Ilia Kovalev
Staff Product Designer | Product Design Manager
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Milan, Italy | Open to relocation and remote roles | Italian residence permit

Product design leader with 11+ years of experience across e-commerce, marketplaces, SaaS, and media. Combines product strategy, systems thinking, and hands-on design with leadership of teams of up to five designers. Led the redesign of Gold Apple's membership program, increasing total company GMV by 9.8%.

Experience

Gold Apple, omnichannel beauty retailer | 6 countries | $2B+ revenue — Remote, Milan, Italy
Product Design Manager — Jul 2025 — Oct 2026

Owned Membership & Account on iOS, Android, and Web. Led a team of 4 product designers and stayed hands-on in design.

- **Rebuilt the membership program** from scratch as a four-tier loyalty system with an in-app currency, tasks, and a rewards store, **increasing total company GMV by 9.8%**.
- Led the redesign of Favorites into a **social shopping experience** with personalized, shareable wishlists. Within nine months, **13.5% of users** had shared a list. Shared lists converted at **3.79% versus 1.35%** for regular favorites. Wishlists **increased total company GMV by 1.2%**.
- **Aligned stakeholders around a dedicated games team** and a unified in-app Games destination, increasing traffic to games by **44%**.
- **Localized the membership experience** for expansion into **MEA, China, and Central Asia**, designing Arabic RTL interfaces and a dedicated Chinese experience through market research and UX discovery.
- **Optimized the personal account experience** through experimentation and growth initiatives, **increasing GMV by 3.68%** while improving engagement with key customer widgets by **4–4.5×**.
- **Reduced customer support dependency** by expanding self-service capabilities across order tracking and account management, **decreasing support requests by 58%** and order **cancellations by 3%**.

Avito, classifieds and marketplace platform | 70M+ MAU | $1B+ revenue — Remote, Milan, Italy
Staff Product Designer — Jun 2024 — Jul 2025

Owned design for two growth bets, Mall and a set of Seller Pricing Tools, working with two discovery and two delivery teams.

- **Shaped the strategy and end-to-end design of Mall**, a marketplace for new products from verified sellers across web, iOS, and Android. Defined its visual identity and repositioned the experience, increasing contact conversion by **74%** and purchases with delivery by **26%**.
- **Redesigned Mall product pages** around seller trust, delivery, and payment information, validating solutions through research and A/B testing. Product page conversion increased by **3.8%**, and purchases with delivery grew by **12%**.
- **Designed a suite of seller pricing tools**: Price Index, Purchase Boost, and Recommended Price. Purchase Boost achieved a median price reduction of **25%** and was rolled out to all sellers; Recommended Price reached **30%** adoption among sellers in the A/B test group.
- **Established DesignOps practices** by introducing **AI-powered workflow automation**, improving file management, discoverability, and cross-team collaboration.

VK, technology & media platform | 56M+ MAU | $2B+ revenue — Remote, Milan, Italy
Product Design Manager — Jun 2023 — Jun 2024

Led product design across a portfolio of 14 media platforms.

- **Built and led a multidisciplinary product design team** of five designers and set shared design standards.
- **Redefined the digital experience across 14 media platforms** by introducing scalable design systems, editorial patterns, and brand-specific UX, increasing **time spent by 49%**, **CTR by 18%**, and **ad impressions by 30%**.
- **Initiated an AI-driven visual transformation** across editorial and advertising production by defining creative guidelines, introducing generative AI workflows, and aligning legal teams, procurement, and advertising partners. Reduced **creative production time by 40%**.
- **Scaled design quality across 200+ advertising partners** by establishing illustration standards, visual guidelines, and reusable AI templates adopted in daily production workflows.
- **Partnered with product and design teams at leading Android OEMs** to design and launch pre-installed media experiences for customized Android distributions across Eastern European markets.

MTS, telecom & digital ecosystem | 80M+ customers | $7B+ revenue — Moscow, Russia

Product Design Team Lead — May 2022 — Jun 2023

- **Built the business case** for MTS's first company-wide digital accessibility initiative, defined the product vision, and **won executive sponsorship** for a dedicated cross-functional product team.
- **Led a multidisciplinary product team**, owning strategy, roadmap, hiring, and delivery from concept to company-wide rollout. Mentored designers and set design processes and quality standards with product and engineering leads.
- **Brought accessibility to flagship products** serving 30M monthly users by **updating a design system with 300+ components** and **enabled six product teams** through research with people with disabilities.
- **Launched the company's first accessibility training program** for 2,000+ employees, rated **4.75/5** by learners. Call center CSAT rose **0.5 points**.
- **Created a charity platform** where customers donate cashback, loyalty points, and unused balances across the MTS ecosystem, **raising $1M+ for charitable foundations**. Featured in Forbes Russia.

Senior Product Designer — Sep 2020 — May 2022

- **Owned the end-to-end design of Workzen**, a B2B task manager for SMEs on Web, iOS, and Android. Turned an early MVP into a full work hub. Daily active users more than **doubled**, while **weekly** and **monthly active users** increased by **66%** and **48%**.
- **Designed the task screen**, bringing statuses, assignees, deadlines, subtasks, budgets, and edge cases into one clear view. Weekly task creation increased by **24%**, and the share of tasks completed on time increased by **7.5%**.
- **Designed a role-based access model** and **a product-wide permissions matrix** across tasks, clients, reports, and settings. The product could grow from one freelancer to a whole team. The share of team spaces grew **12%**.
- **Created Analytics as a new core section**, with reports for the whole team, each client, or one person. The share of owners checking reports every week grew **32%**.
- **Designed time tracking and in-task collaboration.** Tasks with logged time grew **47%**, and weekly stickiness rose **29%**.

Education

Bachelor's Degree in Management, Saint Petersburg State University of Economics

Professional Development

Product Growth & Scaling, GoPractice

Digital Product Design, Bang Bang Education

Competencies

Core Competencies: Design Leadership · Product Strategy · Product Discovery · Systems Thinking · Team Building & Mentoring · Cross-functional Leadership · 0-to-1 Product Development · Design Systems · DesignOps · Growth & Retention · Accessibility · Art Direction · Internationalization

Tools: Figma · ProtoPie · Google Analytics · Jira · Confluence · ChatGPT · Claude · Codex · Cursor · Vercel · Cloudflare

Languages

Russian, native · English, professional working proficiency · Italian, elementary proficiency