

AARON ORNER

UX RESEARCH & DESIGN EXECUTIVE

Research Strategy | Product Experience | Organizational Transformation

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EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Research and design executive with 20+ years of experience across UX, product development, organizational transformation, and business leadership. Builds research organizations, operating models, and human-centered practices that improve product decisions and strengthen the connection between customer evidence and business outcomes.

Experienced in scaling teams, transforming research maturity, mentoring executives and practitioners, and leading complex change across enterprise and entrepreneurial environments. Career spans Fortune 500 organizations, consulting, digital product leadership, and company building, with depth in financial services, healthcare, e-commerce, and enterprise platforms.

SELECTED LEADERSHIP IMPACT

USAA - Grew a research organization from 3 to 12 and established strategic, business-aligned, and enablement research reaching 250+ designers across 20+ design teams.

Grainger - Built a four-person taxonomy research practice supporting 1.6M+ products; improvements were associated with a 12% increase in new-product acquisition, then helped transform a 1,000+ employee call-center experience.

Interverz - Co-founded and scaled the technology company to 100+ employees and more than \$20M in annual billings before acquisition.

Dell / Y&R - Rebuilt a 20+ person design and development organization; the redesigned Partner experience was associated with 22% partner-sales growth over two years.

LEADERSHIP EXPERTISE

UX Research Strategy | Research & Design Leadership | Organizational Transformation | Product Experience Strategy | Research Operations | Research Enablement & Democratization | Executive Advisory & Mentorship | Team Building | Mixed-Methods Research | Experience Measurement | Research Maturity | Human-Centered Design | Design Thinking | Service Design | AI-Enabled Research | Cross-Functional Leadership

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

USERTESTING | Remote

Senior Insights Partner

Jul 2026 - Present

- Advise enterprise UX, Research, Design, Product, Insights, and executive leaders on research strategy, organizational maturity, measurement, operating models, discovery, and evidence-based product development.
- Help organizations evolve from episodic validation toward continuous discovery and insights-led decision-making across the product lifecycle.
- Facilitate strategic workshops and mentor leaders and practitioners on methodology, organizational enablement, and communicating the business value of customer evidence.
- Guide practical adoption of AI-enabled research while emphasizing human review, interpretation, research quality, and responsible use.

Global Customer Success Manager / Executive Consultant

Feb 2024 - Jul 2026

- Led strategic enterprise relationships in financial services and healthcare, connecting research capability to product and business strategy.
- Consulted with UX, CX, Research, Product, and Marketing leaders on research enablement, democratization, measurement, and long-term program strategy.

USAA | San Antonio, TX

Senior Lead Design Researcher

2018 - 2024

- Grew the research organization from 3 to 12, doubling the team within six months and building a multidisciplinary structure of researchers, research operations coordinators, and service designers.
- Designed an operating model combining centralized strategic research, business-aligned research, and democratized research enablement.
- Extended research capability across 20+ design teams and 250+ designers through training, tools, resources, standards, and mentorship.
- Helped make human-centered insights and design thinking critical throughout the Product Development Lifecycle through enablement, executive mentorship, and measurement and maturity models.
- Led mixed-method generative and evaluative research informing product, risk, operational, and customer-experience decisions, including a P&C claims measurement approach combining experience metrics with observed behavior.
- Mentored executives, researchers, and designers while strengthening how evidence was interpreted, communicated, and used in product decisions.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE - CONTINUED

GRAINGER | Austin, TX

Senior Lead Design Researcher

2014 - 2018

- Established a taxonomy research practice and built a four-person enablement team to scale research across online merchandising and product organizations.
- Introduced tree testing, benchmarks, scorecards, and research guardrails that progressively transferred research capability to merchandisers and product teams while maintaining quality.
- Led taxonomy and search research across 1.6M+ products/SKUs; improvements were associated with a 12% increase in new-product acquisition over two years.
- Subsequently helped reimagine tools, processes, and customer experience for a call-center operation with more than 1,000 employees.
- Combined interaction data, time-on-task and friction measures with qualitative research, using human-centered and design-thinking activities with executives and frontline representatives.
- Helped rebuild representative tools, connect e-commerce with assisted service, and establish benchmarks for ongoing experience measurement.

EARLIER LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

INDEPENDENT | Digital Product Design Consultant

2012 - 2014

Advised healthcare and industrial product leaders on research, service design, and product strategy. Generative field research informed Ergon Asphalt & Emulsions road-management tools associated with approximately \$1.2M in new revenue; led service-design work for Life Line Screening.

Y&R AUSTIN | Director, Digital Product Experience

2010 - 2012

Rebuilt and led a 20+ person design and development organization supporting Dell's global Partner Program; directed UX, product design, and portal delivery, with the redesigned experience associated with 22% partner-sales growth over two years.

INTERVERZ AVS | President & Co-Founder

2007 - 2010

Co-founded and led the company to 100+ employees and more than \$20M in annual billings before acquisition. Led strategy, product development, R&D, operations, and delivery of automated localized advertising technology and predictive design tools.

INSITE INTERACTIVE | Digital Account Director

2005 - 2007

Established the agency's first UX research and strategy practice and led multidisciplinary research, design, and development teams across healthcare, education, and retail engagements.

EURO RSCG | Director, Digital Customer Experience

2001 - 2005

Created and scaled the digital organization from approximately \$30K to \$10M in annual revenue in under two years; led 60+ people across five regional offices with responsibility for hiring, delivery, operations, client strategy, and P&L.

TMP WORLDWIDE | Digital Creative Director

1999 - 2001

Led designers and developers and introduced scalable digital production workflows that reduced advertising production time by approximately 75%.

ELYNX | Associate Creative Director

1997 - 1999

Led brand, marketing, and digital product design for financial-services SaaS products, including redesign of core experiences to improve usability, product discovery, and customer acquisition.

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ACA College of Design | Cincinnati, Ohio - Computer Science and Communication Arts

UserZoom Advanced Certification (2021) | UserZoom Core Certification (2021)