Ioanna Gkoura

Head of Tech & Product | Engineering & Product Leadership

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PROFILE

Engineering and product leader accountable for a full Tech & Product function. Work reaches me as a business target: I define the strategy and the specification to meet it, build the teams that can deliver it, and own the result rather than the output. Fourteen years in web engineering behind that — eleven of them in full-time roles, three as Tech Lead — and still close enough to the code, the pipeline and the data to make technical calls myself instead of waiting for them to be translated.

SCOPE OF CURRENT ROLE

Organisation: 25 people — four development teams under their own tech leads, an in-house DevOps team, IT support, QA, Product Management (Product Manager and three Product Owners) and Product Design. Eight further roles in the active hiring plan.

Footprint & reporting: Greece, Cyprus and Georgia offices. Reporting to the Group CTO.

Products & platforms: Custom-built in house on PHP frameworks (Laravel, CodeIgniter) rather than off-the-shelf platforms: sports betting and iGaming portals, four casino brands, and a subscription platform (Betcrew). Supporting services include SportsDataHub, which normalises sports feed data and serves it to the products, plus a Telegram bot and internal reporting tooling. WordPress is used only where a marketing site is all a property needs.

Integrations: Sports feed providers and betting operator feeds with continuous data ingestion into live products, plus payment gateway and ERP integrations over REST and SOAP.

Engineering environment: Dockerised applications on AWS with in-house staging and production infrastructure, CI/CD in Azure DevOps, observability in Grafana and Loki. Scrum with two-week sprints.

EXPERIENCE

Head of Tech & Product

03/2025 – Present

Digital Winners — Athens, Greece · title: Software Delivery Manager · reporting to the Group CTO

Responsibilities

- **Business need to product —** translate stakeholder targets into technical direction and written specification, decide sequencing and trade-offs, and remain accountable for the delivered product and the business result.
- **Organisation and people —** department structure and headcount plan, creation of new teams and functions, hiring across engineering, product and design, and performance evaluation and development through the tech leads.
- **Delivery and quality —** end-to-end delivery across the group's product portfolio, the department's way of working, the quality gates and release process, and ownership of production incidents.
- **Governance and reporting —** reporting to the Group CTO and management on progress, delivery risk, quality, and time and cost allocation per developer, project and epic.
- **Technical direction —** platform and architecture decisions taken with the tech leads and DevOps, how AI is adopted across the teams, and technical SEO for the group's portals.

Selected achievements

- Scaled the function from six developers with no defined process to a 25-person department — creating the Product Owner and Product Design functions from scratch and standing up additional development teams under their own leads, with engineering distributed across three countries.
- Authored the operating model the whole department now runs on: Jira lifecycle and transition rules, refinement and estimation standards, ceremony calendar, Definition of Ready and Done, release and hotfix process with C1–C4 criticality levels and SLAs, git branching strategy, and a capacity model that protects 20% of each developer's sprint for support and 10% for technical improvement.
- Defined the delivery metrics the department is steered by — sprint commitment accuracy, velocity stability, defect escape rate, planned versus unplanned work, and anonymous team pulse checks — framed deliberately as forecasting and team-health signals rather than individual performance scores.
- Introduced a six-stage quality-gate framework from intake to production after a failed relaunch, with each gate backed by an automated check rather than a form: CI/CD standardisation in Azure DevOps, static analysis and security scanning in-pipeline, environment approvals, post-deploy monitoring with rollback, and alerting defined as code.

- Embedded AI into the department's ways of working rather than leaving it to individual initiative — AI-assisted code review inside the review step, and a design system encoded for LLM use so Product Design can turn a concept into a working prototype in hours. I set the direction and the standards: where AI is used, where it is not, and what has to be verified before anything ships.
- Specified and shipped Tech Insights, the internal Laravel application the department now reports from — time and cost allocation per developer, project and epic, a KPI dashboard across six roles fed by the Adadot and Jira APIs, and automated weekly snapshots. Specification, KPI definitions and data model mine; built hands-on with Claude Code.
- Led root-cause analysis on production incidents — including forms and uploads failing simultaneously across two unrelated stacks with no code change, isolated to shared infrastructure and closed with preventive alerting — and rebuilt the technical hiring loop, replacing an assessment with no discriminative value with structured live interviews and documented recommendations.

Tech Lead
11/2021 – 02/2025

Sleed — Athens, Greece

- Led cross-functional front-end and back-end teams delivering client web and e-commerce projects end to end, from requirements to release, on fixed budgets and tight deadlines.
- Established the team's engineering standards — coding standards, code review practice, version-control workflow and the technical documentation that made handovers and long-term maintenance possible.
- Designed and delivered scalable PHP applications, ERP–e-commerce integrations, payment gateways and REST/SOAP services; cut deployment time through release automation and reduced downtime with proactive monitoring.
- Owned requirements, risk and contingency planning with product managers, reported to stakeholders, and mentored junior and mid-level developers.

Web Developer / Web Consultant
06/2018 – 11/2021

Sleed — Athens, Greece

- Built custom web applications and e-commerce solutions on PrestaShop and WordPress and integrated them with client ERP systems.
- Migrated live websites to new platforms without loss of search visibility, improved performance through technical SEO, and engineered RESTful services over dynamic datasets.
- Ran several client projects in parallel, translating client requirements into development plans and prioritising site-audit findings by impact.

Web Developer
09/2015 – 06/2018

Just In Time — Athens, Greece

- Custom web applications, WordPress websites and optimised landing pages in HTML/CSS, with application optimisation for speed, scalability and security across several parallel projects.

EARLIER EXPERIENCE

- Freelance Web Developer, 2012 – 2025 — custom web applications, websites and landing pages for direct clients, in parallel with full-time roles.
- System Administrator Intern, Technological Educational Institute of Piraeus, 2014 — Linux server monitoring and hardening, firewall rules and access controls, log audits, automation scripts, disaster-recovery setup.

EDUCATION

AI Product Management — certification
01/2025

AI Product Management 101, Dr. Marily Nika — GenAI Product Lead at Google, ex-Meta

Executive Programme in Business Administration (part-time)
2024

Athens University of Economics and Business — business economics, leadership, marketing, HR, technology

BSc Computer Systems Engineering
2016

Piraeus University of Applied Sciences (now University of West Attica) — Athens, Greece

SKILLS & TOOLS

Leadership: Organisation design and team building · managing through team leads · hiring and performance evaluation · stakeholder management to C-level · specification and requirements definition · prioritisation and trade-off decisions · roadmap ownership · budget and cost reporting · mentoring and capability development

Delivery & quality: Scrum with two-week sprints · quality-gate frameworks (Definition of Ready / Definition of Done / release criteria) · migration and relaunch checklists · incident management, root-cause analysis and blameless post-mortems · risk identification and contingency planning · delivery metrics and department reporting · documentation standards · Jira, Confluence, Adadot

Engineering: PHP — Laravel, Symfony, CakePHP, CodeIgniter · MySQL / MariaDB · JavaScript, jQuery · REST and SOAP integrations · ERP and payment gateway integrations · Docker · Linux CLI and Bash · Nginx, Apache · WordPress, PrestaShop

Platforms & CI/CD: AWS with on-premise staging and production · Azure DevOps — pipeline design, environments, approvals, rollback · GitHub · Grafana / Loki · SonarQube, Semgrep

Technical SEO: Domain migrations and redirect mapping · crawl and index management · TTFB and caching · Search Console diagnostics · internal linking and cannibalisation · structured data

AI in practice: Setting department-level direction for AI adoption — AI-assisted code review, a design system encoded for LLM use for rapid prototyping, technical documentation, second-opinion root-cause analysis and log triage · Claude Code for building internal tooling end to end, from specification and data model to implementation · verification standards before anything reaches production

Ways of working: Transparent with teams and management about challenges, failures and successes · blameless on incidents, strict on follow-through · prioritisation under pressure without dropping quality · analytical and detail-oriented · ownership from decision to result · knowledge sharing as default

Languages: Greek — native speaker · English — C1, advanced