

MARK SHEKOYAN, PH.D.

Senior UX Researcher & Design Strategist

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PROFILE

PhD-trained cultural anthropologist with over 15 years leading UX research across fintech, enterprise SaaS, and consumer product organizations. I specialize in translating ambiguous user behavior into defensible product strategy through rigorous mixed-methods research, and I have built research programs and infrastructure from the ground up at both agency and in-house teams, including Wealth.com, UserTesting, Cisco, PayPal, Upwork, and Yahoo.

METHODS & TOOLS

Contextual Inquiry & Ethnography • Concept & Usability Testing • Diary Studies • Journey Mapping & Personas • RITE Testing • Design Thinking Facilitation • Voice of Customer Programs • Research Operations & Democratization • AI-Augmented Synthesis Tools • Qualitative & Quantitative Mixed Methods

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Senior UX Researcher — Wealth.com — Tempe, AZ (Remote) Nov 2024 – June 2026

Owned UX research across the wealth, estate, and tax-planning product ecosystem, translating complex financial workflows into product direction for a fast-moving fintech organization.

- Built the organization's first standing UX research infrastructure and repository, establishing repeatable processes for participant recruitment, study design, and insight synthesis where none had existed.
- Surfaced growth opportunities in the estate and trust-planning workflow that leadership had not identified, informing product roadmap prioritization.
- Combined qualitative and quantitative methods with AI-enabled synthesis tools to shorten research cycle time without sacrificing methodological rigor, enabling faster product decisions in a compressed startup timeline.

Senior UX Researcher, Professional Services — UserTesting — San Francisco, CA (Remote) June 2019 – Oct 2024

Led strategic and tactical UX research engagements for enterprise and agency clients across technology, finance, consumer, health, and automotive sectors.

- Built and managed a research program for discovery, concept testing, and usability feedback on in-vehicle voice interaction technology, informing design and safety improvements across 15+ prototypes.
- Led a mixed-method contextual inquiry into the video doorbell shopping experience that shaped a new customer journey map, with recommendations adopted for both e-commerce flow and in-store packaging in the Australian market.
- Directed a two-week mixed-method diary study of first-time use of a home fitness device, generating findings that improved onboarding flow and personalization for new users.
- Mentored junior researchers and ran internal and client-facing sessions on UX research best practices, contributing to the team's research democratization strategy.

Senior UX Researcher, Upwork Enterprise — Upwork — San Francisco, CA / Portland, OR 2016 – 2019

Led cross-platform UX research supporting collaboration between enterprise clients and global freelancers.

- Developed enterprise program-owner personas through mixed-methods research, directly informing product managers' feature prioritization decisions.
- Built a hiring-manager journey map that generated new concepts for simplifying mobile job posting, adopted into the product roadmap.
- Led contextual inquiry into procurement manager budget-control workflows, defining new sales and product positioning opportunities.
- Founded and ran a Voice of the Customer program, including bi-weekly "Meet the Customer" sessions and internal best-practice trainings.

Senior Design Research Consultant — Cisco Systems, Service Technology Group — San Francisco, CA 2014 – 2016

- Led contextual inquiry and persona development for security administrators; co-led a design sprint that produced five concepts to improve network security management.
- Defined a standardized usability metric combining task success and post-test survey data, applied across multiple studies to quantify UX improvements in network management software.
- Facilitated a Vendor Management design thinking workshop with C-suite executives, producing five opportunity areas that shaped new design requirements for the Cisco Services Vendor Management Hub.

Senior User Researcher, Digital Wallet — PayPal — San Jose, CA 2012 – 2014

- Defined a bi-monthly agile RITE testing program across phone, tablet, and web, running 25+ rapid tests that refined the digital wallet's core features during active design.
- Led a mixed-methods diary study and contextual inquiry into mobile shopping behavior, generating new product opportunities and directing a cross-functional design sprint on wallet concepts.
- Led usability research on mobile account activation, resulting in adopted recommendations for more prominent calls to action.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Cultural Anthropology — University of Oregon, Eugene, OR

M.A., Cultural Anthropology — University of Oregon, Eugene, OR (1994)

Focus in psychological anthropology and the anthropology of religion; ethnographic fieldwork on Asian religious groups domestically and in Taiwan; taught courses and presented original research.

B.A., Economics, Cum Laude — University of California, Irvine (1991)

UX Design Certificate — Bloc, 2018 (Wireframing, Rapid Prototyping, Content Design, InVision, Balsamiq, Sketch)