

# Rian van der Merwe, PhD

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## Career summary

- People-first, remote-first product and growth leader with 20+ years of experience leading empowered teams across a variety of B2C, B2B, and Developer Platform industries.
- Extensive experience growing products and leading teams in all stages of the business, from pre-product/market fit through product-led hyper-growth to integrating with sales-led enterprises.
- Over 7½ years at Postmark (email delivery infrastructure for developers) I helped grow the product from \$1.7M in ARR when I joined in April 2016 to over 23,000 paying customers and over \$12M in ARR by the middle of 2023. Postmark is a much-loved product with an NPS score of 80.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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### PagerDuty

End-to-end operations platform for DevOps teams.

#### Director of Product • 11/2023 - Present

- PagerDuty acquired Jeli.io in November 2023. I lead a product team responsible for the integration of Jeli with PagerDuty.
- Worked across business units to develop a strategy and roadmap for integrating Jeli's post-incident review tools into the PagerDuty Operations Cloud to drive increased revenue. Accountable for 2024 revenue targets through a combination of product development and Sales enablement.

### Jeli.io

Incident management platform for incident response teams and their stakeholders. Acquired by PagerDuty in November 2023.

#### Head of Product • 08/2023 - 11/2023

- Accountable for the strategy and growth of Jeli's 3 product pillars: Incident Response, Incident Analysis, and Cross-incident Insights.
- Created a product strategy that includes a definition of our vision and goals, strategic differentiation, growth strategy, GTM strategy, and how the product will assist with growth.
- Created a team topology for how our teams will deliver value going forward, along with several structured ways for us to plan and prioritize our work.
- Launched several near-term initiatives to assist with growth, including onboarding improvements, content marketing initiatives, and product improvements.

### ActiveCampaign Postmark

Email delivery infrastructure for developers. Acquired by ActiveCampaign in April 2022.

#### General Manager (GM) of Postmark • 10/2022 - 08/2023

- GM and part of the Senior Leadership Team at ActiveCampaign. Accountable for the day-to-day growth, business metrics, and operations for all of Postmark.
- Led the Product, Design, Marketing, Customer Success, Sales, and Ops teams (~20 people).
- Collaborated closely with the Engineering team to address customer opportunities in a way that builds a healthy, growing business within the ActiveCampaign ecosystem.
- Over 7½ years at Postmark I helped grow the product from \$1.7M in ARR when I joined in April 2016 to over 23,000 paying customers and over \$12M in ARR by the middle of 2023. Postmark is a much-loved product with an NPS score of 80.

## **Head of Product, Postmark • 04/2022 - 10/2022**

- In April 2022 ActiveCampaign acquired Postmark, along with the Wildbit team. I led the cross-functional team responsible for the transition and the successful integration of the team and the product.

## **Wildbit**

Multi-product portfolio company focused on tools for developers, such as Postmark, DMARC Digests, and Beanstalk.

### **Head of Product • 01/2020 - 04/2022**

- Led team development, product vision, execution, growth, and product culture across all Wildbit products (Postmark, DMARC Digests, People-First Jobs, Beanstalk). Accountable for revenue and product growth as part of the Executive Leadership Team.
- Developed and coached an empowered product and design team, with a strong focus on living out our principles and values in the work we do. Coached and guided the team on modern forms of product planning, customer research and discovery, product discovery, and product development processes.

### **Principal Product Manager • 04/2016 - 12/2019**

- Wildbit's first Product Manager. Implemented the Product function within the organization. Facilitated the creation of the first Product Strategy for Postmark, as well as the processes and rituals we used as an empowered team.
- Led the successful transition of the Postmark business from a credits-based pricing model to more profitable and sustainable monthly plans and tiers. Also led the project to introduce bulk email sending to Postmark in addition to our existing transactional email capabilities, vastly expanding our total addressable market.
- Led product lifecycle from start to finish. Responsible for making sure we work on the right customer and business opportunities, come up with the right solutions to address those opportunities, ship those solutions regularly to customers, and ensure that customers discover and adopt the product and its various features.

## **Jive Software**

### **Director Of Product Design • 10/2014 - 04/2016**

- Led product design for Jive's mobile products, including Jive Daily (Jive's primary mobile app), Jive Circle (a corporate directory app), and Jive Chime (a real-time team messaging app).
- Activities included user research, product discovery, information architecture, content strategy, interaction design, and prototyping.
- Responsible for all user research at Jive across all desktop and mobile products. This included ethnography, usability testing, and collaborative design research.

## **HealthSparq**

### **Director Of Product • 04/2014 - 10/2014**

- Led and grew the Product & Design team for all HealthSparq products. Responsible for hiring, product strategy, design process, and day-to-day execution and delivery.
- Led the product and design teams through the release of our Unified Search product in August 2014: a single interface to search for health care providers and costs, bringing an e-commerce experience to health care.

## **Flow Interactive (SA) • Cape Town Area, South Africa**

### **Director Of User Experience • 05/2012 - 04/2014**

- Led user experience design & strategy projects, business development, and training for a broad variety of clients.
- Managed the internal team of designers and front-end developers through the project lifecycle.
- A variety of hands-on user experience design activities, including usability testing and user research, information architecture, content strategy, and interaction design.

## **kalahari.com • Cape Town Area, South Africa**

### **Head of Product & User Experience Design • 12/2010 - 05/2012**

- Led the 13-person Product & Design team responsible for the end-to-end user experience of kalahari.com.
- Product Management of all front-end and backoffice product lines in the kalahari.com ecosystem through their entire lifecycle (vision, strategy, design, delivery, measurement, and maintenance)

- User experience design for all user-facing product lines, including information architecture, user research, content strategy & SEO, interaction design, and visual design.
- UX training and consulting for other MIH group companies in Africa, Middle-East, and South-East Asia (including Dubizzle, BuzzCity, Lelon, LevelUp!, Pricecheck, and 36 Boutiques)

**Yola.com** • San Francisco Bay Area

**Senior Product Manager** • 10/2009 - 11/2010

- Led the team responsible for the product vision, strategy, design, and development of a variety of areas of the Yola user experience.
- Led the redesign of payment screens that resulted in 28% increase in completion rate for domain purchases. Led the design and implementation of a revamped Pro package that resulted in a 280% increase in revenue from the package.

**eBay** • San Francisco Bay Area

**Senior Manager, Product Health and Strategy** • 04/2005 - 10/2009

- Responsible for the planning, execution, and business impact of eBay's Product Health program, which is a holistic research program that drives global product strategy and resource allocation through insights from a variety of user assessments of our site experience. We used surveys, true-intent studies, advanced in-page analytics, site logs/web analytics, and qualitative insights.
- Managed the team that executed the program, and worked with leaders across the design, business, and engineering organizations to develop product strategy based on the insights, as well as provide success metrics to measure the impact of product changes.
- Collaborated across functions to write and scope specifications for new products and changes to existing features, from product discovery through execution & delivery.
- Promoted 3 times during my 4.5 years at eBay.

**Survey.com** • San Francisco Bay Area

**Research Project Manager** • 03/2004 - 03/2005

- Worked directly with a variety of clients to manage their market research needs from start to finish. Included design of research methodology, survey design, negotiating with vendors, sample development, data collection, analysis, and reporting.

**EDUCATION**

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**Ph.D in Internet Marketing**

Curtin University of Technology • 01/2001 - 01/2003

**M.Sc (Eng) in Information Science**

Stellenbosch University/Universiteit Stellenbosch • GPA: Cum Laude • 01/2000 - 01/2001

**B.Eng in Industrial Engineering**

Stellenbosch University/Universiteit Stellenbosch • GPA: Cum Laude • 01/1996 - 01/1999

**SKILLS**

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Product Management, Growth, Product Strategy, Strategy, Strategic Planning, Leadership, Cross-functional Team Leadership, Coaching, Platforms, API products, Analytics, Software as a Service (SaaS), Content Strategy, Customer Research, E-commerce, Information Architecture, Interaction Design, Product Development, Team Building, Usability Testing, User Experience, User Experience Design, User Interface Design, B2B, Enterprise