MANDI O'BRIEN

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PRODUCT & DESIGN LEADER

Design-rooted product leader with 14+ years shaping digital/customer experiences and 8+ years owning consumer, SaaS, and marketplace products. Former VP who built and led a six-person Product & Design team; more recently owned Sunday's $30M+ acquisition portfolio. Works from executive strategy and customer discovery through UX, experiments, technical delivery, coaching, and AI-assisted building.

SELECTED IMPACT

- **Made marketplace priorities usable.** Co-designed Need algorithm changes with Engineering; when creators couldn't read or trust the numbers, redesigned urgency and competition cues. Delivery within 96 hours rose from ~60% to ~90%, sustained for 2+ years.
- **Built and developed a Product & Design team.** Led a six-person organization with up to four reports, 95% retention and top engagement; coached people into greater ownership while staying hands-on.
- **Built an experimentation operating system.** Established Sunday's acquisition discovery, measurement, testing, and QA practices; ran 60+ A/B tests in 2024, with 18 winning variants becoming controls.

EXPERIENCE

SUNDAY (BOULDER, CO, Apr 2023–May 2026)

Senior Product Manager, Acquisition & Experience

Owned strategy, discovery, UX, experimentation, delivery, and measurement for Sunday's $30M+ revenue-exposed DTC acquisition, subscription-commerce, and onboarding portfolio across Lawn, Pest, and Garden.

- Led a peak-season working group of six senior managers and directors, aligning 10+ senior leaders across Product, Engineering, Design, Marketing, Analytics, Merchandising, Finance, and Operations on evidence, investment choices, and delivery tradeoffs.
- Built an acquisition operating system combining customer interviews, behavioral research, VWO experiments, custom Heap/Omni reporting, intake, QA, and post-release analysis. Sustained roughly 30–60 A/B tests annually; introduced practices adopted by other teams.
- Stayed hands-on in Figma prototypes, interaction design, UX copy, requirements, acceptance criteria, technical sequencing, QA, and release decisions with frontend and backend engineers.
- Translated a three-to-five-year multi-category vision into a modular Lawn, Pest, and Garden buying experience delivered in under three months. When initial order value rose ~$20 but core Lawn conversion fell, analyzed the competing effects and recommended simpler acquisition with expansion elsewhere in the journey.
- Challenged sitewide session CVR as an unreliable proxy for Lawn-funnel health. Framed and stress-tested user-based Qualified CVR with Analytics, which built the calculation; personally built the surrounding Omni views of funnel entry, demonstrated intent, and purchase, keeping session CVR as a guardrail.
- Led scenario design, cross-functional coordination, and executive decision-making for a proposed $1.3M shipping-savings plan. Analytics' forecasts exposed fulfillment and conversion risks; helped leaders choose a lower-risk configuration with ~$376K in modeled savings.
- Probed AI yard-photo input as a possible replacement for questionnaire steps: tested extraction of structured plan inputs, checked GPT-4o inference economics, and developed 10+ interaction concepts. Discovery-stage only, not launched.
- Hired and coached an associate PM contractor new to product through customer research, prototyping, prioritization, PRDs, user stories, and AI-assisted UX writing.
- Contributed acquisition-domain context to Sunday's production Sunny AI companion, flagging brittle assumptions tying a changing intake questionnaire to assistant context and reviewing inaccurate responses with the owning team.

VERBLIO (DENVER, CO, 2018–2023)

Vice President of Product & Design (promoted from Director and Senior Director)

Recruited by the CEO as Verblio's first design hire and first director-level Product leader. Owned Product & Design for a bootstrapped B2B creator marketplace as company revenue grew from ~$2M to $12M.

- Owned interconnected customer and creator workflows: briefs, job discovery, marketplace matching and incentives, quality/revisions, enterprise configuration, subscriptions, creator pay, and operations tooling. Balanced customer demand and delivery speed against creator earnings, capacity, and service costs.
- Evolved SMB-oriented workflows into agency and enterprise capabilities, including account permissions, delegated work, collaborative review, and configuration. Enterprise retention improved 20% during this evolution.

- Led product strategy, business-rule definition, requirements, sequencing, migration planning, and cross-functional QA for a 3.5-year modernization of subscriptions, credits, billing, ordering, and creator pay. Partnered with Engineering on architecture tradeoffs in a program involving 38+ contributors.
- Noticed customers writing requests such as “FOR MARIA, DUE FEB 27” into open job titles to reserve work for preferred creators. Led an assignments MVP that supported repeat relationships without undermining marketplace availability; first-month adopters were more likely to retain beyond 12 months.
- Rebuilt a legacy creator dashboard around deadlines, priorities, and next actions, using Pendo, FullStory, usability tests, staged beta rollout, and Metabase to improve task completion and safely retire the old experience.
- Established executive Product Council, OKR, strategy, and prioritization practices that brought customer evidence, operational tradeoffs, and Engineering constraints into decisions before roadmap commitments hardened.
- Stayed hands-on in product and brand design, reusable UI systems, research, and the WordPress marketing-site components that enabled nontechnical Marketing colleagues to publish independently.
- Led a company-wide Jobs-to-be-Done investigation of content-quality complaints, separating problems with expertise, briefs, expectations, plagiarism, training, and service operations into actionable work across functions.
- Developed PMs and designers through coaching and delegated ownership, including complex subscription-migration work; led a six-person Product & Design group with up to four direct reports.

BLUE APRON (NEW YORK, NY, 2014–2017)
Design Manager, Marketing
Recruited by the CMO as first marketing design hire and employee #82 during hypergrowth. Designed acquisition, packaging, subscription e-commerce, lifecycle, and editorial experiences; used customer interviews to inform Blue Apron Wine education and simplified a complex pairing matrix into a scannable infographic. Established the first Digital Asset Management system and governance model.

TOUGH MUDDER / MUDDERELLA (BROOKLYN, NY, 2012–2014)
Graphic Designer → Design Manager
Created brand, digital, environmental, and participant-experience design across a rapidly scaling events business, including Mudderella’s visual identity and reusable event-branding systems. Managed one direct report while remaining hands-on.

INDEPENDENT BUILDING & AI PRACTICE

Build and deploy small products for real users, directing AI coding agents while owning product, UX, testing, and release decisions. Prototypes become useful through feedback and deliberate human review.

- **Denver Feeds:** AI-assisted event curation across three Denver communities, with approximately 2,400 listings curated since March 2025. Added human approval after testing and rejecting automated publishing.
- **Tab Splits:** Receipt-based bill splitting used across ten hosted dinners and approximately $4,000 in receipts, with guests beginning to organize independent events.
- **Portfolio publishing system:** Building a visual content editor alongside Claude Code, including coordinated saves across human and AI editing.

Earlier advisory: At Hour Children, used Hotjar to uncover a goods-versus-cash donation intent mismatch, then developed personas, information architecture, and UX wireframes.

Current tools: Claude Code, ChatGPT, v0, Vercel, Supabase, PostHog, GitHub; work includes AI-assisted prototyping, context engineering, workflow automation, and lightweight evaluation.

EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

B.A., Graphic Design, cum laude — Portland State University, Honors College
Reforge — Advanced Product Strategy, Product Leadership, Growth & Experimentation
DeepLearning.AI — AI/ML Foundations
Wharton/Coursera — Executive Business Foundations, Finance & Operations

BEYOND WORK

Organizer of Denver's Amuse-Bouche foodie collective and Setlist Social indie-music group; otherwise reading my way to 52 books this year, haunting repertory screenings and art openings, and happily becoming a beginner again—recently in lap swimming and American mahjong.