

Kirk Castro

Product & Design Leader

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SUMMARY

Product leader with 15+ years building and scaling digital products from zero to one through enterprise scale. I lead cross functional teams to set product strategy, own roadmaps, and deliver measurable business outcomes across consumer facing platforms. I co-founded a veterinary software startup, scaled it to nationwide adoption and acquisition, then drove \$100M+ in incremental value at Independence Pet Group through experimentation, design systems, and customer centered product development. I bring a design leader's eye for experience quality to product strategy, which is where I create the most leverage: connecting product, engineering, and marketing to move faster with more clarity.

EXPERIENCE

Director of UX & Product Design

Independence Pet Group · B2C pet insurance group serving millions of customers · Sep 2022 – Present

- Lead product and design strategy across a 9 brand B2C portfolio serving millions of users, delivering \$100M+ in incremental value through experimentation, A/B testing, and customer centered optimization of complex discovery and enrollment journeys.
- Founded and lead CLEAR, a 30+ person cross functional team spanning product, engineering, design, and analytics that owns the quote and enrollment experience across the portfolio and drove \$38M in incremental value in 2025.
- Built the company's experimentation program from the ground up, implementing Kameleoon and running 60+ A/B tests and research projects, shifting the organization from intuition led decisions to data informed product development.
- Drove a pre-packaged plans initiative that lifted conversion 12% and gross written premium 25% over a four month period, with roughly \$10M in additional annual forecast.
- Set product priorities and roadmap direction across brands, partnering closely with engineering and data science to turn ambiguous acquisition challenges into clear, intuitive product experiences.
- Created scalable systems and processes, at times reducing delivery timelines by up to 80% while improving quality and team efficiency.
- Elevated design and product from a service function into a trusted strategic partner, influencing executive decisions through data, storytelling, and a clear point of view on experience quality.

Head of Product Design

Shepherd Veterinary Software · Acquired by Synergy Pet Group · Mar 2019 – Jun 2022

- Led product design through post acquisition integration, aligning experience direction, interaction standards, and customer journey across converged teams and product lines.
- Partnered with executive leadership to define product direction and deliver new capabilities supporting nationwide expansion.
- Operated as a player coach, contributing hands on to product work while mentoring designers and collaborating closely with product and engineering.
- Established foundational product and design operations that improved delivery speed and product quality while keeping customer experience the north star.

Co-Founder & Principal Product Designer

Shepherd Veterinary Software · B2B software streamlining operations for veterinary practices · Jan 2016 – Mar 2019

- Co-founded the company and built the product from zero to one as sole designer, owning research, UX, visual design, prototyping, and early front end execution.
- Collaborated directly with veterinarians, engineers, and business partners to translate complex workflows (medical records, scheduling, billing) into clear, intuitive experiences where accuracy and speed were non negotiable.
- Scaled Shepherd from prototype to nationwide adoption, culminating in acquisition by Synergy Pet Group in 2019.
- Defined product vision, roadmap priorities, and early go to market direction, establishing product and design as core drivers of the business.

Product Designer

Kajabi · B2C platform for creating and selling online courses · Mar 2015 – Dec 2015

- Designed and built UI templates and platform features using HTML, CSS, and Rails.
- Ran UX research to guide design decisions and improve usability.
- Supported brand consistency across marketing and product design.

Designer

Clients including Microsoft, Oakley, Hurley, and Gravity Payments · 2010 – 2019

- Designed branding, web, motion, and product experiences across apparel, tech, and financial services.
- Partnered directly with clients from concept through delivery, balancing creative direction with business goals.

Earlier Experience

Hurley · Nike

- Graphic Designer, Hurley (2010 – 2011): designed seasonal apparel lines and graphics.
- Design Internships, Nike and Hurley (2014 – 2016): branding and digital UI projects while completing degree.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts, Graphic Design and Digital Media

Laguna College of Art and Design, 2016

SKILLS

Product Leadership & Strategy

Product Strategy & Roadmapping, Product Discovery, Experimentation & A/B Testing, Data Informed Decision Making, Outcome Ownership, Customer Journey Mapping

Leadership & Collaboration

Cross Functional Team Leadership, Stakeholder Alignment, Executive Communication, Team Development, Agile & Lean Practices

Experience & Craft

UX Strategy & Vision, Design Systems at Scale, AI Assisted Product Design, Search & Discovery UX, Design Ops

Tools

Figma, Claude Code, Cursor, Vercel / v0, GitHub, Kameleoon, GA4, Microsoft Clarity, JIRA, Monday, Azure DevOps, Microsoft 365