

# One Knight in Product - E104 - Richie Lokay

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

design, people, designers, product, performance, scale, building, thinking, tools, systems, town planners, individual, generally, team, pioneer, different stages, client, stage, brand, email

## SPEAKERS

Richie Lokay, Jason Knight

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Jason Knight 00:00

Hello, and welcome to the show. I'm your host, Jason Knight. And on each episode of this podcast, I'll be having inspiring conversations with passionate product people. If that sounds like the sort of thing you want a bit more of in your life, why not head over to [OneKnightInProduct.com](https://OneKnightInProduct.com), where you can sign up to the mailing list, subscribe on your favourite podcast app or follow the podcast on social media, and guarantee you'd never miss another episode again. On tonight's episode, we talk about performance design and the importance of having teams of pioneers, settlers and town planners to balance blue sky thinking and good old fashioned operationalization and scaling. We talk about what performance design is why it's important in the joy of building and executing through high performing teams. We also asked whether designers in Agile delivery can really work and how to make sure we've got a good bond between product design and engineering. For All this and much more, please join us on One Knight in Product. So my guest tonight is Richie Lokay. Richie's a New York history buff, board game collector and pioneer in the field of performance design as a designer, but she wants us to stop thinking about designers just pushing pixels, but as a strategic enabler in the art of visual problem solving, which is currently solving those problems as the VP of product design and services at Wunderkind, a one to one performance engine and the world's first marketing operating system. Let's hope he's installed all the updates. Hi, Richie. How are you tonight?



Richie Lokay 01:28

I'm great. Thanks for having me, Jason, and hello to your listeners.



Jason Knight 01:32

If they were here, right now, they would be saying hello, right back at you. So first things first wunderkind, I've seen all those lovely words about what one looking does, but specifically in simple terms that you can describe to someone like me. What problem does wunderkind specifically self?

R

Richie Lokay 01:47

Yeah, it's the simplest way I would say it is we uniquely have ways of connecting brands, with customers, the end customer, there's a client in between there that usually we work with, and that scientists and such and but whether it's you know, if you're thinking just about retail, and e-commerce, you know, those brands have those mechanisms. And we find those customers for them, the right customers the right time for the right thing, and try to just increase that performance of that. It's quite honestly, very much like if any of your listeners have done retail, I've worked at the mall and sold shoes, knowing that a little bit better, it's caring about them a little bit more and being more authentic and what your brand is, and trying to just make sure you speak to your audience. And so I think in that way, that's performance, it helps it works. It gives better experience in what you're selling, what you're buying. And so it's as simple as that we have a lot of digital solutions that in the future, we have that non digital solutions as well.



Jason Knight 02:42

So when you say digital solutions, you're talking about the platforms that you're building to enable your clients to set that up themselves. I mean, my closest analogy here would be something like using Google Analytics or Google Tag Manager, like having stuff that I can set up via a platform that I can then embed on my site, and then does all the clever stuff for me. Is it that kind of deal? Or have I completely got that wrong?

R

Richie Lokay 03:03

Yes, and no, I could go into detail and talk about this all week. We uniquely and we will be poised to do less of this, we tend to be more of a white glove service where haha, we believe there's so much of what there's a huge landscape of tools and things out there that you can use, and very few people have the time to learn them to use them, optimise them for what is to actually get real value out of them. So my founder of this company, and another founder and I worked at a menswear company called Lenovo historically and bought a lot of services, we bought a lot of tools and a lot of software. But how much money did you get out of it? Did he get that return on investment a lot of times no, because you don't have time. And so historically, we were steeped out of an idea where we'll do it for you. And we'll guarantee those results in we'll try to just be a great partner. Now that doesn't scale that well, over time, we're removing that down a little bit more where we can have customer input at different parts and different key points where they have different simple but powerful tools where they can do that quicker and faster for themselves. But generally, our bread and butter is that we do it for individuals better than they can do for themselves, and that they are very happy. So they don't have to make them more money.



Jason Knight 04:10

But you're the VP of product design and services they have and you just touched a little bit about the services there. And that I guess is what we're calling that white glove kind of onboarding and white glove maintenance of their solutions. So when it comes to the product

design part, then are you currently building tools, more for your internal people to manage the staff for the clients? And then hopefully getting those tools to one day be client suitable? Or are they kind of client suitable already? Or how does that work?

R

Richie Lokay 04:40

Good question. Both. Historically, we built complex tools to do really powerful things that was very hard to learn. But we leveraged and use ourselves to do some pretty amazing things make a lot of value and a lot of money. We'll continue doing that and finding opportunities to do that simpler and better. But there's definitely an opportunity for us to nail parts of that complex services offering and give our clients more opportunity to do that themselves. And to kind of feed the need of different users within the client base, there's many different people we expect would use our tool and our platform. And they think differently, and they need different tools, you can imagine that simplest thing would be like a copywriting tool for a copywriter. And doing that, at one level, to see and feel the strategy of a marketing strategy is very different than what a designer needs or a marketing manager to do things very strategically.



Jason Knight 05:31

Makes a lot of sense. But we tried before this, and you described yourself as a pioneer, about a set low town planner. Now we'll come back to settlers and town planners in a bit. But when you're saying that you're a pioneer you very much would you consider yourself very much up in the clouds doing all that blue sky big thinking or you kind of in the weeds as well getting involved in a detail or some mixture of the two.

R

Richie Lokay 05:54

If you're talking about me as Richie, I know what my value is in it is I have some pretty big ideas. And I think at a scale and a scope. And I understand with my founders and our product people and such like a long term vision, you know, four or five years down the line of how we think we can generally see the future of how this could come together, I think there's incredible opportunity within what we're doing within larger space that doesn't quite honestly exist yet. But I personally think the value that I drive is that I actually know how these things work, I really helped hands down to build our platform to in the way that I knowing how you implement and how things actually work for an architecture and design and systems standpoint, having first hand knowledge of the services department, for instance, allows me to have the insight of how I would do that differently, and how I can have a big, you know, not just a half step for not incremental change, but like a, you know, a sea change. So in that way, I think I'm steeped in it as much as possible, I resisted being like a manager or upper leadership because I felt that individual contributor allowed me to really have an understand the specificity of what is really powerful about what we did. And then I realised, well, a certain point I there's people are better at it than me, they can take it and iterate and get better. And so that's where the 10s planter, or you know, the different stages we talked about previously, come in and finding the people that are better suited for that ticket scale, so I can continue leveraging the next step, the next step and get prepared them for that.





Jason Knight 07:17

Wow, as long as you're not just sitting there proposing, those are things that people can't actually build, which is obviously what some blue sky thinkers do.



Richie Lokay 07:24

Now, my hope is, it's very steeped in in our roadmap, right next steps in like a couple years down the line, and it all connects anything, it's like architecture, you know, you might have people that are in the architectural understanding, like how the system's gonna function, how it's gonna connect the ecosystem as such.



Jason Knight 07:37

So one thing that occurs to me if you've kind of got that ability to apply at both levels, or that background in the individual contribution, and you know, how this stuff works is that it can be quite difficult to escape the gravity of like the planet of individual contribution, that is like trying to drag you back to it because you know, all this stuff, and they want you to be doing all that day to day urgent, not important stuff. Have you ever felt that gravity or you quite good at blasting off and going out into space? If we can torture our analogies?



Richie Lokay 08:08

No, I think I think I wear many hats, I've been very fortunate in the way that I can build teams around these different stages or different things. And I think inevitably, when you're good at and you get better at hiring, which I think I have, and you have good partners, those individuals can fulfil those needs better than I could in the first place. But that's the greatest when you hire and you have a great team where they've done it better and more effectively with more detail. And you can leverage that individual that is the dream, right? Where you've done it yourself without doing anything. And I think that that's the beauty of like a good management system and more structure. And so I found that that became really rewarding later on when I realised it better people than myself to have that specificity of implementation and understanding. And then as long as we have that trusted flow of communication up and down, I think that that's benefited both of us.



Jason Knight 08:52

But it's not a small company, according to LinkedIn, at least he's got, I think, anywhere between 60-100 people, depending on which metric you look at. And obviously you're there as the VP of product design and services. You've got a bunch of other designers, you've got a bunch of product directors and a wider product team there that I dug out as well. I guess it's not uncommon for there to be disconnects between, say product and product design teams. Like that's not an unknown dynamic, right. So how's the dynamic there between your team and the product team? At one weekend? Like, have you managed to forge a fairly healthy relationship and defuse some of those tensions that can occur?

R

Richie Lokay 09:27

Yeah, I hope so. I think that dynamic is always changing, especially as we grow, I think different stages in different sides of the company, you're wearing different hats. I think what I've identified the value that the product design part of innovation, envisioning what we can, I dare say, like cheaply conceive of things, document them, prepare them and organise them in a way that a product manager or product person probably doesn't have time to prepare them and maybe we're so busy. Yeah. And that way that I can make sense. When I think design I use not just visual design, but like really You search and organising that and putting that to paper is part of the thing that then will be incorporated into a product spec, right or a pod or something like that. So those requirements really come out of that clarity. We have some great ideas from some big thinkers outside myself in this company and translating those ideas, putting the pen to paper bit and making them persuasive and making a case for them. I think design does that better than anybody. And I think that there's a financial component that then comes in to make those decisions and from our biz ops teams and such. But to really describe such, especially what we do, where there's layers of the customer experience, and how it's gonna connect with our product, and how it's going to work and putting together design doesn't really well, it's that first stage of innovation and visioning, I think is crucial. And I think that as I partnered better with the product team, they really appreciate that. And then the second stage around, we have a UX research kind of that equivalent, that is a true partnership, right, where we they take them that further into detail and, and really kind of partner and get to the specificity of those different requirements. And then anything, that third thing where they should expect, and I think most I think, good product, people do really appreciate that. And it comes back to design a third stage of actual pixels and actual like, the rigour of like the actual UI, right? That then we can do that at a level that meets their specific spec that they wrote, right, and then handed it back. So I think that there's there's a nice back and forth of if you have like a really strong, you know, triangle of engineering, product design and design in which that that becomes like, three really different stages of looking at it. And so that fourth one, to me is where design is really communicating to almost engineering for implementation, right. So those four stages, I think, happen in all different stages of our company. And we have four different wings to design. And, in general, I think it's pretty consistent, whether it's producing those four stages of, of understanding on the design workflow.



Jason Knight 11:46

But you said before that design is a problem solving medium, I'm assuming that means and you've touched on it a little bit yourself, like you want your team or your designers or designers at the funnel, as far as possible, gain involved at the outset of any initiatives that are going on, rather than what happens in some companies where you just get some product manager throwing a grenade over the wall at the last minute, everything kind of signed, sealed and delivered is your job to as you put it push pixels and just design a UI that makes the PM look good. Yeah. So I guess the question is, like, if you're getting involved way up front, like how do you weigh the amount of involvement that you would expect or need versus the amount of time that your teams need to actually do the design?

R

Richie Lokay 12:32

Well, for me, I've just made clear, they're different. They're not the same teams. There. There tend to be like little overlap we have. Maybe it's more like a scrum situation, right? Maybe not

true Scrum, but...



Jason Knight 12:42

No one uses true Scrum!

R

Richie Lokay 12:43

I mean, there's one guy who wrote that book. So early on, yeah, how much time to do and wants to put towards it, I think. Yeah, I, you know, I wish I had an answer that I think it's just really is like, by the feel of like how important things are and what the Romantics and what we're working on. Yeah, I generally think the time pressure in really good for me is one of my favourite colleagues, our Vice President of analytics, and data analytics has always told me your best works in 20 minutes, I don't know if my best works in 20 minutes. But truly, I could vision in organise a team around years of preparing and planning, we've had prepared and plan some things for years. But you know, ultimately, you get the sweet spot of, you know, in one week or one quarter, I can get vast majority of that work done and get it off and not to be too worried about the detail. And that should be on product anyway. So I think that that's kind of to me, like just feeling that sweet spot of like the return, you know, it's ROI.



Jason Knight 13:36

But you just touched on scrum as well. And I've certainly worked with designers in the past that really struggle with Agile software development, and how that intersects with design. Because some designers will be wanting to get everything kind of designed just so and pixel perfect and implemented perfectly and really not have any concept of the fact that some designs might be hard to build, or they might be hard to build in the time that people have got and start to get quite precious about their designs and really struggled to go for this kind of constant two week cycle. Is that something that you feel is getting better in design circles, like a designer's getting a lot more into agile development now? Or is there still that kind of lingering idea that it's kind of incompatible, which is certainly a message that I've seen from some designers?

R

Richie Lokay 14:22

I don't think I've cracked it. But I think I see it differently than it used to, I think in that way that, like, we talked about this four stages, if those are slightly different teams or different responsibilities, we have that big vision. And then the second stage is we have prepared like a broader visioning. I wouldn't say that's like the v1 version, but it's like the not a blue sky, but like a simple but complete understanding of how it could work. And then you go back and you say, when these requirements, what's the v1, what's the v2, you know, whichever stage of that, and then pull back the, you know, pull back a little bit of the scale and scope of it. And then that fourth group, I have a team that's just at the features right? Were they are we living within the architecture in the ecosystem, they can say, well, we generally have this design system, we have this UI patterns and such, we don't have that all built out with our front end team. And we can say, we can generally make them as the team, they could make general good decisions around that individual feature, that little workflow within the larger ecosystem. So I think that's

kind of the the way we've been working recently, I think that's much better, where it's like, you know, if that UI component libraries are baked out, we can feel good about the consistency around that that part of user experience. And then we also know kind of where we're going towards and how they'll fit in these smaller product specific features should fit within that ecosystem. And I would hope that, you know, we're generally have like a design architect that kind of sees things through a different scale, that that should all fit together. I think the product people really want to think like that as well, I think, right? Well, maybe there's many different types. I mean, I'm from product, but there might be when they're really narrow or on their feature, and there's one ever more broad. So, in that way that I think that we covered both here anyway. Jason, do you see that similar?



Jason Knight 16:02

Yeah. And I think to be honest, as a product person, myself, I'm always going to be keen on iterative, fast learning loops and stuff like that, because I think it's essential to make sure that you're not over committing or putting too many chips on the wrong part of the table. So yeah, I can't speak for every product manager, obviously. But I would assume that the vast majority of actual product managers, I think that the majority would feel like that.



Richie Lokay 16:27

Yeah, I think that. Yeah, that makes sense.



Jason Knight 16:30

But do you think that... you touched on it like design systems, and I know that in some companies, I've interviewed one guy who's like, he's a product manager for design systems. So like, they've obviously really industrialised that. But design systems feels like a real kind of set low or town builder type thing, and not really like the sort of thing that you'd want to get involved in too much. Because it's not necessarily this kind of vision of a thing. It's more like the operationalization of design. But do you think that design systems are essential for scaling, UX and UI? Or do you think you can kind of do it whatever way you want?



Richie Lokay 17:06

No, I would disagree with the characterization. I love design systems.



Jason Knight 17:10

I think you just want to build new ones all the time.



Richie Lokay 17:13

But that's not me. But I mean, it's, we're just talking like visual design systems like UI, that, to

me makes a lot of sense. I mean, I think you get generally all the pieces and parts ready and you add to any revenue, you nurture, and you curate that system, and you have a really good relationship with the front end team. That's great. I'm thinking though, repeatable pieces and parts of what we're building, and what we're designing what we're deploying, for the features, has to work at scale. And that's how you try to keep your company below 1000 people because we can just even hiring more customers, it says more pods and more designers to do the client work, right. So in the way that things that work should be repeatable. And I think if anything, the blue sky is where we blow it up. We take what we know. And we do it a next level, I think that if you know what I mean, like I think the vision gets larger, if you pieced apart these different, and it's hard to without using a specific sample, I could probably use a specific sample. Okay, so one thing that's so curious and exciting about working for me is that it's a layer cake. We're designing and we think mostly from the customer experience first. And this idea of we deliver these experiences to these customers for these brands. And then we also have a UX, right, then we have like different product things that people log in and use. And so we're designing tools to deliver the things we design and deliver. And so that is a really interesting interplay of repeatable systems where we can pick and choose and do it and have it at scale, and then customise it and use it in a point where it's the right for the customer experience. Well, those UX tools, the ones that need to deliver that and deliver that at scale. And so I'm, you know, currently we're thinking about instead of building a really great tool that designs an email, for instance, right? I have very little patience for that. It's like, I want to design an email, I'm gonna design 1000 emails. Right? And so to me, that's a different kind of design system, right? And so how do you do that at scale with where you're giving people simple, powerful tools, I think back to when we were bonobos, my, our founder and CEO, and was the head of customer acquisition at that men's retailer. And just highlighting and understanding like he has like a, as a dashboard of things of tools he could in, he could leverage if he was smart enough guy, if he had the ability to do everything himself, he would write really looking to kind of almost like create a system by which people can log in and really have the power at their fingertips to making the strategic decisions. And so I think a lot of what we're doing when we're building the design systems is to give all this variation in iterative potential within something that someone can like leverage very quickly and much larger scale. And so that goes back to that, that customer experience if we're speaking to billions of people, we're not going to individually handmake million emails to send them and so that's where the design systems come in right pieces and parts. We might like to think what we do what we design is completely unique and stuff like that. Everybody's following patterns and trends and things. So we just tend to do them. Yeah, in probably productize them in organism for reuse and a much higher level with 10s of 1000s. of scales.



Jason Knight 20:10

That makes a lot of sense. But you're into performance design. What's performance design? Is it just the same as normal design but more performance? Or does it mean something specifically?



Richie Lokay 20:20

Well, my senior director of customer experience that owns that part of the layer cake around like what we're deploying to what customers at scale and to the individual needs, coined that in a meeting once and I think it really steeped in the fact that when we were interviewing a time, one of our junior email experience engineers, I asked the question in an interview, and this is



years ago, and I said, What makes what is good? What makes a good email? And it seems like a simple question, but how you respond to that really tells you what you know about email, email technology, email, design, whatever, like it's a complicated thing you met. Oh, yeah. And she was amazing. And she said, it's three things, which you said earlier about? It's, it's how well it functions. Do your user like doesn't getting the inbox? Is it look, right? Is it look at all the different places? Is it? You know, it scale, you know, you can reuse those pieces? It's, it's like the code kind of like the syntax of a bit, then the semantics of does it meet the brand needs? And does it you know, is this communicating properly? And then the most important thing is she knew the fact is, it doesn't matter if you're sending fart in the wind, it's not performant, or it doesn't, it's not seen or used, like, what's the point? Yeah, we can like to send less things. When we send emails through a whole list in group and when such it doesn't make any sense to send something to someone's not going to open are not going to use. So what we've been really good about is any ads as well, even beautiful ad platform, we're much more likely to send something that's higher performance, that people actually get use of, they'll get in we'll know that they've converted on and that's that's the deal, right? We've seen a lot of money saved a lot of people's time, there's so much crap out there that you see in your inbox or in online or different ads, you'll never buy just, it's like visual noise. And so the more you cut that back, the brand feels better, right? They they didn't send as much crap out, the people don't want it. And generally you you're speaking more directly, and more specifically, the people that really want the messaging and so yeah, so that's that performance design, right? That's so critical that you can have all three of those things. And I think that is different than when I thought about in the office when I did a lot of different websites and how to make it look and brand and communicate and things. But I think it's also we're very blessed, blessed to be invested the wrong word. But we're very fortunate in the fact that at the scale we're working at, we definitely know what works just across the board, regardless of you know, just generally we're doing it, you know, a trillion impressions at this point. So if we take that that knowledge, and then we add customization for the brand, or for the you know, the individual strategy and promotion, people tend to like those messages, and those those campaigns much better. And they tend to be much happier, and brands spend less money on sending crap. And ideally, we're better partners, and they we have more clients and they sell more things. And the people that get them like the things more.



Jason Knight 22:49

And those trillion impressions seem to imply that if you wanted to, you could do a bunch of different experiments as well, the kind of classic idea like with Facebook, or Google or whoever it was to change the colour of their button by 1%, or whatever in gold, is different levels of engagement with the button by is that sort of thing you empowered to do at your site as part of that performance design? Or are you kind of constrained by client demands and the kind of specs that they give you.



Richie Lokay 23:14

We have a performance strategy team that's always running different kinds of interactions and things. They tend to be performance first, design second, and then like technology last, but they come in from a different angle. And it's like, yeah, we were always iterating of how the web works in some ways. I mean, in some ways that were that we were the company that cursed everybody with these pop up opt in Windows, right? Geez, yeah, we historically when

we originally did that was when the right person wants to sign up for our mailing list, we would know and we'd be able to trigger that for people. And they never see it again, if they closed it. And if they chose to put their email, and that was a really valued customer. And then they got around that that mechanism was so intrusive, that it was really powerful, because everybody had to close it, that it became something very different. And we're going to curse for that. But but the original thinking there was really correct, which is in the right time when someone's about to leave or whatever. You could say, hey, we know you didn't want to buy something right now. But we could follow up with you. Like if you were leaving the store at a retail shop, like Hey, make sure. And so the I think that the heart heart was in the right place. And so in that way, we've evolved, we've made those better. We've always iterated not just with performance, but what makes a better long term brand experience and a better partner for those clients. So yeah, we're always doing that. In we all are right, Jason era as well, right? Trends, interactivity moves on. But I'm really proud of the fact that when it was pushed down bars at one point, we you know, when we had the Cyber Monday, Black Friday kind of coupon things and stuff, the idea of like creating new planes where people could interact differently from a site and bring it to life, I think, was a good idea. And as we roll out different opportunities and different offerings for how websites or emails as such, that's what we look to is like thinking about how we actually truly use so often what we do online is based on the 90s of the first e commerce shopping experience. Nothing's really changed that much I mean, outside of maybe, you know, Amazon doing Amazon, we could talk about that separately or, or Shopify giving better payment or you know, Apple Pay or something. I generally the exact same ecommerce experience, and we would just call commerce experience. Yeah. And so I think there's a lot of opportunity to just keep entering and think about how to do that very differently for the 2020s. And not necessarily what we did in the 90s are in the arts. And so yes, we're interesting thing about that, we want that to be a better, more seamless, a better experience without friction that with the customer, and the client is really happy with it.



Jason Knight 25:30

So when we're talking about building design teams, and you've described yourself as a pioneer, which is part of the classification put forth by Simon Wardley, pioneers, settlers and town planners, and to paraphrase in my own words, pioneers are out there doing all that blue sky thinking, settlers are kind of going out and building it and scaling it. And town planners will then kind of take that and operationalize it and make it ready for primetime. So do you need an equal balance of all these types in a design team? Or do you kind of weight it in different areas?



Richie Lokay 26:01

That's a great question. Pioneer. Yes, in that characterization of what that is, meaning, like, maybe not blue skies, but like new undefined, right, like I do thrive in the new and undefined and high risk environment. I think that's kind of what you're characterising. So, I believe I even had this conversation with my colleagues and research environment. Today, we're doing it like an on site, off site kind of thing about 2022. And it's there's different people in that room that live in different stages of maturity within what their platform, their product, and what their involvement in the company is. And so we sometimes speak different languages about that, too. And that's, you know, maybe the example of people that work at big corporate structures, really just looking for a really specific goal to meet that works for them. But maybe in startup stage, it doesn't matter if you met your goal or not, you have to solve all the problems. You're

the only one there, right. So in that way, I think the original question is like, how do you know when to hire people for those different stages. And identifying that, I think there's nothing more important in hiring and knowing exactly what individually motivates an individual and what they want from that now into the future. And so, I've generally thought it was something that I didn't have well defined, or I was just putting definition to it, I would find that, you know, if I'm the Pioneer kind of equivalent there, you find the settlor person to make even more clear. And then those become your number twos, your lieutenants, your partners, and I have those people and they're amazing. And then they ultimately their job is to find that town's planner, and to really bring it into the space where it's well defined, you're eking out performance, you're thinking about it really at that level, I can't remember all the adjectives raised on his principles in front of me, because I'm in front of me. But yeah, in that way. And so I think that what that means is, to me is it also makes me feel really good, where, ultimately, now we've built these teams enough times where I have these town planners, but they do their job so well. And they're so versatile, and they do it better than I ever could. And I can feel really good. Like I'm not useless, I'm actually good at this part. So I can prepare them. Now, if you find someone like that town's planner, they get thrown into something that's very undefined. And it's very high risk, and not really good understanding of what the goals look like. They really struggle. Yeah. And to know what and you can see the panic in their eyes and times, like, I don't know, that, to me is fun. And it's really cool opportunity and to figure out and define and put shape into that. I think just going and thinking about it from those different stages is really helped me understand how to communicate to those individuals and know that we both have our own value, and that I'm not good at some of those details. And they are. And so that's coming later. So I don't know if I know when those people were there. But I think that that natural progression is really helped me. Now if you're naturally maybe this not a pioneer, you're a settler, that's okay, I think it's just identifying, you might need that other pioneer person on your team that can can define those r&d undefined things. Or you might need a town planner, you might need these other people. So it doesn't mean that they have to come in that order. That just tends to be me.



Jason Knight 28:48

And what's one piece of advice you'd give an ambitious designer, maybe someone who's trying to get into performance design, like you or just someone that's ambitious and wants to move on to the next stage of their design career, some first step that you'd advise any designer to go out and take and use that to level up their career?

R

Richie Lokay 29:04

Yeah, so if we're talking about like, really specific, like visual designers, maybe UI like online, digital, those kind of folks, I think what's so exciting right now is Well, number one, I consulted for 10 years and didn't ran my own kind of thing, and it did engineering and technical things. I would say every opportunity you can to step in to own something to try something. It's free sometimes to take on work where it's like, I don't have to do that. And I think the intellectual curiosity, of just showing up and saying, offer that out and not being guided towards specific understanding of what you did in school or what you did your last job and such I think, just really opened, opening the lens, broadening the approach. I don't know whatever was out about like who you are as a designer. I mean, the way I've used design in this conversation is very broad. And it's not just pushing pixels. It's it's about visual problem solving and thinking

about things through in the same way that I imagined other people in other disciplines. Think similarly, right? Whether it's, you know, architects or whatever, but that idea of have that visual problem solving, I think that just opening that up and thinking about that. And then we talk about even like design systems, I think there's so many cool tools. So exciting to see what like figma is doing as far as like, you can work at all these different scales and you can push pixels, and you can engineer and organise your thought in a way that's like at many different levels. That's so cool, kind of like Harvard's back to like, like a different era of print design, where like, people are at different scales, like thinking about layout on a big giant phone book size thing you're designing. But then you also have to like design, the digital pages, I used to work in publishing the magazines and stuff. So like all these different scales of things and thinking about like narrative across different long, it's so cool, right now that you can have those tools really powerfully and see it on many different levels. Our, our design architect, on the UX side, is a specialist in creating design systems out for, for figma. Specifically, just to see how he's using the tool to design for the tool is pretty cool. And I just think it's an incredible opportunity. I think just thinking about design really open and thinking about the vision problem solving. Also, I think, I can't go wrong, but just really going deep and studying typography. I think that's one of the best things I ever did was I studied a rigorous old fashioned traditional print, typography. And I think that's our secret weapon a lot of times is is visualisation, but also typography that it's like a maybe you feel come to an odd Jason. But to me that's like a, like a kind of a spooky thing that people that don't know how to do it, maybe just going deep on colour, I think my natural inclination of just setting colour theory and such as another secret weapon, I think that just you can draw from as a designer that you can never know too much about. But it's once you know and understand you see the world very differently can be like a really incredible secret weapon. So you think about the three things I said which is like tight, which is kind of the communication, part visualisation about kind of how it looks, and then colour then how you can really express it in different ways. I think that you couldn't go deeper on any three of those things in any kind of medium and what you're calling design, right?



Jason Knight 31:51

Well, I'm a terrible designer. So maybe I'll just start with one. And where can people find you after this? I'll talk to you about design or performance design, or any of the things that we've spoken about tonight?



Richie Lokay 32:02

I think the best way and your listeners would like they can hit me up and email me, believe it or not, Richie@wunderkind.co, we got the.com finally, it was in a German bankruptcy caught up for a couple years. But the we finally got that I tend not to have a big public persona on you know, on social media, because I think there's a lot of wasted effort that I put towards working internally here. But yeah, fair enough. Yeah, I'd love to hear from people. So. And also, if this is something interesting to you, and you pick the right opportunities there, you obviously can apply. We're always looking for great partners and good people. So across our entire organisation.



Jason Knight 32:38

Alright. Well, I'll make sure to link that into the show notes. And hopefully you get a few people

come over and tap you up. Well, that's been a fantastic chat. So obviously really appreciate you taking the time to share some of your thoughts and opinions about performance design. Hopefully we can stay in touch but yeah, as for now. Thanks for taking the time.



Richie Lokay 32:54

I loved it. Thanks so much for having me.



Jason Knight 32:58

As always, thanks for listening. I hope you found the episode inspiring and insightful. If you do again, I can only encourage you to hop over to [OneKnightinProduct.com](https://OneKnightinProduct.com), check out some of our other fantastic guests sign up to the mailing list or subscribe on your favourite podcast app. Make sure you share with your friends so you and they can never miss another episode again. I'll be back soon with another inspiring guest. But as for now, thanks and good night.