Chris Pizzo

Creative leader, *brand builder,* systems thinker.

LOCATION	San Francisco Bay Area
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Creative director with 18 years of experience leading brand and marketing design.

I set creative direction, build teams and develop systems that help companies deliver strong, consistent work through growth and change. I integrate AI across research, creative development and prototyping, and build reusable workflows to support creative teams and operations.

Experience

ZenBusiness

DEC 2025 – PRESENT

Director, Brand Creative Austin, Texas (remote)

B2C SaaS platform that helps entrepreneurs start, run and grow their businesses.

- Lead creative direction for the launch of the company's flagship AI product, directing agency partners across video, paid digital, web, social and influencer content.
- Directed the company homepage redesign and a brand commercial, translating the brand's positioning into its primary website and a broader story for entrepreneurs.
- Build the creative infrastructure behind a growing brand function, including project intake, shared brand resources and reusable templates for marketing teams.
- Develop reusable AI workflows, agent instructions and project knowledge bases to support research, concept development, writing and creative review.

Expel

JAN 2023 – JUN 2025

Creative Director Herndon, Virginia (remote)

Cybersecurity company offering managed detection and response (MDR) across cloud, on-prem and SaaS.

- Led a company-wide brand refresh that aligned product, marketing and sales on one identity and strengthened the company's credibility with enterprise buyers.
- Built creative operations and a scalable design system so a small US-based team could serve marketing in the US and UK.
- Launched brand enablement for Sales and Customer Success: decks and templates both teams called a "game-changer" for credibility with customers.
- Directed brand activation for major events, including the flagship RSA Conference presence, unifying messaging, motion design, swag and environmental design with the Events team.

Doma

MAR 2021 – DEC 2022

Senior Creative Director San Francisco, California

Real estate technology company that acquired two legacy title companies and listed on the New York Stock Exchange in 2021.

- Unified three companies under one brand, identity and design system, aligning legacy and startup teams across go-to-market functions.
- Led IPO readiness for the brand: investor decks, press materials and internal brand systems aligned to executive strategy.
- Built creative operations from scratch, so a lean team delivered 600+ assets a quarter without losing quality or burning out.
- Grew the team from 2 to 7, built a mentorship model pairing senior and junior designers, and promoted one to art director.

SAP Concur

JUN 2015 – MAR 2021

Head of Brand Design, TripIt San Francisco, California

TripIt, the consumer travel app, as SAP Concur brought it into its enterprise travel management offering.

- Led TripIt's full rebrand across visual identity, messaging and product touchpoints, repositioning the brand for travelers and the companies that buy travel for them.
- Directed the TripIt.com redesign, improving accessibility, mobile experience and content strategy; sign-ups rose 10% after launch and the work won the 2019 Marketing Excellence Award.
- Built TripIt's global design system and illustration library, still in use, for localized, on-brand work across teams.
- Directed a data story on traveler happiness that earned national media coverage, including Good Morning America.

AI Practice

AI-assisted research, brand strategy, concept development, copywriting, image generation and rapid prototyping. Build reusable AI workflows and project knowledge bases to support creative development, review and team operations.

Tools: Claude, ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, Midjourney, Claude Code

Skills

Brand and creative leadership: Brand strategy, brand identity, creative direction, integrated campaigns, agency management, brand governance, rebrands

Creative operations: Design systems, brand enablement, project management, cross-functional collaboration, executive communication, stakeholder management

People: Team building, hiring, mentorship, team development, delegated leadership, culture building

Tools and craft: Figma, Adobe Creative Suite, motion and video, UX/UI design, prototyping, digital accessibility

Writing

Field Notes, at chrispizzodesign.com/field-notes

People → Process → Product: Leaders as Mechanics, Not Race Car Drivers
Why leaders who tune their people and process first get better work, with less burnout.

Why Facilitation Is the Creative Leadership Skill That Matters More Than Ever
Reframes creative leadership as facilitation, not control: how to build trust and keep a team steady through change.

Tend to Your CROPs: Why Creative Ops Is a Leadership Mindset
Makes the case for creative operations as a leadership mindset: how a team scales and stays engaged.

Awards and Professional Development

- 2019 Marketing Excellence Award, SAP Concur (TripIt.com redesign)
- IDEO U: Foundations in Design Thinking, Change Leadership, Cultivating Creative Collaboration, Storytelling for Influence, Leading for Creativity
- Deloitte: Six Signature Traits of Inclusive Leadership
- House of gAi: AI for Branding Masterclass, 2026 (in progress)
- Maven: Maximize Your Design Process With AI, Erin Essex, 2026

Education

B.S., Business Administration (Marketing), California State University, Sacramento