

Rico Lavender

Staff Product Designer, ex-Meta, ex-American Express, ex-Lifelock

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About Me

Staff (IC) Product Designer with 10+ years of experience crafting user-focused designs for complex, enterprise-level solutions. Proven expertise in guiding cross-functional teams, utilizing research-driven insights and iterative methodologies to enhance digital experiences for internal and external users and customers. I also consult as a freelance designer, usually leading and managing a product's full life cycle, which includes managing features and backlogs to match business needs.

Skills

- **Design & User Experience:** UI/UX Design, Visual Design, Web Design, Mobile Design, Interaction Design, Responsive Web Design, Physical Product UI, eCommerce Experience, AI-driven products.
- **Tools & Technologies:** Figma, Relume, Design Systems, HTML5, CSS, UX Pilot, Notion, Jira, Trello, Perplexity AI, ChatGPT, Zapier AI Workflows, n8n AI workflows, Make AI workflows, Netlify, Webflow, Shopify, Squarespace.
- **Methodologies & Principles:** Human-Centered Design, Usability Principles, Research Principles, AI Prompting for creative outputs, Design Leadership, Remote-first teams, Cross-functional team building.

Work Experience

Progress Residential

2024 - Present

Senior/Lead UX Designer

- Leading end-to-end UX design for property rental marketplaces and management platforms, streamlining complex workflows for renters, landlords, and property managers to ensure intuitive experiences, using some AI assistance.
- Developed strategic, user-centered design approaches informed by rigorous user research, usability testing, and behavioral insights, effectively aligning design initiatives with business objectives.
- Facilitated design workshops and strategy sessions with cross-functional teams, integrating principles of human-centered design and agile methodologies to drive innovative solutions.

Self-Employed

2021 - Present

Freelance UI/UX Designer, Entrepreneur

- Executed end-to-end product design projects for financial institutions, SaaS companies, startups, and design agencies, delivering strategic solutions that drive business impact.
- Managed full product lifecycles—from strategy and design to client partnerships—leveraging strong communication skills and integrating AI tools to enhance the design process where useful.
- Collaborated with diverse teams to align cross-functional UX patterns, design systems, and responsive web design, ensuring scalable and seamless user experiences. Would often travel to client sites for better communication.

Meta - Instagram

2023

Contract Product Designer, Growth

- Strategically hired for a high-priority, global UX initiative to resolve critical transparency issues with users posting stories across Instagram and Facebook.
- Redesigned cross-platform privacy controls, providing clearer, more intuitive ways to manage where content appears.
- Executed data-driven, high-velocity design strategies, leveraging UX best practices to drive a 45% improvement in user sentiment and clarity.

Meta - Facebook Marketplace (Seller Experience)

2019 - 2021

Product Designer, Growth

- Designed and launched the bulk listing tool for sellers on Facebook Marketplace, automating repetitive tasks and allowing sellers to list multiple items at once, eliminating the need for one-by-one postings.
- Redesigned the mobile seller onboarding process with Quick Post, streamlining listing creation and driving a 8% monthly increase in Marketplace usage and engagement.
- Developed enterprise-level e-commerce solutions and seller tools that optimized complex workflows, improving scalability, efficiency, and the overall seller experience on Facebook Marketplace.
- Thrived in a high-growth, fast-paced environment by balancing quick iterations with long-term design strategy to deliver impactful, seller and buyer focused experiences.

Sibi, Inc.

2018 - 2019

Design Manager, Marketplace Experience

- Provided mentorship to junior designers and championed a culture of growth-driven, user-focused design, driving continuous improvement across the platform.
- Optimized complex workflows, such as warranty registration, installation scheduling, and returns processing, to reduce friction and improve post-purchase satisfaction.

- By migrating from Sketch I introduced and used Figma to design, prototype, and execute creative concepts for various digital experiences, leading to an improvement in the overall buyer and seller digital user experience.

American Express

2017 - 2018

Senior User Experience Designer

- Improved user engagement and app navigation by implementing incremental design improvements to the online card management tool.
- Utilized quantitative & qualitative research methods to inform UX design decisions, resulting in a 15% decrease in user drop-off rates during customer onboarding.
- Collaborated with cross-functional teams to deliver innovative, user-centric designs, resulting in 43% decrease in customer complaints that were previously a problem because of frustrating and out-of-date navigational flows.

Ownzones

2016 - 2017

Product Manager / Designer

- Led product team to deliver visually stunning designs resulting in a 20% increase in user engagement on 2 mobile apps and one TV app as well as mentoring the junior product management with the web product.
- Led daily stand-ups with the distributed cross-functional team who were located remotely throughout Europe, mostly in Romania as well as one design contractor that was stateside. This helped establish a working flow to deliver on-time feature to our products each week.
- Managed the release schedule of our app on both the iOS store and Android store by writing engaging descriptions for each feature release as well as adding relevant visuals that helped portray any new features that would help sell the product online and communicate with our customers.

Norton Lifelock - *Senior UI/UX Web Designer*

2015 - 2016

Substantial - *Contract User Experience Designer*

2014 - 2015

Pearson Education - *Senior Graphic Designer*

2013 - 2015

Secure Medical - *Digital Designer*

2012 - 2013

Intrepid Networks - *Front-end Web Developer, Designer*

2011 - 2012

Alpha Omega Publications / Freelance - *Web/Graphic Designer, Video Production Artist*

2003 - 2010

Education

Devry University

- 2003 Bachelors of Science, CIS

Collins College

- 2003 Certificate of Multimedia Design