

Ryan Byrne

Design Lead — UX, Product Strategy & AI

Remote — South Africa | Open to US/EU remote roles

Email: ryanbyrne68@gmail.com

Summary

Design Lead who scales SaaS from early-stage → \$10M ARR, builds engaged beta communities (0 → 500+ users), and makes frontier tech (AI, fintech, Web3) usable for everyday people. Known for modernising legacy products into contemporary, high-performing platforms, creating design systems that scale, and delivering high-quality, research-driven designs that improve adoption and trust.

Core Skills

Design Systems • UX Leadership • Product Design • SaaS/CRM • AI & Workflow Automation • Fintech & Web3 • Research & Validation • Agile Delivery • Product Ownership • Engineering Collaboration

Experience

Design Team Lead — Travefy (2023–Present)

- Modernised Travefy's platform into a cohesive, contemporary experience, aligning with new web standards.
- Designed and implemented a comprehensive design system adopted across teams, improving velocity by 40%.
- Scaled platform from solo advisors to agencies of 150+ advisors, contributing to \$10M ARR (+25% YoY).
- Directed UX for CRM, commission tracking, and proposal customisation used by 10,000+ advisors.
- Built and grew a beta community (0 → 500+), cutting validation cycles in half.
- Ran IA research (100+ participants), improving task success by 30%.
- Shipped AI prototypes in 3-day sprints, leading to a 40% increase in pilot adoption.

Co-Founder & Product Owner — HourlyRate.ai (2022–Present)

- Launched SaaS for freelancers; attracted 3,000+ signups in 6 months.
- Balanced roadmap, design, and engineering as PO + UX lead, doubling release cadence.
- Built AI automations reducing ops load by 70%.
- Established community of 800+ freelancers for continuous feedback loops.

Co-Founder — 2099 Innovation Studio (2019–Present)

- Delivered AI, Web3, and fintech products for Standard Bank, Old Mutual, Sanlam, FNB, Diners Club.

- Led strategy + UX that increased adoption by 2–3x.
- Oversaw cross-disciplinary teams for climate-tech, finance, and blockchain projects.

Senior Product Designer — Toptal / Byte Orbit (2017–2023)

- Designed and rolled out Shyft Forex App design system, ensuring scalable consistency.
- Scaled app from pilot → 100k+ users, improving usability and visual appeal.
- Facilitated workshops and sprints, reducing time-to-release by 20%.
- Redesigned onboarding flows, boosting completion by 35%.

Earlier Career (2012–2017)

Software Engineer and Product Designer roles across startups/agencies.

- Built full-stack web apps (React, Node, SQL).
- Designed SME websites/apps improving acquisition by 2–5x.
- Developed technical empathy for seamless engineering collaboration.

Selected Projects

- Travefy Design System & Modernization: Unified design language across web + mobile; improved delivery velocity by 40%.
- Shyft Forex App (Standard Bank): Scaled to 100k+ users; introduced design system + UX refinements.
- Trip Preview AI (Travelabs): AI-generated itinerary previews; validated with 200+ beta users.

Education

- B.Des, Ideation — Inscape Education Group (2015–2017)
- B.Com, Information Systems — University of Johannesburg (2010–2012)
- Google Design Sprints — Udacity (2018)