Nina Serpiello, PhD

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Research strategist with 25+ years designing and leading patient-centered research for pharmaceutical, biotech and medical device clients, and customer research for enterprise and AI products. I turn what I learn from patients, caregivers, physicians and customers into strategy for product development and launch, across the U.S., India, Europe and Latin America.

Expertise

Patient-centered research : In-depth interviews with patients, caregivers and physicians; in-home and clinical fieldwork; patient journey mapping; human factors and usability testing of drug-delivery devices; projective and participatory methods

Consulting & delivery : Client relationship management, business development, multi-project leadership, workshop facilitation, strategic reports and executive presentations

Research governance : Human factors research proposal review and approval; HIPAA compliance and adverse event reporting training; clinical research training

Quantitative methods & tools : Surveys, Likert-scale ratings, product usage telemetry, AI-assisted synthesis; dScout, UserTesting, ChatGPT

Therapeutic areas : Diabetes, psoriasis, breast cancer and oncology, women's health, adolescent eating disorders

Experience

Oracle Corporation · Lead Principal UX Design Researcher · Feb 2022 – Sep 2026

Oracle's product teams were building AI-assisted features for the Cloud HCM suite and needed to hear how customers actually experienced them. I led a team of 4 researchers, partnering with product management, UX design, engineering and data science to bring that evidence in. We ran a customer listening program with monthly interviews for nearly two years, reporting to product teams and leadership with customer-evidence videos. In discovery research with dozens of key global customers, one study of six customers surfaced 105 pain points and 32 opportunities that drove the first redesign of Workforce Compensation in 9 years. I also co-developed a rubric and workshop for planning AI applications, piloted with 12 product teams and selected for presentation to customers at Oracle AI World 2026.

HTC Creative Labs · Principal Researcher · Sep 2019 – Feb 2022

HTC wanted to move its virtual reality business from consumers to enterprise, but product decisions rested on internal opinion. I led a two-track research program to replace opinion with evidence. Strategy research combined surveys, fieldwork and 50 in-depth interviews across 15 industries; UX research ran 9 months of usability testing in the U.S. and Taipei, with 8 studies of 10–25 users each. The findings shaped HTC's enterprise VR hardware and software, and engineering and sales teams began asking for research on their own.

Amgen Biopharmaceuticals · Senior Manager, Customer Experience · Sep 2018 – Sep 2019

Amgen's internal design group was growing from a U.S. practice into a global one, and I joined to help scale human-centered design across the company. Our small group worked with product teams across therapeutic areas to design patient experiences with services and devices. We also built design strategies to connect patients to support systems.

Teague · Research & Strategy Manager · Nov 2016 – Apr 2018

Boeing needed reliable human factors evidence for the design of aircraft interiors. I managed a human factors research team that validated industrial design decisions with human-scale physical mockups. With VR developers, we created a new method that paired virtual reality with those mockups, and our studies measured perceived scale to within 0.5–1.5 inches per axis.

Artefact · Design Director · Jul 2015 – Sep 2016

Dr. Reddy's was preparing to launch a biosimilar oncology drug in India and needed a strategy that would stand apart. I directed patient research in Delhi and Mumbai: our team interviewed women with breast cancer, their families and non-profits in their homes, while a second team spoke with physicians in hospitals. We delivered a patient journey, four opportunity areas and seven strategies that shifted the client from physician loyalty toward patient-centered support for earlier diagnosis and access to treatment. I also led teams and client engagements for Eli Lilly, Samsung, Tangerine Bank and Arizona State University.

IDEO · Human Factors Research & Design, Client Liaison · Aug 2000 – Dec 2012

For 12 years I led research and client relationships for IDEO's pharmaceutical, medical device and healthcare clients, including Eli Lilly, Novartis, Pfizer, Cardinal Health, St. Jude, Kaiser and Samsung, and mentored the researchers on our teams. My longest partnership was with Eli Lilly, whose pipeline of injected medicines needed a device patients could trust. I led patient research across five serious diseases that shaped a platform of two injector mechanisms. Through years of iterative user testing it became the auto-injector for Trulicity (2015) and Taltz (2016; Medical Design Excellence Awards gold, 2018), now trusted in 50+ countries, and I am a co-inventor on a related Lilly patent.

I also built the foundations that made patient-facing research possible. I created Lilly's review and approval process for human factors research proposals, and trained IDEO researchers in HIPAA compliance and adverse event reporting. With a Lilly clinical research physician, I redesigned two sets of clinical study documentation, and study coordinators began requesting the new designs because they saved time and reduced confusion. For Samsung, I led fieldwork in regional, teaching and Veterans Affairs hospitals to build a UX strategy for clinical communications.

Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford · Art Therapist · Sep 1998 – Sep 1999

Before design research, I trained as an art therapist and worked with adolescents hospitalized for severe eating disorders. I designed individual, group and family art therapy interventions, and evaluated each patient's progress. I joined daily rounds with the medical team, wrote treatment plans and documented patient engagement.

Empathic Research & Design · Design Consultant · Jun 1997 – Jun 2018

Alongside my staff roles, I ran an independent design research practice. Clients including Genentech, Eli Lilly, Nike, Apple, Cisco and Oracle brought me in for design research, workshops and curriculum in research methods for product innovation.

NeXT Computer · Art & Production Manager, Design & Illustration · Jul 1989 – May 1994

My career began at NeXT, where Steve Jobs's vision set a high bar for every detail. I managed illustration, documentation design and visual content for marketing and technical publications that explained the inventions of the NeXT engineering team. Our work earned multiple awards from the Society for Technical Communication.

Patent

U.S. Patent 7,918,824 · Needled pharmaceutical delivery device with triggered automatic needle insertion and manually controlled pharmaceutical injection · Co-inventor (as Nancy J. Serpiello); assigned to Eli Lilly and Company · Issued Apr 2011

Education

PhD in Organizational Systems Transformation (Psychology) · Saybrook Graduate School, San Francisco, California · Aug 2013

MFC in Cognitive-Behavioral Psychology and Art Therapy · Notre Dame de Namur University, Belmont, California · Aug 1999

BS in Graphic Design and Illustration · San Jose State University, San Jose, California · Aug 1992

Workshops & Teaching

Human-Centered Design for Patient Experiences · workshops and coaching for a transformation team · Eli Lilly & Company, Indianapolis, Indiana · May 2007 – May 2010

Design Thinking, Design Process: Ideas to Prototypes · executive education workshop · Stanford Graduate School of Business, California & Barcelona, Spain · Aug 2010 – May 2011

Human-Centered Design Mentorship · workshops and coaching for an MBA team · Keck Graduate Institute, Claremont, California · Sep 2011 – Mar 2012

Design Thinking for Sustainable Systems · teaching and co-developing a new PhD program · Institute of Technology at Buenos Aires, Argentina · Jul 2016 – Jul 2018

Creativity & Innovation · teaching and content development · Pinchot University, Seattle, Washington · Aug 2009 – Aug 2017

Professional Development

2024: Women's Executive Leadership Program, Oracle

2019: Effective Management Practices

2018: Clinical Research Boot Camp for Translational Health Sciences

2017: Crucial Conversations & Emotional Intelligence Executive Training

2017: Prosci Change Management Executive Training