NYU Medical Center.
- Accountable for team direction, capability development, and client outcomes across the agency's digital practice.

Director, User Experience & Creative Design

2013 – 2014

CGI · Toronto, ON

- Led a multidisciplinary UX and creative design team, steering CGI's Customer Experience practice across enterprise and public-sector client engagements in the Greater Toronto Area.

Director, Interaction Design

2012 – 2013

Influitive · Toronto, ON

Led interaction and UX design at this advocacy-marketing software startup.

Interaction Design Director

2010 – 2012

R/GA · New York, NY

- Led a team of 8–12 interaction designers on the Verizon Wireless account, partnering with cross-functional teams of strategists, developers, and producers to deliver experiences across web, mobile, tablet, and retail kiosk.
- Set and maintained interaction design standards, and contributed to hiring, performance reviews, and team growth.

Senior Experience Architect

2008 – 2010

Organic · Toronto, ON

Delivered digital experience solutions for clients including Bank of America and Nike Canada, collaborating across Organic's San Francisco, New York, and Detroit offices.

Sr. Information Architect / UX Designer

2008

Publicis · Toronto, ON

Helped establish Publicis Modem's Toronto practice as its first Senior Information Architect, working with clients including Rogers, CIBC, and Purolator.

Earlier Career — Concept & Experience Design

1996 – 2007

Helsinki, Finland

Early service design and concept design roles for clients including Nokia, Finnair, and Nordea — blending UX project leadership with systems thinking years before the discipline took hold in North America.

EDUCATION & CREDENTIALS

d.MBA — Human-Centered Design & Business Strategy

BA, Audiovisual Production — Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki

Certifications: Group Facilitation · Transformative Design Practice · Journey Mapping · Human-Centered Design for AI

LANGUAGES

English (native) · Finnish (native) · Swedish (limited working) · German (elementary)