Akta Paneri

Director of Design

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Design leader with 15+ years in enterprise software, most of it spent making complicated products feel obvious. I set design direction, build teams, and sit in the room where roadmap decisions get made. I also still design. I was a developer before I was a designer, so I prototype in code, read the codebase, and argue about implementation with engineers rather than throwing specs over a wall. Across three companies my work has moved the numbers that matter: a $10M ARR milestone at Scrut Automation, $1M ARR in year one at Spendflo, and a 20 percent retention lift for the Times of India. Case studies at aktapaneri.com, written as decision narratives: the Scrut platform redesign, the AI capability ladder, and the notification and task centre. The site is hand-built in HTML and CSS.

CORE SKILLS

Design Leadership: design vision and strategy, multi-year product direction, design org building, hiring and career paths, mentorship, design critique, stakeholder management, executive communication, cross-functional collaboration, operating model design, roadmap prioritisation.

User Research: user interviews, usability testing, heuristic evaluation, journey mapping, competitive and category research, research synthesis, assumption mapping, product analytics, data-informed decision making.

Product Design: interaction design, information architecture, workflow design, data visualisation, dashboard design, enterprise SaaS, B2B platforms, wireframing, prototyping, visual and UI design, accessibility (WCAG), responsive and mobile design.

Design Systems: design system architecture, design tokens, theming, component libraries, documentation, governance, design-to-development handoff.

Technical: HTML, CSS, JavaScript, front-end prototyping, production code contributions, Figma, Sketch, design and engineering tooling.

Domains: governance risk and compliance (GRC), audit and evidence workflows, security and information security, procurement and spend management, finance workflows, enterprise data platforms.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director of Design

Scrut Automation | Bangalore, India | Jul 2026 - Present

- Sole design leader reporting to the CEO and CTO. Lead a team of 8 designers and strategists across a multi-product compliance platform used by CISOs, auditors, and compliance owners, and co-own product decisions with Product and Business.
- **Set the design direction for the whole platform** and turned it into a prioritised agenda the company funded. Ran category research across Vanta, Drata, Secureframe, Sprinto, Hyperproof, and AuditBoard to turn UX gaps into roadmap bets, and made the case to founders and executive leadership.
- **Built the team and the standards together.** Hired across experience levels, built career paths, and split design critique into craft and strategy tracks. Redesigned the operating model around designer and engineer pods with floating product managers.
- **Closed the gap between design and shipped code.** Designers now make production front-end changes themselves, so small UX fixes stop queuing behind engineering and prototypes get tested in the real product.
- **Connected design to business outcomes.** Activation, engagement, and trust work contributed to the company crossing $10M ARR.

Head of Design

Scrut Automation | Bangalore, India | Apr 2024 - Jun 2026

- **Made a dense domain legible.** Designed control status models, evidence workflows, permissions, multi-entity architecture, and a unified notification and task centre that turns a flood of operational signals into a short list of what to do next.
- **Ran research that changed decisions.** Interviews with CISOs, auditors, and compliance owners reshaped roadmap priorities. Introduced a PRD readiness checklist, assumption mapping, and a shared decision log with Product, so the team could tell what was known from what was being guessed.
- **Architected Nucleus, the company design system,** coupled to code with design tokens, theming, and accessibility governance. Cut design-to-development handoff time by 33 percent while leaving product teams room to solve new problems.
- Promoted to Director of Design in July 2026.

Head of Design, Founding Designer

Spendflo | Bangalore, India | Feb 2022 - Mar 2024

- First design hire. Built the design function from nothing for a data-heavy procurement and spend management platform serving buyers, approvers, finance leaders, and vendors.
- **Defined the UX strategy and product vision from zero to one** and designed most of it personally: approval workflows, spend dashboards, and automated procurement triggers that carried the company to $1M ARR in its first year.
- **Turned spend data into decisions.** Designed dashboards and visualisations that let finance leaders see renewals, usage, and savings at a glance instead of in a spreadsheet.
- **Hired and grew the design team from zero to three,** brought research and analytics into discovery, and set up design operations that lifted delivery velocity by 150 percent without dropping quality.

Senior Product / UX Designer

The Geek's Lab | Delhi, India | Jan 2020 - Jan 2022

- **Led UX for vConfex (Times of India),** lifting user retention by 20 percent through a research-driven redesign of complex, multi-stakeholder workflows.
- **Introduced rapid prototyping and usability testing** that cut validation cycles by 25 percent, and governed design systems that improved consistency across products by 35 percent.
- Designed data-rich dashboards and scalable interface patterns across web and mobile for enterprise SaaS and data platform clients.

Senior UX Designer

Dvait Studio | India | Dec 2012 - Dec 2019

- **Designed across 100+ products,** B2B operational workflows and consumer products alike, covering user research, journey mapping, wireframes, prototypes, and hands-on collaboration with engineers on web and mobile.
- Promoted from UX Designer to Senior UX Designer.

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

- **$10M ARR milestone** at Scrut Automation, supported by design-led activation, engagement, and trust improvements.
- **$1M ARR in year one** at Spendflo, from zero to one product design and UX strategy.
- **20 percent retention lift** from a research-driven redesign for the Times of India.
- **33 percent faster design-to-development handoff** through the Nucleus design system.
- **150 percent delivery velocity increase** from design operations at Spendflo.
- **First Prize, Xiaomi India Theme Contest,** a design reaching more than 10 million users. **Guest Faculty,** School of Accelerated Learning, 2021 to 2022.

EDUCATION

Post Graduate Certificate in Visual Design and User Experience | Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad

Bachelor of Computer Programming | Gujarat University