

Gema Izquierdo

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LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/gemaizquierdo

Portfolio: www.gemaportfolio.com (includes UX case studies and prototypes)

SUMMARY:

UX Researcher | Human-Centered Design Strategist

Human-centered, User Experience (UX) Researcher with a Master's in Interaction Design and hands-on experience applying mixed-method research in enterprise environments. Skilled in qualitative and quantitative research methods, including usability testing, user interviews, and journey mapping, to uncover user needs and inform design decisions. At Capital One, incorporated UX research practices into my role by conducting over 50 research sessions to improve internal tools, streamline approval workflows, and support digital adoption initiatives. Passionate about systems thinking, inclusive design, and translating user behavior into actionable insights that enhance user experience.

SKILLS:

UX & UI Design - Wireframing, Prototyping, User Flow, Interaction Design, Design Systems.

User Research - Usability Testing, Empathy Interviews, A/B Testing, Diary Studies, Surveys.

Design Tools - Figma, Axure, User Testing, Visio, Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign.

Process & Strategy - Service design, design thinking, iterative testing, user journey mapping, persona development.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Sr. Process Manager - UX Research & Design

CAPITAL ONE | New York City, NY | 2025 - Present

- Apply UX research and design methods in an agile environment to improve internal enterprise platforms, focusing on workforce planning, approval processes, and cross-functional tools. Design and iterate user flows and prototypes in Figma to support design decisions, optimize workflows, and apply inclusive design and accessibility best practices to ensure usability for all internal users.
- Collaborate on the creation of a new Recruiting Tool, serving as the voice of the user as the Point of Contact and Administrator for the current tool (TIR). Conduct user analysis, identify usability barriers, and synthesize insights into actionable requirements. Participate in design sessions, prototype the interface and new features in Figma, and bridge gaps between the legacy tool and new platform by balancing successful features with areas for improvement. Conduct iterative usability testing and user observations throughout development to validate design decisions and ensure intuitive, user-centered workflows. Collaborate cross-functionally with product managers, engineers, and stakeholders to align features and deliver a seamless user experience.
- Lead and validate a self-initiated UX research project to redesign the New Hire Approval Process; conduct contextual inquiries, task analysis, and stakeholder interviews to uncover friction points. Create and iterate user flows to understand barriers and visualize improvements, own the research and design recommendations, and validate solutions through usability testing to ensure intuitive workflows. Perform quantitative validation by analyzing approval time data across multiple periods to measure and confirm the improvement, reducing the median approval time from 2 days to 1.
- Conduct and synthesize mixed-method UX research (stakeholder interviews, task analysis, workflow mapping) to identify gaps in capacity, budget management, and affordability tracking. Synthesize findings into user-centered, visual guidance to clarify complex scenarios, validate with stakeholder usability testing, and reduce budget overages by 80% across domains.
- Apply and iterate behavior-focused UX research methods such as hypothesis testing, surveys, and observation to analyze internal adoption barriers. Iterate solutions with user feedback and validate updates through usability testing, delivering actionable recommendations that drive behavior change and tool adoption.
- Support design systems by advancing UX research practices through the standardization of methodologies, including research templates, interview scripts, and journey mapping frameworks, to scale user-centered design across the team and ensure consistency for internal tools.

Process Manager - UX Research & Design

CAPITAL ONE | New York City, NY | 2021 - 2024

- Applied and iterated UX research and service design methods in an agile environment to improve internal platforms for tech and finance teams, focusing on enterprise tools, workflows, and system adoption. Conducted and synthesized insights from over 100 user interviews and 50+ research sessions (usability testing, journey mapping, contextual inquiries) to uncover pain points and collaborate on solutions that enhanced workflow efficiency, supported adoption initiatives, and applied inclusive design and accessibility best practices to ensure usability for all internal users.
- Designed and implemented an automated Tableau dashboard that eliminated two days of manual reporting. Analyzed and synthesized data from Google Sheets workflows to define the data hierarchy, flow, and information architecture. Conducted user interviews with the Finance team to uncover pain points and map workflows, creating user flows that formed the basis of the dashboard's information architecture. Validated the solution through usability testing sessions with the Finance team and iterated based on feedback. Collaborated with Finance, Data teams, and engineers to ensure usability for data-heavy reporting needs.
- Owned and designed UX research for an internal forecasting app, a project initiated by team leadership for executive workforce planning. Analyzed existing data from dashboards and manual Google Sheets workflows to understand how information was structured and used. Conducted user interviews, created personas, journey maps, and user flows, and defined the data hierarchy and information architecture to align with executive decision-making. Designed and validated prototypes in Figma to ensure usability and clarity of complex, data-heavy workflows.
- Facilitated and iterated co-creation workshops, observation sessions, and stakeholder feedback loops to align and refine product decisions with user needs.
- Developed and standardized research templates, documentation, and communication tools to improve transparency, collaborate across cross-functional teams, and maintain consistency in decision-making, contributing to a unified UX design system across projects.

Branch Ambassador - Customer Experience & Informal UX Research

CAPITAL ONE | Jersey City, NJ | 2019 - 2021

- Drove customer experience and digital adoption initiatives by leveraging user research and behavioral insights to bridge in-branch experiences with digital tools.
- Led a customer conversion initiative that improved digital adoption by 40%, using in-person observations and behavioral insights to identify friction points and guide coaching and tool improvements.
- Collected informal qualitative data through customer conversations to uncover usability challenges and inform improvements to onboarding and internal tools.
- Collaborated with digital and design teams by surfacing customer insights from the front line, helping bridge the gap between in-branch experiences and digital tools.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Master's Thesis – UX Research on Paperless Adoption in Banking:

Designed and executed a mixed-method UX research study to explore behavioral, emotional, and usability barriers to paperless statement adoption. Conducted surveys, interviews, and literature review to uncover five key behavioral themes, delivering insights and recommendations that shaped internal digital adoption strategies.

Freelance UX Design Project – NYC Reset

Collaborated with a graphic designer and developer to create the brand and website for a personal trainer. Led UX efforts including research, competitive analysis, information architecture, user flows, wireframes, and user testing to ensure an intuitive experience and alignment with user needs. nycreset.com

EDUCATION

Master's Degree – Interaction Design & Information Architecture, *University of Baltimore*, MD (2024)

Bachelor's Degree – Design, *Institute of Superior Design*, Havana, Cuba (2016)