

# WILLIAM THOMPSON

PRODUCT LEADER | EDUCATOR | CONNECTOR

## Professional Summary

I believe technology should serve people. For over 20 years, I've led cross-functional teams to create scalable, human-centered solutions across automotive, education, and emerging tech. From software-defined vehicles to immersive platforms, my work bridges product strategy, business development, and talent growth to align innovation with purpose. As both a product leader and educator, I build inclusive ecosystems that evolve with users and deliver lasting impact, moving people, business, and products forward through clarity, empathy, and collaboration.

## Work History

### University of Michigan - Lecturer & Program Innovator

01/2022 - Current

- **Curriculum Design & Instruction:** Designed and launched courses in AI, UX/CX design, and product management, using market research and learner profiling to build scalable, industry-aligned curricula. Contributed to the development of the nation's first master's certificate program in Automotive UX, a unique credential aligning talent with industry demand.
- **Student-Centered & Experiential Learning:** Delivered lectures and coached student teams through hands-on projects in software-defined mobility and product innovation. Courses consistently reached capacity with waitlists each semester, driven by strong student engagement and real-world application using tools like Figma and Jira.
- **Faculty & Institutional Impact:** Collaborated with faculty to align curriculum with industry expectations, supporting increased enrollment and career readiness. Helped place students at General Motors, Stellantis, Rocket Mortgage, and Apple, strengthening the university's reputation as a launchpad for product and CX leadership.

### Aquent - Director of Industry (Mobility & Tech Innovation)

02/2024 - Current

- **Program Design:** Developed and launched the HOTT program (Hire, Onboard, Train, Transfer) to upskill professionals in AI, UX, and immersive media. Achieved 60% candidate placement within two weeks of availability and maintained a backlog of 20+ qualified professionals, validating strong market demand.

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📁 [Case Studies](#)

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## Skills

- Product Management
- Product Strategy
- P&L Ownership
- Strategic Partnerships & Growth
- Innovation Leadership
- Design Thinking
- UX/CX/UI Strategy
- Experience Design
- Agile & Scalable Product Delivery
- Emerging Tech Integration (AI, XR, SDV)
- Cross-Functional Team Leadership
- Strategic Communication & Influence

## Education

Rochester College  
Rochester Hills, MI  
BBA

Macomb Community College  
Warren, MI  
AAS Digital Design

- **Business Development:** Secured supplier status with a major automotive OEM, generating a \$2M+ net-new annual revenue stream and elevating Aquent's role as a preferred digital experience partner in mobility innovation.
- **Centers of Excellence & Coaching:** Launched Centers of Excellence in AI, Mixed Reality, and Design; trained a cross-functional "revenue pod" on prompt-engineering techniques, resulting in a 10% increase in win rates and accelerated deal velocity within six months.
- **Human-Centered & Mobility-First Repositioning:** Pioneered a mobility-first strategy that reshaped client design approaches and influenced long-term product roadmaps, driving increased strategic deal flow and deeper market alignment.
- **Culture of Innovation:** Embedded design thinking across business units, expanding Aquent's service offerings into high-growth areas like AI and software engineering, while improving solution quality and customer engagement.

## Rightpoint - Head of Mobility

04/2022 - 02/2024

- **Program Building:** Launched and led a new mobility-focused business vertical, aligning product delivery with the evolving needs of clients like Nissan, GM, Malibu Boats, Yamaha Marine, and Sixt. Implemented iterative prototyping, user research, and agile methods to build strategies grounded in customer insight and market demand.
- **Leadership & Growth:** Led interdisciplinary teams to deliver high-value solutions, driving a 60% increase in lead generation, 3x OEM client growth, and a 25% revenue lift. Collaborated with mobility and marine clients including Hertz, Yamaha Marine, and Malibu Boats to create differentiated, platform-integrated experiences.
- **Business Leadership:** Owned P&L for the business unit, ensuring profitability while scaling resource investment. Integrated AI, AR/VR, and connected platform technologies into client roadmaps, helping Rightpoint establish leadership in the next-generation mobility and marine sectors.

## General Motors - Sr User Experience Manager

12/2004 - 11/2021

- **User Experience & Environment Transformation:** Scaled an internal UX and product team to 130+ designers, engineers, and researchers, reducing vendor dependency and improving release velocity by 30%. Built organizational capability to support GM's shift to in-house digital leadership.
- Oversaw a \$30M budget and led cross-functional teams in launching 80+ global vehicles and digital platforms, including award-winning experiences for the Cadillac Lyriq, Escalade, and Buick Avenir Concept.
- Drove end-to-end innovation through iterative testing, agile UX delivery, and cross-functional collaboration, setting a foundation for GM's transition into a Software-Defined Vehicle (SDV) strategy. expectations.

## Certifications / Organizations

- Generative AI - University of Michigan
- AI Ethics, Usage, and Creativity - University of Michigan
- IQ Labs Board Advisor
- Leading SAFe - Scaled Agile (SAFe 5)
- Harvard Emerging Leader
- The Extraordinary Leader
- Team GM Transformers
- Workplace of Choice Committee Chair

## Links | Articles

- [2022 Chevrolet Silverado](#)
- [How gaming is informing the design of vehicle dashboards](#)
- [2023 Cadillac Lyriq](#)
- [Industry Insights: Meet auto UX leader and UMSI lecturer Bill Thompson](#)
- [UMSI accelerates automotive UX program to become hub for industry experts](#)
- [Extended reality and its impact on automotive market research](#)

## Awards

- Wards Auto Best UX - 2023 Cadillac Lyriq, 2021 Cadillac Escalade, 2021 Chevrolet TrailBlazer, 2017 Buick Enclave
- Eyes On Design - 2015 Buick Avenir Concept, 2014 Cadillac ELR
- Popular Mechanics Top Gadget Cadillac CUE