James Butler

Principal Product Designer · Consumer, B2B and AI Products

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Principal product designer with 15+ years designing consumer, B2B and AI products, from first idea to optimisation at scale. At Booking.com, led design across ~18 teams for ~150M app users, ran hundreds of A/B experiments, and set the vision for Booking Assistant ($10M+ saved a year) and Travel Communities (2M monthly users). Led growth and activation design for Shopify's Shop app as it reached #1 in the App Store Shopping category, and took Algolia's Agent Studio from 0 to 1 ($6M+ influenced ARR). Designs for consumers, business partners, developers and operations teams across 42 markets. Hands-on with code and AI: ships self-authored PRs with Claude Code, and has designed, coded and shipped six iOS apps.

Professional experience

tem.energy

Principal Product Designer | Jul 2026 - Nov 2026 (role made redundant)

Series B energy tech. Set design direction for how customers buy, onboard and renew. Reported to the Chief Growth Officer.

- Lifted eSignature completion from 30% to 50% by changing how the choice was presented, shipping the changes as self-authored PRs with Claude Code.
- Replaced an insecure, manual email process with an automated, secure direct debit flow that collects 92% of missing details without Ops follow-up.
- Prototyped the first versions of broker renewals and set the product vision with the squad. The work shaped broker conversations and is now live with a subset of brokers.
- Mapped onboarding from contract to first payment across Operations, Credit and Finance, making every dependency visible through journey maps and working prototypes.

Algolia

Senior Manager, Product Design | Nov 2024 - May 2026

SaaS search and AI platform. Led design across Search, AI and developer experiences, bringing design into earlier decisions with Product and Engineering.

- Led design for Agent Studio, Algolia's platform for developers building AI agents, from 0 to 1: $6M+ influenced ARR, 4.7/5 CSAT and 100k weekly API calls.
- Led design for pricing, plans and usage across Algolia's usage-based platform, including how Agent Studio fitted in.
- Led six designers, from mid-level to Principal. Promoted one from Senior to Staff, and hired senior designers who have since grown within Algolia and beyond.
- Introduced design critique, progression frameworks and AI hack days where designers built and shipped working apps.

Voyago

Founder, Product and Design | Jul 2023 - Nov 2024

- Founded and ran a social travel discovery startup helping people find places their friends love. Led all product and design work: strategy, UX, visual design, positioning and investor storytelling.
- Launched iOS and Android apps, reaching 363 accounts and early affiliate revenue, and iterated with engagement data and user feedback.

Shopify

Design Manager, Shop | Jun 2021 - Jan 2023

Shop is Shopify's consumer shopping app, with 100M+ installs.

- Increased setup rate by 7% and push notification opt-in by 30% through a new onboarding experience, balancing activation with customer trust.
- Led design across Growth, Activation and Retention as Shop evolved from package tracking into a shopping app, reaching #1 in the App Store Shopping category.
- Partnered with senior Product and Engineering leaders, UX researchers and content designers on product direction. Coached designers and design managers.

InVision

Product Design Lead | Apr 2021 - Jun 2021

Booking.com

Product Design Lead | Sep 2018 - Mar 2021

Product Designer | Jun 2015 - Sep 2018

~150M app users. Started in Localisation, then moved into traveller, partner and customer service experiences. Designers shipped their own production code.

- Set the vision for Booking Assistant, an AI/ML service experience, and led design as the messaging platform grew from one team to seven. It answered 30% of stay-related questions automatically in under five minutes, saving $10M+ a year.
- Set the vision for Travel Communities, a bet to bring travellers back without paying for every visit as paid search returns fell. Led up to three teams. It hit 1M monthly active users in under a year, grew to 2M, and doubled 12-week retention.
- Led design for traveller, partner and customer service experiences across ~18 teams, functionally managing ~20 designers, and delivered a design curriculum for the wider design team.
- Ran hundreds of A/B experiments, all measured on bookings per day. One, a coffee-cup icon beside “Free breakfast”, added 3,000 daily bookings, worth an estimated $20M a year in revenue.
- Shipped B2B tools for accommodation partners, including Inbox, quick replies, templates and monitoring dashboards, and internal tools that moved Customer Service requests from phone to messaging.
- Adapted core booking flows for 42 markets, including Japan, Brazil and the Middle East, designing for different languages, right-to-left scripts and local payment methods.

Independent work (alongside employment)

Ember and SaunaDiscovery.com

Founder and Principal Designer | Mar 2026 - Present

- Designed and built a sauna discovery app for iOS and watchOS, plus a web guide, accessible by default through its own component system. Led SEO and go-to-market. Ember ranks #1 for “sauna guide” in multiple App Store storefronts.

Six iOS apps

Designer and developer | Since Swift 1 in 2014

- Designed, coded and shipped six apps in discovery, reading, fitness and utilities, using SwiftUI, Claude Code and Cursor.
- Built supporting tools: a self-hosted analytics SDK and dashboard (Swift, Supabase, Next.js) and a localisation CLI.

Earlier experience

Senior Product Design Consultant, various agencies | Nov 2013 - Jun 2015

Discovery, UX strategy and prototyping for startups, including travel platform The Dyrt.

Product Designer, then Head of Product, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council | Dec 2010 - Nov 2013

Started out designing and building websites for four schools. Saw that students and teachers had no good way to keep working together outside school, so designed and built a bespoke virtual learning environment solo.

Education

University of Lincoln | BA (Hons), Media Production (Design & Digital), 2005 - 2008

Skills

Product strategy · UX and UI design · Interaction and visual design · 0 to 1 product development · User research · A/B testing and experimentation · Information architecture · Prototyping in Figma and code · Design systems · Mobile app design (iOS, watchOS) · B2B and multi-persona products · AI product design (conversational AI, AI agents) · Activation and retention · Onboarding and payments · Internationalisation and localisation (i18n, l10n) · Service design · Stakeholder management · Journey mapping · Design critique and mentorship · Figma · SwiftUI · Claude Code · Cursor