

Akshay Desai

PRINCIPAL PRODUCT DESIGNER & PRODUCT DESIGN LEADER

0→1 Product Development · AI-Native Design · Complex Platforms · Enterprise SaaS

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EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Hands-on principal-level product designer and design leader with 10+ years spanning frontend engineering, full-stack development, product design, and design leadership. Joined ACTO as its first employee and helped take the company and platform from 0→1, progressing from developer to Head of Product Design while remaining deeply involved in every production release. Converts ambiguous founder, market, and stakeholder direction into validated product strategy, system architecture, workflows, high-fidelity UI, and shipped software. Experienced in AI-native design workflows using Claude Design, Figma Make, and production-connected design systems to reduce design cycles from weeks to days. Helped support ACTO's growth from 2 to 70+ clients, approximately \$500K to \$11.5M in revenue, and 50,000+ users.

SELECTED IMPACT

70+ CLIENTS	\$11.5M REVENUE	50,000+ USERS	8–10 MAJOR LAUNCHES / YR
100+ ENHANCEMENTS / YR	12 DESIGNERS LED	300 SCREENS IN 4 MONTHS	40 ENGINEERS PARTNERED

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Head of Product Design — ACTO Technologies Inc., Toronto, ON

2021 – PRESENT

- Own the design direction for every ACTO production release, translating inputs from founders, product, marketing, customers, and other stakeholders into product concepts, validated workflows, production-ready interfaces, and coordinated delivery with PM and engineering teams.
- Serve as a trusted product advisor to founders and senior leaders, challenging weak assumptions, reshaping scope, and influencing which opportunities move forward based on customer value, usability, technical feasibility, and platform strategy.
- Personally lead approximately 8–10 major product launches and 100+ enhancements annually across ACTO's platform, including Learn, Events, CMS, Coaching, Certifications, CxZone AI Role-Play, analytics, and Adaptive Learning.
- Conceived and led ACTO's Adaptive Learning strategy, consolidating a separate Journeys experience into Launchpad and unifying learning, coaching, certification, AI role-play, reminders, access controls, deployment logic, and performance insights into one adaptive workflow.
- Conducted discovery with 5–6 major enterprise clients to understand Launchpad and Journeys usage, tested the AI-driven direction through wireframes, and incorporated feedback into nuanced platform capabilities before delivery.
- Designed Adaptive Learning end to end using Claude Design, grounding the workflow in ACTO's design system and product patterns; reduced complex design cycles from weeks to days while improving visual consistency, interaction quality, and production readiness.

- Built and led a 12-person design organization of 6 UX and 6 UI designers; directed the creation of approximately 300 wireframe screens in four months for ACTO's 2022 platform revamp.
- Led ACTO's transformation from a generic white-label learning product into a purpose-built life-sciences platform, redefining UX, terminology, content, workflows, and visual language around pharmaceutical field teams.
- Helped support growth from approximately 25 to 70+ clients after the repositioning, with 50,000+ users and multiple enterprise deployments exceeding 3,000 users.
- Lead a production-connected design system spanning accessibility, responsive behaviour, reusable components, design tokens, documentation, governance, and page-level patterns, enabling faster and more consistent frontend delivery.
- Partner closely with an engineering organization of approximately 40 people, leveraging prior development experience to resolve architectural constraints, clarify edge cases, improve feasibility, and maintain design quality through implementation.

Senior Product Designer — ACTO Technologies Inc.

2019 – 2021

- Transitioned formally from engineering into product design after serving as the primary owner of ACTO's UX and UI from the company's earliest stage.
- Led end-to-end design across enterprise learning, content, events, deployment, assignment, coaching, certification, administration, reporting, and multi-persona workflows.
- Validated workflows directly with customers and converted operational needs into scalable product models, including certification history, repeated attempts, manager controls, versioning, redeployment, due-date changes, and completion preservation.

Senior Full-Stack Developer — ACTO Technologies Inc.

2016 – 2019

- Built core product experiences across frontend and backend while independently owning interface design, interaction behaviour, and implementation quality during ACTO's early growth stage.
- Established a strong bridge between product intent and engineering execution, shaping technical decisions with direct awareness of user workflows and usability.

Frontend Developer — First Employee — ACTO Technologies Inc.

DEC 2015 – 2016

- Joined as ACTO's first employee when the company served 2 clients and generated approximately \$500K in revenue; helped build the initial product from 0→1 and independently designed and coded its frontend experience.

Frontend Developer — McCann, Toronto, ON

2015

- Designed and developed responsive digital experiences for agency and client initiatives, collaborating with creative and technical teams to translate concepts into polished frontend execution.

SIGNATURE PRODUCT LEADERSHIP

- **Adaptive Learning.** Original product concept and end-to-end ownership spanning research, product architecture, journey mapping, system flows, wireframes, prototypes, high-fidelity UI, AI-assisted design, customer validation, and delivery.
- **AI Role-Play and Certification.** Designed practice, evaluation, certification, attempt history, manager controls, competency reporting, and AI-powered coaching experiences for life-sciences field teams.
- **Platform Repositioning.** Reframed ACTO around the language, workflows, governance, and operational realities of life sciences, supporting stronger product-market fit and enterprise adoption.

- **Enterprise Readiness.** Shaped onboarding, permissions, access management, SSO, deployment, integrations, and data flows, including Veeva, Salesforce, Okta, and client-specific systems.

CORE CAPABILITIES

0→1 Product Strategy & Execution	Principal-Level Interaction Design	Complex Platform Architecture
AI-Native Product Design	Customer Discovery & Validation	Executive & Stakeholder Influence
Design Systems & Governance	Enterprise SaaS & Life Sciences	Engineering Collaboration & Delivery

TOOLS & METHODS

Figma · Figma Make · Claude Design · AI-assisted prototyping · Wireframing · High-fidelity UI · Design systems · Responsive design · Accessibility · Journey mapping · Information architecture · Customer interviews · Usability validation · Product specifications · Frontend engineering · Full-stack development · Agile product delivery

EDUCATION

Post-graduate Certificate, Web Development — Humber College, Toronto, ON	2014 – 2015
Bachelor of Computer Application (BCA) — YCMOU, Mumbai, India	2011 – 2013

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Canadian citizen · Based in Toronto, Ontario
Open to Principal Product Designer, Staff Product Designer, Director of Product Design, and Head of Product Design opportunities.