

Stanislav Stankov

Principal Product Leader & Builder

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Hands-on product leader and builder with **13+ years in product** and an engineering background, spanning Silicon Valley technology companies, B2B SaaS, entrepreneurship, and AI-native products.

My sweet spot is at the **intersection of product, growth, and business**: finding new revenue opportunities, launching new verticals, improving activation and retention, and turning technical capabilities into products customers adopt and businesses can grow.

I have operated at **Principal / Lead Product scope at Yahoo/AOL, Kota, and Upwork**, while also co-founding and scaling Rush from 0 to product-led growth and acquisition.

I stay close to the craft: **customer discovery, product analytics, experimentation, technical architecture, and measuring what happens after we ship**.

My AI experience spans early predictive ML, clustering, and segmentation through today's **LLMs, RAG, agentic workflows, and AI-native product development**. I use **Claude Code and ChatGPT daily** across product discovery, research synthesis, rapid prototyping, technical exploration, data analysis, and writing product specifications

WORK EXPERIENCE

Kota.io | Lead Product Manager

Aug 2025 – Sep 2026 | Dublin, Ireland / Remote

European employee-benefits technology platform connecting employers, employees, HRIS/payroll systems, brokers, and benefit providers.

- Took ownership of Kota's **insurance product portfolio** and standardized the product and development processes around launching and managing insurance benefits; within four months, **reduced the release time for a new insurance provider from ~6 weeks to 3 days**.
- Led provider launches cross-functionally across **Expansion, Integrations, Benefits Operations, Engineering, Marketing, and GTM**, solidifying a repeatable operating model for bringing new insurance products to market.
- Created and launched a new **Salary Sacrifice vertical for the UK**, building a flexible framework for employer-funded benefits designed to remove one of the highest-friction points in Kota's UK proposition.
- Drove multiple platform improvements to reduce friction for both customers and internal teams, including **SSO, in-platform document signing with Dropbox Sign, impersonation capabilities, admin tooling, and improved benefit views**, making onboarding, servicing, and support more self-service and efficient.

GuestReply.ai | AI Product Manager

Feb 2025 - Aug 2025 | Remote

AI-native SaaS for property managers, automating guest communication while creating additional revenue opportunities from unbooked inventory.

- Led product development from early MVP toward **adoption, retention, and commercial traction** for an AI-powered B2B/B2C product serving short- and mid-term rental operators.
- Designed the product journey from **AI copilot → controlled autopilot**, solving one of the central product challenges in AI automation: earning enough customer trust to delegate communication.
- Developed and iterated workflows around **multilingual replies, tagging, prioritization, escalation logic, and knowledge-base/RAG responses**.
- Established continuous customer discovery using real guest inbox conversations to identify failure modes, validate assumptions, and improve automation quality.
- Built product visibility around **time saved, automation performance, upsell revenue, and ROI**, helping customers understand the value the AI was creating.
- Worked closely with frontend, backend, and AI engineering across a modern AI stack, including **Python, LangGraph, OpenAI API, and custom RAG architecture**.

Yahoo.com / AOL.com | Principal Technical Product Manager

Dec 2023 - Dec 2024 | New York / Remote

Incubation, AgeTech & New Revenue

- Led part of the **AOL Incubation portfolio**, using rapid proofs of concept and real-user testing to validate new products and business opportunities outside traditional development cycles.
- Developed and shipped **Communities**, designed specifically for AOL's 55+ audience; initial beta studies showed **65% higher engagement among loyal users**.
- Launched the Medicare Hub, creating a **new AgeTech vertical targeting a \$10B+ recurring market opportunity** through partnerships with external Medicare service providers.
- Led development of **Medicare AI assistants/chatbots**, improving system prompts, conversational warmth, and usability for senior customers.
- Worked across product discovery, customer behavior, partnerships, monetization, and technology - taking ideas from opportunity identification through live product validation.

RUSH | Co-Founder & Head of Product

Feb 2020 - May 2023 | Sofia

B2B SaaS / Shopify post-purchase automation platform. Acquired by Shop Circle.

- Co-founded Rush and led the product from **0 through early product-market fit, growth, and scale**, working hands-on across product, technology, analytics, and business strategy.
- Built the initial MVP with a small distributed engineering team and **pivoted three times** while searching for the strongest adoption strategy.
- Increased trial conversion/retention from **32% to 65%** by identifying and removing customer friction.
- Introduced Product-Led Growth, delivering approximately **4x acquisition, 2x revenue**, and an **86% trial success rate within six months**.
- Increased monthly Shopify installs from roughly 250 to 1,100, helping Rush enter the **Top 100 Shopify Marketplace apps**.
- Shifted monetization from discount-led pricing toward a **value-driven revenue model**.
- Built acquisition, activation, retention, and revenue reporting using **SQL and Metabase** to connect product decisions directly to business outcomes.
- Applied machine learning approaches, including **predictive analysis, clustering, and customer segmentation**, to understand behavior and inform product and growth decisions.

Upwork.com | Senior Product Manager

Senior Product Manager

Jul 2016 - Nov 2020 | Mountain View, California / Remote

- Owned monetization products spanning **pricing, Connects, subscriptions, billing, reporting, and payment flows**.
- Introduced auction-based use of Freelancer Connects for job-post visibility, contributing to approximately **+200% revenue from Connects purchases within four months**.
- Led pricing and tax initiatives across the US, Australia, New Zealand, and Europe.
- Worked closely with Finance, Legal, Global Payments, Security, and Engineering to maintain payment and subscription compliance, including card-network and 3DS requirements.
- Built and monitored metrics around product revenue, accounts payable/receivable, and customer payment journeys.
- Led product work focused on removing friction between client signup and the **first job post / successful hire**.
- Used customer research, funnel analysis, A/B testing, and experimentation to identify and improve key onboarding and marketplace behaviors.

EDUCATION

Master of Business Administration (General Management) by The Open University, UK

Master of Business Administration (Organizational Excellence) by New Bulgarian University, BG

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science by New Bulgarian University, BG

CERTIFICATIONS

CompTIA Security+ by CompTIA

Product Leader Certification by Product School

Senior Product Manager Certification, Product School

Professional Scrum Product Owner I (PSPO I), Scrum.org

Project Management Professional (PMP) by Project Management Institute

PRODUCT & BUSINESS EXPERTISE

Product Leadership

Product strategy · Portfolio strategy · 0→1 · New verticals · Product discovery · Roadmaps · Product-market fit

Growth & Commercial

PLG · Monetisation · Pricing · Activation · Retention · Conversion · Growth loops · New revenue streams · B2B SaaS

Customer & Data

Customer discovery · Funnel analysis · Experimentation · A/B testing · Product analytics · SQL · North Star metrics

AI Product

AI-native products · LLMs · RAG · LangGraph · LangChain · OpenAI · Prompt/system design · AI automation · Predictive ML · Clustering · Segmentation