

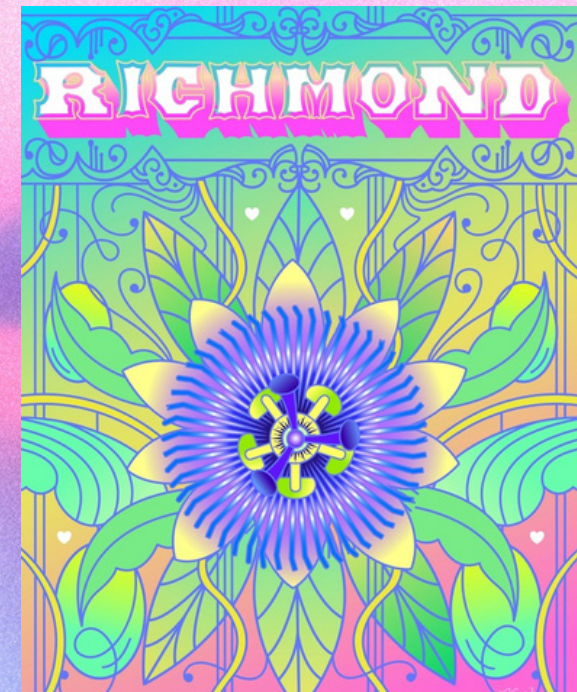
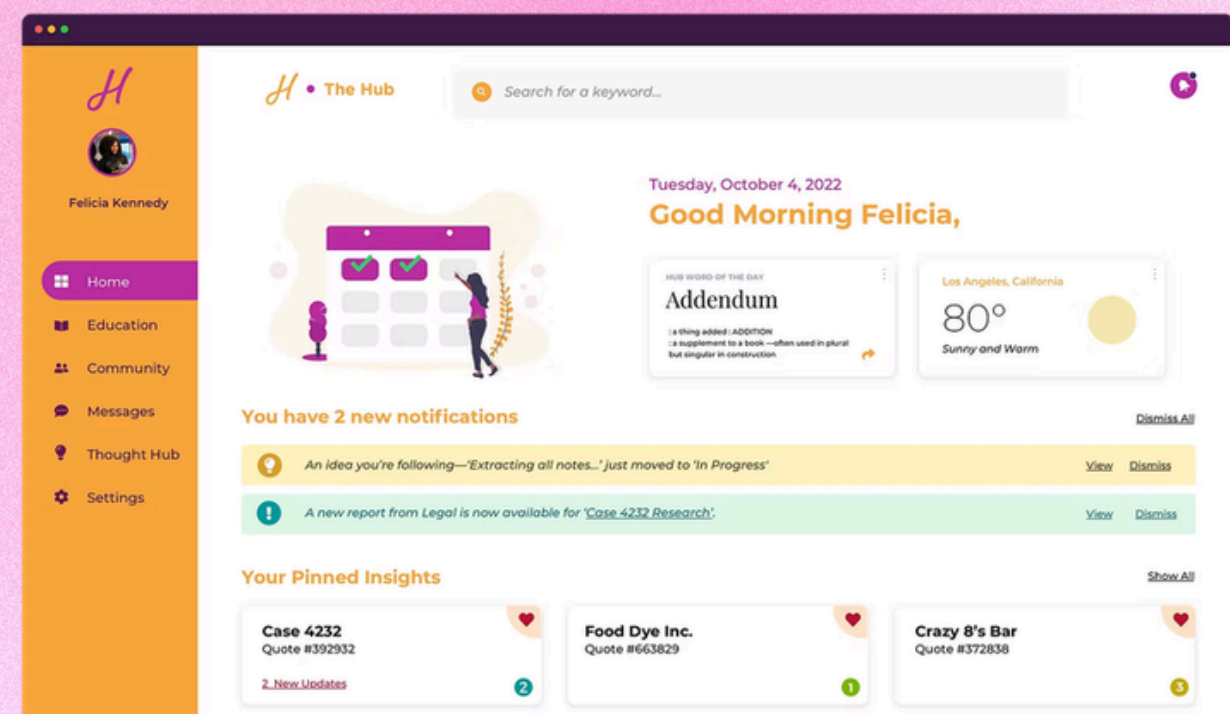
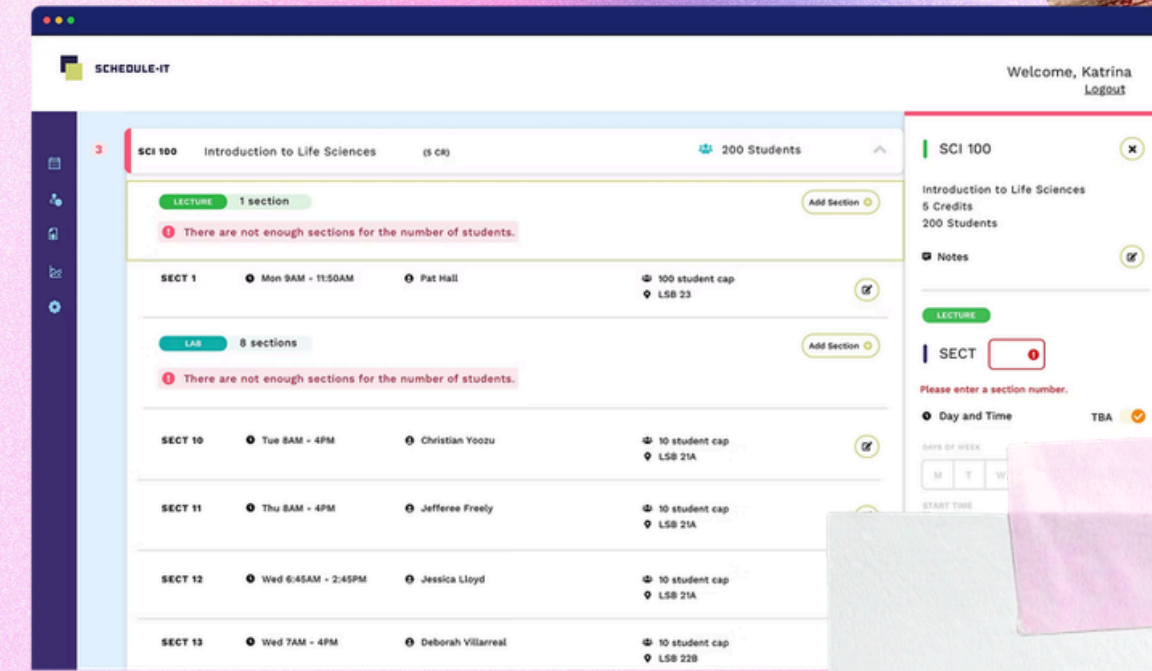
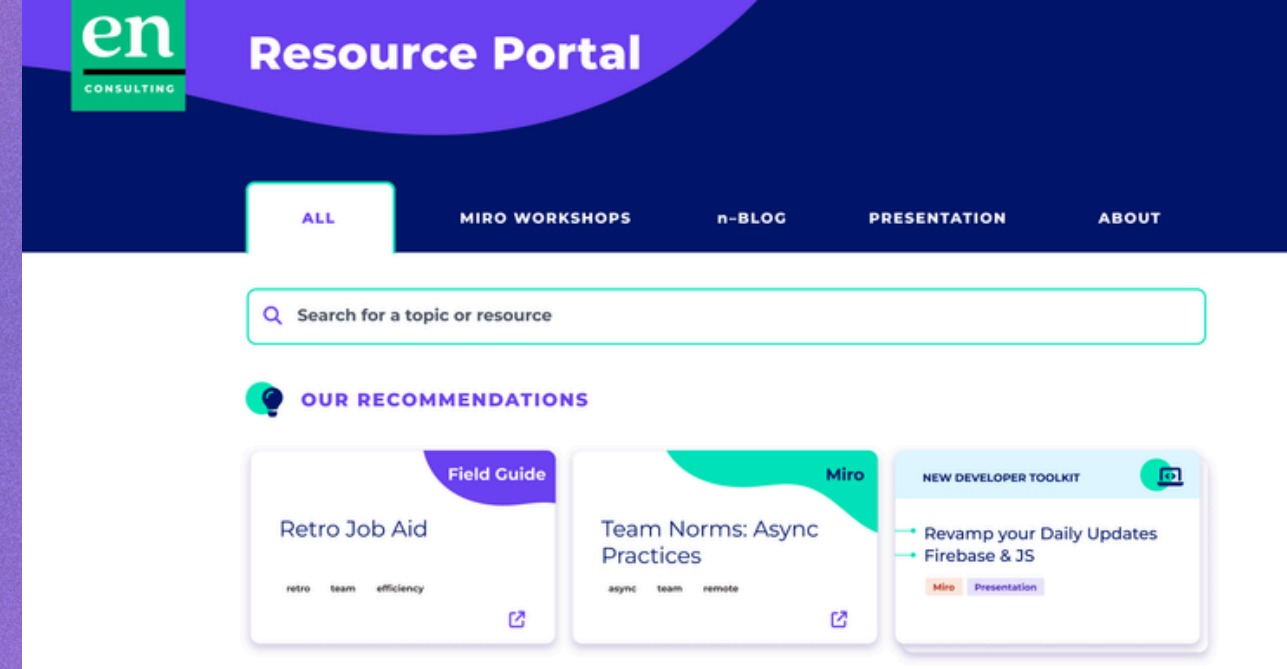


Victoria Griffin

THE *Product*
DANCE

Learning the steps to successful partnerships
within product teams.





The Palette of My Work (& Life)

- UX/UI
- Product thinking
- Logo & branding
- Marketing
- & Anything creative
- Cat mom

Product

Dance





What feelings, emotions, or adjectives come to mind when you think of dancing?



Do these feelings coincide
with your feelings about
Product/ Product design?



Designing a product is like dancing.

It requires rhythm, communication, trust, and awareness of your partners.

Everyone has their role, and the choreography only works when each person understands how to move with the others.

**What does a successful partnership look like?
And how do we learn the steps?**



What does a successful partnership look like?

Synchronized

Everyone must move in time. If one partner rushes, stumbles, or improvises too wildly, it disrupts the flow.



Communication and collaboration with others around you decreases doubt, uncertainty, and necessary work.

- ★ **In product discovery, outside perspectives are valuable. Are there roles or people you can bring in to shed light on the problem or the path?**
- ★ **Decisions, timelines, and constraints don't have to be faced alone. Moving forward in sync with your team can ease transitions.**



What does a successful partnership look like?

Intuitive

Good dance partners develop intuition for each other's strengths, limits, and cues.



The best product teams do the same: anticipating needs, compensating fluidly, adjusting rhythm and developing trust.

- ★ Within a product team, are there rituals, activities, or processes that can help develop trust early? Is everyone on the same page as far as project scope and timeline?
- ★ In the natural cycle of Agile there will be opportunities to anticipate the needs of your team. What are some things you can do to prepare and to communicate?



What does a successful partnership look like?

Creative (& fun!)



A good dance showcases spontaneity, focus, and expression. Some parts are tightly choreographed, others are improvisational.



A flexible team can adapt to changes big and small. Balance is key—overplanning kills spontaneity, underplanning creates chaos.

- ★ Sometimes product teams are at the whims of a shifting focus. Whether it be an opinionated stakeholder, or a budget constraint, it's important to stay on your toes and go with the flow while maintaining project momentum.
- ★ Inside tension can affect a project's success. It's important to recognize these areas of stress and work to alleviate them before it compounds. Are standups getting to long? Are design reviews getting out of hand? Get creative with solutions.



How do we learn the steps?

For designers:

Design is not a solo act — it's a shared choreography where a designer dances with others, each bringing unique rhythms, tensions, and energies to co-create the product

Rather than predefined roles, each person enters the dance floor with their own movement vocabulary — with the designer responding, leading, following, and adapting in real time.

Each partner is dancing with the designer — sometimes in harmony, sometimes in tension, but always in motion together.



Designer & Engineer

the Rhythmic Salsa

There's a give-and-take. One partner initiates a movement (a concept or constraint), and the other responds.

Design pushes; engineering grounds.

A rhythm-driven dance like salsa—each improvising within a shared pattern.



Start here

- Learn from each other
- Communicate in each other's languages
- Talk through boundaries
- Find a common ground

The PM brings tempo, beats (timelines, scope, business goals) and the designer listens and interprets.

Together they find the pace: fast decisions, slow explorations, pauses for tensions.

This relationship is complex, multi-faceted, but can be dynamic and powerful—together.



Start here

- Be each other's advocates and support.
- Learn when to loosen up project constraints and tighten focus for time-based tasks.
- Get creative with team exercises and problem solving tasks. Dare to dream big with the client and product owner.

Designer & Project Manager

the Traditional Waltz



Designer & User/Product Owner

the Storytelling Ballet

The designer shapes the experience; the user and the product owner give it a voice.

Together, they co-create narrative + visual harmony — needs, journey, and flow are seamlessly aligned. Neither leads completely; instead, they alternate lead roles, depending on the moment and context.

Smooth, delicate, emotionally aware. Sometimes the product owner is the user or will advocate for their users.



Start here

- Before any feature work can begin, what is the story this product is trying to tell or express?
- Having a user journey or persona to true back to when creating stories or features can help cut through the noise.



How Can We Practice?

Successful partnerships don't happen overnight. They need time, effort, and the practice of doing, to succeed.

Take the lead. Suggest collaboration activities when opportunities arise.

Share your own fears, experience, and ideas with your team. "Here are the steps I've learned to take in other partnerships."

Be open to learning new moves from others and sharing their language.

Ready to Dance?



- What are some suggestions or recommendations you've seen work with your own teams or projects?
- Is there something you've learned today in this talk that you'll try or apply?
- What other questions are still on your mind?

