

5 golden rules of intuitive product design

We interact with brilliant design every day, often without even realising it. From the sleek storage solutions in our homes, to the bicycles we ride and the software that powers our work, great design quietly shapes how we move through the world.

Temps de lecture : minute

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But great design doesn't happen overnight. For startups in particular, the process is iterative and is about finding innovative ways to meet user needs, build loyal communities, and reshape industries gradually over time.

I was one of the first designers on the team at Canva: one of the world's best known digital design platforms. In my time at Canva I learnt a huge amount about the power of simplicity, the delight in the little details, and how being a good human brings authenticity to product design.

Now, I'm founding designer at *Wondercraft*: a creative audio studio doing for audio what Canva did for design. I'm passionate about building intuitive digital products that enable users to channel their creativity.



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Meet Wondercraft: the first audio studio for creators

I've been working in the industry for over 15 years. These are the design principles I live by.

1. Be (a good) human

Being a good human was a guiding design principle at Canva. It's about being genuine in your approach, listening to what the user needs, and solving their problems in an authentic way. Examples of this in practice might be building an amazing free product first to build a community, being transparent about pricing, and giving something back, whether through company initiatives or non-profits.

This principle can be difficult to implement: as designers we all have stylistic preferences and ingrained biases, and companies have

commercial goals. But human-centred design involves always putting the user first. This foundational principle ensures users don't just use the product; they love it.

2. Prioritise excellence over perfection

I often emphasise to my design colleagues that 'done is better than perfect'. This tracks across to lots of industries, but none more so than design where moving fast and iterating is the name of the game. When you're working in the fast-paced environment of an early-stage startup, the goal is often to ship products and features quickly. You need to have a product in the world in order to get real-world feedback, iterate and improve. At this end of the market, perfection is an unattainable ideal. But this doesn't mean we can be sloppy. I always advocate for excellence: it's practical and holds you accountable to high standards, without causing perfection paralysis. By continuously learning and improving whilst striving for excellence, you pave the way to creating a successful product.

3. Understand the problem

Product design is all about solving real users' problems. It isn't about personal preferences. A clear definition of the problem you're tackling is an essential component in the design process. It's the guiding force that enables designers to keep their efforts focused and put users first to address a need. Always base design decisions on data and user insights to create impactful solutions.

4. Just simple enough

Think about some of the products you use every day. Have you ever taken a moment to appreciate their craftsmanship and simplicity? The beauty of truly great design is that it's almost invisible and completely intuitive. As such, design should be as simple as possible, but no simpler.

Design with purpose and weigh every line: this might mean simplifying something by removing unnecessary components or enhancing the user experience with just the right addition to signpost an action more clearly. You can also keep users engaged with progressive discoverability: humans can only process a few options at a time, so hold a few cards close to your chest and release features gradually to help users make decisions and get to know your product.

5. Be coherent, not consistent

To build successful global products at scale, it's essential to develop a design language that balances flexibility with efficiency. While consistency is often seen as something that can optimise workflow for brands, aiming for rigidly consistent design details across platforms and channels can actually limit adaptability and set you up to fail. The key is to design a coherent yet distinctive branded experience which is recognisable (but not necessarily identical pixel for pixel) across different platforms. You can do this by creating versatile building blocks which can be customised – for example for Android, iOS, Mac and Windows– which maintain design harmony and are clearly related, but can be easily tweaked to suit the demands of that system.

6. Show the future

Designers possess a unique superpower: the ability to envision what doesn't yet exist. One of a designer's most important roles is to communicate a new idea into a clear, cohesive vision that guides the entire team and leads to its successful creation. It's an amazing job: to lead the way and shape a future that we're the first to build.

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