

MARIA KOTSAR

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Summary

My people-centric mindset that originates from Human-Centered Design, shape my holistic approach to building digital products. I'm curious by nature and always prioritize understanding users and their needs. I'm committed, enthusiastic and decisive, find energy in inspiring others, facilitating processes and delivering professional results.

My design process is guided by systems and critical thinking, turning ambiguity into clarity while passionately driving innovation and meaningful change. Key characteristics: confident but low-ego, takes charge but brings people along, strategic but a team player, exploratory but realistic, organized but not rigid, open-minded and values-oriented.

Skills

- Claude Code / Figma
- AI Agent skills building
- Design Systems
- Designing AI experiences
- Adobe Creative Suite
- Microsoft 365
- Atlassian's software
- People Management
- Usability Testing
- Product Strategy
- Information Architecture
- Innovative Thinking, Growth Mindset
- Human-Centered Design

Experience

06/2024 - Present

Manulife Financial Corporation
Toronto, Canada

Product Design Lead, Group Benefits & Individual Insurance (B2B portfolio)

Lead a team of 5 Product Designers to deliver designs for authenticated user experiences. Contribute to an AI initiatives group exploring conversational AI design system patterns and AI implementation opportunities. Mentor the team on skills growth and advocate for organization-wide design practice alongside the Head of Product Design.

Key responsibilities:

Hands-on design (50%)

- Deliver end-to-end designs in Figma, partnering with researchers to create user flows, wireframes, prototypes and responsive UI for web experiences.
- Partner with Product Owners and Business stakeholders to develop conceptual designs for future product opportunities, informing roadmaps and vision.
- Lead ideation sessions and design reviews with the team to drive collaboration and quality.

Project management (20%)

- Coordinate with Product and Business stakeholders to balance needs, oversee alignment and enable agile prototype–test–iterate cycles.
- Host agile rituals for the design team, own Jira board, manage teams' capacity.

Craft leadership (15%)

- Champion product design practice, set standards and metrics, support hiring and talent development.
- Deliver presentations on product design skills, facilitate learning sessions and workshops with the team, contribute to the HCD community by sharing insights from my experience.

Design system expansion (15%)

- Evolve component libraries for consistency and accessibility, align with global teams, integrate AI-driven patterns, conversational UI.

04/2021 - 06/2024

Trinetix

Kyiv, Ukraine

Senior Product Designer at Big4 accounting firm through Trinetix

I am the leader designer of over 10 enterprise products for a top Big Four company. Core domains: Audit and Digital Innovation, Robotic Process Automation (RPA), Chatbots and Generative AI.

My process: preparing a detailed design roadmap for future project work in collaboration with leadership team; discovery phase, estimation, research of best market practices, exploring different solutions and approaches using low-fidelity prototypes, testing of early concepts, gather user feedback, build high-fidelity prototypes and deliverables, organizing development team handoff sessions. I demonstrate strong taking ownership and commitment in leading the design process.

- Building applications that have complex information architecture, technical innovations and functionality.
- Highly organized, ability to communicate within cross-functional teams, working with developers to ensure effective design implementation, application building and continuous improvement.
- Strong involvement in every part of the product building process from ideation, planning, evaluation, conducting research, working on design experience, all relating visuals and deliverables, and responsible for ongoing development support.
- Creating holistic and scalable Design Systems that make it easier to maintain consistency and scale future solutions and functionality.
- Using jobs-to-be-done framework to create intuitive, user-friendly mobile design products (Android, iOS).
- Excellent attention to details, patience and empathy, flexibility in adapting design processes.
- Facilitating openness in multiple design and product management teams within the company to foster critical thinking and idea sharing.
- Contributing to the career development of junior designers, empowering other colleagues by clearly articulating business needs, mentoring them on interface design best practices, Design thinking approach and providing constructive feedback.

01/2019 - 04/2021

DataArt

Kyiv, Ukraine

UX / UI Designer at FMCG company projects through DataArt

Localizing and redesigning responsive e-commerce websites and client's campaigns landings the average traffic of which is 1.5 million customers per month, also influencing conversion rates by redesigning existing solutions.

- Collaborating with cross-functional teams and stakeholders in an agile environment to optimize product usability and functionality, creating e-commerce websites from scratch.
- Ability to work independently in preparing expert usability research, user testing and accessibility evaluations of e-commerce websites.
- Improving users retention rates by troubleshooting and enhancing a UX UI design elements based on expert usability analysis and customer insights.
- Leveraging persuasion abilities to deliver oral presentations to stakeholders to explain the design work and gather feedback.

Education and Training

09/2013 - 12/2018

Master's degree in mass communication (Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv)

Accomplishments

Audit Innovation of the Year at the Digital Accountancy Forum & Awards 2021

Working on the digital cloud-based solution that revolutionizes the audit of funds and investments that became the winner of Audit Innovation of the Year at the Digital Accountancy Forum & Awards. I am responsible for redesigning the application experience and supporting the Design System.

Hobbies and Interests

Enthusiastic snowboarder, with a deep love for mountains and nature, music festivals and travels. I have always had a tremendous hunger for knowledge, I'm constantly honing my skills and embracing new learning opportunities. I am fascinated with cutting-edge technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Cloud Computing, Cyber Security.