

Joel Califa

A Design Leader with a passion for systems, and a knack for delightful, straight-forward experiences. Over two decades of design and development experience—from cringe-worthy table-based websites to award-winning work.

WORK EXPERIENCE

VP, Design, **Unify** 2025-2026

- 🎉 Helped the company pivot their product direction.
- 👉 Worked with Company Policy on Unify's 2026 rebrand.
- 👉 Wrote a 250-slide fresh-eyes critique of onboarding that went viral inside the company.

VP, Design, **Heap** 2021-2023

- 🎉 Led the design team through Heap's acquisition by Contentsquare.
- 👉 Rolled out product principles with Product and Engineering.
- 👉 Led product vision work across the company.

Staff Product Designer, **GitHub** 2017-2021

- 🎉 Led design on Pull Requests and Code Review for over 180 million developers.
- 👉 Shipped Suggested Changes, Co-Authors, Draft PRs, Auto-Merge and multiline comments.
- 👉 Designed the Code button and early Codespaces flows.

Product Design Lead, **DigitalOcean** 2014-2017

- 🎉 Designed DigitalOcean's Team Accounts feature, which now accounts for over 30% of revenue.
- 👉 Built and managed a team of 7 Product Designers.
- 👉 Redesigned the onboarding flow, which increased conversion by over 5%.
- 👉 Articulated DigitalOcean's design principles and built a future roadmap in collaboration with Product.

Instructor, **General Assembly** 2015-2016

- 👉 Designed a 10-week front-end curriculum from scratch.

Product Designer, **Amicus** 2012-2014

- 🎉 Overhauled the most important flows in the app.
- 👉 Regularly committed production code.

Designer, **Netcraft** 2010

SPEAKING

- 👉 Spoke at design and development conferences around the world, including **Design Driven** (NYC), **SyntaxCon** (Charleston, SC), **Hybrid Conf** (Berlin), **Mixin Conf** (Perth), **One Day Out** (Copenhagen) and **RETHINK**.

EDUCATION

BFA Design & Technology, **Parsons**

- 🎉 Founded Design & Code, an organization with branches at Parsons and SVA that taught designers how to code.
- 👉 Voted most likely to write this CV.

TOOLS & SKILLS

- 🎉 Information architecture. Systems design.
- 👉 Usability testing. A/B testing. Heuristic evaluations.
- 👉 Taking criticism the right way. Killing my babies.
- 👉 Figma, Photoshop, CorelDRAW.
- 👉 Semantic, cross-browser HTML/CSS, JS.
- 👉 Prototyping in code with AI coding agents.
- 👉 Git. React, Next.js. Ruby, Rails. PHP.
- 👉 Quick Learner. Top-tier Google skills.
- 🎉 Experience building and leading design teams.
- 👉 Success with agile methodologies and OKRs.
- 👉 Hard worker. Self starter. Detail-oriented. Collaborative.

CONTACT

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