Ivan Kalkaev

Lead Product Designer

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Portfolio: kalkaev.com/works

About

I design complex digital products: fintech, crypto wallets and payments, DeFi, B2B SaaS, iGaming, and e-commerce. I have more than 15 years in design, including 9 in product and 6 leading teams and studios.

I start from the business goal and a map of every scenario and state — errors, empty screens, KYC, fees — and only then move to visuals. I set up processes and the handoff to engineering, take responsibility for quality, and hire and develop designers. I understand implementation and what individual decisions cost, so I can discuss them in concrete terms with engineers.

I use Cursor, Grok, and Grok Build for concepts, prototypes, and visual work.

Achievements

- Led teams of up to 11 direct reports, hired 25 designers, and regularly mentored 10.
- Shipped more than 100 products over my career.
- Swedish Advisory (Y Combinator): the landing page delivered a 58% conversion lift on paid traffic.
- Tokapi: an NFT checkout redesign increased repeat purchases by 39%.
- BlastUP: I designed the early architecture of the staking and IDO path; drop-off in the participation widget decreased by 40%.
- ProMobile: design system built in parallel with frontend development; $2M+ in advertising budget through the platform; order flow time reduced by 38%.
- Reach Metaverse: the pitch deck supported the first funding round of $1M.
- Roketo (Telegram Mini App): 250,000 users in the first month on a marketing budget of about $5,000; I set the art direction and built the process for generating assets with AI.
- Arkada: product and art direction for a quest platform; 30K+ holders, 20K+ campaign traffic.
- PokerDAO: room creation reduced from 11 steps to 3.
- Open Wallet: strategic and visual direction for a self-custodial wallet; an initial sprint grew into an external design function on retainer.
- CYBRO (DeFi): art direction for the redesign of a liquidity management platform and a full identity reset; I designed the logo; the redesign is in production at cybro.io.
- PayVDA: positioning, product and visual direction for a crypto payments product for India and the UAE; landing page in English, Arabic, and Hindi; the app launched.
- EZ Wallet: art direction for a wallet and merchant tools; directed designers together with the PM; the product launched.
- ApeBro: concept and art direction for DeFi vaults.
- Vibe Skills: concept and art direction for an AI education product; the case brought in three inbound clients.

Awards

Apple Design Award 2024 · Contra Top 1% Creatives 2025

Experience

Kalkaev® — Independent Product Designer

2026 — Present

I run a product design practice for startups and small teams. I take on problem framing, product and design decisions, work with founders, and the handoff to engineering. I advise on UX/UI, product structure, design systems, and quality.

Unipaws — Co-founder, Design Director

2024 — 2026

I co-founded a product design studio focused on Web3 and fintech and led design across more than 30 projects in the first year. I set up processes and the handoff to engineering, mentored designers, and was responsible for quality.

Pixpowder — Art Director

2022 — 2024

I helped build a product design studio from scratch and set processes and quality standards across more than 50 projects. I led work in Web3, fintech, iGaming, and B2B SaaS, and directed designers through concepts, product decisions, and finished screens.

Lunapark — Co-founder, Art Director

2016 — 2022

I co-founded a design studio and owned the work from pitch to launch for Yandex, VK, Wargaming, Severgazbank, and EKSMO. I led product, brand, and campaign projects for a multidisciplinary team.

Tesla Media (Artonica) — Creative Director

2013 — 2016

I grew from senior designer to creative director. I led creative teams and client relationships, and delivered work for Suzuki, VK, Haval, Efes, and Sony.

Skills

Product design · UX/UI · Design team leadership · Hiring and mentoring · Design systems · User flows · Information architecture · Prototyping · Art direction · Fintech and payments · Web3 · Sketch · Figma · Framer · React · React Native · TypeScript · HTML/CSS · HeroUI Pro · Cursor · Grok · Grok Build in REX · AI in design

Frontend — high level: React, React Native, TypeScript, HTML/CSS. Intermediate: Swift, Rust.

Languages

Russian — native. English — B2.