

Melisa M. Pelayo

Product Owner · Design-Led Product Leader · AI Product

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PROFILE

Product Owner and design-led product leader with 10+ years building consumer mobile products at Mercedes-Benz and Volkswagen. I work at the intersection of user insight, product strategy, and AI, owning decisions, not just deliverables.

I conceived Agentic Chat (an AI product for rapid validation through expert and user persona conversations), designed the UI and UX of House of AI — a unified AI platform presented to the entire organization — and own the B2C persona system for the MB App. I built a Figma plugin to embed persona validation directly into design workflows.

I bring design instinct to product decisions, and product thinking to design. Direct with stakeholders, structured in delivery, and I raise the bar on quality and on what the product actually needs to be.

I lead with empathy and high standards; my teams feel heard, empowered, and proud of what they build.

EXPERIENCE

Product Owner — Mercedes-Benz App Feb 2026 – Present

MBition — Mercedes-Benz Software Hub Berlin, Hybrid

- Lead the largest cross-functional team in the MB App — 11 people across iOS, Android, design, QA, and localisation, with the broadest feature portfolio in the app: Remote Controls, Car Status, Charging, Security, Comfort, Personalization, Home Screen, and App Extensions. No Scrum Master, no Tech Lead.
- Drive discovery, story mapping, stakeholder alignment, and sprint delivery across cross-functional teams (design, engineering, QM).
- Own the B2C persona product, 5 AI-powered customer agents grounded in 10,000+ real interviews and App Store qualitative data.
- Present product strategy and outcomes to senior stakeholders including CFO-level leadership.
- Certified Impact Mentor, beVisioneers: The Mercedes-Benz Fellowship (2026).

Principal UX/UI Designer — Mercedes-Benz App Jan 2025 – Jan 2026

MBition — Mercedes-Benz Software Hub Berlin, Hybrid

- Led design strategy and governance at principal level — quality standards, cross-team alignment, design system ownership.
- Conceived and co-created Agentic Chat, one of the first initiatives of its kind at MBition, conceived and pitched at company-wide AI Week before AI agents and Copilot became industry standard. An AI product enabling teams to validate decisions via expert and user persona conversations.
- Designed the platform of House of AI, a unified AI ecosystem (6 tools) for MBition and presented the full vision to the entire organization.
- Built a Figma plugin embedding B2C persona validation directly into design workflows.

Expert UX/UI Designer — Mercedes-Benz App Jul 2020 – Dec 2024

MBition — Mercedes-Benz Software Hub Berlin, Hybrid

- Led UX/UI for key MB App features: Seat Ballet, Digital Key (VVR), Apple Watch & Siri integration, CPO Filter.
- Drove major UX redesign of the MB App aligned with user research and business goals.
- Facilitated cross-functional workshops and design thinking sessions across product, design, and engineering.

Senior UX/UI Designer — Autonomous Driving Jul 2019 – Jun 2020

Daimler Mobility AG Berlin

- Designed end-to-end in-vehicle UX for self-driving cars from concept to implementation-ready interfaces.
- Led behavioral studies and usability testing to optimize driver and passenger interactions.

Senior UX/UI Designer — Business Innovation Feb 2018 – Jul 2019

Volkswagen Group Services GmbH Berlin

- Delivered innovative UX/UI solutions across all VW Group brands from concept validation to live product.
- Led a design team of up to 6, focused on strategic growth, skill development, and cross-functional collaboration.

- Managed the planning and execution of design projects aligned with corporate objectives across the VW Group.
- Collaborated with UX Research to conduct global UX studies and drive design enhancements.
- Coordinated and moderated Design Thinking workshops, promoting innovative problem-solving and team alignment.

Digital Product Designer — E-commerce Jun 2016 – Feb 2018

LUMAS Berlin

- Led redesign of the online configurator for Whitewall & Lumas, UX concepts for responsive web with data-driven improvements via Google Analytics.

Visual Designer / Art Director Sep 2014 – Jun 2016

Rocket Internet SE Berlin

- Designed user-centered interfaces for iOS, Android, and web in a fast-paced startup environment, collaborating closely with PMs and engineers.

Creative Jan 2014 – Jul 2014

fbtk. Berlin

Art Director & Founder 2011 – Dec 2013

MINIKI Design Germany

- Founded and led a design studio for brand identity, web design, and editorial for international clients.

Art Director Aug 2005 – Oct 2011

BDP Franchise Solutions S.A. de C.V. México

- Led Art Department managing a team of 8 designers for international brands including Dairy Queen, Applebee's, and Amway.

Co-Founder 2009 – 2011

Colectivo Americana México

- Led design strategy from creative direction to cultural impact across the collective's projects and activations.

SKILLS

Product: Product Ownership, Backlog Management, Roadmapping, Discovery, Story Mapping, OKRs, Stakeholder Alignment, Agile/Scrum, BDD

Design: UX/UI Design, Design Systems, Figma, Prototyping, User Research, Usability Testing, Information Architecture

AI & Innovation: AI Product Design, Persona Systems, Prompt Engineering, Agentic Workflows, AI-powered Validation Tools

Leadership: Cross-functional Team Leadership, Team Empowerment, Influence Without Authority, Stakeholder Communication, Design Thinking Facilitation, Recognition & Motivation, Psychological Safety

Tools: Jira, Confluence, Figma, FigJam, GitHub Copilot (MCP), Miro, Notion, Microsoft Teams

Languages: Spanish (Native) · English (Excellent) · German (Very good C1)

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

- PSPO I — Professional Scrum Product Owner (Scrum.org) — In Progress, 2026
- Certified Impact Mentor — beVisioneers: The Mercedes-Benz Fellowship — 2026
- Deep Management 3.0 — Management 3.0 — 2025
- Efficient UX: Doing More with Less — Nielsen Norman Group — 2025
- AI for Designers — Interaction Design Foundation — 2024
- Becoming a UX Strategist — Nielsen Norman Group — 2024 (90%)
- Dieter Rams: Principles of Good Design — LinkedIn Learning — 2023
- Storytelling for Influence — IDEO U — 2023
- What Is Generative AI? — LinkedIn Learning — 2023
- UX Leader: Essential Skills — Nielsen Norman Group — 2023 (87%)
- Foundations of Project Management — Google / Coursera — Dec 2022
- Unlocking Creativity — IDEO U — 2022
- Introduction to HTML, CSS & JavaScript — Le Wagon — 2020
- Design Thinking — Interaction Design Foundation — 2020
- Master in Marketing — Universidad de Guadalajara — 2008–2010

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & ACTIVISM

- Founder — Love Living Being (LOLIBE) · Nonprofit at intersection of art, philosophy & environmental consciousness · Berlin · lovelivingbeing.com
- Co-Founder — Colectivo Americana · Cultural movement born in Colonia Americana, Guadalajara. Transforming art into action through public interventions, urban libraries, photography, and cultural activations that reclaim city space for creative expression and social change. Driven by culture. Rooted in the neighborhood. · colectivoamericana.com
- Founder — xsassy · Artisanal vegan cacao brand, handcrafted in Berlin · 10% of sales donated to LOLIBE · xsassy.berlin