

Joelson Leal

head of design at hello.cv & UX Engineer | Chevening Scholar 

 London, England, UK

ABOUT

I'm a Product Designer and UX engineer working on shaping a smarter, more intuitive professional identity experience in the AI era. With almost a decade of professional experience in tech and design, I've held leadership roles such as VP of Product Operations at .CV Domains and Design & Innovation Manager at Cabo Verde Digital, where I designed government digital entrepreneurship programs. Alongside these roles, I've led and delivered design projects across web, mobile ecosystems, always grounded in usability and business impact. I also contribute as the Senior Product Designer at Kriolish, a startup where we are working on an infrastructure that promotes and supports the growth of Cabo Verdean Creole. This work reflects my belief that design can preserve culture while creating modern, inclusive user experiences.

WORK

Head of Design | hello.cv, Inc. | Full-time (Remote) | Austin, Texas, United States | Oct 2025 Present

Senior Product Designer | Kriolish, Inc. | Part-time | Boston (Remote), MA, United States | Sep 2022 Present

Led the redesign of a crowdsourced language learning platform, significantly enhancing usability and visual consistency across diverse devices.

- Increased user engagement by 40% through iterative prototyping, comprehensive usability testing, and strategic design optimizations.

VP of Product Operations | ola.cv, Inc | Full-time (Remote) | Praia, Cabo Verde | Jan 2024 - Sep 2024

Directed product operations to enhance service delivery for the .CV top-level domain through strategic design and implementation of support infrastructure.

- Designed and implemented automated support channels and comprehensive multilingual knowledge bases for the .CV top-level domain.
- Improved support response time by 70% and reduced user drop-off through the implementation of user-centered support workflows.

Design and Innovation Manager | Cabo Verde Digital (Government Program) | Full-time | Praia, Cabo Verde | Jan 2021 - Dec 2023

Managed design and innovation strategies for digital transformation initiatives, driving growth across public and private sectors.

Advisor for Branding and Marketing | Ministry of Culture and Creative Industries | Full-time | Praia, Cabo Verde | Jan 2019 - Dec 2021

Developed and executed impactful cultural campaigns that significantly boosted public engagement and promoted national identity through strategic branding.

- Created and successfully launched cultural campaigns that boosted public engagement by 20% through targeted digital outreach and strategic branding initiatives.
- Provided expert advisory on national initiatives, leveraging strategic design thinking and public messaging to effectively promote local identity.

Lead Product Designer | Bonako | Cabo Verde, Cabo Verde | Jan 2016 - Dec 2019

Directed design and shipped four digital products (Muska, MyUnitel, RTC App, Passafree), focusing on UI consistency and UX coherence. Collaborated with engineers to ship cross-platform features on time. Translated product requirements into interfaces, resulting in over 100K user adoption across platforms.

EDUCATION

Goldsmiths, University of London | User Experience Engineering | Distinction | MSc | London, England, UK | Sep 2024 - Sep 2025

Arizona State University | Public Management | Certificate | Phoenix, Arizona, United States of America | Jun 2022 - Jul 2022

University of Cabo Verde | Multimedia Design and Communication | Upper Second-Class Honours (2:1) | BSc | Praia, Cabo Verde | Jan 2010 - Dec 2014

SKILLS

AI-UX Research & Evaluation | Usability Testing, AI Trust & Alignment, User Personas, Journey Mapping, Cognitive Walkthrough, Agentic Workflows, Problem Framing

UX Engineering & AI Prototyping | HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Vibe Coding, AI-Assisted Prototyping, Storybook, Developer Handoff

AI Product Strategy & Design Ops | Product Strategy, Design Operations, AI-native Workflows, Cross-functional Collaboration, Digital Transformation, Innovation Management

AI-Native Product Design | Figma, AI Design Systems, Prompt-driven UI, Generative Interfaces, Claude Code, Lovable, v0, Interaction Design

CERTIFICATES

Foundations of User Experience (UX) Design | Google | Jan 2023

AWARDS

Mandela Washington Fellow | Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI)
Recognized as a Young African Leader, participating in a flagship program designed to empower young African leaders through academic coursework, leadership training, and networking.

UX Awards (IDZ) Autumn 2025 Nominated for New Talent | IDZ International Design Center Berlin

#IDC2025 research and design challenge, Design Concepts | ACM Interaction Design and Children (IDC)

Chevening Scholarship | UK FCDO | Jul 2024
Prestigious, fully funded merit-based award by the UK Government, recognizing outstanding leaders with vision and potential to drive positive global change.

LANGUAGES

English (Fluent), Portuguese (Native), Caboverdean Creole (Native), French (Learning) (Basic)