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Jelle Stienstra, PhD

Turning emerging technology into digital products, AI ventures and measurable business value.

AI · Digital strategy & transformation · Proposition & service design

Profile

Technology and innovation leader with 15+ years of experience turning emerging technologies, customer insight and market shifts into new products, experiences and business models.

Founder of style + code and previously Digital Strategy Director and Commercial Director at PTTRNS.ai. Combines strategic thinking, human-centred design, product development and business understanding to move from opportunity and concept to implementation, adoption and measurable impact.

Experience spans AI, personalisation, retail, fashion, automotive and consumer businesses, with a consistent focus on translating complex technology into propositions that customers understand, organisations can execute and businesses can value.

PhD in Human-Centric Data-Driven Design.

Selected impact

AI that sells in live retail

Engineered an AI personalisation product for live retail. In eyewear, conversion rose three to eight times, and returns fell by about 20%.

From project work to FashionTech SaaS

Architected the shift of PTTRNS.ai from project work to a FashionTech SaaS. Closed more than €500k ARR.

IKEA Concept Kitchen 2025

Directed the product vision for IKEA Concept Kitchen 2025 with IDEO. Digital and interactive products were taken onto IKEA's roadmap.

Built a new AI proposition around style intelligence

Founded style + code to connect product understanding, consumer style and context across search, guided discovery, conversational advice and emerging agentic-commerce interfaces.

Cross-industry innovation track record

Led or shaped work for organisations including adidas, H&M, PVH, BESTSELLER, Kering, IKEA, Nike, Audi, Porsche, Ahold, Philips and Microsoft Research.

Experience

2024 – Present

Managing director, style + code

Turned style intelligence into deployable AI for retail

Eindhoven, The Netherlands

Co-founded style + code to build AI agents that help fashion, footwear, fragrance, and eyewear shoppers find products that fit their style.

Directed guided selling and contextual search, so discovery follows the language customers use rather than keyword filters alone.

Style intelligence for retailers: a clearer picture of customer taste, higher conversion, and fewer returns.

2019 – 2024

Strategy director, PTTRNS.ai

Turned digital innovation into a scalable product business

Eindhoven, The Netherlands

Management team responsibility for the value proposition, long-term vision, and go-to-market strategy.

Turned a work-for-hire organisation into a fashion-tech SaaS operating model.

Defined and ran positioning, branding, marketing, content, automation, PR, partnerships, and events for an AI digital stylist, a 3D fashion rendering platform, and digital fashion consultancy.

Set up SaaS sales and customer success, and built the international sales organisation, with seven direct reports.

Closed and onboarded H&M, A'2154, Victoria's Secret & Co, adidas, BESTSELLER, Intersport, PVH, and Stichd in fashion, and KRYG Group, Fielmann, Kering Eyewear, and Nexeye in eyewear. More than €500k ARR.

Engineered an AI hyper-personalisation platform. Eyewear clients saw conversion rise by three to eight times, and returns fall by 20%.

2018 – 2019

Digital innovation consultant, ISAAC (now iO)

Built the proposition that became PTTRNS.ai

The Netherlands

Re-aligned the UX and innovation departments, including AI and VR, around design thinking, design sprints, and service design.

Prepared the spin-off of PTTRNS.ai: proposition, launch, and roll-out.

Project work for HP, DAF, Nespresso, Nike, Parfumado, and Swinkels Family Brewers.

2016 – 2018

Creative lead, NEWCRAFT (now VML)

Moved emerging technology from experiment into business

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Advised brands on digital initiatives through service design and data, in design sprints aimed at innovation and commercial impact.

Led e-commerce, customer journey, and hyper-personalisation work for Aegon, KPN (Telfort), Ahold (Albert Heijn, Gall & Gall, Etos), Jacobs Douwe Egberts, Nuon (now Vattenfall), Nike, and Omega Pharma NL.

Steered the Pon Digital Innovation Lab, and took AI, blockchain, and 3D business models into core operations for Audi, Porsche, Volkswagen, Gazelle, and Pon.bike.

2015 – 2016

Assistant professor, University of Twente

Connected academic research with real-world innovation

Enschede, The Netherlands

Helped shape the DesignLab as a place where researchers, societal organisations, industry, students, and citizens work together.

Taught and developed courses, and supervised graduate students, in interaction, contextual design, and service design thinking for Industrial Design and Creative Technology.

Research in service design, human-technology interaction, systems thinking, and ubiquitous computing, including prototyping and research through design.

2010 – 2016

Design innovation strategist, Interactionists

Used prototypes to de-risk new products and business models

Eindhoven, The Netherlands

Started the practice to self-fund a PhD. Delivered prototypes of digital products and business models to test market and technical feasibility.

Acquired and delivered work with Philips, Heijmans, Rabobank, Microsoft Research, Royal Huisman, frog design, Viking Schaatsfabriek, Schiphol Group, and Eindhoven University of Technology.

Education

2012 – 2016

PhD, human-centric data-driven design

Turned human-centred research into tangible innovation

Eindhoven University of Technology, Eindhoven, The Netherlands

Research through design: designed and developed more than forty prototypes, used by people as material for the thesis and for further development.

Dissertation: Respectful Embodied Interactions, a phenomenology-inspired approach to designing for the aesthetics of interactive systems.

Showed that starting from a human-centric philosophy leads to products, services, and systems fitted to skill and to context.

Self-funded and self-directed. Support from Eindhoven University of Technology, European project FP7-ICT-2011-7 no 287624, and IKEA of Sweden.

Guest lecturer in industrial and interaction design at the University of Lund, Sweden, and Universidade Federal da Bahia, Brazil, and guest researcher at the University of Siena, Italy.

Creative director for Eindhoven University of Technology on Concept Kitchen 2025, commissioned by IKEA of Sweden, with about 100 design students and professionals from IDEO. Shown at World Expo 2015, and taken into IKEA's strategic roadmap.

Published in peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings. Presented at World Expo 2015 and Salone del Mobile in Milan, Dutch Design Week 2015, IHAC 2013 in Salvador, and DHub 2012 in Barcelona.

2007 – 2010

MSc Industrial Design, cum laude

Designed technology around human skill and context

Eindhoven University of Technology, Eindhoven, The Netherlands

Graduation project: the Sensible phone, an alternative operating system for smartphones.

The augmented speed-skate for TVM Schaatsploeg translated pressure on the skate into sound for professional speed skaters.

2003 – 2007

BSc Industrial Design

Eindhoven University of Technology, Eindhoven, The Netherlands

Skills and languages

Design thinking, Vision and strategic planning, Digital transformation and change, Business model innovation, Data-driven decisions, Leadership, Cross-functional collaboration, Market analysis, Customer experience design, Service design, Digital marketing, Stakeholder engagement, Agile and Scrum.

Dutch Native

English Professional / C2

Spanish Basic / A2, actively learning

Portuguese Basic / A2

German Basic / A1

Courses

2022	Organizational Leadership Specialization, Northwestern University
2022	Introduction to Negotiation, Yale University
2018	Digital Transformation, BCG and University of Virginia
2018	Management of Fashion and Luxury Companies, Università Bocconi
2017	Leadership in 21st Century Organizations, Copenhagen Business School
2016	Business and Marketing Strategies Specialization, University of London

Projects

Concept Kitchen 2025

for IKEA of Sweden as Creative director

2013 – 2015



More than 100 students from Eindhoven University of Technology, the University of Lund, and Universidade Federal da Bahia, together with design professionals from IDEO, worked on IKEA's Concept Kitchen 2025: a tangible glimpse of sustainable cooking and food in the kitchen. Visibility and adoption at World Expo 2015 placed digital and interactive products, systems, and services on IKEA's strategic roadmap.

"This by Jelle Stienstra promoted future vision fits our take on designing a sustainable life at home for the many people. It is not about electronics nor about making life easier per se, it is about making home smarter and more engaging. It is about interactions that make you care."

Marcus Engman, Head of design, IKEA of Sweden

Alternative smartphone OS

for DQI as Interaction design

2009 – 2010



An alternative operating system for smartphones, set against a cognitivist approach to experience design. Navigation that takes doing and feeling as seriously as thinking was implemented and validated. A different take on context, personalisation, and engagement. Traces of this patented experience design are found in smartphones today.

"This is not yet another metaphor inspired interaction paradigm. This work is a truly context and use-sensitive operating system that exploits ones expressivity in accessing the depths of information available on smartphones in an engaging manner."

Bill Buxton, Principal researcher, Microsoft Research

Disruptive SOHO

for Jacobs Douwe Egberts Professional as Service and system design

2016 – 2017

A connected coffee machine and service for the small-office market. The machine is the marketing, upsell, and service channel: never without coffee, with a subscription that grows with the company.

Audi Q2 experience

for Pon Automotive as Project lead

2016

For Audi and Pon Automotive, NEWCRAFT and ISAAC VR developed a virtual reality experience around the introduction of the Audi Q2, to test virtual reality in the sales funnel of automotive dealerships. High impact on brand and product awareness through interactive experience design.

Mobility as a service

for Pon as Project lead

2016

With Achtung!, Diffmt Media, and Q42, a mobility-as-a-service proposition and a showroom of the future for Pon Digital Innovation Lab's vision on mobility 2030. The results were adopted onto the strategic roadmap, and Pon's new headquarters in Amsterdam was to house a lab to continue the work.

Movement sonification

for TVM Schaatsploeg as
Interaction design

2007 – 2009



A device on the skate translates pressure into a real-time soundscape, designed and tested so professional speed skaters can improve their technique. Viking Schaatsfabriek, a leading manufacturer of speed skates, used the work to investigate go-to-market strategy.

"This innovation has the potential to revolutionize the sport and training methods. The real-time translation of movement into sound turned out to provide athletes a better grip on their flow and was highly motivating. With sensitive eyes and ears for detail, Jelle enabled athletes to better listen to their bodies."

Gerard Kemkers, Former head coach, TVM Schaatsploeg

Care-O-Bot

for ACCOMPANY as Lead
interaction design

2012 – 2014

With Fraunhofer Institute and the University of Siena, a care robot for older people that engages in personal interaction and takes context into account. Praised by the European Commission, the robotics community, and the design community. Red Dot award, best of the best, 2015.

"The expression of a new understanding of a robot's ability to interact with its environment. Equipped with an intelligent interface, it possesses human-like qualities that exceed imitation and lend it originality and character."

Jury statement, Red Dot awards