

case study

OOVVOO

Director of Product Design





ooVoo Was Losing Competitive Advantage and Needed a Change

Transforming a video pioneer in a crowded market

challenge

ooVoo, the once-dominant video communication platform with over 40 million users, faced a rapidly shifting landscape. Skype had been an ongoing competitor, mobile-first competitors like Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp emerged, and commoditized video technology threatened ooVoo's unique edge. In order to maintain competitive advantage and avoid user attrition, the company needed to diversify its product offerings, and evolve the existing ones.

ooVoo's mission was to redefine connections by bringing families and close friends closer through interactive video shared experiences, and innovative tools that allowed for connecting in deeper, more meaningful ways.

my role

As Director of Product Design, I championed a user-centric reinvention of ooVoo. Through a comprehensive discovery process, we moved beyond video calls to prioritize deeper user needs and goals. I built a diverse, five-person product design team across NY, Israel, and Canada, aligning their strengths with key areas for impactful engagement and talent development.

skills applied

Design Leadership

Organizational Design

User-Focused Design Advocacy

Team Building

Product Design

Cross-functional Collaboration



From Tech-Heavy to User-Centric: Rebooting ooVoo's Design Strategy

Establishing a clear path forward was necessary to lay the groundwork for true progress

Technology First, Users Second

ooVoo's reliance on technology-driven features needed a shift towards understanding and serving user needs and goals.

Limited Design Presence

Design's minimized role led to thin resources, reactive instead of proactive work, and underutilization of diverse skill sets.

Monolithic Codebase

The rigid, single-codebase structure impeded the development of flexible, multi-platform experiences.

Inconsistent Experience

Lack of user-centered design principles led to a confusing interface, impacting user adoption and engagement.

Misaligned Product

Previous development efforts resulted in a product that didn't meet user needs and burdened the team with technical debt.

Engineering-Design Disconnect

Unclear communication and misaligned expectations between design and engineering hampered efficient delivery and market responsiveness.



Happy and Empowered People Drive Success

Focusing on four critical areas, I ensured our team had the tools and environment to flourish, propelling us to achieve outstanding results.

Process

Assign clear roles and responsibilities within the team, fostering a sense of ownership and driving efficient execution.

People

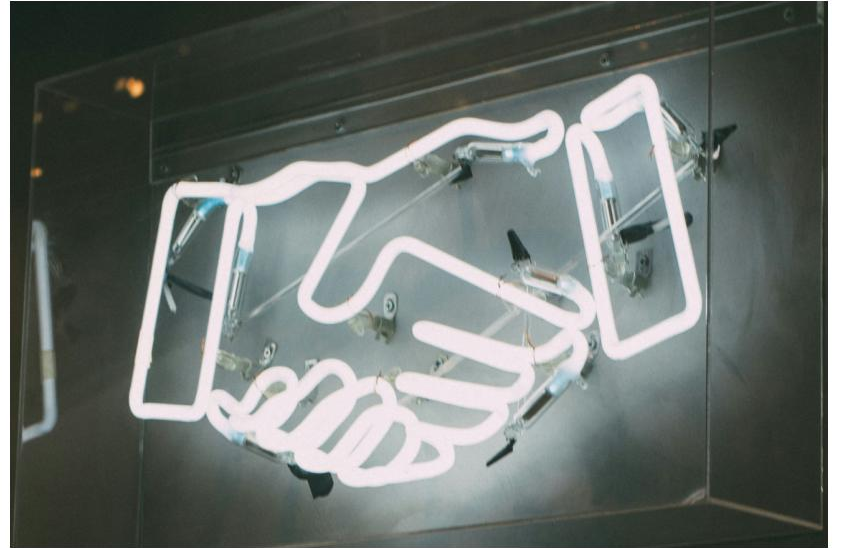
Create an environment for my team where they felt supported, inspired, and empowered to do their job well.

Partners

Building trust to create a united front, empowering us to tackle challenges and exceed expectations together.

Product

Create an experience that would better serve our customers, grounded in insights and a strategic path forward.



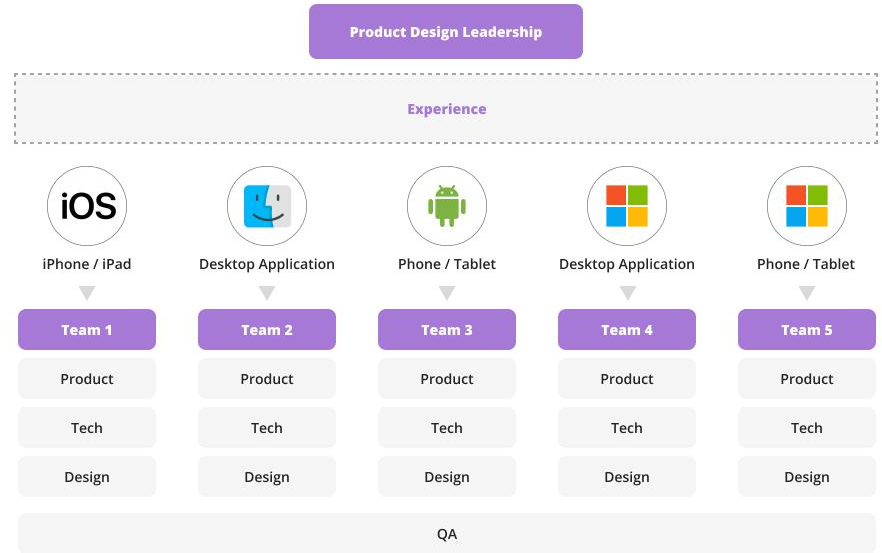
New Design Team Shapes ooVoo's Multi-Platform Future

Our Transformation: I shaped a new design team structure for multi-platform expansion

To support ooVoo's digital reach and align with our strategic shift away from a monolithic codebase, I successfully recruited and hired three new product designers.

This expansion, along with the existing two team members, established a dedicated team equipped to support our work at scale and define responsibilities across the organization for building and expanding multi-platform experiences.

This new structure fosters deeper understanding of the end-to-end user experience, while enabling collaborative support for unique user needs across different platforms.



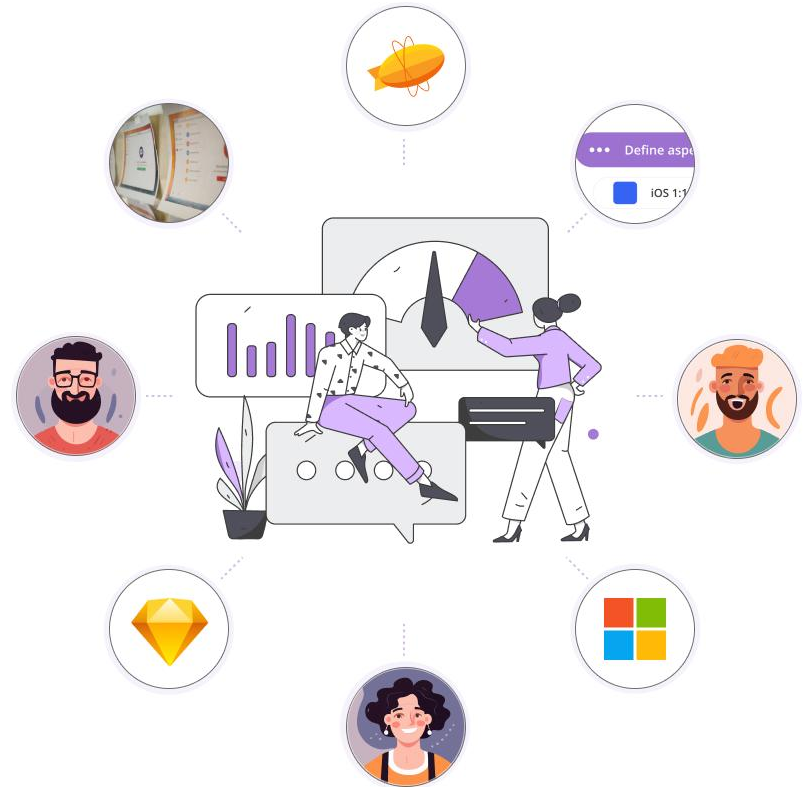
Breaking Down Barriers and Building a Collaborative Design Culture

I led the implementation of new workflows, communication practices, and quality control measures, contributing to a thriving design team

With the team, I refined new processes, contributing to more efficient ways of working, fostering better communication with partners, and identifying new rituals and standards for reviewing the delivery of work before and after release to market.

Processes

- Daily standups and documentation
- Microsoft Azure (TFS) and Trello for tracking and reporting
- Team Slack channel
- Regular collaboration meetings to review and critique our work
- Clear boundary setting (Defining Scope and Priorities, Protecting the Design Process, Quality controls)



Building a Product Users Love

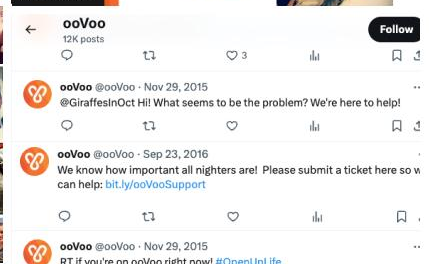
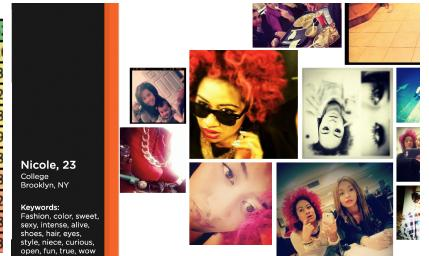
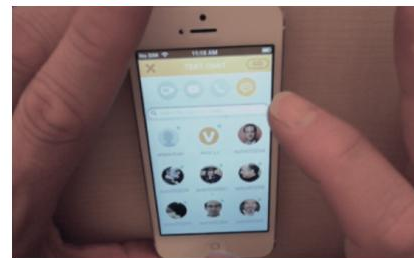
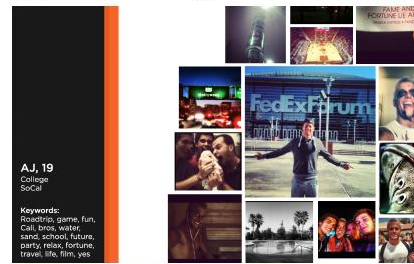
In-depth user research identified key needs and preferences, which informed a more engaging ooVoo experience.

In collaboration with product and communication leads, I launched a user-centric product discovery process to understand user needs and aspirations. This involved segmenting our user base and analyzing their unique usage patterns, habits, and challenges.

Methods

- **User Interviews:** Enabled the creation of targeted personas aligned with user needs and business objectives.
- **App store reviews and ratings:** Identified common user pain points, features praised/criticized, and areas for improvement.
- **Guerrilla Usability Testing:** Identified usability issues, confusing UI elements, and areas for optimization
- **In-app feedback mechanisms:** Prioritized user needs and understood feature preferences
- **Social media monitoring:** Continuous improvement of brand perception, identified audience preferences, and address negative feedback
- **ASO (App Store Optimization):** Optimized app store listing to increase visibility, downloads, and conversions
- **Moderated usability testing:** Identified usability issues, navigation problems, and misunderstandings in specific tasks

Platform A	Platform B	% out of all calls	Participants	Android	iOS
Android	Android	29.55%	2	78.75%	75.5
iOS	iOS	25.00%	3	12.05%	13.2
Android	iOS	14.57%	4	5.07%	5.93
iOS	Android	12.66%	5	1.93%	2.42
Android	Windows	9.02%	6	0.80%	1.08
Windows	Windows	2.07%	7	0.41%	0.59
Windows	Android	1.78%	8	0.25%	0.38
Windows	iOS	1.72%	9	0.17%	0.28
iOS	Windows	1.06%	10	0.14%	0.22
Mac	iOS	0.57%	11	0.13%	0.18
Android	Mac	0.46%	12	0.30%	0.13
iOS	Mac	0.46%			
Mac	Mac	0.34%			
Mac	Android	0.21%			
iOS	WinPhone	0.19%			
WinPhone	Android	0.19%			
Android	WinPhone	0.18%			
WinPhone	iOS	0.18%			
Mac	Windows	0.16%			



From Conversations to Connections

Prioritizing user needs and mobile, I helped shape ooVoo into a platform for stronger connections.

Our user research revealed a desire for deeper, more engaging interactions than just video chats. We identified an opportunity to enhance ooVoo's "social connection" aspect by focusing on:

User profiles with personal stories

This feature aimed to foster deeper connections by allowing users to share their lives and experiences beyond real-time conversations.

Asynchronous messaging and interactions

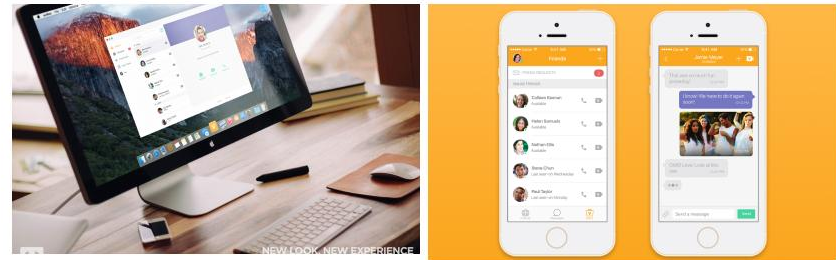
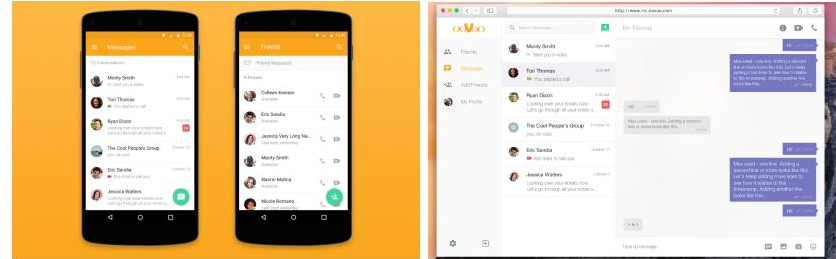
We moved beyond the limitations of live video by facilitating asynchronous communication through text, photos, and video snippets.

Interactive backgrounds and visual enhancements

To personalize the user experience, we introduced customizable backgrounds and animations, making video calls more expressive and fun.

Scaling for growth

Recognizing the growing importance of mobile, we transitioned from a monolithic codebase to separate iOS, Mac, Android, and Windows apps, allowing for platform-specific optimizations and faster iterations. This ensured a seamless experience for users across devices while maximizing development efficiency.



Leading a Design Team to Brand Consistency and Efficient Delivery at ooVoo

My holistic approach to brand, platform, and delivery

I guided the design team to redefine ooVoo's platform experience by:

Platform-specific design

Led team through platform-specific design, ensuring seamless and intuitive experiences across all operating systems.

Cohesive brand identity

Created a consistent visual language across all digital products reinforced ooVoo's brand recognition.

Streamlined design delivery

Communicated clear methods and deliverables at each stage, facilitating a smooth and efficient iterative design process.

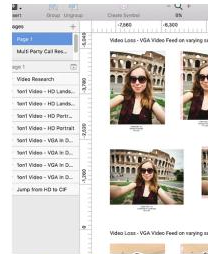
THE TYPOGRAPHY

Gotham is our family of choice.

Stay true to type. Consistent typography is used for all ooVoo communications.

Gotham
Ultra, Black, Bold, Medium
Book, Light Thin, XLight

Our favorite Gotham styles are Ultra, Bold, Book, and Light, but the entire family is fair game. Don't use too many different font styles all at once. Typography should communicate clearly, not distract.



color values

Values to dye for. Consistent colors are key to maintaining the brand's visual integrity. Use these values as your primary go-tos when applying color.

primary palette

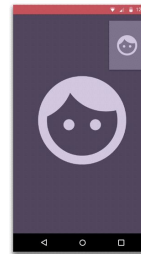
- | | |
|---------|----------|
| 1 Black | 5 Red |
| 2 Gold | 6 Orange |
| 3 Aqua | 7 Purple |
| 4 Blue | 8 Green |

Aa

Ultra Display and accents
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNORSTUVW
abcdefghijklmnpqrstuvwxy
0123456789

Aa

Book Verbal
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNORSTUVW:



PMX #E1C1E



4 Aqua
pms 3252 U 3252 C
r77 g13 b205
c54 m0 y24 k0
hex 47D5CD



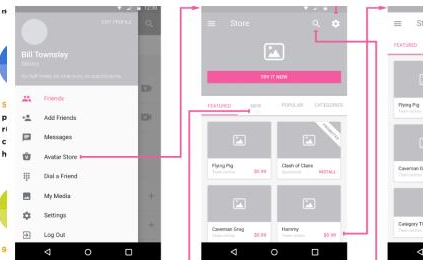
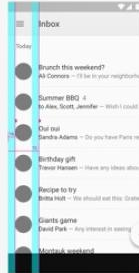
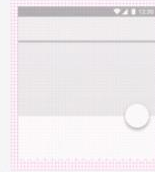
8 Purple



LAYOUT

Baseline Grid

All components align to an 800-pixel baseline grid. Text aligns to a 40-pixel baseline grid. Typography in tooltips aligns to a 40-pixel baseline grid. This applies to mobile, and tablet.



Bridging the Communication Divide between Design, Product, and Engineering Teams

I established collaboration practices for open communication and clear expectations

Building strong partnerships and earning the trust of Product and Tech teams was crucial to securing their support and ensuring successful project delivery. My leadership approach encompassed two key aspects:

Setting high-level expectations for collaboration

Established clear goals and expectations for collaboration across teams, fostering a transparent and accountable environment.

Diving deep into project execution

Created a consistent visual language across all digital products reinforced ooVoo's brand recognition.

Key practices that fostered successful collaboration:

- **Open and early feedback sharing:** Shared work across teams and leadership throughout the design process, encouraging continuous feedback and iteration.
- **Alignment with executive leadership:** Presented demos to secure executive buy-in and ensure strategic alignment.
- **Streamlined development:** Established clear design specifications for development, maintaining quality control during build and delivery.
- **Pre-launch refinement:** Conducted pre-launch QA meetings to identify and address any potential design oversights.
- **Understanding technical feasibility:** Each designer collaborated directly with their engineering partner to assess the feasibility of proposed concepts, minimizing the risk of overly complex features that could impact the customer experience.

ooVoo's Growth Journey Through Acquisition and Market Shift

My impact on ooVoo's growth journey

Although ooVoo was acquired by Krush Technologies and ultimately transitioned out of the market, it experienced significant growth during my tenure. My 3-year leadership at ooVoo saw a substantial user base expansion, with approximately 100 million new users to our original 40 million.

This success can be attributed to several key factors:

User-centric approach

By prioritizing user needs, we drove a product transformation that led to increased engagement and retention. Focused on understanding and addressing user pain points, resulting in a more relevant and satisfying experience.

Mobile-first strategy

We transitioned from a unified codebase to a model that leveraged design patterns and properties of mobile operating systems. This allowed us to deliver an optimized experience for users on various mobile devices.

Agility and iterative development

Our emphasis on rapid prototyping and iterative testing enabled us to quickly adapt to changing market trends and user feedback. This agile approach ensured we were constantly evolving and refining our product based on real-time insights.

100 MILLION  **REGISTERED USERS**
(and counting)

ONE BILLION 
MINUTES PER MONTH
spent on video calls

Top 10 Countries:

- 1 United States
- 2 United Kingdom
- 3 Canada
- 4 India
- 5 Italy
- 6 Brazil
- 7 Mexico
- 8 Japan
- 9 Russian Federation
- 10 Ireland



NEW USERS IN JAPAN
Registrations skyrocketed this year
(JULY 2013-JULY 2014) **974%**