

ISHA DESWAL

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

UX Research Leader with 5+ years of experience building and scaling customer insights programs, leading cross-functional research teams, and influencing product strategy across enterprise digital experiences. Experienced managing researchers, establishing research operations, driving executive decision-making, and leveraging qualitative research and AI-assisted methodologies to improve customer and business outcomes.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Research Strategy | Research Operations | Research Team Leadership | Research Roadmaps | Product Strategy | Career Development & Coaching | Executive Stakeholder Management | Generative & Evaluative Research | Human-AI Interaction Research | User-Centered Design | Insights Repository Management | Qualitative & Quantitative Research | Market Research | Design Thinking Workshop Facilitation

TOOLS & PLATFORMS

Qualtrics | Quantum Metric | UserTesting | UserZoom | Askable | Respondent | SurveyMonkey | SQL | R | STATA | Spotfire | Figma | Miro | Claude | Gemini | Copilot | ChatGPT

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

United Airlines (contract via Dexian) | November 2021 - Present

Lead UX Researcher | June 2023 - Present

- Manage and develop a team of 5 UX researchers, overseeing research prioritization, career development, mentorship, and delivery across multiple product domains.
- Established and scaled research operations processes, including research intake, prioritization, stakeholder alignment, and insight dissemination across product, design, and engineering teams, reducing research turnaround time by 66%.
- Defined and maintained the UX research roadmap supporting strategic initiatives across customer acquisition, booking, loyalty, and post-purchase experiences, impacting digital experiences for over 250k monthly users.
- Coached and mentored 7 researchers through project planning, stakeholder management, storytelling, and career development, resulting in promotion of 3 team members to Sr. User Experience Researchers.
- Led 15+ design-thinking and strategy workshops with product owners, developers, marketing, and executive stakeholders to synthesize user insights, contributing to strategic investment decisions that impacted the 170+ million annual travelers.
- Streamlined enterprise feedback mechanisms and insights repositories, translating user insights into measurable digital platform improvements that increased engagement metrics.
- Advocated for accessibility and inclusive design standards, influencing organizational customer experience guidelines; presented United's digital accessibility journey at the 2026 CSUN Assistive Technology Conference.

- Led a structured research intelligence practice leveraging AI tools (Gemini, Claude, Copilot, Figma AI) via advanced frameworks (e.g., CO-STAR) as force multipliers within a methodology-first framework, improving operational efficiency by 30%. Hosted multiple working sessions and workshops to train the team to use AI tools to increase efficiencies in daily tasks.

Sr. UX Researcher | December 2022 - June 2023

- Created and led a research team, developing the user research roadmap for digital initiatives across United's platforms to impact the 70+ million users of the United Mobile app.
- Partnered with senior product and design leaders to prioritize strategic research initiatives aligned with company OKRs, incorporating qualitative feedback from 500+ users.
- Pioneered the integration of continuous generative research into UX design processes, enhancing stakeholder engagement.
- Managed multiple stakeholders across iOS, Android, mobile web, desktop, airport kiosk and in-flight entertainment system development to ensure consistent, reliable product research, opportunity identification, and alignment with overarching business strategy.

Senior Research and Insights Analyst | November 2021 - November 2022

- Led and managed quantitative portfolio-level research involving 500,000+ participants, generating actionable user insights to elevate United's premier member experiences and inform executive product and loyalty strategy decisions.
- Conceptualized and executed responsive web layouts for 15+ email campaigns, applying user feedback insights to boost NPS scores by 7% among premier members.
- Enhanced data analysis processes using Spotfire and SQL, improving the efficiency of reporting to executive stakeholders by 33%.

HCD Research | April 2021 - November 2021

Market Research Analyst

- Spearheaded customer research using traditional (like surveys and in-depth interviews) and neuroscientific methodologies (biometric testing and implicit association testing) to generate deep consumer insights that impacted strategic decisions for 8 clients across CPG, pharmaceuticals, medical devices and political consulting.
- Interpreted complex data using SPSS to deliver actionable recommendations, influencing client decision-making and product strategy.
- Trained the team to use R and STATA which resulted in reduced time for analysis and reporting, increasing efficiency by almost 50%.

LEADERSHIP & CONFERENCES

User Experience Professionals Association (Remote) | Spring 2026

UX Research Mentor

- Coached and mentored emerging UX professionals on research methodologies, portfolio development, and stakeholder management strategies.

CSUN Assistive Technology Conference (Anaheim, CA) | March 2026

Speaker

- Presented at the annual CSUN conference about United Airlines' journey in shifting left and integrating accessibility in the user experience strategy and design process.

DDX Design and Innovation Conference (San Diego) | Fall 2025

Speaker

- Invited to talk at the annual DDX conference about behavioral science and its applications in the user experience field.

EDUCATION

Master of Behavioral & Decision Science

University of Pennsylvania, United States | December 2020