

JACOB MCDANIEL

Product Design Leader | AI-native builder, Product Design, UX

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SUMMARY

Product Design Leader with 18+ years scaling design teams and systems across B2B SaaS, marketplaces, agtech, B2C, and fintech. I help organizations bridge strategy and execution; lead distributed teams of 17+, ship enterprise design systems across 24+ platforms, and pioneer AI-native workflows that cut design cycles 65% while maintaining craft. Proven record turning underutilized features into \$4M/week revenue drivers and boosting enterprise CSAT 65% through rigorous user research and cross-functional alignment.

EXPERIENCE

[VetDiscounts.org](#) – Founder & Executive Director – Austin, TX

Feb 2026 – Present

- Founded a 501(c)(3) marketplace connecting service members with national and local brands; defined the complete product strategy, UX, and brand identity from zero to launch.
- Established and designed charitable service programs within the platform, expanding the organization's social impact footprint while driving community value.
- Conducted generative and evaluative research to ground the platform roadmap in real user behavior, translating service member motivations into intuitive digital flows.
- Architected and coded the responsive web platform in Next.js and React using AI-native workflows (Cursor, Claude); shipped production-grade UI directly from Figma without handoff lag.
- Orchestrated organizational governance and market outreach; next is securing key corporate sponsorships and grant partnerships to fund the platform's high-growth launch strategy.

[Netspend](#) – Sr. Product Designer, Design Systems – Austin, TX

Sep 2025 – Present

- Drive end-to-end design for consumer fintech onboarding and activation flows; partnered with PM, Engineering, and Data Science to tie design experiments directly to conversion rate and retention KPIs.
- Integrated AI-native tools (Claude, Gemini, Figma AI) into discovery, prototyping, and asset prep, cutting design cycle time by 65% and establishing team rituals around AI-assisted workflows.
- Led Design Ops and ran AI in UX workshops for 12 designers, marketers, brand, and front-end devs; standardized AI-assisted workflows (prompt libraries, Figma plugins) and evangelized adoption across the org.
- Iterate on mobile and web interaction patterns using quantitative insights and user research, eliminating activation friction and improving retention by 35%.

[&Pixels](#) – Founder, Chief Pixelator, & Principal Product Designer – Remote

Apr 2010 – Present

- Lead end-to-end product strategy and AI-native design architecture for the &Pixels Labs suite ([Revlr](#), [ToDidIt](#)), managing cross-functional collaboration between engineers, PMs, and partner agencies from conception to **launch**.
- Led end-to-end design for 20+ web and mobile apps using cross-platform design systems; validated user flows early to minimize engineering risk and shipped production-ready assets that improved retention by ~42%.
- Designed and built a custom client portal for managing proposals, documentation/contracts, onboarding, media, team members, and real-time project tracking for ~15 active client brands.
- Rearchitected &Pixels' agency ecosystem, scaling delivery models and expanding co-development networks through the &Co collaborative network.

Thirsty, Indeed – Founding Product Designer – Remote

May 2021 – Present

- Design, build, and launch a Shopify-powered e-commerce marketplace platform utilizing conversion-optimized UX architecture and cross-platform design principles, driving a 35% increase in average order value (AOV).
- Design dynamic consumer interfaces, storefront components, and custom product configuration features built specifically to balance high-intent buyer journeys with seller-facing ease of use.
- Manage the complete product lifecycle from prototype to digital launch, designing scalable catalog systems and interaction loops that grew repeat customer rates by 25% within 12 months.

Charles River Labs – Director of Product Design – Remote

May 2021 – Sep 2024

- Built, mentored, and scaled a distributed team of 17 multidisciplinary product designers, achieving a 90% retention rate while actively coaching individual contributors into structured leadership roles.
- Architected an enterprise design system in Figma with a component library spanning 24+ web and mobile platforms; reduced design inconsistencies by 80% and cut engineering execution time by 25%.
- Championed generative research practices and accessibility (WCAG) compliance standards, integrating user testing loops into agile release cycles to lower customer support volume by 30%.
- Partnered with executive leadership to prioritize the product roadmap, aligning design metrics with commercial objectives and adoption goals.

Escapia & Vrbo by Expedia Group – Design Lead (B2B SaaS Enterprise Software) – Austin, TX

Mar 2018 – May 2021

- Led the UX transformation of Escapia, Vrbo's B2B SaaS platform for property managers; deployed cross-platform design strategies to boost CSAT by 65% in two years.
- Transformed an underutilized rates engine into a high-yield product generating \$4M/week in added bookings for beta customers; turned a feature ignored by sales into a revenue driver for vacation rental owners.
- Conducted structured user interviews and global usability studies, using qualitative evidence to eliminate complex operational friction points and compress onboarding time by 35%.
- Embedded design into an agile org of 125+ cross-functional professionals; maintained visual craft, interaction design precision, and delivery velocity across sprint cycles.
- Closed feedback loops between Customer Success and Product Teams; used support insights to prioritize retention features that reduced churn by 60%.

U.S. Army – Combat Infantry Sergeant – USA & abroad

May 2002 – May 2008

- Led a 4-person infantry squad during combat deployments, managing mission-critical logistics, operational protocols, and team safety in high-pressure, ambiguous environments.
- Awarded the Army Commendation Medal for exceptional crisis leadership, tactical execution, and maintaining decisive operational alignment under duress.
- Translated battlefield strategies into structured teamwork and accountability, significantly enhancing unit performance and mission success.

SKILLS

Design & Strategy: Product Design, UX Design, UI, Interaction Design, Design Thinking, Design Systems, Information Architecture, B2B SaaS, Enterprise SaaS, Product Roadmap, Conversion Rate Optimization, CSAT, Adoption Rate

Tools & Platforms: Figma, Abstract, Component Library, React, CSS, AI-Powered Design Tools (Claude, Cursor, Gemini), Collaboration Tools (Asana, Jira, Azure DevOps, Dovetail)

Research & Testing: Generative & Evaluative Research, A/B Testing, User Testing, Usability Studies, Quantitative & Qualitative Analysis, Rapid Prototyping, Wireframing

Leadership & Process: Cross-Functional Collaboration, Agile, Stakeholder Communication, Mentorship, Hiring, Design Recruiting, Product Lifecycle Management

EDUCATION

Johnson County Community College – Associate's Degree, Graphic & Web Design