

Mahalakshmi Somasundaram

VP - Product Design @ M2P Fintech



Skills that make you a good designer, make you a good person too.

About me

I bring over 18 years of experience in UX Research, Design and Strategy across B2B and B2C platforms, and across various sectors that include e-commerce, banking, fintech, insurance, telecom, healthcare, education, travel amongst others.

Rooted at the confluence of business, design, and technology, I have led multiple UX design efforts from 'Research to Implementation', and have delivered impactful digital experiences to increase customer engagement, satisfaction and retention.

My experience working collaboratively with various disciplines and verticals offers me an edge to define and develop UX strategy for businesses, and to help businesses build internal design capabilities with the right team.

I have been fortunate enough to have travelled to different countries; 'To the metropolis Singapore, to the Suburbs & remote villages of Eastern Australia, to the glamorous Dubai, to the conservative Kuwait, to the heart of Urban and Rural India (North to South, East to West)' deep diving with users & clients to understand their Mental Models; helps me acknowledge differences and embrace diversity.

Having working experience both in a design agency and in-house design team equips me with a unique perspective to quickly grasp the limitations and opportunities of both the settings.

Strengths

- Building internal design capabilities
- End-to-end execution of User-Centered Design
- Translating research findings into actionable solutions
- Stakeholder, Client engagement
- Technical Recruiting
- UX Coaching, mentoring
- Implementing Design Language

Education

Certified Usability Analyst (CUA)TM
Human Factors International

M.Sc., Information technology
Annamalai University

B.Sc., Computer Science
Annamalai University

Post Diploma in Computer Applications
Dr.Dharmambal Government polytechnic college for women

Key Clients

Key clients / brands serviced include but are not limited to the ones below.



Design Consultant
Amtrex Consulting
 From Jan'24 to till date

I currently consult on the design and development of eTender, a next-generation procurement platform that introduces a fresh approach to vendor management and sourcing workflows. My role centers on shaping the product vision, guiding the overall experience framework, and ensuring alignment with both user expectations and business goals.

Along with that, I manage the design-to-development pipeline by working closely with an external development partner — setting priorities, reviewing outputs, and ensuring high-quality, on-schedule delivery.

VP, Product Design
M2P Fintech
 Jul'21 - Dec'23

M2P Fintech is a company based out of Chennai; M2P embeds fintech in core business offerings, act as a reliable tech layer between banks, fintechs, and financial institutions. M2P co-creates financial solutions, enabling banks, NBFCs, fintechs to offer cutting-edge financial services to their end customers.

- Interfacing with senior executive teams, customers from multiple lines of business to create a business aligned design strategy.
- Leading the efforts to bring all acquired products on a unified M2P platform.
- Educating cross-functional teams on the design thinking process, promoting the enduring advantages that design can offer, and garnering support for design initiatives more so for 0-1 products.
- Leading the design & research practice at M2P; Coaching and mentoring a multi-disciplinary team of 32 people on design thinking, promoting an environment that embraces diversity and collaboration.
- Building UXD assets (libraries, UX training material, design system, product glossary, fintech glossary) to increase productivity, efficiency and reducing TAT.
- Established processes for team productivity and appraisals.
- Defining a unique and unified design language system for M2P Suite of products.

Co-founder, eTender
 Aug'20 - Jul'21

eTender is a B2B digital platform that intends to facilitate meaningful and smooth communication between buying and selling organisations, involving precise data exchange between them during the procurement phase. It aims to improvise the 'Spend Management' & increased savings to the buying organisations, and expanded reach for the selling organizations.

- Instrumental in conceiving eTender as a product, extensively researching the UAE market and users, defining the product's value proposition, and outlining the core features and functionalities.
- Being a designer myself, created wireframes, prototypes, and mock-ups to visualise the user interface and how the product will function. Defined and used a customised design system.
- Validated the assumptions testing the early stage product prototype with actual buying organisations, vendors ensuring genuine demand and interest in the product.
- Managed remote product development efforts with geographically dispersed, multi-disciplinary teams, carefully managing version rollouts with a strong focus on budget considerations.

Director of UX
Hexolabs Interactive
 Nov'14 to Jun'18

Hexolabs, mobile app development company located in Chennai that offered innovative end-to-end mobile based solutions, and mVAS solutions to enterprises specifically in the African region.

- Made Hexolabs' clients feel inclusive of the design process by giving them live demos of storyboarding, live remote usability tests, etc.,
- Leverage user research & test findings to get a buy-in from stakeholders and improve product designs strategically.
- Mentored a team of designers, developers, product owners and got them into the 'Users First' culture.
- Conducted internal training for senior management and technical staff to evangelize user experience.

Center of Excellence
Lead
Human Factors Int'l.
 Jul'2005 - Jul'2013

HFI (Human Factors International) is a global design consulting firm specialising in the field of human factors, usability, and user experience (UX) design. They work with organisations and help them focus on their strategic customer and user experiences.

- I commenced my UX journey at HFI as a Human Factors Specialist, and quickly I ascended to the position of Center of Excellence Lead. Had a privilege to practice and learn end-to-end of UCD, under the direct guidance of some brilliant minds in the world of design.
- Consulted for international clients - Transform user and business needs into viable and usable products and solutions.
- Did hands-on design - planning and conducting user research, design reviews, usability testings, wireframing, prototyping, workshops, focus groups, information architecture, card sorting, A/B testing, remote usability testing, heuristic reviews, competitive analysis, multi-lingual designs
- Partnering with researchers and co-designers to create and deliver engaging online experiences, planning and leading research initiatives, design evaluations.
- Supporting BD team in scoping the design efforts, making proposals.
- Managing a multi-disciplinary team of 10+ members including usability practitioners, visual designers, and frontend developers, also managing client communication.

UI Design Lead
SRA Systems Limited
 (Now Aspire Systems)
 Sep'2000 - May'2005

SRA Systems was a multi faceted organisation with offices in India and the US. Their core service offerings included Business Process Management, SAP and licensing, BI Practices.

- Designed the official logo of the company, letterhead and business cards.
- Creating HTML prototypes for Web sites, e-commerce apps, e-learning solutions, workflow enabling solutions, intranet and internet sites.
- Headed the corporate communications design team, designed flyers, brochures, promotional material that include both print and digital mediums.
- Led the tactical redesign effort of the company Intranet site, and other client websites, ongoing maintenance of corporate website.

In addition to these, I have independently managed 5 design and research projects for clients in the UAE and India.

Notably, one of these clients is Chrysalis, a leader in revolutionizing school education with a transformative program that challenges conventional practices in the Indian educational landscape.