JON BELL

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Dear Hiring Team,

I am eager to express my interest in the AI Senior Product Designer position at GitLab, a company I have admired since 2019. I believe that designers at software companies must be clear and persuasive writers to be effective. Great design does not speak for itself, so it's up to designers to do the research, be clear in our thinking and our justification, communicate well with our stakeholders, and document decisions clearly so vital information isn't stuck on our Figma canvases or in our heads. Seeing these async, document-first, and transparent philosophies in your handbook is a delight.

In your job description, I see three vital skills needed for someone to succeed in this role: experience with AI/conversational UI, deep DevOps intuition, and an ability to collaborate and persuade across cross-functional teams. Fortunately, these don't just play to my strengths, they are aligned with the kind of work I am most passionate about.

AI and conversational UI experience
At Twitter, I designed the frontend for "Cortex," a user interface for interacting with machine learning models that optimise real-time decisions across the platform. This tool was critical for making complex AI functionality accessible and actionable for our engineering teams, demonstrating my ability to translate advanced AI concepts into great experiences. Years later, I created a design system to align a large telco's conversational UI products.

DevOps and root cause analysis
At Replay.io, my focus has shifted to R&D for a promising Root Cause Analysis tool that leverages our "time-traveling debugger" technology. This tool is designed to intuitively predict and diagnose issues before they impact end-users, something I know GitLab is also keenly interested in. My role at Replay encompasses everything, from user research to building prototypes and envisioning a design north star to inspire the team forward. I call my technique "3 years, 2 weeks" to demonstrate how to think long-term while still pushing key business objectives ahead.

Cross-Functional collaboration and stakeholder management
Throughout my career, I have often been the 'fixer' when it comes to difficult stakeholder relationships. At Microsoft, while leading the UX team for Office Mobile apps, I navigated the challenging waters of internal feuds between the Windows and Office divisions, ensuring alignment and fostering a cooperative environment despite differing goals. For a decade, I've taught a class called "Design While Shipping," to help designers advocate for research and set a high bar for design while communicating effectively across teams.

These experiences uniquely prepare me for the AI Senior Product Designer role at GitLab. I am ready to leverage my technical expertise, deep understanding of user-centric design and research, and proven ability to manage cross-functional projects to help drive GitLab's AI initiatives forward with both vision and intention. I love finding alignment with cross-functional teams while still honouring rapid iteration and experimentation.

Thank you for considering my application. After following your journey as a fan of GitLab's products and operating philosophy for five years, I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to contribute during the most significant shift in DevOps and software I've seen in my entire career. I am eager to help make sure GitLab doesn't just navigate the massive wave of innovation and opportunity that AI is unleashing in DevOps. It will be leading it.

Best,
Jon Bell