

CLAIRE BENJAMIN

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I translate abstract problems into tangible needs for meaningful designs, discovering root elements of complex challenges through investigation, imagination, and genuine understanding of people. My depth of expertise ranges from physical and digital design research and strategy, to patented product R&D, to published engineering research.

EXPERIENCE

USER EXPERIENCE STRATEGIST | JD SPORTS / FINISH LINE

MAR 2020 – PRESENT

- Building holistic, research-based product design strategies aligning with organizational goals to inform cross-functional product roadmaps. Work spans interactive technology, program design, websites, and apps.
- Planning and facilitating design workshops to propel concepts from early-stage thinking to actionable strategies. Collaborating with product team, executives, digital operations, developers, design, store operations, and others.
- Identifying opportunities and developing strategic recommendations for crafting meaningful experiences across network of digital products through planning and execution of user research.
- Managing and coordinating user research (*usability testing, in-context interviews, prototyping, A/B testing, other*)
- Advocated for and led implementation of remote user testing platform now used across the product team.
- Founding member of EcoAction committee, developing and implementing sustainability initiatives for JD US.

USER EXPERIENCE RESEARCHER | JD SPORTS / FINISH LINE

DEC 2018 – FEB 2020

- Managed research and testing initiatives to gain in-depth understanding of users and develop strategies for digital experiences. Crafted and executed research roadmaps that utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods.
- Led end-to-end research and testing for new omnichannel app features to be implemented in JD Sports flagship store opening 2020. Conducted competitive analysis and observational research, created initial concepts, user flows, wireframes, and prototypes, and managed user testing.
- Managed digital product side of pilot A/B testing initiative with Nike i3 and Accenture.

DIGITAL EXPERIENCE INTERN | FINISH LINE / JD SPORTS

MAY – NOV 2018

- Developed human-centered research and testing strategy that is now used across the digital product team.
 - Analyzed current processes and tools; conducted internal qualitative and quantitative research; recommended and implemented improvements and fresh approaches to the team's design strategy and workflow.
- Co-planned customer journey-mapping workshop for in-store experience that resulted in identification of opportunities and challenges that guided the Experience team's project roadmap for FY2020.

INNOVATION RESEARCH ANALYST | POTINTIA

AUG 2017 – APR 2018

- Researched tools, methods, and strategies for corporate innovation to identify best practices and create published, user-friendly resources to help companies bridge gaps in creative development.
- Conducted qualitative and quantitative research and data collection, analyzed and synthesized results, and communicated findings through both technical and informal writing and visual aids.

GRADUATE DESIGN ENGINEER |

CU DESIGN CENTER & MEDTRONIC SURGICAL INNOVATIONS

AUG 2016 – MAY 2017

- Utilizing design research and engineering, developed an ergonomic surgical device with an intuitive surgeon-to-tool interface and a novel mechanical design to improve the user experience for surgeons and simplify the current procedure to enable a quicker, less painful recovery for patients.
- Observed the surgical setting and explored current solutions; generated concepts, sketches, and low-fidelity 3-D models; designed experimental set-up, iteratively prototyped and tested functional designs.
- Presented final prototype to stakeholders of various backgrounds and technical knowledge. **Patent pending.**

GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT |

KEPLINGER RESEARCH GROUP & CU BOULDER

AUG 2015 – MAY 2017

- Explored design and fabrication of self-healing soft machines (moving systems made of highly compliant materials) for clean energy generation, high energy density artificial muscles, and precision sensing.
- Designed and built hardware set-up and software program for a self-sensing system for soft artificial muscles and used data from system to inform new designs for the muscles.
- Co-authored paper published in *Science* in January 2018 ([Vol.359, Issue 6371](#)).

EDUCATION

M.S., MECHANICAL ENGINEERING, DESIGN | UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

MAY 2017

Design Center Colorado: Graduate Design Program

Keplinger Research Group

B.E., MECHANICAL ENGINEERING | VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

MAY 2015

Varsity Cross-Country, Track & Field teams

Science and Technology of Robots in Medicine (STORM) Lab

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN INTENSIVE | PRATT INSTITUTE

JULY 2020

Studied the principles of sustainable human-centered design thinking, design vocabulary, and composition. Tested sustainable strategies, expressing ideas through speaking, writing, drawing, and other forms of visual communication.

Intensive included historically-based lectures with open discussion, project-based studio/lab time, critique of peers' work, and presentation.

SKILLS AND TOOLS

- design workshop facilitation • user interviews and insights • project management • data analysis
- ethnography • usability testing • physical and digital prototyping • journey-mapping • technical and informal writing
- Sketch • InDesign • Jira • Optimizely • Google Analytics • UserTesting

AWARDS

2016 DAAD RISE PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP | BÜRKERT GLOBAL, KARLSRUHE, GERMANY

Awarded a professional fellowship by DAAD (German Exchange) to join a research and design project at Bürkert Global Innovation Center and promote intercultural understanding and exchange of engineering ideas and methods.

INTERESTS

ASSISTANT TRACK & FIELD / CROSS-COUNTRY COACH | FAIRVIEW HS

DEC 2016 – PRESENT

Facilitating practices and meets, developing training plans, and serving as a mentor for high school athletes.

DI TRACK & FIELD, CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM | VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

AUG 2011 – MAY 2015

Elected team captain for 2014-2015 seasons