

CHRISTOPHER PAWLUS

Creative Leader & Consultant | Product Creation, Head-to-Toe | Storytelling Through Design

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Global creative, design, and innovation executive with 25+ years leading footwear and product design for heritage brands and startups. Unites design thinking, hands-on craftsmanship, and consumer insight to build signature brand identities, restructure innovation processes, and deliver eco-conscious, commercially successful products. Proven record driving multibillion-dollar growth (Timberland \$350M to \$2B), launching new categories, and leading global teams across the US, UK, and Switzerland.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Creative Direction • Footwear & Apparel Design • Industrial Design • Product Strategy • Brand Identity & DNA • Trend Forecasting • CMF (Color, Material, Finish) • 3D Modeling & CAD • Rapid Prototyping • Tech Packs • Sustainable Design • Go-to-Market Strategy • Product Development • Sourcing & Factory Development • Consumer Insights • Outsole & Last Development • Concept Ideation • Team Leadership • P&L / Revenue Growth • Cross-Functional Leadership

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Pawlus Design, LLC — Founder & Principal Design Consultant

Boston, MA • 2020 – Present

- Founded a footwear and product design consultancy delivering concept-to-launch design, design leadership, and sourcing for global brands, founders, and PE-backed startups.
- Lead industrial design, 3D modeling, and rapid prototyping for Alleviate Inc. (consumer therapy-tech), including patentable product content.
- Provide footwear design direction for Manitobah, collaborating with Indigenous artists on an authentic rebrand and relaunch; additional clients include 741 Performance, Reef, CAT, Rip-It, and Wolverine.

KEEN Footwear — Vice President, Design & Innovation

Portland, OR • 2018 – 2020

- Built and led a 7-person design team and managed up to \$1M in resources and contracts; reported to the Global GM and CEO/Owner.
- Raised tech-pack handoff reliability from 40% to 90% and improved milestone on-time delivery by ~70% through team restructuring and process standardization.
- Launched five eco-conscious collections and codified a sustainable brand toolkit ("Consciously Constructed": recycled PET, LWG gold-rated leathers, reduced PFCs).

Lucchese Bootmaker — Design Consultant

Dallas, TX • 2018

- Expanded two new collections in six months — premium lifestyle and steel/nano-toe work boots — advising the President, Board, and Owner.
- Partnered with development and production in El Paso, TX and China to meet ASTM safety standards.

Timberland (VF Corp.) — Stratham, NH • 1997 – 2018 (promoted 8 times)

Vice President, Global Product Design & Creative Director | 2014 – 2018

- Directed a 45-person global footwear and apparel design team across the US, London, and Switzerland; helped grow the brand from \$350M to \$2B over a 20+ year tenure.
- Created the SPG (Style, Performance, Green) design framework adopted company-wide; led a six-month brand-vision initiative with BMW Designworks.
- Drove Sensorflex (5M+ units over three years) and embedded consumer insights to elevate product relevance and seasonal creative direction.

Global Senior Creative Director & Footwear Design Director | 2012 – 2014

- Set global footwear creative direction — product stories, color palettes, materials, and trend — across men's, women's, and kids'.

Senior Global Creative Director, Women's Footwear | 2009 – 2012

- Built Timberland Earthkeepers®, an eco-conscious outdoor-performance women's footwear line.

Earlier Timberland roles (1997 – 2009): Global Creative Director, Authentic Youth • Design Director, Urban Footwear • Senior Designer, The Invention Factory • Brand Creative Director, Men's Casual • Performance Outdoor Inline Designer.

The Rockport Company — Inline & Advanced Concepts Designer

Marlboro, MA • 1993 – 1997

Reebok — DesignOvation International Design Competition, Winner

Stoughton, MA • 1993

EDUCATION

BFA, Industrial Design / Fine Arts — University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (Summa Cum Laude)

Executive Management Course, Emerging Leaders Program — University of Michigan, Ross School of Business

PATENTS & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Named inventor on 20 U.S. patents in footwear (9 utility, 11 design) — The Timberland Company, The Rockport Company, and Wolverine Worldwide (SR Holdings / Sperry). Selected utility patents: Chimney ventilation systems (US 8,359,769 / 8,146,266 / 7,392,601), Modular Shoe (US 7,578,076 / 7,284,344 / 7,010,872), Footwear with Adjustable Stiffness (US 7,540,100), High-Performance Boot (US 7,730,640), and Energy-Return Sole Insert (US 5,528,842). Recent design patents: Footwear Sole (USD 1,017,205) and Footwear Upper (USD 984,110). Lead designer of Alleviate, Inc. consumer-therapy products protected by international design registrations (Australia, EU, UK) — Arch Massager and Plantar Fasciitis System; Loft (U.S. patent pending).

AWARDS & HONORS

- IDSA Silver IDEA Award, Product Design Excellence (2005)
- Permanent Collection — Bata Shoe Museum, Toronto (2001) • Permanent Collection — SFMOMA, San Francisco (2000)
- Reebok DesignOvation International Design Competition, Winner (1993)

ACTIVITIES & SERVICE

- Former Industry Advisor — North Carolina State University, Wilson College of Textiles (TATM Advisory Board)