Jacob McDaniel

Staff Product Design Engineer

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Summary

I've designed B2B platforms for 18 years, and for the last 18 months I've built them too. Six products are live in production code across web, PWA, iOS, and Android, each with its own MCP server so AI agents can work alongside the people using it. Before going hands-on, I led a 17-person design team at Charles River Labs and turned Vrbo's ignored rates engine into $4M a week in added bookings.

Experience

Senior Product Designer

Sep 2025 to Present

Netspend (Ouro), Austin, TX

- Lead design for onboarding and account activation in a regulated consumer fintech product, with every experiment tied to a metric PM, Engineering, and Analytics track together.
- Brought AI tools into the team's daily work for discovery, prototyping, and asset prep.
- Run Design Ops and AI-in-UX workshops that give designers a shared, AI-assisted workflow.
- Use product data and research to rework the mobile and web activation flows.

Founder and Principal Product Design Engineer

Apr 2010 to Present

&Pixels and &Pixels Labs, Remote

The design and engineering studio I've run since 2010. Before building the &Pixels Labs products, I led design on 20+ client mobile apps.

- Built six products in production on Next.js, React Native, Supabase, and Vercel, with one token system shared from Figma to code. ToDidIt, Sousnap, and Bugggy ship on web, PWA, iOS, and Android. Revlr.ai ships on web and PWA.
- Built MCP servers and APIs for ToDidIt, Revlr, Bugggy, andpixels.com, and VetDiscounts, so AI agents can read and act on the same data people see in each app.
- Designed the shared platform layer every product runs on, including trackers, tasks, reporting, integrations, and AI-generated reports.
- Launched Revlr.ai in 10 days. Took ToDidIt from brand to beta in 4.5 months.
- Write the prompts and model instructions behind each AI feature, balancing accuracy and speed to keep AI margins above 90%.

Founder and Executive Director

Feb 2026 to Present

VetDiscounts.org, Austin, TX

- Founded a 501(c)(3) that gives veterans, military families, first responders, and healthcare workers free, verified access to savings and benefits.
- Set the product strategy, UX, and brand, then built the platform in Next.js and React with its own MCP and API layer.
- Ground the roadmap in generative and evaluative research with the people it serves.
- Run governance, sponsorships, and partnerships. Now building the grant program ahead of our first applications.

Director of Product Design

May 2021 to Sep 2024

Charles River Laboratories, Remote

- Built and led a team of 17 designers with 90% retention.
- Built Helios, the design system behind 24+ internal platforms. Design inconsistencies dropped 80% and engineering time dropped 25%.
- Set research and accessibility standards for a regulated lab environment. Support volume fell 30%.
- Set the portfolio roadmap with executive leadership, tying design metrics to commercial and adoption goals.

Design Lead, B2B SaaS

Mar 2018 to May 2021

Vrbo by Expedia Group, Austin, TX

- Led the end-to-end redesign of Escapia, Vrbo's platform for vacation rental property managers. User satisfaction rose 65% in two years.
- Redesigned Rates Manager, a tool sales and owners had written off. Beta customers added $4M a week in bookings.
- Ran interviews and global usability studies that cut onboarding time by 35%.
- Worked inside a 125+ person agile org and brought Customer Success insights straight into the roadmap.

Combat Infantry Sergeant

May 2002 to May 2008

U.S. Army, Kansas Army National Guard, Kansas and overseas

- Led a four-person infantry squad through a 2005 to 2006 combat deployment, owning logistics, operational protocol, and team safety.
- Awarded the Army Commendation Medal for crisis leadership and tactical execution.

Skills

AI and agentic design	MCP server and tool design, agent workflows, AI-generated reporting, prompt and model instruction frameworks
Platform and B2B SaaS	Data-layer UX, multi-entity workflows, trackers and task systems, reporting, integrations, 0 to 1 product strategy, regulated domains
Design engineering	Next.js, React, React Native, PWAs, Supabase, Vercel, GitHub, design tokens, code-based design systems
Craft and tools	Figma, Claude, Cursor, v0, Lovable, rapid prototyping, interaction design, information architecture, accessibility
Research	Generative and evaluative research, interviews, usability testing, synthesis, Dovetail, UserTesting
Leadership	Hiring, mentorship, Design Ops, AI-in-UX workshops, alignment across PM, Engineering, and GTM

Education

Johnson County Community College

2002 to 2008

Associate's Degree, Graphic and Web Design

Completed while serving in the Kansas Army National Guard