

Anton Startsev

Senior Product Designer

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Authorised to work in Portugal (self-employed, Portuguese tax residency). Open to relocation within an international company.

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Senior Product Designer with 10+ years on data-dense products in logistics, financial services, biotech and education. I take domains where the rules are not intuitive — freight operations, mortgage decisioning, drug screening — and turn them into interfaces teams actually use: an enterprise portal serving 10,000 companies, an analysis workflow that turned an 8-hour task into 30 minutes, a learning platform whose trial-to-paid conversion nearly doubled. Experience spans product discovery and domain research, information architecture, design systems and delivery alongside engineering. Led 7 designers across four products at Russian Railways; sole designer and product lead in two startups.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

EmbryoNet AI Technologies — Chief Product Officer & Product Designer

Aug 2023 – Present | Porto, Portugal — remote, company based in Germany | Equity stake

AI platform for drug discovery and toxicology: it screens how compounds affect embryonic development, work biologists previously did by eye, frame by frame.

- Joined a technology built over a decade of academic research — published in Nature Methods, featured in its Method of the Year 2023 — at the point it became a product, and owned it from strategy through to interface.
- Designed the analysis workflow that cut processing of a single experimental run from 8 hours to 30 minutes.
- Took the product from 0 to scientists running their first live experiments in 9 months, as sole designer in a team of 5.
- Designed ~40 screens for 3 user roles and built the product's design system, the engineering team's source of truth.
- Ran ~40 interviews with research teams across 3 full product generations, redefining the core workflow each time.
- Platform in production at research institutes running ~5 experiments a week each; the company holds an ERC Proof of Concept grant and a Nebius AI Startup grant.

US Mortgage Fintech — Product Designer & UX Researcher

Dec 2024 – Dec 2025 | United States, remote | Contract

Decisioning product for mortgage retention. Advisors spent about an hour each morning assembling their call list by hand across several systems with unmapped data.

- Designed prioritised worklists generated overnight, removing ~1 hour of manual work per advisor per day; ~100 advisors now work from the product.
- Delivery contributed to ~30% more clients handled per advisor daily.
- Designed 25 screens and built the design system from scratch; from kickoff to MVP in production in 7 months.
- Held both product management and design in a 5-person team alongside 4 engineers — discovery, requirements, interface design and delivery QA.

Independent Product Designer & Consultant

Jul 2023 – Present | Porto, Portugal

Paid product and design work for startups and small businesses. The largest of these is **Ursa School**, an online language school (Jul 2023 – Present) — an end-to-end product covering marketing site, level-assessment test, LMS and CRM integration.

- Trial-to-paid conversion up from ~30% to ~55% over 3 years, through funnel redesign and iteration on the level test.
- Trial-lesson attendance up from ~55% to ~82%.
- Repeat purchases grew from 0% to ~45% of new sales, on retention flows built into the platform.

Client work. 10+ websites and product interfaces delivered end to end — a computer-vision studio, a theatre studio, a dental clinic and other small businesses — from scoping and design through to build and launch.

Portal — Founder

Jul 2025 – Present | Porto, Portugal

Boardgame fantasy café: 35 seats and a team of 4, 50+ events a month and 3,500 unique guests in the first year; covered by Público and Agenda Porto. Also where I build small internal tools by vibe-coding, keeping current with new prototyping tooling.

Mentoring — Bang Bang Education and British Higher School of Art and Design

Feb 2021; Sep 2023 – Mar 2024

- **Bang Bang Education, product design (Sep 2023 – Mar 2024):** mentored 20 of the 50 students in the cohort in weekly 1.5-hour one-to-one sessions; half found design work before finishing the programme.
- **British Higher School of Art and Design (Feb – Apr 2021):** guided 9 students through to release of their mobile application on the App Store; all 9 received job offers within 3 months of graduation.

Russian Railways — Senior Product Manager & Design Lead

Mar 2019 – Jul 2023 | National rail freight operator

Joined as Product Specialist running market and corporate client research, then led design across four products inside a 58-FTE innovation department. Started each product hands-on, carried it to executive approval, then hired and led the team that built it.

- Freight client portal on web, iOS and Android — ~250 web and ~150 mobile screens (unique screens, not counting states) covering ~50 logistics operations: electronic document management, rail wagon and container tracking, finance, statistics, BI dashboards and staff training. ~10,000 client companies, ~5M documents a year, 33k unique monthly users.
- Cut the end-to-end shipment cycle from ~30 days to ~14 by consolidating approvals and paperwork that previously spanned several disconnected systems.
- Grew adoption to 80% of the national freight market in 2 years, with 10x CLV increase, 90% retention and 85% satisfaction across the 10,000-company user base.
- Led 7 designers across the four products — 4 on the flagship portal — working with ~55 engineers; built and owned the design systems.
- Ran 100+ user research studies, ~100 respondents each, with freight operators, dispatchers and back-office staff.
- Also shipped a conference platform (~40 web and ~50 mobile screens; live slide translation, audience polls, speaker Q&A, interactive venue map, 20+ events a year), plus department operations and procurement products at ~25 screens each.
- Established the company's first Agile development unit in a traditional-approach enterprise, moving releases from 2–4 a year to every two weeks and delivering \$2M cost reduction.

Self-employed — Digital Media Producer

Feb 2013 – Mar 2019

- Led a core team of 4 plus freelancers on ~4 client projects a year — some 180 individual deliverables over six years, including 4 AR/VR applications, 3 WebVR 360 tours, video series, corporate presentations and landing pages.
- Owned budgets up to €20k per project, alongside documentation, cost optimisation and quality control.
- Museum installations reached ~1,000 visitors a day across 2–3 week runs. Key clients: Higher School of Economics, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow Through an Engineer's Lens.

Earlier

Fargame — Founder (2016): corporate training and team-building events; clients included Red Bull and GE Health Care.

MaxConference — Technical Specialist (2009 – 2012): technical support and interpretation for conferences.

SKILLS

Design: Information architecture, data-dense interface design, dashboard and data visualisation, design systems and tokens, user flows, prototyping, accessibility, Figma, AI-assisted prototyping

Product: Product discovery, domain research, requirements and specification, roadmapping, stakeholder management, KPI and metrics definition, A/B testing, data analysis, Power BI, business analysis, Agile, cross-functional delivery, design-to-engineering handoff and QA

Leadership: Design team leadership, mentoring, communication

ACHIEVEMENTS

Top 50 of 1,300 entrants — Designflows 2025, Bending Spoons. International product design competition.

1st place — Hackathon "Smart Cities, Heavy Industry, Fuel and Energy Complex", Leadersofdigital, 2021. Led 4 developers against 150+ teams; automating airport service operations at Sheremetyevo during adverse weather.

Top 5 — International Hackathon "IT Solutions for Urban Environment", Yandex, 2020. Led a team of 4 on an app for residents to propose and have experts evaluate local urban initiatives.

Finalist — "AR Project", Hackjunction, 2018. Augmented reality application assisting people with DIY apartment repairs.

EDUCATION

Skoda Auto University — MA, Marketing Management in Global Environment, 2014 – 2015

Bauman Moscow State Technical University — BA, Management of Product Innovation, 2009 – 2013

British Higher School of Art and Design — Digital Product Design & Management, 2019 – 2020

LANGUAGES

Russian (native), English (full professional proficiency), Czech (limited working proficiency), Portuguese (A2)

INTERESTS

Hiking (700 km Camino Portugués). Travelled every continental European country. Co-founded a summer camp in Smolensk. Volunteered with the World Organization of the Scout Movement.