Interview Guide for Product Designer

Tiny

Created by [Deliverables AI](https://github.com/androb/deliverables)

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# About this Guide

This guide serves as a roadmap for assessing candidates for the Product Designer role at Tiny. It is crafted to align with the job requirements and Tiny’s values. The guide includes an interview agenda, a competency framework, situational scenarios, a case study for role play, a candidate Q&A section, and a scorecard for evaluation.

The competencies are drawn from the job description and reflect Tiny’s commitment to content creation, open-source initiatives, and a remote-first culture. The questions are designed to uncover candidates’ past experiences and how they approach design challenges.

The guide is a tool for Tiny’s hiring team to conduct comprehensive and consistent interviews. It captures the necessary information to make informed hiring decisions and ensures a fair evaluation process for all candidates.

# Job Description

**Job Title: Product Designer**

**About Tiny**

If you’ve ever written content on the web, chances are you’ve used a Tiny product. As part of the Tiugo Technologies portfolio of brands, we make TinyMCE and other great developer tools. Our team is dedicated to bringing content creation tools globally through open-source initiatives.

We’re expanding our product family and are looking for a talented Product Designer to join our remote team of over 200 members worldwide, with significant presence in Australia, Poland, and the USA.

**About the Role**

As a Product Designer for TinyMCE, you will have a direct impact on millions of users globally. In the TinyMCE product team, you will be part of the entire development journey, from identifying issues to defining and designing solutions. Your responsibilities include creating wireframes, prototypes, UI designs, and considering the broader experience for users, developers, and customers, such as editor behavior and best practices.

TinyMCE, our product, is a widely used component in customer’s web apps. You will merge your ideas with those of other designers and developers responsible for integrating TinyMCE into their apps. The role involves functional, almost architectural design work, emphasizing research, user experience, usability, and empathy for both developers and end-users.

Familiarity with front-end web development is essential for discussing HTML and CSS, best practices, and accessibility standards with developers. Experience with design systems and componentized designs is beneficial.

Tiny is a fully remote organization with team members across multiple continents. Excellent communication skills are crucial, meaning you should be able to clearly express design briefs, documentation, and ideas in English, either in writing or video.

**Key Responsibilities**

* Translate customer feedback into actionable solutions.
* Collaborate with developers to implement solutions.
* Conduct industry and competitor research to identify opportunities, trends, and best practices.
* Assist the product team in communicating and visualizing upcoming features.
* Maintain and develop the TinyMCE design system in Figma.

**Requirements**

* 3-5 years of experience as a designer working with software development teams.
* Proficient in modern web development, able to effectively communicate technical details with developers.
* Familiarity with accessibility standards and their influence on design.
* Ability to work with at least a four-hour overlap with the CET timezone.
* Comfortable with English communication, both spoken and written.

**Why Join Us**

* Flexible schedule and fully remote work.
* Professional development resources, including up to 5 days of additional leave and dedicated yearly funds.
* LinkedIn Learning access.
* Extra leave for Tiugo Day - our company’s foundation day, and your birthday.
* Access to a mental health and well-being platform.

# Interview Agenda

1. Introduction (5 minutes)
2. Review of the candidate’s portfolio (20 minutes)
3. Competency-based questions (30 minutes)
4. Situational scenarios (20 minutes)
5. Case study / Role play (30 minutes)
6. Candidate Q&A (15 minutes)
7. Wrap-up and next steps (10 minutes)

# Competency Framework

The competency framework for the Product Designer role at Tiny is designed to evaluate candidates on a mix of technical skills, design expertise, and soft skills. These competencies are essential for contributing to Tiny’s mission and thriving in a remote-first environment.

1. **Design Proficiency**: Mastery in creating wireframes, prototypes, and UI designs.
2. **Technical Communication**: Ability to discuss HTML, CSS, and design best practices with developers.
3. **User Empathy**: Understanding of user experience, usability, and accessibility standards.
4. **Collaboration**: Working effectively with remote teams and contributing to a design system.
5. **Research and Analysis**: Conducting industry research and translating findings into design solutions.
6. **Communication Skills**: Clear expression of design briefs and documentation in English.
7. **Cultural Fit**: Alignment with Tiny’s values of transparency, learning, and growth.

# Competency 1. **Design Proficiency**

Candidates must showcase a strong portfolio of design work, highlighting their ability to create wireframes, prototypes, and UI designs. They should articulate their design process and demonstrate proficiency in design tools, particularly Figma.

## Lead Question

**“Can you walk us through a design project you are particularly proud of, from conception to completion?”** What challenges did you face? How did you overcome them? What was the impact of your design?

*Look for a detailed explanation of the design process, problem-solving skills, and the ability to measure the success of their designs.*

## Situational Scenario

**“Imagine you’ve received user feedback indicating that a feature in TinyMCE is not intuitive. How would you approach redesigning this feature?”**

*Look for a structured approach to user feedback, empathy for the user, and a methodical redesign process.*

## Diving Deeper

* “How do you ensure your designs are accessible to all users?”
* “Describe your experience with design systems and how you have contributed to one.”
* “How do you balance aesthetic design with functional requirements?”
* “What is your approach to testing and validating your designs?”
* “How do you handle conflicting feedback from different stakeholders?”

## Evaluation

| Rating 1 | Rating 2 | Rating 3 | Rating 4 | Rating 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Lacks design proficiency | Basic design skills | Competent in design | Strong design skills | Expert in design creation |

# Competency 2. **Technical Communication**

The candidate must be proficient in modern web development practices and able to effectively communicate technical details with developers. They should understand the importance of HTML and CSS in design and be able to discuss best practices and accessibility standards.

## Lead Question

**“Tell us about a time when you had to explain a complex design decision to a developer or development team. How did you approach the conversation?”** What was the outcome? Did the solution meet both design and technical requirements?

*Look for clear communication, technical understanding, and the ability to find common ground with developers.*

## Situational Scenario

**“You need to explain to a developer why certain design elements must be implemented using specific CSS properties for accessibility reasons. How would you go about this?”**

*Look for a clear explanation of accessibility standards, technical knowledge of CSS, and persuasive communication skills.*

## Diving Deeper

* “How do you stay updated on the latest web development and design trends?”
* “Can you give an example of how you’ve incorporated front-end development best practices into your design work?”
* “Describe a time when you had to compromise on design due to technical constraints. How did you handle it?”
* “How do you ensure that your designs are technically feasible to implement?”
* “What’s your experience with responsive design and how do you approach it?”

## Evaluation

| Rating 1 | Rating 2 | Rating 3 | Rating 4 | Rating 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Struggles with technical communication | Can discuss basics | Communicates effectively | Strong technical dialogue | Expert in technical communication |

# Competency 3. **User Empathy**

Candidates should have a strong understanding of user experience principles and be able to design with empathy for the end-user. They must be familiar with usability and accessibility standards and incorporate these into their design work.

## Lead Question

**“How do you incorporate user feedback into your design process? Can you give an example of how you’ve improved a design based on user input?”** What methods did you use to gather feedback? How did you prioritize changes?

*Look for a user-centered design approach, the ability to gather and analyze feedback, and the application of accessibility standards.*

## Situational Scenario

**“A user with visual impairments is having difficulty using a feature you designed. How would you go about addressing this issue?”**

*Look for a thoughtful approach to accessibility, problem-solving skills, and a commitment to inclusive design.*

## Diving Deeper

* “What are some key principles of user-centered design that you follow?”
* “How do you ensure your designs are usable by a wide range of people, including those with disabilities?”
* “Can you discuss a time when you had to make a design more intuitive for users? What was your approach?”
* “What tools or methods do you use to test the usability of your designs?”
* “How do you balance user needs with business objectives in your design work?”

## Evaluation

| Rating 1 | Rating 2 | Rating 3 | Rating 4 | Rating 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Lacks empathy for users | Basic understanding of UX | Competent in user empathy | Strong in creating usable designs | Expert in user-centered design |

# Competency 4. **Collaboration**

The candidate must be comfortable working in a remote environment and have experience collaborating with cross-functional teams. They should also have experience contributing to or maintaining a design system, which is crucial for consistency across Tiny’s products.

## Lead Question

**“Can you describe your experience working remotely with a design or development team? How do you ensure effective collaboration?”** What tools do you use? How do you handle communication challenges?

*Look for experience with remote work, use of collaboration tools, and strategies for effective communication.*

## Situational Scenario

**“You’re asked to update a component in the TinyMCE design system. How would you approach this task while ensuring consistency with the existing system?”**

*Look for an understanding of design systems, attention to detail, and the ability to work within established guidelines.*

## Diving Deeper

* “How do you approach giving and receiving feedback in a remote team setting?”
* “What’s your experience with Figma or similar design tools for collaborative work?”
* “Describe a time when you had to align your design with others in a shared system. What was the process?”
* “How do you document your design decisions for others to follow?”
* “What strategies do you use to stay aligned with team members in different time zones?”

## Evaluation

| Rating 1 | Rating 2 | Rating 3 | Rating 4 | Rating 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Struggles with collaboration | Basic teamwork skills | Competent collaborator | Strong team player | Expert in remote collaboration |

# Competency 5. **Research and Analysis**

Candidates should be adept at conducting industry and competitor research to identify trends and best practices. They must be able to translate these findings into actionable design solutions that align with Tiny’s strategic goals.

## Lead Question

**“How do you conduct research to inform your design decisions? Can you give an example of how research influenced a design project?”** What sources do you use? How do you validate your findings?

*Look for a methodical approach to research, the ability to synthesize information, and the application of insights to design.*

## Situational Scenario

**“You’re tasked with identifying emerging trends in content creation tools. How would you go about this research, and how would you apply your findings to TinyMCE?”**

*Look for a strategic approach to research, the ability to identify relevant trends, and the application of insights to product design.*

## Diving Deeper

* “What tools or methods do you use for competitor analysis?”
* “How do you stay informed about the latest design and technology trends?”
* “Can you discuss a time when you had to pivot a design based on new market insights?”
* “How do you balance quantitative and qualitative data in your research?”
* “What’s your approach to validating design concepts with users or stakeholders?”

## Evaluation

| Rating 1 | Rating 2 | Rating 3 | Rating 4 | Rating 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Lacks research skills | Basic research abilities | Competent in research | Strong analytical skills | Expert in translating research into design |

# Competency 6. **Communication Skills**

The candidate must be able to clearly express design briefs, documentation, and ideas in English. This is crucial for effective communication within Tiny’s distributed team and for maintaining clarity in remote collaborations.

## Lead Question

**“Can you provide an example of a complex design concept you had to communicate to a non-design audience? How did you ensure they understood?”** What tools or techniques did you use?

*Look for clarity of expression, the ability to tailor communication to the audience, and the use of effective communication tools.*

## Situational Scenario

**“You need to present a new design direction to the TinyMCE team, including members who are not designers. How would you prepare and deliver this presentation?”**

*Look for a structured presentation, the ability to explain design concepts clearly, and the use of visual aids to enhance understanding.*

## Diving Deeper

* “How do you document your design process for others to follow?”
* “What’s your approach to writing design specifications or guidelines?”
* “How do you handle language barriers or misunderstandings in a remote team?”
* “Can you share an experience where effective communication was critical to a project’s success?”
* “How do you ensure that your written and spoken communications are clear and concise?”

## Evaluation

| Rating 1 | Rating 2 | Rating 3 | Rating 4 | Rating 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Struggles with clear communication | Basic communication skills | Competent communicator | Strong communicator | Expert in clear expression |

# Competency 7. **Cultural Fit**

The candidate should resonate with Tiny’s values of transparency, honesty, and straightforwardness, as well as the company’s commitment to learning, growth, and diversity.They should be comfortable with the remote-first culture and enthusiastic about contributing to a global team.

## Lead Question

**“How do you align with Tiny’s ‘WYSIWYG’ culture of transparency and honesty in your professional life?”** Can you give an example of how you’ve demonstrated these values in a work setting?

*Look for examples of transparency in communication, honesty in dealings, and a commitment to personal and professional growth.*

## Situational Scenario

**“You’re working on a project with tight deadlines, and you encounter a design challenge you’ve never faced before. How would you handle this situation while adhering to Tiny’s values?”**

*Look for a willingness to learn, seek help, and share knowledge, as well as the ability to work independently and proactively.*

## Diving Deeper

* “How do you approach continuous learning and professional development in your career?”
* “Can you share an experience where you had to adapt to a new or challenging work environment?”
* “How do you contribute to a positive and inclusive team culture?”
* “What strategies do you use to stay motivated and productive in a remote work setting?”
* “How do you handle feedback and use it to improve your work?”

## Evaluation

| Rating 1 | Rating 2 | Rating 3 | Rating 4 | Rating 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Does not align with company values | Basic alignment with values | Competent cultural fit | Strong alignment with values | Exemplifies Tiny’s culture |

# Case Study / Role Play

Candidates will engage in a case study that mirrors a realistic design challenge at Tiny. They will need to analyze the situation, propose a design solution, and defend their choices. The case study will test their ability to navigate Tiny’s design system, incorporate user feedback, and communicate their ideas clearly.

Evaluators should look for innovation, strategic thought, and the ability to produce a coherent design that aligns with Tiny’s values and product objectives. The role play will also gauge the candidate’s presentation skills and their responsiveness to questions and feedback from the hiring team.

The case study will provide insights into the candidate’s design process, their grasp of Tiny’s products, and their potential as a team member. It will also show how they manage stress and adapt to new information, which are key qualities for a remote team member.

# Candidate Q&A

The interview concludes with a session for candidates to inquire about Tiny, the Product Designer role, and the team they may join. This segment is crucial as it allows candidates to show their interest and understanding of the role and Tiny.

**Q. What does a typical day look like for a Product Designer at Tiny?**

A. Product Designers at Tiny engage in a variety of tasks, from research and design creation to collaboration with developers and stakeholders. They operate in a flexible, remote setting, managing their responsibilities to meet team objectives and deadlines.

**Q. How does Tiny support professional development for its team members?**

A. Tiny offers professional development resources, including LinkedIn Learning access, additional leave for learning, and yearly funds dedicated to career advancement.

**Q. Can you tell me more about the TinyMCE design system and how it’s maintained?**

A. The TinyMCE design system comprises guidelines and components that ensure uniformity and quality across our products. It is collaboratively maintained by the design team and evolves with user feedback and industry standards.

**Q. How does Tiny facilitate remote collaboration across different time zones?**

A. Tiny employs various communication and project management tools to support remote collaboration. Team members are expected to overlap with the CET timezone and communicate proactively for alignment.

**Q. What are the growth opportunities within the design team at Tiny?**

A. Tiny values learning and growth, offering designers chances to tackle new challenges, lead projects, and contribute to the company’s strategic initiatives.

**Q. How does Tiny integrate user feedback into the design process?**

A. User feedback is vital to Tiny’s design process. Designers collaborate with the product team to collect and analyze feedback, which informs design iterations and enhancements.

# Candidate Evaluation

Complete the following scorecard for the Product Designer role at Tiny. Use the evaluation guides for each competency to score the candidate.

| Competency | Rating (1-5) | Interviewer Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Design Proficiency |  |  |
| Technical Communication |  |  |
| User Empathy |  |  |
| Collaboration |  |  |
| Research and Analysis |  |  |
| Communication Skills |  |  |
| Cultural Fit |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total** |  |  |