

GARRETT POLIFKA

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Platform leader | Design systems | DesignOps | Product strategy

Design-systems and experience-platform leader with more than 12 years across UX, engineering, product, and operations. Led product strategy, governance, documentation, contribution, and staged modernization for Paylocity's Citrus Design System. Brings front-end fluency and a practical approach to AI-enabled workflows, with clear boundaries between platform leadership and specialist implementation.

EXPERIENCE

Independent practice | Feb 2026 - Present

Design Systems, AI-Enabled Workflows & Product Operating Models

- Advise, research, and build at the intersection of design systems, product operations, AI-enabled workflows, and organizational pattern design.
- Develop audits, workflow blueprints, prompt libraries, documentation systems, and governance models that support expert judgment.

Paylocity | Apr 2013 - Nov 2025

Staff Design System Manager | Jul 2024 - Nov 2025

Senior Product Owner, Design System | Feb 2019 - Jul 2024

Product Design Manager / Engineering Manager, Design System | Feb 2019 - Sep 2020

Product Design Manager, Talent Solutions | Apr 2017 - Nov 2019

- Led Citrus from early UX strategy and documentation through product ownership, program operations, and multiple generations of change.
- Owned vision, roadmap, backlog, requirements, governance, contribution, release mechanics, stakeholder communication, and adoption support for the enterprise design system.
- Led the operating sequence for the next Citrus generation, including Alpha, Beta, and official launch gates between June 2024 and July 2025.
- Partnered with engineering and design specialists on component strategy, tokens, centralized Figma variables, accessibility expectations, dependencies, and readiness while preserving specialist implementation ownership.
- Established recurring contribution reviews, roadshows, stakeholder updates, and a monthly release rhythm to make priorities, decisions, and migration needs visible.
- Grew the Talent design team from two to six designers and built a biweekly planning rhythm, cross-team creative reviews, and monthly executive reviews across five product areas.

Earlier Paylocity roles | Apr 2013 - Sep 2017

UX Lead, Talent Solutions; UX Lead, Design Systems; UX Designer; ScrumMaster, Paylocity Design Team; UI Developer

CAPABILITIES

- Design systems and platforms: product strategy; roadmaps and backlogs; tokens; components; design language; documentation; contribution; governance; migration; adoption; accessibility requirements; release planning.
- Operating models and DesignOps: intake and prioritization; decision rights; cross-functional planning; contribution reviews; stakeholder communication; support; change management; evidence boundaries.
- Product, UX, and front-end practice: platform product ownership; UX systems strategy; Figma; HTML and CSS; prototyping; product operations; design-to-development workflow.
- Leadership: hiring, onboarding, mentoring, team allocation, executive reviews, facilitation, tradeoff framing, conflict resolution, and cross-functional coordination.
- AI-enabled workflow practice: prompt libraries; local-model workflows; knowledge organization; reusable decision frameworks; privacy-aware experimentation; human-review boundaries.

EARLIER EXPERIENCE

- Jacobs & Clevenger, Senior Front End Web/UI Developer | Jan 2012 - Apr 2013
- Norton Agency, Interactive Art Director | Oct 2006 - Jan 2012
- Creative Circle, Freelance Art Director | Feb 2006 - Oct 2006

EDUCATION

Columbia College Chicago | Bachelor's, Marketing Communications