James Kelly
Product Design Leader

www.jameskelly.ie ↗
Linkedin ↗

About

Product Design Leader with 20+ years of experience leading high-performing teams and delivering impactful digital products. I've led as both an individual contributor and people leader, building and scaling design systems and SaaS platforms across HR, Finance, Learning, and Organizational Management. I bring an empathetic, people-first leadership style that empowers teams while driving clarity, quality, and measurable outcomes. I've worked on shaping AI design strategy and embedding AI thoughtfully into products to create meaningful, human-centered experiences. From discovery and research through testing and continuous iteration, I work across the full product lifecycle with the goal of improving both products and the people who use them.

Work Experience

Product Design Manager — Workday
December 2021 – Present
Product Design Manager at Workday, a leading financial management, HR & Payroll cloud based software organisation with a UX org of over 200+ globally. I currently lead UX across three product teams with seven Product Designers in Europe and San Francisco. The product spaces I have supported are Workday Learning, Help, Journeys & Onboarding — each of the teams I work with have dedicated AI roadmaps which I support from a strategy and leadership perspective

- **Built and led multidisciplinary teams** across UX, Research, Product, and Engineering to deliver AI-driven, user-centered experiences.
- **Partnered cross-functionally** to define and execute strategy, ensuring alignment across Product, Engineering, and key business teams.
- **Directed roadmap planning** and design consistency across Workday's AI initiatives and core product experiences.
- **Acted as primary UX stakeholder** for strategic product and AI design decisions, shaping end-to-end user experience.
- **Mentored and developed designers**, driving growth, performance, and innovation in AI-focused design work.

Lead Product Designer — Diligent
March 2021 – December 2021
Lead Product Designer at Diligent, the world's largest Governance, Risk and Compliance SaaS provider. Working with a UX org of over 50 people, as Lead Product Designer across two products in Finance and Org Management spaces.

- Working within agile teams focused on continuous design sprints, iterating solutions, testing and incorporating user feedback at the heart of every decision.
- Conducting research, user testing sessions, building wireframes, prototypes and artefacts with multiple scrum teams across two product areas
- Presenting concepts and work to Director level and senior stakeholders

Lead UX Designer — Eir Ireland
March 2020 – March 2021
Lead UX Designer working with strategy, digital and multiple agile development teams. Focus on continual improvement and incremental changes through design iteration and validation of our work through rigorous A-B testing.

- Leading all UX design projects, user research, prototyping and usability testing
- Design and iA workshop facilitation and project roadmap planning
- Improving web accessibility standards across all eir digital platforms
- A/B Testing (with results of 14% increase in transactions and revenue)

Work Experience

Design Lead — Threesixty
March 2005 – March 2020
As head of the design team my role was to direct and lead all digital and design projects. Projects ranged from digital web design projects to apps and digital products. I worked with and led a team of 6 designers and developers, working alongside a wider team of strategists, copywriters, project managers, QA testers.
A selection of some projects outlined:

- Design and integration of a travel application and booking system
- UX and UI design for an app for a tax reclaim start up
- eCommerce and digital product design for a lighting industry startup
- Creation of a complex data management platform for document and information management for a blue-chip multinational organisation
- Leading and mentoring a team of designers and developers

Education

Postgraduate Certificate in Leadership & Team Enablement
Technological University Dublin (2023 – 2024)
This course covered areas such as personal leadership, coaching, team design, team enablement, coaching for high performance, leader effectiveness, managing performance, leadership and impact.

Postgraduate Certificate in Digital Leadership & Transformation
Technological University Dublin (2021 – 2022)
This course covered areas of focus in Data Analytics, Emerging Technologies and Organisational Change, Strategy in a Digital Environment, Digital Implementation & Execution, and Leadership for High Performance.

Higher Diploma in Interaction Design and User Experience
Dublin City University (2018 – 2020)
Completed an immersive course exploring web applications that enhance user experience and interaction, with a final research project on how digital typography influences emotion and trust.

- Interaction design, user experience design & human computer interaction
- Web technology & researching interactions with technology

Design and Visual Communications
Waterford Institute of Technology (2001 – 2004)
Studied design thinking, visual communication, typography, photography, illustration, printmaking, digital media, and colour theory. Final dissertation explored the visual culture of football, focusing on iconography, symbolism, and wider visual language.

Certificates & Training

- Leading AI Strategy - Trinity College Dublin
- Interaction Design Foundation Accessibility for All
- Google UX Design Certificate
- Interaction Design Foundation Usability Testing
- Interaction Design Foundation Design Thinking

Portfolio & Contact

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