

# VANESSA KIRBY

Operational Leader | COO | VP Delivery

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[Website](#) [SlideShare](#) [LinkedIn](#)

## PROFILE

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Operational leader with 20+ years building the delivery infrastructure that lets product-led companies scale. I've run cross-functional programmes, introduced operating models, and driven measurable commercial outcomes at M&S, Argos, BT Financial Group, and SeedLegals, across organisations from 50 to tens of thousands of people, in retail, fintech, legaltech, and enterprise.

My edge is structural: I identify where the operating model is the constraint on growth, and I fix it. Whether that's a cross-functional rhythm that doesn't exist, a GTM process that excludes the people who need to know, or a leadership team that isn't functioning as one. I've done all of it, and I've delivered the numbers alongside it.

International experience across Asia, Australia, USA and Europe. Board Trustee. Conference speaker. MSc Occupational Psychology.

## CORE COMPETENCIES

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**Operating model design:** Cross-functional structure, delivery rhythm, GTM process, OKR frameworks

**Transformation leadership:** Agile adoption, digital-first shifts, org redesign in traditional large-scale businesses

**Scale-up delivery:** Building delivery infrastructure without formal authority across product, engineering, marketing, CX

**Commercial impact:** Direct accountability for revenue-linked outcomes: conversion, retention, market entry

**Team leadership:** Teams of 26–30+ in complex matrix organisations; mentorship and growth frameworks

**AI integration:** Operational efficiency, support cost reduction, design and product process uplift

**International operations:** In-country delivery across Asia, Australia, USA and Europe

## EXPERIENCE

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**Director of Product Operations** | **SeedLegals** Apr 2022 – Present | London

*LegalTech SaaS scale-up · ~160 people · consolidation and growth phase*

- Introduced strategic planning cadence, cross-functional GTM process, and delivery rhythm across product, engineering, marketing and CX; operating without formal authority over most functions
- Designed and launched new market entry into the USA and a regulated investor marketplace product (deal flow to portfolio management), leading cross-functional delivery from concept through GTM
- AI integration programme to improve operational efficiency and reduce support costs, coordinating across product, engineering and CX teams

- Co-sponsored exco-level strategic pitch with Director of Strategy on AI-driven disruption reshaping engineering, product and CX boundaries simultaneously, operating at SLT on a topic with material implications for company structure

**Director of Service Design | Modern Human (Consulting)** May 2021 – Apr 2022 | London

*Freelance consulting · maternity leave cover · global retail and edtech clients*

- Led service design practice across global retailers and edtech clients; delivered strategic vision and operating model recommendations at senior stakeholder level

**Head of Experience Design | Marks & Spencer** Oct 2017 – Jul 2020 | London

*FTSE 100 retailer · omnichannel digital transformation · team of 26+*

- Led a team of 26+ across omnichannel digital experience, operating inside a complex matrix organisation with multiple senior stakeholders and competing priorities
- Furniture category: +16% conversion - equivalent to ~£3m annual revenue uplift - through end-to-end redesign of the customer journey
- Sparks loyalty programme revamp: +1M app downloads and +8% NPS improvement
- CFTO redesign: +300–450% YoY growth; delivered through structured cross-functional delivery programme

**Head of UX | Argos (Sainsbury's Group)** Aug 2015 – Oct 2017 | London

*Major UK retailer · £4.25bn revenue · digital-first transformation · team of 26+*

- Central to Argos's transformation from physical to digital-first: shift from 30% to 66% online business, hitting the £250m stretch revenue target, one of the most significant retail digital transformations of its period in the UK
- Owned delivery of the full selling journey redesign: homepage, category, product, and checkout plus finance integration and taxonomy coordinating across engineering, trading, and commercial teams
- Structured the team operating model to deliver at speed and scale inside a large, fast-moving retail organisation

**Head of UX | BT Financial Group** Jan 2013 – Jul 2015 | Sydney, Australia

*Investment bank · digital wealth platform transformation · team of 30+*

- Business sponsor for the introduction of Agile into a large traditional waterfall organisation accountable for change adoption, not just design execution
- Led digital transformation of the wealth management platform: introduced design systems, experience-led strategy, and modular pattern libraries that reduced time-to-market and enabled consistent deployment at scale
- Managed a team of 30+ through sustained organisational change in an investment banking environment

## EARLIER CAREER

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**Group Manager – Experience Design** - Avanade (Microsoft Technology) *London*

**Creative Director** - SapientNitro *London*

**Director of User Experience** - Flow Interactive *London*

**Senior Director – Product Interface Design & Testing** - LexisNexis *Dayton, USA*

Prior positions across UK, Asia, Australia and USA - details available on request.

## BOARD & ADVISORY

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**Trustee (Digital Strategy) | Wimbledon Windmill Museum** Oct 2020 – Present | *London*

- Board-level accountability for digital strategy, user engagement and online visibility across marketing, social, fundraising and events
- Commissioned and delivered in-house museum experience app in partnership with Bloomberg Connects

**Digital Adviser** | Conduct Change *Jan 2017 – Present*

Digital transformation and online communications advisory for mental health and anti-bullying campaign organisation.

## EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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**MSc Occupational Psychology:** University of Hertfordshire

**BSc Life Science (2:1):** University of Westminster

**Recent development:** AI for Work & Life (Univ. North Florida, 2025) · Product Analytics (2024) · Figma Pro (2023) · Google Digital Marketing Fundamentals (2020)

## SPEAKING & PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS

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Conference speaker on digital experience, product strategy, and agile delivery. UX and product mentor. Champion of inclusive design and ethical AI. Passionate about applying digital thinking to heritage, education and public service.