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Based in Melbourne

Milly Schmidt

Senior product & design leader available for full-time contract or salaried positions, remote or on-premises

About me

I'm a pragmatic, confident and empathetic product and design leader. I have always been interested in how to solve problems for people. I've worked in the tech industry in various roles for ten years, both technical and managerial, so I can zoom in and out to see the details as well as the big picture. I highly value transparency, cross-functional collaboration, experimentation, feedback, facilitation and research.

I've designed solutions in code as a software engineer. I've designed interfaces, experiences and design systems as a UX designer. I've designed ideas, products, and research projects as a design and product leader. All of these design lenses have been critical in building my understanding that designing the culture and structure of organisations plays a huge part in delivering solutions for end users.

I deliver value to users and customers with both empathy and systems thinking. I understand and can implement traditional and progressive paradigms at each of these levels of design. My approach at all levels is iterative, research-based, human-centered and transparent.

My goal is to work with people with deep knowledge and expertise to deepen my own skills in this complex and fascinating world or technology products.

UI design	*UX design*	*Product design*	*Organisational design*
Front end dev →	*UX research* →	*Product management* →	*Agile & lean coaching*
Design systems		*Product leadership*	*Product strategy*

Education

BA (Adv) in Arts	**UX Immersive (part time)**
University of Sydney	**General Assembly Melbourne**
2006-2009	October - November 2015

Skills and expertise

Leadership & management

- Hiring, performance management, ongoing management & feedback of high-performing teams both technical and non-technical.
- Progressive management and org structure strategies like Teal organisations, and interested in innovative, equitable, sustainable and human-centred approaches to building anti-fragile teams.
- Product management, with a focus on risk, agility and breaking down organisational silos and transparency. Building product visions and strategies based on problems rather than solutions and being led by research.
- Various implementations and iterations of empowered, autonomous teams Agile & Scrum.
- Skilled and sensitive facilitator, having delivered workshops to conferences, meetups, as well as senior stakeholders.
- Training & professional development, coaching & mentorship.

Design & research

- Lean & more formal research practices, including study design and recruiting as well as research activities user interviews, card sorting/tree testing, usability testing and design research, competitor research, data analysis, diary studies, ethnographic research, guerilla research.
- Developing and maintaining research repositories using Drive/Docs as well as Airtable and specialised tools (Dovetail).
- Designing, building and scaling component libraries and design systems with various libraries and approaches, creating ways for designers and developers to collaborate efficiently.
- UI design and heuristics, including colour theory, typography, accessibility, interaction design and psychology.
- Proven success at implementing design/product frameworks like Design Thinking, Jobs to Be Done, GV Design Sprints, Lean UX.
- UI design tools such as XD, Figma, Sketch, UXpin, InVision, Baslamiq, Proto.io & various others
- Research tooling, Optimal Workshop, UsabilityHub, UserZoom, Rev
- Content strategy, information architecture.

Code & technology

- Delivering code in various tech stacks including React and Angular, Elixir, Phoenix.
- Other MVC paradigms like Ruby & .Net, Symfony
- Building & maintaining interfaces in functional programming using Hoplon, Clojurescript, Datascript & Clojure
- The basics; Sass, LESS, CSS, HTML, PHP, Javascript & jQuery
- Building & customising CMSs like Drupal, Wordpress.

Last position

Director of product

UsabilityHub
usabilityhub.com
October 2019 - current

A bootstrapped, profitable startup building a SaaS product that offers remote, unmoderated design research tools to a global audience.

Product management
Product strategy
Design research
UX design
Facilitation
Leadership team

I joined UsabilityHub as a Senior UX Designer and was promoted to lead within a few months. I was then asked to step up as Director of Product, a role that encompasses design and product leadership with a view to developing new product offerings, managing the core product and scaling the team. I worked closely with the executives/founders on implementing OKRs, building product and organisational strategy, and establishing the practice of human-centered design alongside lean product research. I worked closely to coach the team on their agile processes and find a way of working that suited their particular constraints and goals.

- UX design and facilitation of co-design work, educating the team on processes, tools and techniques to ideate, refine and deliver designs in an iterative way
- Collaborated with and advised their front-end developer on implementation of and scaling of a front-end component system using Chakra
- Worked closely with the executive team on repricing project
- Designed and facilitated multiple UX and CX research projects, both lean and more in-depth.

Recent positions

Senior UX designer

RMIT Online
online.rmit.edu.au
March - October 2019

A branch of RMIT University focused on delivering online learning solutions for short courses and degree courses,with a mandate to pursue technological innovation.

Product management
Design research
Agile coaching
Management
UX design
Facilitation
Management team

I joined RMIT Online in their "Future Skills" team, a cross-functional Agile team working with industry to build 6-8 week short courses in topics like product management, blockchain, agile, app development with Swift, and more. My role was to manage the majority of the team and to work closely with the agile coach to integrate UX research into their regular cadence of work over time. A highly volatile environment that saw three restructures in the short period I worked there, my remit was frequently changing. I managed two other designers and helped train them in UX research activities.

- Designed and integrated a research approach for a highly constrained product pipeline, empowering designers, learning designers and customer support staff to participate in a series of interviews, surveys and other critical user feedback touchpoints
- Created a theme system for their highly custom coded LMS that allowed content editors to more easily build visually pleasing courses without handling custom code
- Trained various staff in UX research activities
- Management of technical and non-technical staff, including performance management.

Director of product & design

RateIt
rateitapp.com
June - November 2018

A growth-stage venture funded startup offering customer experience feedback software and hardware implementations to retail, healthcare and government premises globally.

Product management
Product strategy
Executive team
Management
UX design
Coaching
Facilitation

I joined RateIt to help them establish their design and product strategy to assist them with their ambitious growth plans and Series A funding. Their team was fully-remote, spread across multiple continents, and I was managing the product team (both designers and developers, as well as a product manager). I reported directly to the CEO and was part of the executive team. My role involved a lot of people management, as well as critical product strategy and the establishment and development of UX research and design.

- Established agile processes and Lean experiment framework as well as collaborative and cross-functional approaches to problem solving
- Developed product management framework, tooling and roadmap
- Developed UX research and design practice, including hiring
- Established a design ops component-driven approach in collaboration with technical leads
- Worked with the C-suite to translate highest level business objectives to execution on the ground with the delivery team
- Role encompassed responsibilities of technical sales lead (explained products to prospective customers) as well as product marketer
- Project managed and executed on a new marketing website to assist with funding and sales
- Kickstarted a culture of design thinking and empowering and collaborative human-centred design
- Performance management of multiple staff.

Product/UX designer

EstimateOne
estimateone.com
October 2017 - June 2018

A growth-stage, bootstrapped and profitable startup offering SaaS products to builders, subcontractors and suppliers in the commercial construction industry in Australia and overseas.

Coaching
Design leadership
User experience design
Research
Facilitation
Leadership team

I joined EstimateOne to develop their design and research practice from scratch and assist their reorganization from a functionally divided visual design-led company to a set of cross-functional, audience-led squads. I mentored their new junior designer and coached their newly established product managers. My role was part of the leadership team and I worked closely with the CEO and Agile coach to assist with building new capabilities and educating the team on modern design, research and product management practices.

- Helped transition the organisation to a new structure and establish collaborative, Lean design processes to support distribution of UX design as a function across teams
- Mentoring for the junior designer who was looking to upskill in design thinking and UX
- Worked with stream leads and a product coach from Cogent to facilitate sketch shops, retrospectives, design feedback sessions
- Established a practice and personally conducted various usability testing and research interviews, and trained the team on how to do this and why
- Ushered in a new era of React transitioning the team and stack from Symfony/PHP to React/GraphQL and a component library
- Provided training for senior staff members around design thinking and human-centred design practices.

Founder

Estimate Work, Dim Valley
estimate-work.com,
dim-valley.com
2016-2018

Bootstrapped SaaS project
management product and UX
consultancy.

Entrepreneurship
Strategy
Lean strategy
UX design & research
UI design
Front-end development

I established two businesses; one product and one consulting. The goal
was to attempt to build a simple, "does one thing well" SaaS product
without investment. The product was a project management tool
focusing on collaborative estimation. I consulted to other SaaS
companies as a designer to cover costs of developing the bootstrapped
product.

- Initial product concepts and high level business strategy
- Competitor research and product/market fit research
- Finance and operations, including setup of trusts and business
  banking
- Product strategy and iterative product development
- Front-end strategy and design system development
- Independent contracting/consulting to startups and small
  businesses on user experience design and research
- Continuous lean research and customer feedback gathering.

UX engineer

Clover
clover.com.au
November 2016 - September
2017

An emerging Fintech startup
offering a new robo-advice
platform to millenials.

UX research
UI design
Front-end development
Lean experiments
Design systems
Design sprints

I joined the small cross-functional, high performing agile team in Clover's
early stages as they were still finding product-market fit by marketing to
and getting feedback from early adopters. Their workflow was
experiment-driven, with a Lean focus. I helped research, design and ship
critical parts of their initial product offering.

- Combined role of front-end dev (React) and UX (research, ideation,
  synthesis, facilitation)
- UI design using Sketch, Balsamiq, in-browser iterations
- Worked closely with product manager, senior devs, another UX
  engineer to ship high value features to early adopters
- Worked closely with founders to understand product vision and
  business model opportunities
- Overhauled their in-app onboarding for higher conversion
- Refactoring component-driven approach in React
- Worked on deep user research, both generative and evaluative
- Conducted many rounds of usability testing, in-house and guerilla
- Measurable impact of work through experimentation frameworks.

Early career positions

UX/content strategy

Weave
weaveweb.com.au
August - November 2016

UX design
Content strategy
Information architecture design

I joined Weave to do UX and content strategy. I worked with them to
improve their ways of working & agile processes, upgrade tooling and
security, start a culture of peer review and collaboration as well as
actively contributed to design development projects for clients.

- State of the Bays - a report on marine biodiversity in the bays of
  Victoria. I worked with them on their content strategy and UX
- Nando's Australia - project management and technical consultancy.

UX lead

Equiem
getequiem.com
October 2015 - July 2016

UX research
UX design
Design sprints
Leadership and management

I initiated the UX department and hired and managed junior UXers. I worked closely with the engineering team to advise on execution of and with stakeholders for strategy.

- Used project management tools ProdPad, Pivotal Tracker and DaPulse to manage UX deliverables
- Trained front-end engineers in order to build a component-based style-guide driven product
- Liaised with CTO & other stakeholders to translate business goals to product strategy.

Front–end lead

Equiem
getequiem.com
February - October 2015

Design systems
Drupal development
PHP, Javascript and Sass
Hiring
Visual design

I came on board as an engineer and quickly specialised to front-end. Their Drupal 7 UI needed improvement and their theme system needed rigour. I introduced a component-driven Sass strategy and removed over 40 sub-themes from the project which were drastically increasing compile time. I also developed an extensible icon library and configurable colour picker branding system so the product could be white labelled.

- Sass, Javascript, jQuery, Drupal 7
- Leading and teaching a team of back-end engineers about best practice Drupal theme development
- Style guide (component library) development & implementation.

Software engineer

Godel
August 2011 - February 2015

Drupal CMS
Site- building
PHP, Javascript, Sass
Design systems and component libraries
Client management
Marketing and content creation
Site launches and provisioning

I joined a small agency as a generalist and by the time I left I was lead engineer and training staff in Drupal, SCSS, Javascript and more. I also worked with clients for end-to-end web development, from initial consultation, content strategy, design, build, launch and SEO. Many of the sites we worked on in that period are still online.

- Sass, JS, jQuery, Drupal 7, Drupal 6, PHP
- Dev team lead
- Copywriting and content strategy
- Style Guide & client template development
- Illustrator & Photoshop

Volunteering & community contributions

Local leader & co-organiser

Melbourne Chapter of IxDA Meetup
ixda.org

After this meetup's organisers stepped down, I stepped up to lead it. I recruited volunteers, sourced speakers, and designed events all focusing on human centred design. I am part of a community of local leaders that connects meetup organisers from around the globe.

Facilitator & instructor

Code Like a Girl
codelikeagirl.org

I have worked with Code Like a Girl for a few years in a mix of paid and unpaid positions, ranging from teaching workshops to children and adults, to MC'ing events.

Advisor

Girls in Tech Australia
melbourne.girlsintech.org

I served on the advisory board for the GiT Australia team and project managed a web and brand refresh.

Hackathon mentor

Go Girl, Go for IT, Girl Geek Academy & Girls in Tech

I have worked with various groups focused on women and girls in tech to help facilitate, mentor and judge hackathons, providing technical and design guidance on projects.

Meetup speaker

Various

Be Responsive Melbourne, Drupal Melbourne, The Web Meetup, Agile Project Management Meetup, Content Strategy Meetup, PHP Melbourne, Prototypes & Popcorn, DDD Melbourne'

References on request

Managed me

Andrew Ritchie,
CEO, EstimateOne

Worked with me

Amanda Warmerdam,
Director of Customer Experience, UsabilityHub

Managed by me

Marcelo Zerwes
Creative Media Manager, RMIT Online