

Ross Brinkman

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Product Portfolio

[rossbrinkman.com](#)

I absolutely love making products. I'm a senior product leader with 12+ years delivering consumer, commercial, and defense products from concept through production and sustaining, with experience spanning industrial design, consulting, product management, and entrepreneurship. Known for leading cross-functional teams combining data-driven business decision-making, user-centered design, and a cheerleading hands-on mentality to drive products of empathy that endure the market with measurable results.

Experience - Selected Projects

Utility Game Lab - Toy and games brand

Founder & CEO | Chicago, Jan 2025 - Present

- **New Product Development & Launch:** Developed, marketed, and launched Subversia, the card game of espionage, with 500% crowdfunding success and 20%+ margin in cash-strapped environment.

Kearney - Global management consulting firm specializing in supply chain and product management

Manager, Product Lab | Chicago, Dec 2024 - Jul 2025

- **Defense NPD Process Redesign:** Collaborated with executive leadership of defense giant (client size: \$65B) to create new product development processes that reduce timelines by 15% and generate annual sustaining engineering cost avoidance of 30%.
- **Agentic AI Platform Development:** Led global team of 13 UX designers, software engineers, AI scientists, and data architects to create firm's first agentic AI platform, Velocity, reducing hardware product development timelines and costs by 25-30%.
- **Airline Galley Cart Product Management:** Identified initiatives to reduce galley cart product, maintenance, and operational costs by 20-30% and increase revenue by 10-20% through site walks, user insights, product teardowns, and SME collaborations.

Senior Associate, Product Lab | Chicago, Oct 2022 - Dec 2024

- **Defense Electronics Product Management:** Managed team of 6 to reduce defense giant's (client size: \$65B) product and supply chain costs for highly complex radio, nightvision, and fighter jet processing applications by \$120M while increasing job win rate 20%.
- **Power Tool Manuals Product Management:** Reduced power tool corporation's (client size: \$18B) instruction manual paper usage by 40%, 36 tons, and \$8M in annual costs through design overhaul, process redesign, and digitization.
- **Water Service Product Management:** Unlocked strategic acquisitions for water service brand (client size: \$6B) by executing product due diligence and platform development to realize technology and supply chain consolidation, reducing procured components by 45%.

TEAMS Design - Global product design and development agency

Vice President | Chicago, Jan - Oct 2022

- **Revenue & Margin Improvement:** Increased internal revenue by 10% and margin by 5% by creating firm's first business development position and sales toolkit and implementing new project management, services costing, and proposal processes.
- **Power Tools Portfolio Expansion:** Developed 2x cordless concrete and 1x cordless jobsite power tools to expand our client's portfolio, leapfrog competitor technology, and cement top positions in respective product categories.

Design Director | Chicago, Dec 2020 - Jan 2022

- **Design-To-Value Program Leadership:** Led DtV programs for major brands across residential IoT security, robotic vacuums, and kitchen appliances, generating 300+ ideas to realize 8-12% cost reduction and increase supply chain resiliency without sacrificing product quality.
- **Robotic IoT Vending Innovation:** Collaborated with food vending startup (series d: \$50M) to conduct ride alongs, construct user stories, generate concepts, and execute validation prototyping for IoT-centric robotic vending machine of fresh foods.

Lead Design Manager, Senior Industrial Designer, Industrial Designer | Chicago & Shanghai, May 2013 - Dec 2020

- **Global Product Roadmap Vision (Shanghai):** Led team of 12 to develop strategic air conditioning product vision and roadmap for global technology corporation joint venture (client size: \$81B) and coordinated additional teams across China, Japan, USA, and Germany
- **IoT Security New Product Development:** Developed visual brand language and initial keystone products for residential security device brand (client size: \$4B) after they acquired various competitors.

Education

The University of Chicago, Booth School of Business

Masters of Business Administration (MBA), Evening Program, Dean's List | Oct 2018 - Dec 2021

- Concentrations: Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Finance, Strategy, General Management
- Groups: Studio Booth (Co-Chair), Built@Booth, Product Management, Marketing, Running Club, Dumpling Club

Purdue University

Bachelor of Arts, Industrial Design | Aug 2009 - Jun 2013

- 16 seat competitive program, graduated with #2 rank in class, 1st place winner and team lead of Caterpillar sponsored studio project
- Groups: Industrial Design Society of America, Men's Water Polo Club (Captain, Coach, VP), Women's Water Polo Club (Coach)

Additional Information

Skills: Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Premiere, Excel, Alteryx, Rhino, Solidworks, OnShape, Keyshot, Miro, Trello, Notion, Figma

Awards: 2025 Global Innovators 1st Place, 2020 IDEA Gold, Silver, Jury Awards, 2018 Red Dot, 2016 CES Honoree, Papito's Pancake Champ

Articles: [DeWalt DW735](#), [Smartwool](#), [Ninetedo Switch](#), [IKEA Odger Chair](#), [Nike Pegasus](#), [REI Flash 55](#), [HelloFresh](#), [Bose Ultra Open](#)

Interests: Board game design, woodworking, triathlons, water polo, basketball, I'm a big movie nerd, and raising my wonderful twins!