

EPISODE 45

“OT: I always thought that you needed to always manage people all the time in order to improve. There are some designers that just want to improve their skills. They want to be better at illustration, or managing colors. And that's good too. That's the way you want to go at that time of your life.”

[00:00:29] TG: You're listening to the UI Narrative podcast, the biweekly podcast that shows the stories of people of color interface designers and researchers, and their contributions towards creating user-centered experiences. And I'm your host, Tolu Garcia. Let's get started.

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[INTERVIEW]

[00:01:47] TG: Sup, everybody? Welcome back to the UI Native podcast. Let me introduce you to today's guest. Omar was born an engineer, but raised between designers. Now he has seven plus years of experience as a product and interface designer, working with almost 50 companies. Earlier in his career he specialized in designing for Android, and he is still a fan of this operating system. Omar is great at leading teams to create and evolve digital products that impacted users in fast ways. He is a feature creator. There's always something in his vast mental library of interface patterns that fits into any digital product he's designing. He loves

product launches, always talking about the hidden gems, and how to turn them into the spotlight. He is always hungry to know people creating stuff and following them on Twitter and liking their work. At night, he's a Podcast Producer, and recently a video game streamer. Everyone, welcome Omar Tosca to the UI Narrative podcast.

[00:02:52] OT: Thank you. Wow! That was such an amazing introduction.

[00:02:57] TG: So I'd like to start the show by talking about some of your earliest memories of being interested in design.

[00:03:04] OT: Yeah. So it goes back to middle school. Well, it could go back to when I was a child. But it's basically when I was trying to improve things. I didn't know that that was designing or iterating stuff. But I always wanted to take stuff, my own stuff, the stuff that my family use in the house, my friends, and I always wanted to improve them. And I talk about middle school every time, because when I was in middle school, we had all these devices from the previous era of the iPhone. And we had devices that don't show you were very customizable, but there's always one person in the Internet that get a way to change things. Even on the iPhone, it's a very safe operating system. We had the jailbreak. And on Android, we have several ways to theme your phone. But I wanted my devices to improve and also to express myself.

One of the first things that I wanted to do is to change the theme of the phone to express the usual thing. What if my phone looks like Windows XP or Windows Vista? And I took a look at the Internet and found some forums and stuff like that, and just change it. Like taking the graphics out of the memory of the phone and tweak it on Photoshop, and changing the way I want it to look. The font that was another thing that I think it was easy to change. At the end, I discovered I could sell all those themes. So people just came to me and asked for changing their phones and theming.

[00:04:55] TG: I think it's amazing that you got into design from customization on your Android phones. Like I can't even imagine like how many people probably don't realize like, "Oh my gosh! Like I could probably like do this as a job." A lot of OS's now, specifically Mac, like there'll be more restrictions to what you can customize. But I just think it's so like fascinating how you were able to like make that sort of like a side gig selling the designs that you created.

[00:05:27] OT: Yeah, it was controversial, I think, from my point of view of the school, because I didn't think we had the power to make business inside the school. What was something that I get trouble on. But it was fun. It was really fun to do that.

[00:05:42] TG: So some listeners may not know this, but Omar is from Mexico, and currently living there as well. And I think it's so awesome to have an international guest on the show. So I want to talk more about your experience getting started in interaction design in Mexico. What was the process like for you? And how did you go about learning UI design?

[00:06:03] OT: Another story, it goes back now to when I was studying engineer. At the time, I wanted to be a software engineer. I was always close to technology. When I was a kid, I always understand how machines and computers talk with people. So I just wanted to play with it. Like take that technology into some kind of next gen level or something. But I wasn't sure at that time on how can I impact on understanding technology and humans at the same time. So in some ways I discover when I was studying subjects on interaction design subject on school, I discovered there was a whole world around designing UI and how that layer is basically the connection between humans and computers. And it was interesting to understand it that way, because I always thought, "Well, if I understand the computers, I can just change everything in people's life," right? But I discovered that wasn't the only thing that I needed to know. That there was this layer where you can actually perform as the translator between these two entities that is actually the actual computer and the humans. I discovered I had that superpower of being the actual translator.

Everything that I try learning by then, it became very clear to me at some point what I wanted to be. It wasn't an engineer. It was actually to become a designer. After understanding that, the same thing that I talk about improving my own devices, I keep doing that. But that time, I had an Android phone. It was, I think, a Sony Xperia kind of. The one with a keyword that you can use the slide in and out. It was a really fun phone. So I took that phone. I did the same thing that I did with my previous phones, and I changed everything. But in the process, I discover there was this language from Google that they call HOLO Design. It was in the previous world before material design. And when I discovered that, I also discover that there was another world behind

that. Like there were actual people designing like a full system just for your device or your phone to be consistent.

After that, I took a whole trip understanding all those rules that they had for Holo color. By understanding those rules and also by remembering them, I learned how to design for Android in some ways. Like I just took those rules and I just applied to previous designs for other applications that I want it to be better, I wanted to improve. Always wanted to do that. So I just took all those two things, like wanting to improve things and also the knowledge of Holo. I emerged them. And I discovered there were people trying to design for Android. That was by clicking here and there in Internet. I think it was 99designs, and also tweeting about it. So it was a process coming back and forth. Not just doing stuff, but also sharing those things that I was learning to others.

But basically, that's the way I discovered interaction designer user interface design and all the things that are behind that. After that I just took a job, like freelance job first. And then I took – This is an interesting story that I'm not sure if you want to hear. But the way I get my first and only job as a designer that I still have was by tweeting.

[00:10:04] TG: I love that.

[00:10:04] OT: I tweet it to my actual associate director of the studio. He was just trying to look at people designing for Android. I want to take that for a second. Like, yeah, I took some advantage by taking some knowledge that not all the people wanting to do, because at the time, and actually, now, people want to design for Apple. And people want to design for all the shiny things that you can see. But I had an Android phone. I did the same thing, right? I just wanted to improve my own device. But by doing that, I get a superpower, right? Because not all the people was interested in that. And not only Android, but low-end devices. And so I was like those kind of rare designers over there that wanted to do that. Well, then I just discovered that I wasn't the only one. That there were a lot of designers out there. But I was the only one at least on the region that wanted to do that.

[00:11:05] TG: I think that is such a unique like experience that you've had, getting better at designing from creating ideal features that you want on your Android. And also, too, that led to

your first job experience of like you said, like a lot of new designers, they go towards the shiny things. And usually that's iOS systems, and not Android. But I think that's like a great opportunity that you like took for yourself to get better at becoming a better UI designer. And also, too, using some of that beginner like engineering background that you got. So you had a little bit of the understanding of like how it should function. I think it's great that you took that opportunity. And even though – Well, I know for you, it probably was the greatest, because you had interest in designing for Android. But specifically talking to listeners here, take opportunities even if it's not specifically a product that you love, because you can get experience from that.

[00:12:16] OT: Yeah. Design covers a lot of layers and things out there, that there's probably one part of it that you could like, but also you could take advantage of. For example, I'm seeing a lot of opportunity on accessibility right now. Like there's a rise on accessibility designers right now, because for so long, we ignore accessibility. And we just gave that power for most of the time to actual developers. There were rules for accessibility, the audio stuff, the feedback on vibration, and all that stuff. But as designers, we almost ignore it for so long that now we discover that it's something that we need to take a look. And there's actual people that is very, very into it.

[00:13:10] TG: I think it's wonderful that you've been given opportunities to advance in your career. And I think that's one of the biggest lesson listeners can learn from your experience, is how important it is to just use opportunities that you come across as your toolkit to advance. And I know, too, like off the podcast, we were talking about how you had some mentorship to along the way. In what ways like has mentorship helped us exceed the most? And how did you go about finding your mentors?

[00:13:42] OT: That is part of what you were saying about opportunities. By the way, I just can acknowledge that I had some privilege on my own. This is a hard topic, right. But as a white man on Mexico, I had some privilege that I'll acknowledge. Also from my earliest on my life, I get into English. That's something that 80% of the people in this country and probably in the whole continent, I'm talking about South America, and Mexico, and Central America, aren't familiar with. There is a lot of disadvantage there for Latin America. And in some ways that helped me connect to the right people.

And I don't want to say that you should learn English to do this, but it was an advantage for me. And when I took all those advantages – I don't want to say advantages. Those are privileges that I had, I would say. And I took them in a positive way and took the opportunities that I had by knocking some doors. When I was telling you the story behind my first job, it was basically that I follow some designers on Twitter and then starting conversations with them. And then I found these designers that was very into like improving design in the area, in Mexico, and I just tweet him. I took my opportunity. I tweet him, and he answer. People will always answer right? But he answered very fast. He was very interested in the way I get into design. That's how I found my first mentor, Luis Lopez, Lulo. He was starting a studio here in Mexico. And he was looking for designers with these superpowers that I was talking about.

So after I met him, I discovered that I found another mentor, because he was very friend. So a connection took me into more connections that helped me find the right mentor. At the time, I had two mentors, him and the other one that it's called Fabian Luna. Like two of the greatest designers in Mexico. Fabian is more into the back. He's not much in the spotlight, but he's always there. And he's always searching and designing like greatest products here in Mexico and for Latin America also. So yeah, those were my first mentors.

And the things that I found that connected me with them was the same thing that I was telling about trying to improve things. So the three of us always wanted to change and improve things. That is kind of the mentality from Silicon Valley. You always want to – Well, I'm sure if it's a commodity or not, but –

[00:16:30] TG: Yeah, yeah, Silicon Valley, New York, all the big cities.

[00:16:34] OT: Yeah, wanting to improve and take that into a business and all that stuff. So they taught me all these things that I didn't know about design. How that applies into business, and how that impact people. So the other part of design that I didn't know about before understanding that it wasn't just the UI layer, they taught me. It was fantastic to learn from them. It's been six crazy years. And actually, we will get to the part when we talk about outgrowing them, right? But we basically learn all that we could from each other. Like, in six years, they taught me how to design for people without not only seeing from the Android perspective. I learned to design for web, to design for the Apple ecosystem.

And also, the other part that it's very important, we call UX design, right? How do we focus on the user? How do we focus on people, the actual people that are using your products? So we learn a lot. And I think they learn from me too, because they were always doing the same stuff as I. Always asking questions. That's something that I learned from the beginning. Always ask questions. Don't hesitate. Just ask.

[00:17:58] TG: Man, six years is a long time. I love though that you were able to witness also that your mentors were growing based off of your own questions that you would ask them. And also, too, I believe like a great mentor is someone that will push you out of your comfort zone, which just seemed like they did that with you a lot with the different opportunities that you had, which you may have not necessarily had the previous experience for, but they knew you had the potential to do well in those areas.

But touching on outgrowing your mentors, how has the process been for you with finding a new mentor? And if someone is in your position that's a little bit more senior designer, what's something that they should do to find themselves a new mentor and maybe, I guess, go in the same route that you've done on Twitter?

[00:18:48] OT: Yeah, I think that change when your connections get bigger once you get experience. I now more designers, and more clients, and the clients help you find more people that work in these work. And you can take advantage of that. You can take more opportunities to work using that in your pocket, that tool in your pocket. But also, I was a little bit fortunate with the company that I work on. We haven't talked about it, right? Because I work for frog. In some ways you can say that that is my second company. But it's basically the first one, because we still are the same. Lulo is there. Fabian is there. Some other designers from the original team, because they bought us a year and a half ago. And so after they acquired the company, like 23 designers. That was the original name of the company, right? 23 Design. But we were also 23 kind of designers, 23, 25, 20 sometimes, but never went more than just that number.

When we get into frog, when we were acquired, the circle that surrounded me grew up by, I'm not sure, 50X. The number of designers working for frog is – I'm not sure actually about the number. But there are a lot of designers over there. So I took the opportunity from my company

to ask for a new mentor inside the company. But I also understood at some point that I needed not only a person that guide me inside the company, but also one that guide me outside it. So right now, I'm actually in the process of finding the one outside. But it's hard, because part of me is still this selfish designer, because I'm not sure if this is something that all designers get into. But at some point, you're always thinking, "I'm the best designer of the world."

[00:20:48] TG: Yes. Definitely, I struggle with that too.

[00:20:53] OT: Like the thing that happened to me is that I always find two or three things to learn from people, right? But you don't always find someone that you admire, right? And that's what I should be looking for. And there's a lot of designers out there that I admire, mostly from Silicon Valley. I'm actually having a rest from Silicon Valley, because I grew up with it. But I also discovered that that's not the only way to design. So I'm kind of hesitating. And it's also a privilege to have the opportunity to choose from different people to actually be a mentor for you.

[00:21:33] TG: I relate though, because as you become more senior, you build all these connections with people. So it's like you have access to a lot of people like as you grow in your career. But it's harder to find someone as a mentor, because I've been finding that people that I look at to as mentors now are like people that own businesses and things like that, because that's like the next level that I'm trying to go to with my like design education business that I'm doing. So it's like as far as like designer mentors, it's like I don't really aspire to be like an art director, a creative director, stuff like that. It's just kind of like being senior lead. Maybe I'll go into principal, but it's like I don't want to have to manage like 15 people. So depending on my guess what your goals are, as far as like how high up you want to go up to levels, that's when it becomes a bit more challenging of like, "Okay. Well, what do I want to do?" And that depends on who I want my mentor to be. And then also, too, you start to compare like your design work to theirs. It's like, "Hmm. Is mine better than –" You start to get in your head a little bit of like, "Oh, are they better than me?" But it's like as long as they're able to advise you in a way that is beneficial to your career, I think it's fine. And sometimes too, like I found that people that are just getting started are great to talk to, because the questions they ask me will really get me stumped sometimes. I'm like, "Wow! Like I got to find a better way to break this down so you can understand." Just like you have your own way of thinking and processing things. And when you've done it for so long, like you don't think you have to imagine it a different way. But for

someone that's just getting started, like for instance, I'm working with an intern right now. And we're doing a lot of design system work. And there was something that I wanted to explain to her to do. But I'm like, "Wow! I don't know how to explain that. That won't take like super long." And then it's like, "Okay, I got to figure out a way to do that so I don't end up doing all the work."

[00:23:47] OT: That's happened to me. I recently become a teacher at a university here in Mexico. I'm teaching the subject of user experience designs, right? And I have a group of five to 10 people, students that they don't even know what user experience design and user interface design is. They're on digital arts careers kind of. And yeah, like, actually, the thing that you're saying, it's one of the things that changed my mind on how to find a mentor, because I basically became a mentor for five kids. They are not kids anymore, but I like to call them like that.

[00:24:26] TG: Yeah, little kids.

[00:24:28] OT: Yeah, little ones. And they taught me how to rethink, as you said, how to teach what I know. And it was a very good challenge for me. And also changed my mind on how to find my mentor, because you're right, the way you want your career should be very connected to who you want to learn from, right?

[00:24:50] TG: Yes, I completely agree. You can learn from both sides, juniors and people same level as you, and seniors. It's just finding you relate with. It may not be like, "Oh, this is the person I go to for everything." But specifically on that, whatever it is you want to be challenged on. Like for people that are more senior than me, like directors and stuff, like I have no interest in doing that. But something that I like to have conversations with them about is like people management. Because, one day, like when I run my own business stuff, like I'm going to have people under me. So getting tips from them on like how they are able to manage staff and keep everyone happy and little things like that.

[00:25:39] OT: Yeah, and I don't actually want or like to say, well, that's the thing that you should do for the people that are listening. Because as we spoke at the beginning, you can do a lot of things in this field, right? So for some people, business path could work like us. That's something that we like, but others might want another thing. But I think the main ingredient for

finding the right mentor, it's always – I said at the beginning that we shouldn't said shoot, but now I'm saying shoot. Just understanding yourself, understanding what you want.

[00:26:19] TG: Yes. Yes. And also, too, being okay with that changing. I have some friends who have told me like, I'm never going to – I just want to stay a lead designer for the rest of my career, which is totally fine. But reevaluating like what you want every six months just because you choose like one route, life changes. You don't got to stick to one thing just because you said you were going to do it six months ago. Whatever makes you happy is the most important.

[00:26:49] OT: That's something that I learned from frog. When you are a senior designer, then you will have two ways of splitting your career. Like you split your career in two ways. One could be to become an associate designer and manage people. And the other one is to become a principal designer. And that path, it's more focused for people that want to become more into craft that don't want to manage. So there're these two paths.

I am a believer of not only there are those two paths, but there could be more than those two are those two, but those paths, in a way, simplifies all the other paths into two. So I didn't know that before we arrived into frog. I always thought that you needed to always manage people all the time in order to improve. There are some designers that just want to improve their skills. They want to be better our at illustration, or managing colors. And that's good too. That's the way you want to grow at that time of your life. Maybe someday you would want something different. And as you said, the probability that you will change your mind and will do that is high.
[BREAK]

[00:28:05] TG: Let's take a short break.

So one of the top questions I get about product design is how do I stay inspired? And the other day I decided to take inventory of what I'm doing routinely. The biggest thing that stood out to me was how I'm always investing time to understand products that are advancing in design and technology. Today's sponsor, Google Design, produces original content like articles and videos to show how Google's products come to life, and to inspire designers everywhere. On Google Design, you'll get to know how the products used by billions actually get made. And hear from desires behind some of your favorite products like Chrome, Google Maps, and Nest. Head over

to design.google to get inspired. That's design.google. Or follow them on Twitter and Instagram @GoogleDesign.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[00:29:01] TG: Okay. So I'm dying to know like what a typical day is like for you as an interaction designer or senior interaction designer at frog in Mexico City.

[00:29:12] OT: We're talking about growth, right? In some ways I want to parallel and to put myself in the past against me right now, and how I could be in the future, right? Because as designers, we always want to improve things, right? And that's basically the process. You look at what something has been done. And you look at how it's done right now and how you can improve it in the future. And that's the way I handle my day-to-day.

First, like the usual, you get up, take a shower, some coffee. I have these – Some people will tell that it's a bad habit of taking a look at Twitter.

[00:29:54] TG: I do this too.

[00:29:55] OT: But that's that works for me, right? I always look the things that are happening right now in our to understand what will happen in the future. And that's something that I like from the way I see the world, right? And that's the way I work in myself. I once try to get rid of it to be calm on the news and not always looking at what is happening right now. I know people that get better without that, but it didn't work for me.

[00:30:27] TG: It's hard.

[00:30:28] OT: Yeah, and also because I wanted to get rid of it. But I discovered that I don't need to get rid of it to stay calm, because there are also other ways to avoid bad news from Twitter, for example, because there's always bad news in the world, right?

[00:30:43] TG: Exactly.

[00:30:43] OT: But there are also some ways. Twitter and all the social media, it's a tool. If you take and improve those tools for yourself or for your advantage, you can take a lot of things right from them. And I'm talking about Twitter a lot, because I got my best friend from that social media. I got my first job from that social media platform. I got some good relations from that platform that I'm not seeing. Well, I'm seeing things that are bad from it. But I always look at the good things that I can take out from things. And some of them, like Facebook, for me, didn't work. So I'd got rid of it. I don't use it. There is nothing I can take from it. So yeah, just let it go. So if you try with those platforms, yeah, it's fine. But if it doesn't work, just get rid of it. So that's a way that I handle my social media that I don't think it relates to the topic of my typical day.

But then I get into meetings. I get into some design jams. Right now I'm working for a team of four designers. So we're doing some jams over Figma and Miro. We're using those tools for conceptualizing and taking ideas out. And then we do some Crazy Eights. It's funny, because we took that from design sprint tools from Google. We take those ideas out from our minds. And that's the way we do it, right? So in that way, we can see okay, "Bree is thinking about X stuff, and Lily is talking about other stuff. So why don't we just combine all these two ideas, or just get rid of this part?" That's the way we work.

So at some point, I might drown from meetings. So I just put some music and get heads, the ideas that I took with the team. Put my own ideas in a place, and then show it the next day to my coworkers. So that's basically how it works on the worksite. I also understood very recently about a year ago that I needed to rest for myself. That's another topic that I would like to talk about.

[00:33:01] TG: It's so important.

[00:33:03] OT: The first five years of my career was always working and working and working and never stopped. That was my mantra the first years. And it was good for me for those five years. But at some point, of course, my body was like, "Hey, dude, you cannot do this anymore. I can handle it." And the body always speak by itself when that thing happened. And I got the burnout, small one, against other ones that some of my peers that I know get some pretty heavy burnout. The burnout told me this is enough. And from that point, until now, I just rest after 5pm or 6pm, or sometimes seven or eight. But I don't used to work that long for the company. I also

do my podcasts and also do some writing stuff, and all of those things. But after that, after that time, I just cut. Because if I don't cut, at the next day I will be tired. And I won't be doing or be productive. I just discovered that very recently. But it works right now for me. Really good for me.

So I just take up my brain off for a second. I'm saying a second, but it's basically two hours of just doing I like to call these automations. I'm not sure if it's coming from a science stuff. But when your brain is used to something that it's automated, it's not thinking. It's not actually thinking. It's just doing stuff by automatic. So when you do those kinds of things, it's very easy to your brain to just rest the actual hard thinking. And for me, it's playing video games, or watching a movie, and that helps.

[00:34:57] TG: Yes, I completely agree. I call it existing. So whenever I say to people, I'm like, "I'm just going to exist right now." They know, "Okay. She's taking a break. No one to talk to her right now."

[00:35:09] OT: Great work.

[00:35:11] TG: Everyone needs that, like every designer, because there's just so much unsaid pressure to perform well. And especially, I think just starting out, like you're always thinking like, "Oh my God!" The imposter syndrome case, that I'm going to be cut, I'm going to be cut. I got to do well because they're paying me. And it's like, regardless, you're going to do well unless you're a lazy person, which I doubt you're not, right? So just releasing some of that pressure and just working the hours that you are paid to work and not going overtime all the time. It definitely pays off when you take rest for yourself, because you're able to just do a better job at work too, and you're less irritated from lack of sleep. Yeah, I'm glad that you're taking time for yourself and doing some self-care.

[00:36:05] OT: But I think it's important to acknowledge when you are not good, or it's not a good day, because we talk about the typical day, right? But that's not always the case. I will say that for the five days, I work at week. Three of them, it's very similar to what I described. But the other two, it's basically – And it's part of the process too to get up, walk a little bit. Sometimes things don't process this in the same way or the same speed. So you just have to – This is

something that I'm still hesitating, because I feel guilty sometimes of not doing actual work. You know what I mean? Like not actually moving and fixing –

[00:36:44] TG: Yes, I know what you mean. Mm-hmm.

[00:36:47] OT: Yeah. It's really difficult for when I get into those days that nothing flows in my Figma file. And it's hard. And sometimes I just change the tasks that I have on my list to something easier, easier in a way. Easier in the way of the automation thing that I talked about. For example, I know my brain is good at creating different versions of the same screen, right? That's not my work anymore. I used to do that when I was on level one interaction designer, or medium, a beginner, to take one screen and iterated like 10 times. When I'm saying iterating it, it's by moving just two, three big cells, changing some fonts, changing the button, the colors. And that's all. I'm not doing it with some strategy in my mind. I'm just doing it because of reasons. And those kinds of things don't always take me into a good place in terms of my actual job. But it helps me make the brain just start flowing by itself.

[00:37:58] TG: Yeah, I like to do that too. I do like little design challenges for myself. Usually like whenever I'll see like some cool design on Dribbble and I was like, "Ooh! I want to create something like this." So then I'll challenge myself to just create a screen. Because it's like sometimes you need to have design without restraints to get that creativity out that sometimes you are scared to do, I guess, because you have the technical restraints. But I feel like if you're constantly like pushing yourself to think outside of the box, and sometimes it brings up a cool feature idea for something that you're working on.

[00:38:43] OT: Another good one for that is taking out the screens. Like screens off and then just put a piece of paper out and start drawing. That's also good to just reevaluate what you're doing right now and you're stuck.

[00:39:01] TG: Alright. So I want to talk about your podcast. So listeners, Omar has a podcast called Diseño con Ñ. Please tell me if I butchered that or not?

[00:39:12] OT: Yeah. Yeah, you pronounced it good. Yeah. It's Diseño con Ñ. Yeah.

[00:39:14] TG: Okay. Awesome. I guess all those Spanish classes paid off. Anyways, it's a Latino design podcast. And I wanted to go into like what inspired you to create your podcast? And have you seen like many design Latino podcasts out there?

[00:39:31] OT: It gets back again to the things that I say about connecting with people. So after some tweets here and there, I get to know Paulo Garcia that is another designer from Mexico City. And he wanted to do a podcast. And I started one with my team when we were 23 Design. We started like a local kind of podcast between us just talking about the things that we wanted to talk or share to the people out there about the way we wanted to see, or the way we saw design back then. So I knew the tools. I knew how to do a podcast with some USB microphones here and there. So I wanted to do one by myself without my colleagues or my coworkers. And I discovered Paulo Garcia on Twitter too. And we were on the same page. We wanted to do the same thing. So we started that.

And the main reason we wanted to start it was that we discovered that there weren't a lot of podcasts in Spanish back in the day. It was three or four years ago. And there were some podcasts, right? But it was very difficult to find them. And at that time, Spotify haven't had podcast yet. The only thing that you will find is Castro, Apple Podcast. Google also didn't have their podcast platform too. So podcast wasn't a thing that was exploded, because podcast is something that came out like 20 years ago, I think, from Apple. So we wanted to do that, right? We wanted to talk about design in Spanish and to provide information to all these big designers that were starting in the field.

And in some ways that helped us understood that it wasn't an easy task to do, because there's a lot of information in English, right? But how to put it in Spanish was the real challenge. And three years later, it's still a challenge. All the good podcasts that I hear, that I like, for example, are very into interaction, like design details, and layout podcast. And what Paulo and I discovered a year and a half, that those were podcasts very similar to what we wanted to do, right? But that wasn't very inclusive from us, because it's the same pattern, two man talking about design. And that is – I will tell you, that is boring as hell. That is actually boring. Like for a lot of people is that another two guys talking about design. And now these guys are talking in Spanish. Right, that's cool. But that's not really entertaining, or I'm not learning a lot from them,

because I'm not engaged by their thoughts, because we were very biased. We were talking from our point of view, and of course, we had some bias towards how we saw design.

So in the last year, we got into more people on the podcast. Now we have Belu, Belén Ceballos, and Arturo Garcia, another male. But from getting more people into the podcast, for example, they are from Argentina and Colombia. So they have another point of view for design in Latin America, because their business is very different in Argentina, to Mexico or to Colombia, that get our point of view in to a wider range of people. And also we got a woman. And she speaks for all of them. But we always want to like improve that part of the podcast. I think that is something that you are doing right now in your podcast, for example.

[00:43:26] TG: Yeah, there's not a lot of black woman out here that have a design podcast. So it definitely feels like I'm a trailblazer in a way. But somebody's got to do it to inspire other people to hopefully do the same thing.

[00:43:42] OT: That's always the goal, right? To inspire other people and give them opportunities. When I was talking about the privilege I had, I always think about those things that helped me out in the field, right? And how I can give that same opportunities to others here in the area. In some way, sharing our knowledge on a podcast, I think it's a way to help them. But of course, there are other ways of giving that opportunity to others, but one step at a time.

[00:44:14] TG: Do you have any advice for our listeners who are interested in getting started in interaction design?

[00:44:21] OT: I think we gave a lot of advice in the process of speaking. But related to what we were talking, about taking advantage. Sometimes, like at the very beginning when I didn't know what to do for my life when I was very young, I was hesitating. One thing that always came to my mind was what I wanted to do when I was a child, right? I don't want to romanticize that thing. But in some ways, that is the essence of what I wanted to do since the beginning. When I was studying engineering, electronics engineering, the thing behind that decision was that I wanted to become an inventor, right? I wanted to invent things and improve people's life. The description always change, but the essence, it's always there.

So when I was trying to become a software engineer, it was the same thing. Taking technology and use it as an advantage for others to be better in their lives or to improve their lives. And it's the same thing that I discovered when I was starting into user interface design. And it's the same thing that I still want to do to take all these knowledge on technology and just translate all these and making all these tools better for the people that are using it right now. So yeah, the advice is find that essence from what you want to do for others and then use it for your own advantage.

[00:45:56] TG: So next, we'll get into listener questions. I asked on Instagram what questions do you have for an interaction designer at frog in Mexico City? And here's what some of you had to say. Gabby Lasala said, "I'm bilingual in English and Spanish, but I learned design in English. Who can I be learning from to balance out my perspective and expand my language of design into Spanish?"

[00:46:25] OT: Wow! Okay, so there's a whole community of Latin designers and also like share knowledge in Spanish and English. The main issue with both languages is that when you try to translate some of the words from English to Spanish, it doesn't work in some way. So you get into something that in Mexico, we call it pocho. Pocho means that you're talking in both languages at the same time. You're using words from both sides. And it's fine. In the end, you're trying to share knowledge, right? So it doesn't matter if you're using words from both languages. But if you are sharing and caring about that, it's always good to try to extrapolate the real meaning behind those words. And some people like colleagues and I, one designer that I to call is Gabrielle Valdivia. He's really awesome. He has been working in Google, Facebook, a lot of good places. And we had him in our podcast one time. He's always sharing in English and Spanish also. He's our good starting point.

[00:47:41] TG: So the next question is from Gie Balinoni. They asked, "Can he review my portfolio for me?" I don't know if you do portfolio reviews. But if you do, you can shout out your link so they can schedule one.

[00:47:59] OT: Of course, of course. Yeah, I don't usually do it. But I can start doing it. I do it for other designs that are closer to me, the ones that actually ask for it. But I don't publicly do it. And this is a good way to start actually. Yeah, just take opportunities, right?

[00:48:15] TG: Right. So that's all the listener questions for this week. As a reminder, you could be included in the next episode. Make sure to follow me on Instagram @uinarrative, and Twitter @uinarrativeco. I randomly asked questions that could be featured in an upcoming episode. Alright, so I like to end the show with my guests with a random question that's completely unrelated to everything we've talked about today. If you woke up as an animal tomorrow, what animal would you choose to be and why?

[00:48:46] OT: You said that it's not related, but I end thinking of that. That's why you should rest of your work sometimes, because if you're thinking about your work all the time, you get into these kind of answers. And that's boring when you're in a party. So I'm not good at parties too. And yeah, the answer is raccoons. The reason is they're always hacking their existing environments. They're hacked themselves when humans arrived into their environment. And they did it so well that they get into trouble, because there are a lot of raccoons in some series. Yeah, I love hacking my own life to improve it. So I feel very as a raccoon. I hope I will walk as a raccoon one day.

[00:49:37] TG: Let me see. For me, I will be a duck.

[00:49:42] TG: A duck?

[00:49:42] OT: Yeah. I like them because they kind of live life carefree in a way. In the water, they clack all day, and they're cute. And they're always traveling. They migrate with the weather.

[00:49:57] OT: Good at swim. Good at flying. Good at – Well, not good at walking, but they are good at two or three things, right.

[00:50:06] TG: Yeah. Where can we connect with you online, Omar?

[00:50:09] OT: You can basically find me on all the social media except Facebook. But I have Instagram, so you can find me there at Omar Tosca. Also you can take a look at omartosca.com. I'm actually testing a little bit with this new tool that it's called Polywork, I think. If you want some invites for that too, it's a really good way to overcome LinkedIn, where you can

just pull that timeline of your own career and some text here and there. It's a really good platform to create a professional profile to share with others.

[00:50:46] TG: As always, all the links and everything we've talked about today will be in the show notes. If you have any questions or comments about today's episode, make sure to tag Omar on Twitter, or UI Narrative @uinarrativeco, or on Instagram. And also don't forget to share this episode with anyone you think would benefit from it.

I appreciate you so much, Omar, for coming on the podcast. First international guest from Mexico. I don't know if I said that right. But I'm trying. Thanks so much.

[00:51:18] OT: Thanks to you, Tolu. It was a really good conversation.

[OUTRO]

[00:51:24] TG: Thank you for listening to the UI Narrative podcast. If you like what you hear, make sure to show this podcast some love by commenting and subscribing to where you listen. You can find me on Instagram and Facebook @uinarrative, or twitter @uinarrativeco. I also respond to emails at hello@uinarrative.com. Talk to you later. Bye.

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