Sanju Varma · Design Leader

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Hands-on design leader for complex business platforms, now at Zūm, where I lead the shift to AI-native product design. Coded prototypes, tested with real users, guide how engineering builds.

Experience

Zūm, Design Lead, Connected Mobility Experience — Apr 2024 – Present

- Lead design for the Connected Mobility Experience: dispatch, driver, parent and planning apps for 7,500+ schools.
- Lead the shift to AI-native product design: prototypes built in code (Figma Make, now Claude Code), tested with real users and reviewed by product and engineering leads, then used to guide builds.

Tesla, Design Lead, Tesla for Business — Mar 2020 – Dec 2023

- Set the design vision and took Tesla for Business 0-to-1 as hands-on lead with 3 PMs and 12 engineers; managed 2 designers (2022–23). It grew to 150,000+ fleet vehicles in 27 countries.
- Bet on one self-serve platform: onboarding went from 6 weeks to 15 minutes, vehicle handover from 2 weeks to 2 minutes, and sales grew 150% year over year.
- Led product strategy for Fleet API, Tesla's developer platform; streaming telemetry cut fleets' data costs 94%.

Cisco, Design Lead, Enterprise Networking (DNA Center) — Oct 2017 – Mar 2020

- Built a team of 8 designers in San Jose and Bangalore; created Cohesion, the Enterprise Networking design system.
- Cut network setup from 3 months to 2 weeks, replacing the command line with guided, intent-driven flows.

Adobe, Design Lead, Admin Console — Jul 2016 – Oct 2017

- Led 3 designers and a researcher, with 4 PMs and 20+ engineers.
- Moved business customers from boxed software to digital licenses: adoption grew 200%, and onboarding went from 4–8 weeks to hours.

PubMatic, Head of Design — Jan 2012 – Jul 2016

- Grew design from 4 to 8 across Pune, Redwood City and New York, with 4 PMs and 200+ engineers.
- Led PubMatic Analytics, the industry's first real-time analytics for publishers, with natural-language search; customer logins grew from about 6% to 60%.

Yodle (now Web.com), Head of Design, Ads — Jun 2009 – Jan 2012

- Grew the design team to 15+ designers and researchers; joined in 2007 as founding product designer (employee #18).

Hearst, Product Designer — Mar 2005 – Apr 2007

- Redesigned timesunion.com, growing its reader audience 140%; also designed for Cosmopolitan and Esquire.

Independent work

Design and build my own apps with Claude Code and Cursor: dubara, Morning, Peek and Vibe (iOS, Mac, web).

Skills

Leadership: design strategy and vision, hiring and mentoring, cross-functional leadership, influencing stakeholders

AI-native design: Claude Code, Cursor, Figma Make, coded prototyping

Craft: product, UX, interaction and visual design, user research, usability testing, design systems, Figma, SwiftUI

Education

Stanford Graduate School of Business, Entrepreneurship

DePaul University, MS, Computer Science (Human-Computer Interaction and Digital Cinema)

University of Mumbai, BE, Computer Engineering