

Joe Pendlebury

Lead UX Researcher & Strategist

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Location: Derby, UK

Summary

Lead UX Researcher and Strategist with 20+ years across fintech, insurtech, retail, healthcare, and air travel. Known for research-led discovery and Conversion Rate Optimisation (CRO) that prevents costly misalignment before build. Prevented £135m loss at Next, drove +37% suits engagement and reduced suits returns from 51% to 36%, achieved +20% onboarding completion at By Miles, and delivered +5% checkout conversion with +15% Average Order Value (AOV) at Funky Pigeon. Uses AI-assisted research workflows to accelerate discovery and shape product roadmaps alongside Engineering and Product teams.

Skills

Hard Skills and Tools: UX Strategy, User Research, Usability Testing, A/B Testing, Journey Mapping, Conversion Rate Optimisation, Checkout Optimisation, Behavioural Analysis, Mobile UX (iOS/Android), Data-informed Design, AI-assisted Research & Analysis, Stakeholder Workshops

Soft Skills: Stakeholder Alignment, Facilitation, Prioritisation, Analytical Thinking, Decision Making, Storytelling, Mentorship & Leadership, Systems Thinking

Work Experience

Lead UX Researcher at Lovey | Jan 2026 - Present | Remote, UK

Bootstrapped UK SME lender and broker, with 900% growth in four years, funding £400m to 8,000+ businesses.

- Embedded as the sole UX researcher, setting research strategy independently while aligning outputs to both product design and growth objectives across the business.
- Built a scalable, Notion-based research practice from scratch – including structured insight, recommendation, and experiment databases – giving the business its first centralised evidence base for product decision-making.
- Ran three UserTesting studies – 8 participants each – evaluating a high-fidelity proof of concept for a major end-to-end loan application redesign spanning acquisition through to loan completion, generating 63 findings including 21 critical P1 ("Act Now") insights to guide further design iteration.
- Audited two Pay-Per-Click (PPC) landing pages and a new iOS app build using Hotjar, Microsoft Clarity, and Google Analytics 4 (GA4), surfacing 91 UX issues across all three and generating 7 prioritised experiment recommendations.
- Led strategic research into a proposed Business Credit Score product, producing a competitive landscape analysis to inform early-stage go/no-go decision-making.
- Identified, diagnosed, and resolved a critical GA4 tracking fault causing a 72 percentage point discrepancy between analytics tools, restoring accurate conversion measurement and marketing attribution.
- Delivered strategic research and advisory work across customer sentiment analysis, app strategy, referral programme feasibility, and iOS build reviews to inform product, growth, and operational decision-making.

Lead Product Designer at By Miles | Sept 2024 - Jan 2026 | Remote, UK

Pay-per-mile car insurance insurtech with 50,000+ customers and £26m GWP.

- Increased checkout conversion by 8% among price-comparison customers by reframing pay-per-mile value proposition and validating designs through user testing.
- Reduced tracker onboarding abandonment by 20% and support contacts by 10% through evidence-based redesign at key decision points.
- Conducted a member interview study generating 400+ observations with an AI-assisted scoring model, which shaped Q4 2025 priorities toward smaller value-add features for faster delivery.
- Introduced AI-assisted research workflows that improved team efficiency by 20% while maintaining regulatory compliance and ethical standards.

Senior UX Designer at Funky Pigeon | Sept 2022 - Sept 2024 | Remote, UK

UK personalised cards and gifts retailer, £32m annual revenue.

- Improved checkout conversion by 5% through simplification informed by user research and usability testing.
- Lifted average order value by 15% through ethically framed upsell and cross-sell journeys based on behavioural insight.
- Reduced card editor drop-off by 12% by streamlining the editor experience, adding high-value features, and deprecating rarely used functionality.

UX Designer at STERIS | Mar 2019 - Sept 2022 | Derby, UK

Global infection prevention and surgical solutions provider, £4.4bn annual revenue.

- Redesigned the global SynergyTrak surgical tracking system based on field research in hospitals and sterilisation facilities, improving task completion times and reducing operator errors using Google's HEART framework.
- Eliminated operator shortcuts that compromised tracking integrity by resolving legacy usability issues, improving data accuracy and reducing error rates across hospital workflows.
- Improved mobile logistics tools for surgical tray deliveries, reducing delivery errors and improving tracking efficiency.
- Served as sole UX resource partnering with US teams to redesign hospital systems internationally, later recruiting and mentoring a UX designer.

Senior Mobile UX Architect at Next | Apr 2014 - Mar 2019 | Leicester, UK

Major UK fashion and homeware retailer, £4.2bn revenue, international operations.

- Prevented projected £135 million loss by proving burger menu reduced engagement; exposing category links increased click-through by 70% and lifted conversion 0.5 percentage points.
- Increased suits engagement 37% and reduced returns from 51% to 36% through research-led navigation redesign.
- Transformed Next's physical Directory into an iPad app with page-turning interaction and tap-to-shop functionality, achieving 35 to 40% conversion rate while reducing printing costs.
- Led mobile innovation squad prototyping AR try-on and virtual configurators that shaped Next's three-year innovation roadmap.
- Promoted from mobile UX architect in August 2015 following commercial impact on mobile channel growth.

Assistant UX Manager at Boots | Apr 2013 - Apr 2014 | Nottingham, UK

Major UK health and beauty retailer, £7.3bn revenue, part of Walgreens Boots Alliance.

- Increased checkout conversion from 3% to 3.5% (17% relative improvement) through strategic simplification of product discovery, product pages, and checkout flows.
- Overhauled product taxonomy and navigation site-wide, reduced dwell time and backtracking on Product List Pages by 15% and improved findability for SEO-optimised category pages.

Website Performance Manager at Buymobiles | Jul 2012 - Aug 2013 | Derby, UK

UK mobile phone contracts and devices retailer.

- Increased checkout completion by 4% through end-to-end flow redesign, fixing critical payment step where unclear labelling caused bank name entries instead of cardholder names.
- Simplified contract and tariff comparison on product pages and improved add-to-basket performance during high-traffic device launches for Apple, Samsung, and Sony.

Senior UX Designer at British Midland International (bmi) | Oct 2011 - Jul 2012 | Derby, UK

Major UK airline serving Europe, Middle East, and Africa.

- Reduced booking flow drop-offs by 10 to 12% through redesign of complex tasks including fare selection, baggage, and seat choice.
- Improved loyalty engagement by 8% through redesigned iOS app experience that encouraged repeat bookings among frequent flyers.

Web Designer at Synergy Health | Aug 2007 - Oct 2011 | Derby, UK

Global healthcare sterilisation services provider.

- Designed and built TrakStar surgical instrument tracking system (later rebranded to SynergyTrak), adopted across UK hospitals and facilities in Netherlands, France, Italy, Costa Rica, and China's first superhospital.
- Conducted field research shadowing sterile services operators to understand real-world constraints and established usability practices that informed the SynergyTrak redesign years later.
- Overhauled corporate website introducing reusable CMS templates and training, gave teams greater autonomy, and reduced delivery bottlenecks.

- Promoted from junior web developer in 2009; returned to STERIS in 2019 after the 2014 acquisition to redesign the same system as SynergyTrak.

Multimedia Design Assistant at Leicestershire Police | Oct 2005 - Oct 2006 | Leicester, UK

UK police force serving Leicestershire and Rutland.

- Year-long placement at Leicestershire Constabulary HQ as part of BSc Multimedia Computing degree at De Montfort University.
- Created Police National Computer training website adopted by constabularies UK-wide to standardise guidance and improve consistency, receiving Chief Constable award for national impact.
- Designed and developed e-learning materials for Police Constables and PCSOs and made complex training content more accessible across the force.

Education

- BSc (Hons) in Multimedia Computing, First Class - De Montfort University, Leicester, UK, 2003 – 2007