

VANESSA KIRBY

Director UX, Design & Product Operations | UX Leader

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IN A NUTSHELL:

I build and run multi-disciplinary UX and design teams. I set the standards for craft, research and design practice, and use that to shape strategic direction and digital transformation. I have strong product and commercial instincts. I'm known for forging relationships across a business, bringing the customer into the room, and turning that into roadmaps that deliver award-winning products.

I've led design at Argos, Marks & Spencer, LexisNexis and BT Financial Group, with international in-country experience across Asia, Australia, USA and Europe. Consultancy and agency time at SapientNitro and Avanade.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Agile UX & Service Design Leadership
- Integration of AI, from process improvement to design integration
- Design systems, UX operations and delivery processes
- Research, UX research, insight generation and evidence-led decision making
- Department management, mentorship and growth frameworks for individuals and teams
- UX, UCD and UXR centre of excellence advisory
- Product operations and interim product management
- Exec-level advisory and strategic roadmapping
- Organisational partnerships for strategic planning and OKR outcomes
- Digital transformation
- SaaS, B2B, B2C, mobile, service design

IMPACT EXAMPLES

- M&S furniture end-to-end customer journey redesign: 16% conversion uplift, equivalent to approximately £3m annual revenue,.
- M&S Sparks loyalty programme revamp: over 1 million app downloads and an 8% NPS improvement in 8 weeks
- M&S Christmas Food to Order redesign: +300–450% YoY revenue growth
- Argos: shifted online revenue from 33% to 66% share — c.£250m uplift
- BTFG: full wealth management offering (spreadsheets to apps) market share to 78%
- SeedLegals: Introduced strategic planning, cross-functional GTM process and operational rhythm across a 160-person scale-up — working across product, design, engineering, marketing and support without formal authority over most of it

CURRENT

Director of UX & Product Operations | SeedLegals Apr 2022 – Present | London

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

- Built out the UX and product design practice, embedding design into every product & engineering team; shifting to company wide, collaborative discovery & ideation to ensure the best solution
- Drove Service Design methods (blueprinting) to identify opportunities for design and manual processes we could automate on platform.
- Switched reliance on Figma to AI prototypes alongside stories written to inform agents (as well as engineers) for speed of delivery
- 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, leading cross-functional delivery from concept through GTM
 - new market entry into the USA
 - a regulated investor marketplace product (deal flow to portfolio management)
- Co-sponsored exco-level AI-driven streamlining of internal service capabilities reshaping engineering, product and CX

BOARD & ADVISORY

Trustee | 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

Board advisor | Mitos Relocation Jan 2026 – Present | London

- Board advisor to founder of retirement relocation consultancy.
- Current focus: brand repositioning and driving AI adoption into the business.

Digital advisor | Conduct Change Jan 2017 – Present

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

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

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
- Led the research and design work behind the furniture conversion redesign: new PDP pattern, and interaction design allowing a primarily offline shopping behaviour to be fulfilled online

- +16% furniture conversion (~£3m annual lift)
- Sparks loyalty revamp: +1M app downloads, +8% NPS
- CFTO redesign: +300-450% YoY growth

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

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

- Led the delivery of the full selling journey redesign: homepage, category, product, and checkout plus finance integration and taxonomy coordinating across engineering, trading, and commercial teams
- 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
- 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+

- 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
- Business sponsor for the introduction of Agile into a large traditional waterfall organisation accountable for change adoption, not just design execution
- Managed a team of 30+ through sustained organisational change in an investment banking environment

EARLIER CAREER

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.

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

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.