

Diego Fernandez

Product Designer

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I've spent over a decade building products and design teams at startups, mostly as the first or founding designer. I work close to the code — pushing PRs, doing refinements directly on top of what engineers are building, and using tools like Claude Code to extend what design can do. Research drives how I work: I use AI to run better studies faster and make insights usable by the whole team, not just design.

Experience

Director of Product Design & Research — Balto

2021 - Present

- Designed and launched QA Copilot, a GenAI tool that doubled QA analyst productivity — eligibility accuracy moved from the low 60s to ~90%, UX-Lite scores went from 2.3 to a consistent 4/5, and the product delivered 3:1 ROI
- Lead designer for Call Explorer across 5,000+ enterprise users — 4.3 UX-Lite score, 76% monthly engagement; turned a feature the company saw as a liability into the surface every downstream product is built on
- Built the design and research practice from scratch, grew to 5 direct reports while staying hands-on through critical features and tight deadlines
- Work directly with executive leadership on AI product strategy, connecting user research and behavioral data to roadmap decisions

Senior Product Designer — Salsify

2018 – 2021

- Design Lead for the Content Activation product line, owned end-to-end experience across a complex enterprise PIM platform — from early research through pixel-perfect UI
- Created and shipped Habanero Design System, adopted by 7 of 8 product teams and meaningfully accelerated design-to-dev handoff across the org
- Shipped Workflow collaboration features — inline commenting, @mentions, side-by-side content comparison — cutting time-to-market from 115 days to 45 days for early adopters and driving 6% month-over-month growth

Lead Designer — ChatID (Welcome Commerce)

2013 – 2018

- 8th employee and first in-house designer — took the product from technical demo to live launches with Walmart, Target, Newegg, and Office Depot; company acquired by Salsify in 2018
- Designed Chatbar, a real-time conversational commerce interface: shoppers who engaged converted at 3x the rate, abandoned carts 34% less often, and returned purchases 20% less frequently — deployed across 50+ brands to millions of shoppers
- Built a comprehensive design system that unified Product, Engineering, and Marketing across all customer touchpoints
- Led WCAG AA compliance initiative, partnering with the Andrew Heiskell Braille & Talking Book Library to test with blind users — expanded the addressable market and enabled launch on Target.com

Skills

Design Leadership

Career development, design mentorship, stakeholder management, budget and resource management, feedback culture, research practices, product-design-engineering process

Design Leadership

User research, usability testing, journey mapping, design systems, wireframing, rapid prototyping, visual design, interaction design, mobile-first, responsive web, accessibility, content strategy, UX metrics, agile

Tools

Figma, FigJam, Framer, Webflow, Cursor, Claude Code, Paper.design, Mixpanel, Dovetail, Adobe Creative Suite, HTML/CSS, Tailwind UI, SQL, FullStory

Volunteering

Design Mentor

I guide designers through career transitions and skill development, drawing on experience as both IC and leader. My focus is on research-driven design, ethical product decisions, and helping designers create work that matters.