

Apparicio Bueno. AJ

HEAD OF DESIGN

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Design leader with 12+ years transforming digital experiences at global brands including The Times, BT Group/EE, Rolls-Royce, and Cazoo. Currently Head of Product Design at The Times, leading AI integration strategy and design transformation across web and mobile platforms.

Proven track record building high-performing design organisations, establishing design systems at scale, and driving measurable business impact through strategic design leadership. Specialise in organisational transformation, AI-powered product innovation, and executive stakeholder alignment.

LEADERSHIP IMPACT

- Built and scaled design teams across multiple organisations, establishing design operations and systems that drive consistency and efficiency at scale
- Led Europe's largest telecom brand migration, successfully transitioning millions of BT customers to EE whilst developing a new digital design language
- Founded Design Circuit education platform with 4,500+ alumni across 14 countries, plus Zenith Leadership executive programme and Kado Archive marketplace
- Delivered measurable product outcomes, including a 93 NPS score, 63% CTR improvements, and 41% bounce rate reductions through strategic design interventions

EXPERTISE

Design Leadership, Design Strategy, AI Integration, Product Innovation, Design Operations, Design Systems, Team Building & Scaling, Organizational Transformation, Executive Stakeholder Management, Digital Transformation

WORK EXPERIENCE

The Times (Aug/2025 - Now) - Head of Product Design

Leading the strategic evolution of digital product design at one of Britain's most prestigious news organisations, overseeing app and web experiences across thetimes.com while managing a cross-functional design team of 13 designers organised into tribes and squads.

- Spearheading AI integration strategy across product portfolio, including search reimagining leveraging journalism archives and article analysis tools, whilst pioneering rapid prototyping workflows using AI-powered meta-prompts with Figma Make and VSCode
- Restructured design organisation and successfully scaled team through strategic hiring for monetisation, acquisition, and product innovation roles, improving cross-functional collaboration across tribes and squads
- Developing comprehensive design vision frameworks for 2026-27 that align product innovation with editorial integrity

- Established "Design Digest Friday" executive communications framework, providing strategic visibility into design initiatives and business impact for C-suite stakeholders

BT Group/EE (Consumer) (Dec/22 - Jul/2025) - Head of Product Design

Pioneered the strategic transformation of digital product design, establishing and defining the Principal Designer role whilst driving innovative design leadership across the organisation.

- Shaped forward-looking 18-24 month design vision for EE, elevating digital product design to quality standards that ensure strategic alignment, delivery, and tangible business value
- Led pivotal brand migration collaboration with Zag, successfully transitioning millions of customers from BT to EE in one of Europe's largest telecommunications migration projects
- Established product design capability and design operations, including design system team (Loop), driving consistency and scalability across 50+ digital products with significantly increased adoption rates
- Developed a comprehensive design playbook introducing robust practices and processes, whilst cultivating a creative design culture that encouraged boundary-pushing innovation and strategic decision-making
- Collaborated strategically with cross-functional agencies to develop and implement cohesive new digital design language, transforming organisational structure for an adaptive, user-centric approach

Cazoo (Dec/2019 - Dec/2022) - Design Lead

Joined as a founding designer to shape the design team, define UX vision, and deliver record IPO with Europe's most useful online experiences for used cars. Led teams in the checkout domain, managing designers across five domains whilst prioritising projects with key business stakeholders and managing directors.

- Mentored a team of five product designers across five domains, coaching a developer to successfully transition into UX Design career
- Owned wider UX strategy to scale product across 5 European countries, evangelising customer insights and data to shape product roadmaps
- Launched comprehensive design bootcamp for cross-functional teams, resulting in 30% increase in project efficiency and equipping 40+ team members with essential UX skills
- Achieved 93 NPS and 4.8 Trustpilot score after launching progressive forms in checkout flow
- Delivered 63% CTR increase after launch of imperfections gallery and 41% bounce rate reduction for checkout flow through improved content hierarchy and UI

Hero® (Acquired by Klarna) (May/2019 - Nov/2019) - Senior UX/UI Designer

Designed the "In Real Life" omnichannel shopping experience for online stores, enabling WhatsApp, SMS and video call interactions. Hero was subsequently acquired by Klarna for its innovative omnichannel retail technology, validating the strategic vision of seamless digital-physical customer experiences.

- Empowered sales teams to text and email with customers through WhatsApp Business proposition, increasing cross-selling opportunities and growing lifetime loyalty
- Achieved up to 70% increase in spending amount per purchase through WhatsApp as on-demand shopping experience

Investis Digital (idx.inc) (Aug/2017 - May/2019) - Senior Product Designer

Led the conception and scaling of the UX team at one of the world's largest enterprise digital agencies, working with FTSE100 clients including Rolls-Royce, British Petroleum, Chemring, JTI, Whitbread, Halma, and St.James's Place. Audited British Petroleum Energy Tool reducing time to find results by 80%, and implemented the new Rolls-Royce digital rebrand in collaboration with Pentagram, developing a 600+ module design system that created consistency across their online products.

EXTRA

- Founded Design Circuit, a comprehensive design education platform with 4,500+ alumni across 14 countries working at leading companies, including Accenture, Apple, Globo, and Spotify. Also created Zenith Leadership, a 6-week executive programme for design leaders, and Kado Archive, a curated marketplace for digital design assets
- Regular speaker at design and product events in collaboration with DesignLab, Trainline, TechCircus, IBM, UX Crunch, and Figma