Yuma Mitsui

Experience Design Strategist

October 2026

Portfolio

www.yumamitsui.com

Contact

vwnh.98@gmail.com

LinkedIn

https://www.linkedin.com/in/yumamitsui/

Tool

Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop
Premiere, iMovie
Figma, Adobe XD
FigJam, Miro
Google Slides, Docs, Spreadsheet
Microsoft Office
Slack, Teams, Asana
Zoom
Generative AI tools

Language

Japanese	[Native]
English	[Business]
Italian	[Novice]

License

Driver's license
TOEIC Listening & Reading [820]

Experience Design Strategist with 10+ years of experience turning human insights into new products, services, and customer experiences.

Based in Tokyo and San Francisco, he has led projects across design research, experience strategy, service design, and innovation for clients in public transportation, mobility, consumer electronics, financial services, and technology. His work ranges from shaping new digital services and physical experiences to designing innovation programs that help organizations build new capabilities.

He has led multidisciplinary teams through the full process—from research and opportunity framing to co-creation, prototyping, customer validation, and strategic implementation—working closely with designers, engineers, and senior stakeholders. He helps teams make sense of complex challenges, turn insights into tangible ideas, and move them toward implementation.

Drawing on research and project experience across Japan, India, Africa, and the United States, he brings a multicultural perspective to understanding people, society, and emerging behaviors. He is passionate about uncovering new opportunities through research and working with diverse teams to turn those insights into experiences and services people genuinely value.

Work experience

2023.5 -
AKQA Uka Inc. Tokyo, Japan
Senior Strategist, Lead Strategist

2020.1 - 2023.4
btrax Japan LLC Tokyo, Japan and San Francisco, CA U.S.
Design Research Manager, Service Design Lead

2016.2 - 2020.1
GK Industrial Design Inc. Tokyo, Japan
Design Researcher at Design Research Initiative

Education

2015.3
M.A in Design Strategy
Kyushu University, Graduate School of Design | Fukuoka, Japan

2014.9 - 2015.2
Product Service System Design Course [Exchange Program]
Politecnico di Milano | Milan, Italy

2011.3
B.A in Environment and Information Studies
Keio University SFC | Fujisawa, Japan

2009.3
B.A in Business and Commerce
Keio University | Tokyo, Japan

Award

2019.10
GOOD DESIGN BEST 100
GOOD DESIGN AWARD 2019 [Japan]
Work | Cruise Ferry - SEA PASEO

2012.12
Excellence Award / Best Idea Award
issue +design Competition [Japan]
Work | My Channel

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Key Skills & Experience

Product and service innovation from opportunity framing to concept development and validation
Designing and facilitating design sprints, co-creation, and innovation workshops
Designing, executing, and analyzing qualitative and quantitative user research; insight generation
Service concept development, customer journey mapping, prototyping, and UI/UX design
CX vision and experience strategy development (proposition definition, roadmap, activation planning)
Leading multidisciplinary projects across strategy, design, engineering, and client teams
Presenting research findings, strategic recommendations, and concepts to senior stakeholders
Proposal development, client engagement, and business development
Managing and mentoring junior and mid-level team members

Speaking & Writing

Lecturer: Global Challenge! Startup Team Fukuoka (2020–2022)
Lecturer: Kaga City Global Startup Development Program (2021)
Article: Designs that make the new normal safe and comfortable. [Freshtrax]
Article: Learning from the leapfrog effect for service design. [Freshtrax]
Article: SEA PASEO | Co-Design brings a new mobility experience. [GK Report]

Work Experience [1]

AKQA Uka Inc. (AKQA Japan)

https://akqauka.com/ Ebisu 2-36-13-B1F Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, Japan

Business	CX transformation, brand strategy and design
Employees	Approx. 40 (as of Sep. 2026)
Position	Lead Strategist (May 2026 – present) Senior Strategist (May 2023 – Mar 2026)
Employment	Full-time
Duration	May 2023 – present (3 years, 5 months)
Key Responsibilities	Experience and innovation strategy, research and insight synthesis, workshop and sprint facilitation, multidisciplinary project leadership, proposal development

Featured Works (AKQA)

CX Design Capability Program for MUFG

MUFG Bank

[Project Lead] Proposal development, program design, facilitation, stakeholder management — Jun – Nov 2026 (ongoing)

Led the proposal and overall design of a CX capability-building program for MUFG Bank, aimed at helping customer-centered ways of working take root across the organization. Working closely with the CX Design team, translated their ambition into a practical learning journey designed to build both understanding and hands-on experience across diverse functions.

Designed a three-stage program combining e-learning, a one-day hands-on academy, and a two-month Sprint Lab. The program guides participants from understanding the fundamentals of CX design to applying them in cross-functional teams — moving through customer understanding, problem framing, ideation, prototyping, and validation.

Recently completed the design and production of the e-learning program, consisting of six short modules covering the fundamentals and practical process of CX design. Currently leading the development of the one-day academy, including its methodology, exercises, research materials, and facilitation approach. This will be followed by the Sprint Lab, where selected teams will apply the process to real business challenges and develop and test customer experience initiatives.

The overall program is designed not simply as training, but as a foundation for building MUFG's internal capability to continuously practice and evolve CX design.

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Featured Works

CX Vision and Strategy Playbook Development for JRE GO

East Japan Railway Company (JR East)

[Project Lead] Workshop design and facilitation, content development — Oct – Dec 2025

Proposed and led the creation of a CX Playbook for the development team behind JRE GO — JR East's new digital reservation service — aimed at strengthening team engagement and establishing a shared vision for the customer experience. Designed and facilitated a participatory workshop series (two half-day sessions) to draw out the team's values and motivations, uncovering a common conviction at the core: "We want to create a future where travelers can journey freely, in their own way."

Built on this insight to develop the CX vision: "GO YOUR WAY — Your partner for moving every journey forward, comfortably." This became the foundation for a seven-chapter CX Playbook — including design principles and a roadmap — completed in approximately three months.

Led a wide range of work across content design, editing, and production of both digital and print formats. Workshop participants gave an average satisfaction score of 6.2 out of 7. The client expressed interest in ongoing collaboration.

Concept for a Customer Experience Hub (EBC)

ITOCHU Techno-Solutions Corporation (CTC)

[Research & Concept Lead] Interview, analysis, concept development — Sep – Oct 2025

To help define the direction for a customer-facing experience hub CTC was planning, designed and led interviews with 12 senior IT decision-makers and contacts in departments CTC hadn't yet worked with. Led the overall project design and analysis, sharing interview facilitation with a colleague.

Three key insights came out of the research: customers want a partner who can support them across understanding, vision, and execution; they're looking for the push to go beyond what they already know; and they want dedicated time and space — away from their daily work — to think seriously about the future.

These were brought together into the concept: "Future Gym — A place to explore, create, gather, and challenge toward the future we want to build." The concept was adopted by the client and used in an executive presentation. The client team is currently working through internal steps to move toward building the facility.

Innovation Workshop for Business Transformation

Toyota Motor Corporation

[Project Lead] Workshop design, lead facilitation — Apr – May 2025

Toyota's IT division came to us with a clear goal: 'Change the way our people see their work' and 'Break down silos and get people thinking differently.' Designed and ran a two-day workshop (half-day × 2, 30 participants) in person.

The program combined scenario planning and design thinking to help participants step back from daily routines and explore future possibilities — ending with selecting and visualizing ideas that could realistically be implemented. Led the program as project lead and head facilitator, directing table facilitators.

Participants shared: "We practiced a kind of thinking we never do normally," "I connected with people from departments I'd never met," and "This rarely happens at Toyota." Overall satisfaction averaged 6.78 out of 7. The strongest ideas are now moving toward prototyping.

Other Works (AKQA)

- CTC corporate website renewal — strategy and experience design [2025]
- CX vision and playbook for an automotive manufacturer pursuing CX-led transformation [2024]
- Design thinking and service design training program instructor [2023]

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Work Experience [2]

btrax Japan LLC / btrax, Inc.

https://btrax.com/jp/

Otemachi 1-6-1-6F, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan / 665 Third St. Suite 536 San Francisco, CA 94107

Business	UX research and design, global marketing, brand experience design
Employees	Approx. 20 (btrax Japan: ~10, btrax San Francisco: ~10, as of April 2023)
Position	Service Design Lead (Feb - Apr 2023) Innovation Facilitator / Design Research Manager (Mar 2022 - Jan 2023) Innovation Facilitator / Business Producer (Jan 2020 - Feb 2022)
Employment	Full-time
Duration	Jan 2020 – Apr 2023 (3 years, 4 months)
Key Responsibilities	UX research design and execution, insight synthesis, IA, UI design, prototyping, workshop design and facilitation, design thinking training, project and team management, blog writing for internal media

Featured Works (btrax)

End-to-End Product Innovation for SUBARU in the U.S. Market

Subaru Corporation (U.S. market)

[Project Lead] Product strategy, UX research, concept development and validation, UI/UX design, beta development support — Feb 2021 – Aug 2022

Led the development of a new digital service for SUBARU's U.S. market, with the goal of deepening customer engagement beyond the vehicle itself. Through user research conducted primarily in the U.S., uncovered a key insight: "Looking back at recorded trips makes the experience of going out with the car feel even more special." Built on this to develop a service concept — a road trip recording app that lets users easily capture their journeys and revisit them through photos and maps. User testing confirmed that this kind of re-experiencing also strengthened attachment to the SUBARU brand and sense of engagement.

Led the full process as project lead — covering UX research, user testing, co-creation workshops, and UI/UX design. Developed a beta app, iterated based on user feedback, and took the concept through to a formal proposal to Subaru of America. Also supported the client team in building confidence with agile development methods and strengthening their creative problem-solving mindset.

Design Thinking Training Program in San Francisco

Nomura Research Institute (NRI)

[Project Lead] Program design, lectures, facilitation — 2021 – 2023 (5 cohorts)

Led a 10-week, San Francisco-based immersive training program for companies seeking to develop DX and design talent — running the full program across five cohorts. Based on client needs, rebuilt the existing program from the ground up, taking ownership of overall design, lectures, facilitation, and mentoring of assistant facilitators.

Rather than simply introducing Silicon Valley's innovation culture and ways of working, the role involved translating those ideas into a form that Japanese participants could connect with in their own context. Through on-the-ground experiences — including company visits, everyday life in the city, and open dialogue — helped participants develop a nuanced understanding of the cultural differences and common ground between Japan and the U.S.

Participants noted: "The way I see things has changed," "Not just my design skills, but my mindset shifted too," and "Every day brought something new to learn." The program has continued to run under a successor after leaving the role.

Other Projects (btrax)

- Concept validation and UI/UX design for a digital healthcare service [2022–2023]
- Design thinking workshops for citizen-led innovation [2021–2023]
- Japanese market research for a global online store platform [2020]

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Work Experience [3]

GK Industrial Design Inc. (within the GK Design Group)

GK Design Research Initiative

https://gkid.co.jp/ https://www.gkdri.com/ https://www.gk-design.co.jp/

Takada 3-37-10-4F, Toshima-ku, Tokyo, Japan

Business	Industrial design and design research
Employees	Approx. 20 (Design Research Initiative: 3, GK Design Group: ~200, as of January 2020)
Position	Design Researcher
Employment	Full-time
Duration	Feb 2016 – Jan 2020 (4 years)
Key Responsibilities	Research design and execution, insight synthesis, co-creation workshop design and facilitation

Featured Works (GK)

New Concept Development for a Seto Inland Sea Car Ferry

Setonaikai Kisen Co., Ltd.

[Research Lead] Research and analysis, concept development, facilitation — Feb 2017 – Aug 2019

Joined as research lead on a project to design a new car ferry for the first time in about 30 years on the routes connecting Hiroshima, Kure, and Matsuyama. Designed and ran an onboard research program — combining interviews, observation, and surveys — and uncovered a core issue: despite a wide mix of passengers with different backgrounds and purposes, the interior was essentially one large open room, leaving people feeling uncomfortable and self-conscious around other passengers.

Starting from this insight, developed the overall concept: 'Park on the Setonaikai — A shared space for everyone to enjoy the Seto Inland Sea journey.' Also ran a co-creation workshop with cabin crew to develop a three-zone interior concept: "Kai" (快, comfort) for quiet, relaxed time; "Kai" (会, connection) for conversation and dining with fellow passengers; and "Kai" (開, openness) for the most open and freeing experience, connected to an inner courtyard and rooftop deck.

Won the Good Design Award Best 100 and several other design awards. Since launching in 2019, the ferry has attracted a growing number of passengers seeking out the experience, contributing to the client's business growth.

New Kitchen Appliance Concept Based on Ethnographic Research

SAMSUNG India (Indian market)

[Research Lead] Field research and analysis, concept development — Sep – Nov 2017

To support SAMSUNG India in developing a new refrigerator concept for the Indian market, designed and conducted ethnographic research in local homes. Through extended observation of how families managed food at home, witnessed a telling moment: a family had left warmed curd on top of the refrigerator to cool down, only to have a stray cat come by and lick it. From this, drew out a distinctly Indian insight: "There are things we want to store at room temperature" and "We want to keep our food in good condition without anything getting in the way."

Built on this insight to develop the concept "Curd Maestro" — a refrigerator designed to help users make perfect curd at home. The concept was developed into a flagship product for the Indian market and launched in 2020.

Other Projects (GK)

- Field research for a new mobility service concept [2017 | South Africa and Kenya]
- Nutrition management and cooking support concept for diabetes patients [2017–2018]
- Future mobility experience scenario planning [2018–2019]