

The Pink Cowboy

By Wouter Kirstein

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UX Designer

With a career spanning over two decades, I have evolved from a general designer to a seasoned design technologist/engineer specializing in UX design. My journey includes diverse roles encompassing web and digital design, development, and UX design. I bring a unique blend of traditional design thinking, six sigma concepts, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, and branding strategies to enrich my creative process. As a result, I not only lead creative teams but also provide coaching to elevate designs to a cultural level.

Skills

- Design for Human-Computer Interaction
- Accessibility for Disability
- Research & Analyses
- Ethnographic Research and Heuristic Evaluation
- Collaboration (Brainstorming, Ideation & General White-boarding)
- Visual Design
- Building and User-Testing on Prototypes
- Persona Creation, User Story Creation, and Prioritization
- UX Management & Strategy
- Product Ownership and Project Management
- HTML5, jQuery, Drupal, JavaScript, Angular, Bootstrap, LESS, and SASS

Programming and Development Understanding

- PHP and MySQL
- Bootstrap 3: Advanced Web Development
- HTML5, CSS3, LESS, and SASS
- JavaScript, Angular
- CMS Systems: Drupal, WordPress
- Prototyping with Ratchet, Adobe XD, Balsamiq
- Version Control: Git
- Webpack, Grunt, Gulp

Responsive Design Fundamentals

- User Experience Fundamentals for Web Design
- Foundations of UX: Information Architecture
- UX Design Tools: Balsamiq Mock-up
- Experience Design CC: First Look
- Learn Sketch: The Basics, User Experience Design
- Storytelling for Designers
- Interaction Design for Usability

History

2022:

Stepped into the role of Full-time User Experience Designer at BlueSky. My focus? Diving into user research, crafting wireframes, prototypes, and collaborating on Salesforce projects. It's a blend of creativity and functionality, shaping how users interact with technology. Still serving the same Absa project from 2018.

2021:

Contracted with CyberPro and Isanqa as a UX Consultant. During this period, I was involved in projects for BMW, focusing on the financial systems related to the new electric Mini. Additionally, I also undertook a significant assignment with Liberty Life, which extended through the majority of 2022.

2020:

Founded The Pink Cowboy, a venture that's more than just a business – it's a dynamic platform where I harness my passion for UX research, design thinking, and content strategy to bolster startup growth. I actively engage in writing numerous social media posts about these processes, keeping me sharply in practice and fostering continuous learning. I firmly believe in the principle that producing more leads to producing better.

2018:

Worked as a UX Consultant at DVT. In this role, I combined UX research and design insights to create effective solutions for clients like Absa and Deloitte.

2017:

At Momentum, I served as a Front-end Developer, focusing on UI and working on technologies like Angular, CSS3, LESS, SASS, and HTML5. It was about crafting interfaces that were both functional and aesthetically pleasing.

2016:

Took on the challenge of UX and Front-end Developer at Symbiotics Application Services. My work involved agile collaboration and utilizing tools like Drupal, WordPress, Adobe XD, and Balsamiq. Client was mainly FNB.

2013:

Joined Yamaha South Africa as a designer and developer, focusing on rebuilding and maintaining websites and managing print advertisements.

2012:

Worked at Tyler Bird Creative as a General Designer/Consultant, leading website design and management.

2011:

Designer at Orion Group, Johannesburg Area, North. This role was dynamic, requiring a tactical approach with responsibilities varying from web and print design to strategizing for diverse departments. I worked closely with the sales team and C-suite, adapting to the needs of each project, whether it was for a hotel event or a new shopping center launch.

2009:

Began at Agility Global Health as a flash developer/designer, transitioning later to Sharepoint developer. This role was about versatility and adapting to different technologies.

History

2008:

Served as an in-house designer at Camelot Health. This role involved publishing work for upscale magazines and focusing on projects for Camelot and Thalgo.

2008:

Moved to Johannesburg and freelanced with Andrew Kennedy Photography and LBI Conferencing, Decor World, exploring various aspects of design.

2005:

Returned to Potchefstroom to work at Advert Square, where I gained experience in magazine, repro, and web design, working with a range of brands... Lot's of flash development

2004:

Went back to Gauteng, freelancing for Skydog, and then worked with Janina Wooding at Pixar Dynamic on HIV awareness campaigns, expanding my design toolkit with Corel Draw.

2003:

Joined Upstream Dynamic, part of Digital Concept Management, where I taught Macromedia to students, following Mark Vermeulen's move to America.

2001:

First major position at Serengeti Moon Design and Advertising in Bloemfontein, where I developed a diverse skill set in design and web development.

2000:

Studied various design subjects at CTU, focusing on Macromedia tools, laying a solid foundation for my career in digital design.

1999:

Completed a foundation year at Technicon Pretoria, where my interest in design truly took shape, leading me to pursue this field.

1998:

Matriculated with an exemption, balancing a mix of technical and artistic subjects, hinting at my future direction.

1997:

The beginning of my journey, born in Lichtenburg and discovering my passion for drawing in Potchefstroom – a simple start to what would become a diverse career in design.

1979 - 2000: My Early Days

I was born in Lichtenburg and later moved to Potchefstroom. Drawing became a significant part of my life during these formative years.

Schooling Years (Mooibank & Volkskool): In my schooling at Mooibank and then Volkskool, I developed a flair for technical subjects but chose to follow my passion for art at age 17.

I attended the fundamental year at Technicon Pretoria. Here, I expanded my artistic horizons in 2D and 3D Studies, Interior, and Textile Design, even winning a first-year prize for a cake design. I loved fine arts but found myself more drawn to design, particularly intrigued by web technologies.

I decided to move over to CTU that was one of the few places that offered diplomas in graphic design with web subjects.



Stash: Replace Card and many more

Steered the ship of creativity, managing a diverse array of digital and print media projects.

Crafted captivating campaigns and designs for an eclectic clientele, ranging from the vibrant markets of retail malls to esteemed corporate entities such as New Holland and Midmacor.

Demonstrated versatility and artistic prowess, seamlessly blending digital artistry with traditional design principles.

Stash is for

the dad who skips a coffee to invest money in his child's future

the mom who wants to build an nest egg for her family to secure them through uncertain times

the 20 year old software developer who recently received his first promotion and would like to start building his wealth

Stash is a free, fun to use and on-demand mobile investment platform. Its engaging and helps to build good financial confidence and habits, while helping clients to connect to the greater financial service offering within our ecosystem

Unlike easy equities and share trading, Stash is safe and really easy to use.

Stash puts their users | the driving seat while giving them a real time view on their finances.

Stash is cool, clever, easy going and fun.



Our Approach: Integrating Lean UX with Google Design Sprints

Our Approach: Integrating Lean UX with Google Design Sprints In our quest for efficient product development, we seamlessly blended Lean UX principles with the 5-day Google Design Sprint. Our approach involved online collaborative sessions with cross-functional teams, including business and development experts. This strategy merged design thinking, agile methodologies, and user-centricity, leading to a cohesive process. Key elements included rapid ideation, prototyping, and testing, enriched by continuous feedback loops. This integration accelerated decision-making and refined the user-focused outcome, elevating our product development journey.

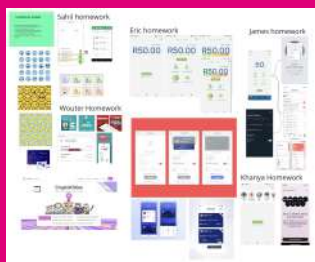
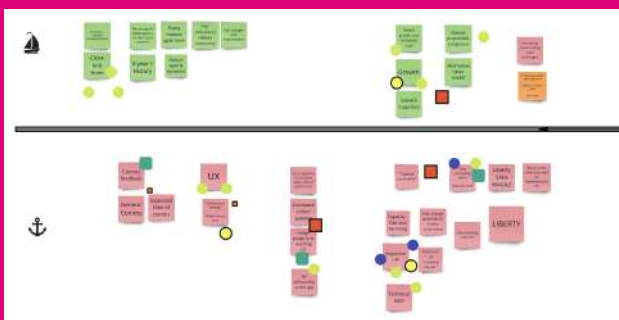
Conducting SWOT Analysis As the team leader, I facilitated a SWOT analysis workshop, encouraging open sharing of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This process smoothly transitioned us from discussion to strategic planning. Utilizing insights from the SWOT analysis, we crafted innovative strategies to leverage strengths, address weaknesses, seize opportunities, and mitigate threats, fostering collective decision-making and action.

Stash: Replace Card

Goal-Setting and Problem-Solving Post-SWOT, we focused on resolving identified issues by setting specific goals. For instance, to improve customer response times, we set measurable targets. Facing new competitors, we innovated in marketing. This approach transformed challenges into actionable objectives, uniting the team in problem-solving.

To understand the range of identified challenges, we conducted swift online interviews with domain experts. These interactions provided multi-faceted perspectives, enriching our understanding and strategy formulation.

Collaborative Prioritization and Socializing Findings We reconvened with the team and product owners to share our interview insights. Using dot-voting, we collectively identified key challenges to focus on. This inclusive process ensured consensus and commitment to addressing critical issues.



Formulating Actionable Questions We crafted targeted "How might we?" questions to guide solution-focused thinking. These included addressing user education on banking processes, enhancing security in PIN resets, and managing cash-out expectations.

Leveraging Team Knowledge: Lightning Demos and Research During our design sprint, the team engaged in competitor analysis and pattern research, bringing diverse insights and ideas from various industries to our project.

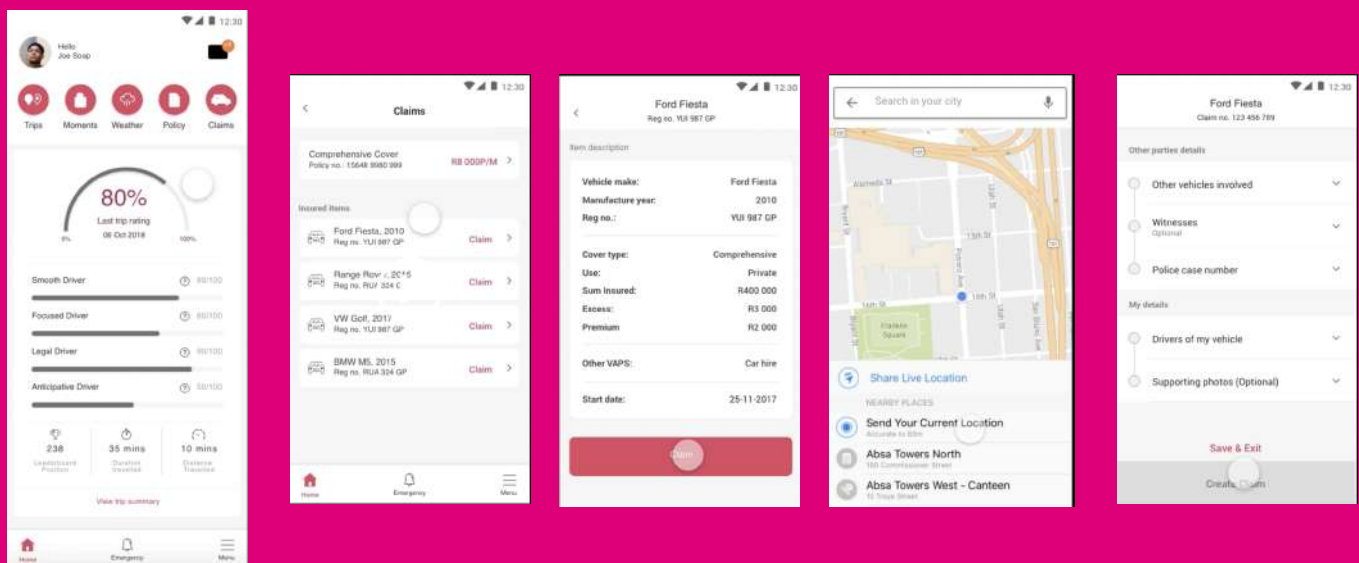
Impact and Outcomes: Enhancing User Experience and Efficiency

- **Enhanced User Engagement:** Our improvements led to higher user engagement and app usability.
- **Efficient PIN Resets:** We streamlined the PIN reset process, enhancing security and user satisfaction.
- **Clear Cash-Out Expectations:** By setting accurate user expectations, we reduced confusion and support inquiries.
- **Improved User Education:** Our efforts increased users' financial literacy, empowering them.
- **Positive App Store Presence:** Our work translated into higher ratings, positive reviews, and better app perception.
- **Time and Resource Efficiency:** Our iterative, user-informed design process was both time and resource-efficient.

Activate:

Activate, previously known as "Insurer of the Future," represents a paradigm shift in digital insurance solutions. Developed by ABSA, this innovative product suite comprises motor, building, contents, and all-risk coverage. Activate stands out by offering a unique blend of safety, convenience, and rewards, especially for conscientious drivers.

Problem Addressed: In an era where digital convenience is paramount, traditional insurance processes often lag, marked by cumbersome paperwork, slow response times, and a disconnect from the digital lifestyle. This gap highlights the need for an insurance solution that not only assures safety and security but also integrates seamlessly into the digital lives of users.

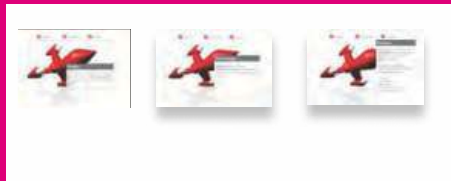


Activate is the answer to this modern dilemma. It's not just an insurance product; it's a lifestyle companion that elevates the concept of insurance to fit the digital age. Our approach encompasses several key aspects:

1. **Seamless Policy Management:** We've crafted a user-centric platform enabling real-time management of insurance policies, thereby eliminating traditional paperwork and tedious phone calls.
2. **Driving Behavior Monitoring:** Utilizing cutting-edge telematics, Activate analyzes driving patterns, offering personalized feedback and rewarding safe driving.
3. **Real-Time Safety and Assistance:** The app's advanced GPS features ensure immediate help in emergencies, streamlining the assistance process.
4. **Instant Claims Process:** Claim submissions and tracking are now a breeze with our intuitive app interface, significantly reducing traditional hassles.
5. **Personalized Rewards:** Safe driving is incentivized with cashback rewards, promoting responsible driving behavior.
6. **24/7 Accessibility:** We guarantee continuous availability, offering assistance and services at any time.
7. **Improved Communication:** Activate fosters real-time communication between policyholders and the insurer, enhancing transparency and responsiveness.
8. **Safety:** Our commitment to safety is unwavering, with immediate assistance and precise location tracking during emergencies.

and more... I ran out of space :)

Agility:



Agilities Landing Pages (2009): Propelling Brand Values Through Design

In 2009, I had the exciting opportunity to work on the for Agiliy, a brand primarily operating in the medical insurance and medical fraud space. Unfortunately, over the years, the finer details of this project have faded, with only a few low-fidelity images remaining. However, these snapshots are a testament to a design approach that deeply resonated with me and effectively communicated the brand's essence.

The core concept behind these landing pages was to embody Agilities' brand values through a vivid, space-themed visual narrative. We envisioned the brand as a rocket, propelling forward with dynamism and innovation, a metaphor for Agilities' drive in navigating the complex world of medical insurance and fraud prevention.

One of the standout features of this project was the creation of the Agilities logo. We infused a sense of space exploration into the logo design, incorporating ring elements that evoked thoughts of planets and orbits. This was more than just an aesthetic choice; it symbolized the brand's expansive reach and its continuous movement towards new frontiers in the industry.

The design choices, though rendered in low fidelity in the surviving images, were meticulously crafted. We aimed to create an immersive experience for users, where the brand's values were not just stated but felt. The interplay of graphics and text on the landing pages was designed to guide users on a journey, mirroring the innovative and forward-thinking approach of Agilities.

Inclusion of these snapshots in my portfolio is driven by more than just nostalgia; it's an acknowledgement of a project where design transcended its traditional role. It became a storytelling medium, a way to breathe life into a brand and create a memorable digital footprint in the competitive landscape of medical insurance and fraud prevention.

Alot of my prototyping was done with flash and fireworks, but my role also included HTML and CSS responsibilities.

Kids IT:



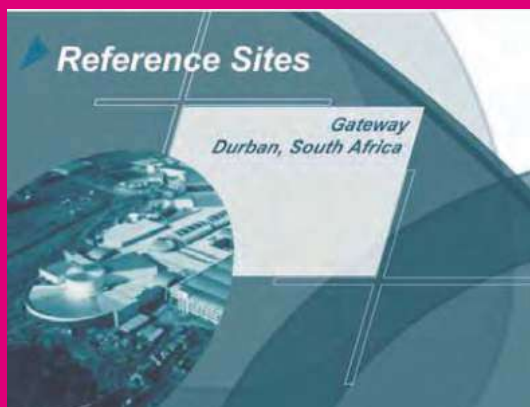
Kids IT: The Safe Digital Playground for Young Minds

Kids IT is one of my earliest and most cherished projects, representing a significant milestone in my journey as a UX designer and entrepreneur. This innovative product transforms a standard laptop into a flash playpen, creating a child-friendly environment that mirrors a standard Windows system. Designed with the dual goals of fun and safety, Kids IT ensures that young users can enjoy digital exploration without the risk of altering system settings or accessing inappropriate content.

Key Features

1. **Child-Safe Interface:** I designed Kids IT with a user-friendly, colorful interface that appeals to children while being easy to navigate. This approach not only makes technology accessible and fun for young minds but also encourages educational exploration.
2. **Protected System Settings:** With Kids IT, the integrity of system settings is maintained, safeguarding devices and data even when children are using them. This feature offers parents the peace of mind that their laptop remains secure.
3. **Educational and Entertaining:** Beyond entertainment, Kids IT is an educational tool, featuring a variety of games and activities that foster creativity, problem-solving, and basic computer literacy in an engaging way.
4. **Parental Controls:** Understanding the diverse needs of young users, Kids IT includes customizable parental controls. This allows for a tailored learning and playing experience, appropriate for different ages and developmental stages.
5. **Offline Functionality:** Mindful of the importance of managing screen time, I ensured that Kids IT is fully operational offline, providing a controlled and rich interactive experience without unnecessary internet exposure.

Head Count Systems:



Head Count Systems: Flash Design and Bilingual Interface Challenge

At Head Count Systems, I designed and animated interfaces for a sophisticated people counting system deployed in shopping malls worldwide. One of my primary contributions was as a Flash Designer.

A significant aspect of this project was the challenge of designing bilingual content. We recognized the need for our system to cater to diverse linguistic demographics, particularly focusing on Spanish and English. This requirement was not merely about translation; it demanded a deep understanding of cultural nuances and typography that resonated with each language's user base.

My role extended beyond Flash design to encompass a broader range of responsibilities, including the creation of animations for transitions and the overall UI design. These animations were crucial in making the interface not just visually appealing but also intuitive and user-friendly. They played a significant role in guiding users through the data visualization process, making complex information accessible and understandable.

Designing for Head Count Systems was a balancing act between aesthetic appeal, functionality, and cross-cultural user experience. It required a keen eye for detail and a deep understanding of how motion design can enhance user interaction. The interfaces I developed were not only a testament to my technical skills but also my ability to empathize with users from different linguistic backgrounds and design experiences that were both inclusive and engaging.

This project was an enriching experience that highlighted the importance of adaptability and creativity in UI design, especially when working with diverse user groups and complex data sets. The skills and insights gained from this role have been instrumental in my growth as a UX designer and animator.

Yamaha:

Yamaha's Digital and Print Presence in South Africa

During my time at Yamaha South Africa, I had the opportunity to spearhead the redesign and development of multiple websites under the Yamaha umbrella. This encompassed a wide spectrum of the brand's divisions, including Yamaha Motor, Yamaha Audio, Yamaha Marine, and Yamaha Music. My role was crucial in reimagining Yamaha's digital footprint, aligning it with the brand's global prestige and local market dynamics. I also worked on Yamaha during its 125 year celebration.

Collaborating closely with the General Manager and relevant marketing teams, I was deeply involved in managing the extensive workload across Yamaha's diverse product range. My responsibilities extended beyond web design; I was instrumental in developing print materials and point-of-sale designs. This three-year journey was marked by a continuous quest for excellence, ensuring that each brand touchpoint, whether digital or physical, resonated with Yamaha's core values and customer expectations.

The scope of my role at Yamaha was not limited to its primary products. I also managed the aftermarket product range, which included esteemed brands like Shoei, Metzeller, and approximately ten other brands. This aspect of my work required a versatile approach, as each brand had its unique identity and market positioning. I was responsible for overseeing everything from website design to print material creation for these brands, ensuring a cohesive and impactful brand presence across all channels.

This period at Yamaha was a testament to my ability to handle a diverse array of design challenges, from digital interfaces to physical marketing collateral. It honed my skills in collaborating effectively with cross-functional teams and managing complex projects involving multiple stakeholders. My contributions significantly enhanced Yamaha's brand visibility and customer engagement, solidifying its position in the South African market.

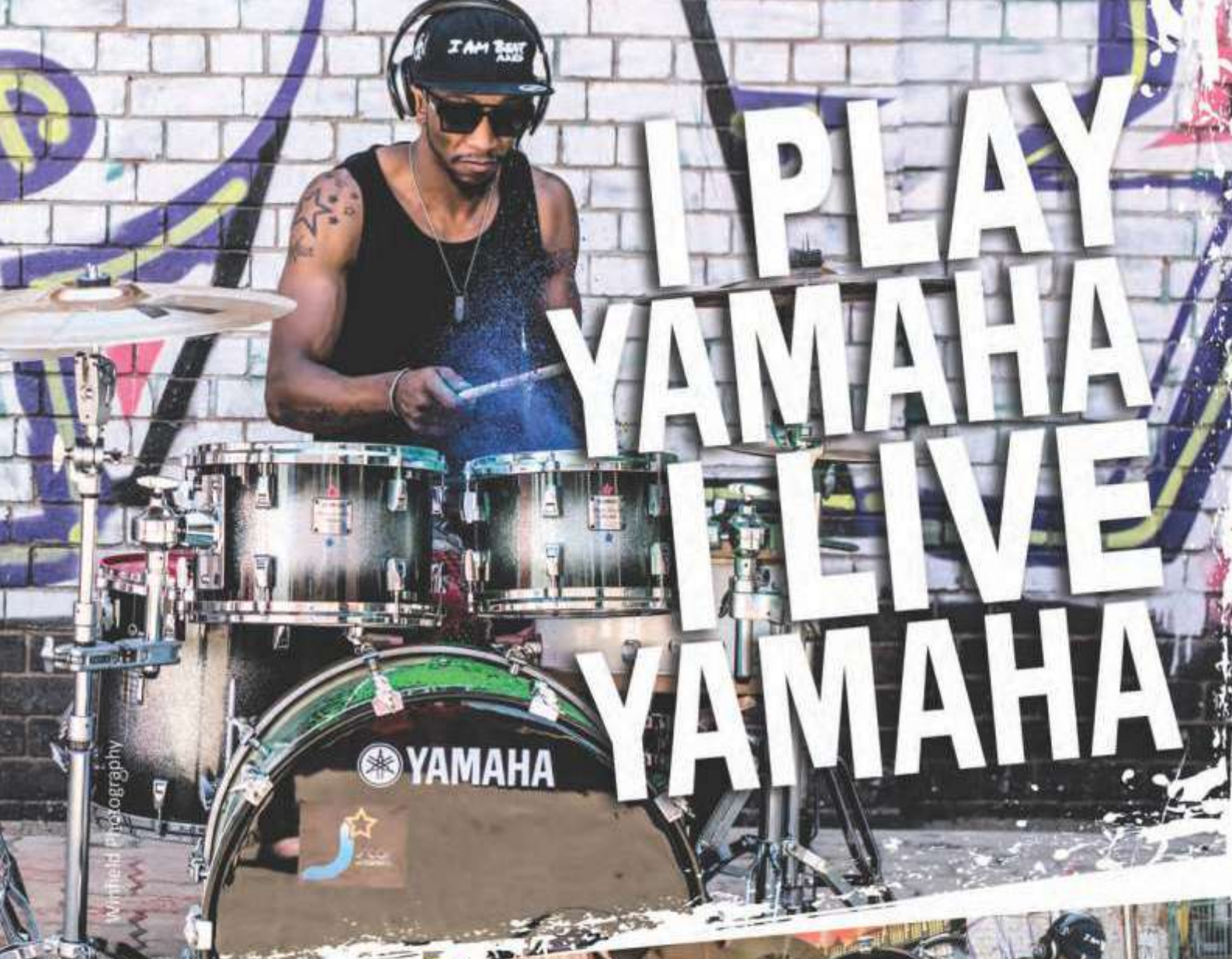
Reflecting on these experiences, it's clear that my time at Yamaha was not just about delivering design solutions; it was about weaving a narrative that connected with users across different touchpoints, creating a seamless and compelling brand journey.

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URBAN PROOF

My Pharma Phase



Cal-C-C-Vita

I had the opportunity to collaborate with Aspen Pharmaceuticals, one of the leading pharmaceutical companies. My role involved creating compelling and engaging material for several of their high-profile brands, including Berocca and Cal-C-Vita.

Key Projects and Achievements:

I crafted visually striking and informative materials for Berocca. My approach focused on emphasizing the brand's vitality and health benefits, resonating deeply with the target audience.

I developed creative content that underscored the brand's commitment to wellness and immune support. These materials were instrumental in enhancing brand recognition and customer engagement.

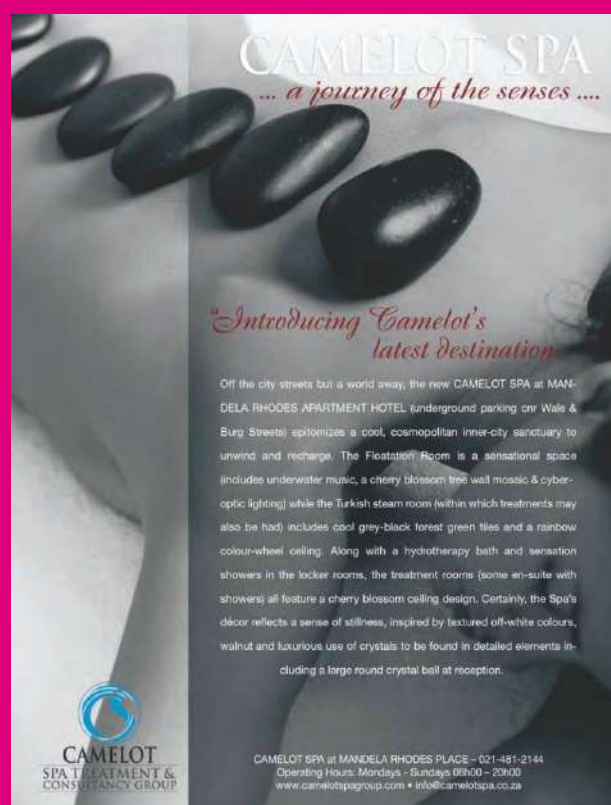
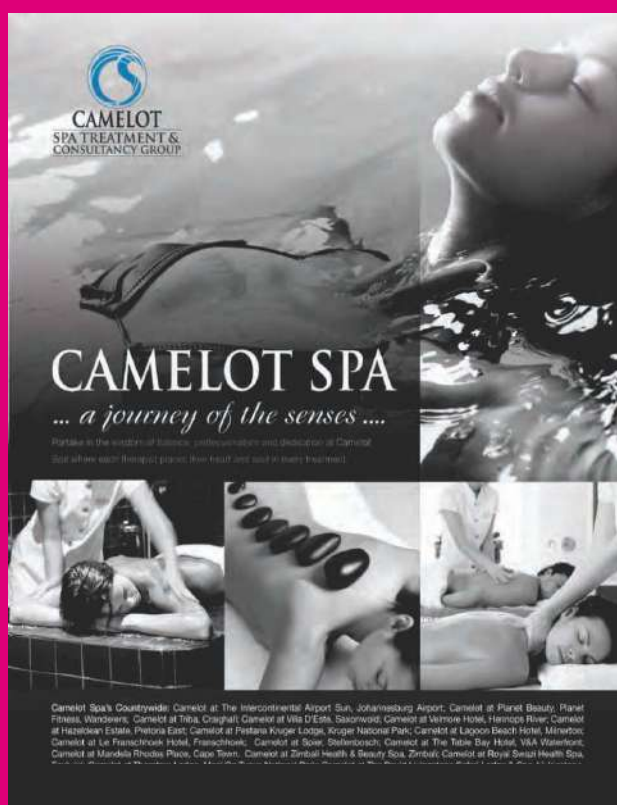
A central highlight of my tenure with Aspen was the development of an initial Flash project. This project, with its cutting-edge design and interactive elements, not only set a new standard for digital campaigns within the company but also laid the groundwork for a subsequent international campaign. The innovative use of Flash technology at that time allowed for a dynamic and engaging user experience, setting a precedent in digital marketing.

The creative concepts and designs I introduced in the Flash project had a profound influence on an international campaign. This campaign was marked by its widespread reach and success, showcasing the global impact of the creative work initiated in my earlier project.

Camelot and other freelance project

some of the pioneering work I've contributed to at Camelot, under the visionary leadership of Debbie Merdjan, CEO of the Camelot Group. My journey with Camelot has been an eclectic blend of design, creativity, and strategic thinking, transcending traditional boundaries and mediums.

Our work has been recognized and featured in prestigious publications like VISI and De Kat, showcasing our commitment to excellence in design and user experience. However, my role at Camelot wasn't confined to crafting visually appealing designs for print media. I delved deeper into the brand's essence, contributing significantly to the spatial and experiential aspects of Camelot's spas.



One of the most enriching experiences was giving input and assisting in the design of floorplans for several Camelot Spas. This involved a deep understanding of the brand's philosophy, customer experience goals, and operational practicalities. Collaborating closely with architects and interior designers, I ensured that every design element aligned with Camelot's vision of luxury, tranquility, and wellness.

My approach was holistic, considering both the aesthetic appeal and functional efficiency of spaces. By integrating user experience principles into physical space design, I aimed to create environments that not only looked beautiful but also enriched the customer's journey at every touchpoint.

Working under Debbie Merdjan's leadership was particularly inspiring. Her passion for excellence and innovation in the health and wellness industry profoundly influenced my work, pushing me to explore new boundaries and constantly strive for perfection. Through our campaigns and spa designs, we've made significant strides in enhancing the brand's image and customer experience, solidifying Camelot's position as a leader in the spa and wellness industry in South Africa.

Appendix:

Educational Prowess and Continuous Enlightenment

Education and Certifications

Various Online Certifications in UX, Design Thinking, and Development.

Main Projects

- Absa Customer One (UX, research and design)
- Liberty Service Console (UX, research and design)
- Liberty Welcome Pack (UX, research and design)
- Neo: Agility GHS
- Stash
- Ting Me
- FNB: Home Loans Internal Systems (UX, Front-end)
- AOS: Time Management Systems
- Yamaha: General Tasks Across the Organization
- Momentum: Various Projects
- Localift
- Absa: Homeloans Claims, Virtual Investor, Insurer of the Future
- Deloitte: Gratitude App, Toursure, Customer One in Salesforce
- Liberty: Salesforce Service Console, Stash
- BMW: Production Line Calculator for New Electric Mini in China
- Startups: Various Fintech and Startups Projects (KidsIT, New Model Insurance)

Additional Training and Online Certifications

- Human-Centered Design
- How to Create Intuitive Products by Imitating Physicality
- UX Management: Strategy and Tactics
- User Experience: The Beginner's Guide
- Dynamic User Experience: Design and Usability
- Design Thinking: The Beginner's Guide
- Human-Computer Interaction (HCI)
- Conducting Usability Testing
- The Practical Guide to Usability
- Get Your Product Used: Adoption and Appropriation
- Affordances: Designing Intuitive User Interfaces

alot more... Its hard to keep it updated... please see linkedin.

Thank you for your consideration.

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