

Mingtao Gao

Strategic Product Researcher & Designer

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Product-focused professional with 4+ years of experience using data-driven insights to shape product strategy and drive business growth. Proven track record in cross-functional leadership, market analysis, and user-centric innovation – instrumental in achieving significant increases in user engagement and conversion rates.

Professional Experience

Alibaba.com - *Global B2B Marketplace*

Bay Area, CA

Strategic User Researcher

Mar. 2022 – Present

- **Product Enhancement & Road-mapping:** Leveraged user insights and cross-functional collaboration to define and implement product enhancements, resulting in a **15% increase** in conversion rates (Page Visits - Order Placed) over 4 months. Actively documented requirements and user stories to ensure alignment with stakeholder needs.
- **Strategic Product Launch:** Directed the research and product launch strategy for **Alibaba Guaranteed (AG)**, onboarding **11,000 new users** in the first month. Post-launch, led ongoing usability studies to identify pain points, build user personas and guide design iterations, contributing to an **8% growth** in daily visits.
- **Feature Development:** Conceived and delivered new customization features on Homepage, driving a projected **2,000+** daily increase in buyer-seller interactions (AB3) by translating user needs into innovative product solutions.
- **Market & Persona Analysis:** Conducted in-depth research across key industries in North and Latin America to develop user personas and segmentation models, informing product roadmaps and feature prioritization.
- **Cross-Functional Process Improvement:** Established **U-Sight**, a centralized research repository, enhancing collaboration among product, IT, and design teams, and driving data-driven product decisions and documentation.

Nook - *Home Renovation Management Platform*

Miami, FL

Product Designer

Aug. 2021 – Mar. 2022

- **Product Strategy & Alignment:** Led a user research initiative to inform the platform's product roadmap, ensuring product features aligned with U.S. homeowner needs and business objectives.
- **Agile Development & Testing:** Collaborated with design and dev. teams to deliver responsive designs and prototypes, integrating technical requirements into the product roadmap. Led iterative usability testing within sprint cycles, driving continuous product enhancements and higher user satisfaction.

Freelance Product & UX Designer

Chicago, IL

Client Projects: Yamibuy, Tradovate

Jun. 2019 – Sep. 2020

- **Yamibuy | Shopping Cart:** Redesigned the shopping cart features, cutting cart abandonment by **3%** through streamlined, consistent user flows.
- **Tradovate | Onboarding Flow:** Optimized new account registration and messaging, creating a more user-friendly onboarding experience and reinforcing brand identity.
- **Deliverables:** Conducted **competitive research**, created **wireframes** and **prototypes**, and collaborated with stakeholders to deliver user-focused solutions that **enhanced usability** and **brand engagement**.

Skills

- **Product Strategy & Roadmapping:** Market analysis, feature prioritization, product lifecycle management
- **User-Centric Design:** Mixed-method UX research, usability testing, customer journey mapping
- **Cross-Functional Leadership:** Agile methodologies, stakeholder management, cross-team collaboration
- **Technical Proficiency:** Jira, Figma, Sketch, Google Analytics, UserTesting, SQL, Python, R

Education

- **University of Chicago** *2019 – 2021*
M.A. in Computational Social Science GPA: **3.78**
Thesis: *The Role of Channel Characteristics in Brand-Related UGC*
- **University of California, San Diego** *2016 – 2019*
B.S. in Cognitive Science, spec. in Interaction Design,
Minor in **Computer Science** GPA: **3.92**