

Chris Strahl: Hi, and welcome to the Design Systems Podcast. This podcast is about the place where design and development overlap. We talk with experts to get their point of view about trends and design, code and how it relates to the world around us. As always, this podcast is brought to you by Knapsack. Check us out at knapsack.cloud. If you want to get in touch with the show, ask some questions, or generally tell us what you think, go ahead and tweet us at @TheDSPod. We'd love to hear from you.

Hey everybody. Welcome to the Design Systems Podcast. I'm your host, Chris Strahl. I'm here today with Nick Hahn. Nick, welcome to the program. It's good to see you.

Nick Hahn: Hey, thanks man.

Chris Strahl: So gosh, we've known each other now six years? Something like that.

Nick Hahn: Yeah.

Chris Strahl: 2017. 2016. I met when you were at InVision, but you've actually had sort of assorted history in the area of design and engineering. You're somewhat of a six man when it comes to design systems and that you kind of do it all. You were at Meta for a little while, you were at IBM, you had a bunch of stuff in agency life. Take me through your experience a little bit and just kind of let folks get to know you for a minute.

Nick Hahn: Yeah, thanks. I got drawn into design because I love connecting people and technology and it just seemed like the natural fit and ended up in the agency world in the early days of the Web 2.0 stuff, all of the app generation. And really the birth of UX was something that I was part of. So building teams and creating these systems around how we do design has been something that I've just been lucky to be part of for the last 20 years.

Chris Strahl: So it's given you an opportunity to see design and engineering from a lot of angles. You have, I think a knack I would say, for being able to pull patterns out of really complex place. And that includes largely the ability to create digital products. So that's both at the consumer level and at the enterprise level. So through all that experience, you've now started your own thing, it's called Creative Liberation. Talk to us a little bit about this. What's this new venture hold for you?

Nick Hahn: Yeah. So I'm taking all these years of various experience and hilarious failures that I've had through the years and going out to companies who are looking to build out design systems, design ops, and helping them navigate those treacherous waters. I've seen it work, I've seen it fail. I've had the chance to see companies that pull through and become a more systems-led design organization and I want to help them set up the right foundation and get going

from the right place. And so getting them to understand that there's a lot of aspects to design systems beyond patterns and beyond components, that's a really important part of this whole process.

Chris Strahl: Yeah, I love that. My favorite thing that we talked about before the show was this awesome hot take you had, and I'm going to let you say it because I think it is more impactful coming from you, but it kind of sets the tone for this whole episode. It's hot as hell in Portland today. I'm sweating my butt off. Luckily I have a beer in front of me right now. So this is going to be a little bit of an extra punchy show. And we might as well fire away. What's your opening salvo in this?

Nick Hahn: Yeah man, I think design systems are going to reduce the need for designers, especially early career designers by 75%. And it sounds scary, but I really think it's something that's coming and unless we get ready for it and understand how it's going to impact our industry and our trade, we're going to be caught with our pants down.

Chris Strahl: So this sounds a lot like the rhetoric of the robots are coming for your job, but in this case this is about the systems coming through your job. And so tell me what you mean when you talk about losing 75% of especially entry level design jobs. What do those jobs do today and what's going to be different about them?

Nick Hahn: Yeah. Most entry level design jobs right now are essentially wireframe monkeys. They spend a lot of time just pumping out screens for teams that have design systems. They might be working within that system and pumping out different design iterations, but largely they're working in this low fidelity, medium fidelity space and they're working with researchers to just iterate over and over again on these different iterations of existing designs or new designs. But largely, that's an unnecessary role and I've seen designers get really bored doing that as well. So it's not actually a fulfilling space. It's fun for a short period when you're learning the tools, but then designers as an individual, they don't like doing it very often.

Chris Strahl: Yeah, I often say there's very few people that went to design school for four years to end up creating table layouts for 40 hours a week. It's not exactly a fulfilling part of the job. One of the things that you equate this to that I think is a really smart sort of metaphor for it is this idea that the design role as it stands today is very bespoke. It's almost this sort of strange craftsmanship of varying levels of quality and varying levels of work product that is akin to early assembly lines. Tell me a little bit more about that.

Nick Hahn: Yeah. So as our design trade has grown over the last especially 10 years and people are investing heavily in design, we've been in this industry trend to hire hundreds or thousands of designers. And what that means is you just have a lot of bodies in the room and so they're trying to pump out designs, but there's no cohesive way that they can collectively make those designs work together.

Developers have all these tools that allow them to create products at scale and collaborate in really efficient ways. In design we don't have that. We're kind of bumping into each other. Everyone's creating different versions of different tables and different components and shipping those. And so as design teams scale and you get in the place where you've got 25 or 30 design teams in companies, trying to coordinate them to create something that's a cohesive experience is nearly impossible.

Chris Strahl: Gotcha. So you're not just talking about design at scale because right now design at scale is largely handled by more bodies. What you're talking about is quality at scale. And quality at scale is something that's not achievable with more bodies. And in fact it actually inhibits quality because you have person A, person B, person C that all do things slightly differently. And so the consistency is about a quality play and all of it relates to the scalability of design.

Nick Hahn: Yeah. Well let's talk about consistency. I think a fallacy is saying if everything's consistent, it's great. It's got to be cohesive, right? And consistency can vary. So you can have three totally different design teams all creating experiences that, let's say it's a login or registration, kind of a shopping cart experience. You have three different design teams. They need to build a cohesive experience that lets that user feel like they're on one journey, yet we've scaled the design team to a point where each of those experiences are built by totally separate teams, product managers, engineers, and it feels really disjointed.

Chris Strahl: So in your view, the future is something like an assembly line for automobiles where you have the Ford way of making things, you have the Hyundai way of making things, you have the Toyota way of making things. And all of these represent this cohesive model for ultimately a product which is a model of a car. Much also like assembly lines, you can adapt that assembly line to make different models of different things.

Nick Hahn: Correct, yeah. Right now those early career designers spend their time on the assembly line essentially. They're not thinking. They try to think, but oftentimes the constraints in which they're designing are so heavily constrained, they can't really be creative. And so essentially where I see design systems pushing the industry is already happening is designers can now let go of being these production people and move into the higher order of actually creating design that solves problems at a higher level, really spending more time with users and getting out of that production cycle. Yes, we have to shepherd the designs through to production to end product, but we don't need to be the people tweaking tiny little pixel perfection things because the design system should take care of that.

Chris Strahl: Gotcha. So you have this idea of design moving from this production mindset to something that's a lot more strategic inside of the organization. And that strategic role is largely focused around software quality, scale, really product

quality, product scale, and then also a lot of that like business need and that business need seems to be a big driver right now, especially in the era of tightening budgets and economic uncertainty where design starts to have an impact more in that strategic decision making rather than just the go build wireframes thing.

Nick Hahn: Yeah, I mean, designers I think by their nature are great at connecting with people. Our entire role is to represent the users within the business. And so if we're at the table with our business partners, our engineering partners, we should be the ones voicing the needs of the user. If we're instead sitting at a screen moving pixels around, most of the time we're not at the table having those really strategic conversations and bringing those needs to the forefront.

Chris Strahl: So you actually view design's role as shifting into one that's a lot more of an agent of change or somebody that's bringing that customer empathy into that business level conversation?

Nick Hahn: Yeah. My experience at IBM when the design program was just getting going, most of my role and most of our team's role was spent in workshops, co-synthesizing research with our engineers. That was the most valuable time that we spent. And then when we had to go actually build the product, it felt like a grind. And so that's what led us into building a design system that enabled us to spend less time doing the production work and enabled us to spend more time with our partners and our business partners across the entire spectrum of the business.

Chris Strahl: That's fascinating. So you actually found the most engaging work to be when you were engaging in that sort of cross-disciplinary collaboration side of things, because oftentimes we encounter design teams that are like, "I just want engineer that leave me the hell alone, or I just want the suits to stop breathing down my neck." And what you view is actually a better place for design is in that position where the collaboration is the valuable part.

Nick Hahn: 100%, yeah. Collaboration is the valuable part. Our ability to both empathize with our users and our stakeholders I think is a really unique aspect of designers as a trait. And I found that we oftentimes are the change agents, we're the ones that are connecting. We'll find that the engineer's not talking to the product team and we'll set up a workshop and we'll get them together and say, "Let's go through what are really the biggest problems we're trying to solve. Let's prioritize those together." Those types of interactions are far more impactful and long-term sustainable as a career and more fulfilling as a career than how many times I redesigned that table.

Chris Strahl: That's awesome. I actually just had a conversation with Stephen Gates about this in a little bit different context. We were talking about the idea of what it means to be a leader in a design organization and how that leadership conversation is

shifting from one of like, "I build the thing" to, "I understand why we build the thing and how we build the thing and how we build the thing affects other people." And that shift in mentality seems to be something that is actually just a shift in the underlying function of design inside of most of these organizations.

Nick Hahn: Yeah, spot on. And the blocker to us as a trade being able to do that, there's many, but one of the major blockers is if we are hired to create a thousand wireframes and be the production people that then hand those wireframes to engineering so that they can go build something that kind of approximates maybe what we designed-

Chris Strahl: Hopefully. A little.

Nick Hahn: Hopefully maybe. Yeah, a little. That puts us in a huge disadvantage to be able to be at the table when the real thinking is being done. We spend more time waiting for the business decisions to be made so that we can then execute wireframes in some form of high fidelity designs to then hand off to engineers, but then engineers are always waiting for us. And then that creates that horrendous friction where we are then seen as a blocker to shipping real product, shipping things on time because we're doing our work and oftentimes we're not given the time to do our work because the scope of the project isn't laid out in a way that design actually has space to do that production work.

Chris Strahl: I think that every single designer has a list of things that are undone for every product they ship. And that list of things is often very long.

Nick Hahn: It's designed that.

Chris Strahl: Yeah, and I think it's frustrating. And I think that that's where the price is often paid in things like accessibility or in things that ultimately represent a better experience that is unique and different and actually interesting. You end up with a lot of blase design because that time isn't really given to that really unique bit. It's like, "I have to ship something, so let's get the baseline experience out."

Nick Hahn: The number of times we've shipped something and said we'll finish it in phase two in my career is I couldn't even count the number of times. The phase two fallacy of, "We'll fix it in phase two" is the first thing designers will learn when they join a company or agency and realize that your dream of building this phenomenal thing almost definitely won't happen.

Chris Strahl: And I mean how often does phase two even happen, right?

Nick Hahn: Exactly.

Chris Strahl: Like a third of the time? A quarter of the time?

Nick Hahn: I don't know if I've ever... Especially in the agency world, I've never seen a phase two in the agency world. It's on the next thing.

Chris Strahl: Yeah, well I mean this is the nature of the agency work. You're always kind of chasing that dragon. But I think this is even more relevant with our shifting macros, right? Like I mentioned before, we're starting to face this period of economic uncertainty. People that are VPs that companies are sitting there facing budget scrutiny, I think that design has largely had a blank check for the past half a decade, maybe a little bit longer. And all of a sudden you're going to start to get a lot of people looking at what is the actual ROI and the actual value I get out of my design organization.

I think this is also kind of telling of the weakness of the way that we think about product creation is that there's definitely scrutiny on design because engineering went through this scrutiny a decade ago. And so engineering teams, like you said, they have systems, they have stuff set up for them that is all about how they streamline this process. I think design is about to go through this because the macros are different. And they've already kind of punched at engineering for a while. So I think design might be next.

Nick Hahn: Absolutely. The blank check to hire in the IBM world, a thousand designers, which ended up being 2,500, I don't think exists anymore. I mean I know in that organization specifically it does not, but I don't think across the board, this, "Let's just throw design bodies at it and it'll fix the problem," that doesn't exist.

So you cannot hire this many people and expect them to work efficiently together. You need to have a mental mind shift away from, "Oh, it's my design. It's my precious, my precious design," from that to, "I'm creating something that both works with and puts pressure on the system to make it better." The entire mindset of the designer needs to change. So the designer can't let go of being the representative of the user, but the actual work the designer does needs to shift from this idea that we're just building the product to, "We're building something that meets users' needs but also fits within the system that our company has established. And then how do we evolve that system?" Those rules, that level of governance, those constraints need to be taken into consideration but there needs to be a system, literal system that pushes and that grows with the company.

Chris Strahl: When I hear you talk about that, I get excited. I get stoked. It's like, "Yeah, that's it. That's the way we should do it." We don't teach designers to do that today. We don't even really teach engineers to do it that way. We, especially, aren't going to teach the 75% of entry level designers that are going to struggle to find a job in the next five years that way. What does that agent to change that actually makes us a reality? I mean business is always good at functioning on necessity, right? And so like, "Hey, this is going to become an imperative, we're all going to figure this out." But what do you see as the steps to figuring this out?

Nick Hahn: Yeah, first thing that comes to mind is when I was early in my career, I felt this pressure as a designer to become this unicorn where I can also do front end code. Like, "Learn Ruby on Rails or this back end, but learn all these code stacks," right? And Ruby on Rails is a big deal and everyone's learning it in JavaScript and blah blah blah. But I sort of buck that trend and said, "I'm just going to double down on understanding the user." I got really into UX. Nowadays, I think the smartest thing you can do as a young designer is go take a business class. If you understand business, then you can stand up in front of a product manager and say, "I understand how this is going to make us money and here's the things we need to do," that'll make you so much more successful and also fit you into the actual full production cycle of how things are made. They'll bring you in earlier in the process than just, "We're going to make these features go wireframe them."

Chris Strahl: It's really interesting. I was always the business guy that understood a little bit about code and understood a little bit about design. And so I was always kind of that product manager, right? That was always my role was in product. The people that I definitely gravitated towards in terms of the production cycle were the people that were able to speak to me at a business level about why we actually cared about the thing we were building. We have this constant conversation right now about should designers learn how to code. Engineers are doing more with design every single day. And so engineers are making more design choices now than they were a decade ago by I would say a factor of 10. We have not summarily forced that into our design organization even though I would say that there's pressure there.

I think that one of the interesting parts about that is there's very little pressure to have either engineers or designers really learn more about product and about the business reasons why we build the product. I think that's a more interesting pressure in this space, is to try to say like, "What fundamentally matters is the why we do this."

Nick Hahn: Absolutely, the why we do it. And actually to that point, having a shared unified vision of what the definition of done is for anything that we're building that design product and engineering all agree upon is the biggest gap I've seen in every product team I've ever worked with.

Chris Strahl: Right, because everybody has a different definition.

Nick Hahn: Everyone, yes. Designers want to take care of the users. Engineers want to get it shipped on time bug-free. Product managers want to make money. And all of those things don't line up. And if you don't have a shared definition of done, you can't ship a cohesive product. You're always going to have those inherent conflicts, which makes building those products extremely frustrating.

Chris Strahl: Yeah. I was just talking about pressure, incentive and all that of this sort of stuff, right? When you have a different definition of done, you have a fundamental misalignment of those incentives and pressures on what your behavior is to achieve your goal. And that misalignment is I think ultimately why still something in this day and age, like 60% of product launches fail or whatever. It's some insane number. I'm not exactly sure what it's off the top of my head.

Nick Hahn: Yeah. Designers love naming everything they make. Design something, design systems, design ops, design strategy, design everything. We want to [inaudible 00:18:38] design.

Chris Strahl: Hey, one of the benefits of being an agent of change, right?

Nick Hahn: That's right. Yeah. We're making the thing, we get to label it. But it actually ostracizes people to embrace design systems, right? We've seen a lot of friction with engineering saying, "Why am I going to spend money on design systems as a design thing?" But it ultimately prevents us from feeling like we're really part of that team because we're doing a design system, right? We're doing design thinking.

Chris Strahl: So in thinking about the rebrand of design systems, I've thought about product ops, product systems, but I think then handing it to product also has its own complications, but we really need to figure out as an industry something better to name this stuff because it affects so much more than design. And I think that design is absolutely a big part of the core of it, but thinking about this in terms of ultimately how we ship something that has value to a user and value to a business or value to an organization, that's ultimately what we need to focus on.

Nick Hahn: Yeah, I wish we had a better name for it. Design systems feels like a placeholder. It kind of feels like how we used to call UX usability and now UX is morphed into sort just product design, right? We need a better name for it. But one of the things that designers do really well, going back to that change agent thing and kind of moving us away from product production, is we bring in design thinking, which is a whole nother design thing, but using design thinking to bring all the parties together and gain alignment on the definition of done, gain alignment on the real problems we're trying to solve, gain alignment on the priority of when we solve those problems is a skill that has been uniquely part of design, which in the organizations I've been part of, it's really great to evangelize that and then see engineers go, "We need design thinking workshops. We need to be thinking through this."

Chris Strahl: If there was a way to marry that sort of design thinking that exists inside of design organizations along with a product and systems efficiency that exists within engineering, I think that's ultimately what design systems are supposed to represent is this melding of, "Hey, I can have this interesting innovative way of being very user centric and being very thoughtful about what my mindful impact

of the thing I'm building is," combined with the way of systematically repeating that at scale. That's a really hard thing to drive at. And I think that's really the true layer of what design systems is aimed at. That's the true problem we're trying to solve.

Nick Hahn: Yeah. And design systems, again we will asterisk that name, but design systems, again, freeze our time up. If we can save 70 or 80% of our time as designers from moving pixels on a screen, I've talked directly to designers who feel like their value is from the number of wireframes they've produced. And when you talk to them and say, "Hey, we don't need to do this anymore," they go, "Well, what is my job now?" Well now you get to sit in front of your product manager, you get to think about the strategy, you get to work, spend more time with users. You're shifting the effort and you're putting your energy towards things that are uniquely valuable that you can bring as a trade to the business that both product and engineering can't do or don't do.

Chris Strahl: I love that idea of, "Okay, so 75% of these production design jobs are going to go away. What does that get replaced with?" And what I heard you just say it's replaced with is this sort of ability to take it further, right? This idea that design has largely existed within the constraints of design tooling and design as a discipline. Starting to break free those constraints and think about how it actually adds value beyond what you can build in Figma or whatever and into a place where it's a lot more strategic in its relevance to an overall business strategy, an overall product strategy. That's what ultimately goes and fills that gap. It's not that all of a sudden 75% of our design work goes away, it just changes into something else.

Nick Hahn: It moves us as a trade from being a reactive trade to a proactive trade. We now get to spend time in that strategy phase before things are decided on what we're going to do and how we're going to do it. We get to be part of that conversation versus someone else has decided that, handed it to us and asked us to get it done so that engineering can do their job instead of sitting in that sandwiched unfortunate middle part where we're not making the decisions but we're also not producing the end product, it's a really unfortunate place to live. And as designers, we should do everything we can to get out of that space because it's not healthy. And design systems will enable us to do that [inaudible 00:22:57].

Chris Strahl: I mean, isn't this every designer's dream to end up in this place where you have a seat at the table? I hear this all the time from design leaders I talk to, is that, "The reason why I left this job was I didn't feel like I had a seat at the table" or, "The reason why I'm excited about this is I feel like I get that seat at the table." So what holds people back from embracing this

Nick Hahn: Culture. Company culture. Largely, it starts at the startup world. Startups, they've got the right founders if they have an engineering and a business

founder, but they don't have a design founder. It starts at the beginning. So that startup might grow and build and evolve, yet design is hired as like a add-on, like, "Oh, we need someone to make it look good." And that's still happening today, which is shocking in 2022, but it's still the standard.

Chris Strahl: That is really interesting you bring that up, being a startup. One of the things that we thought really critically about is we're a product that sure has its roots in engineering. My co-founder is an engineer, a finite engineer. Trying to think about how we incorporate design into the way that we build Knapsack was a big decision for us because we had to start to think about like, "Okay, so in that three legged tool of design, product, engineering, how does that get represented at the leadership level of the organization and ultimately get talked about in terms of the product vision?" We tried it one way where we basically just hired a product designer. And that hiring of that product designer, it wasn't as basic as make it pretty, but it was definitely this idea of, "Okay, go take a very engineering driven product that's like a lot of nested boxes and a lot of complicated navigation systems and go fix all that." It wasn't really until we actually brought a designer, Matt Gorman, who's just amazing into the fold of how we set product direction that it really started to work.

Nick Hahn: That's a great point. As a designer, I'm a weirdo. In my last agency that I worked at the last time I worked at a big agency, I was the only designer with a PC because at the time I could get more RAM for my Photoshop because Windows went 64 bit before Mac did. So I'm a pragmatist when it comes to the world of hardware and computers.

Chris Strahl: We're a bunch of engineers that are all on Mac. And so the 32 gig limit was painful for us as a company for about two years there.

Nick Hahn: Very painful. Yes. I loved explaining this to my fellow art directors like, "What the hell are you doing on Windows XP or 2000, whatever?" Anyway, it doesn't matter. So while I'm not a huge Mac fan boy, I love... There's a designer, and I will look up his name and I'll post it, who is one of the early designers at Apple. When he retired he got interviewed and he got asked like, "Why is Apple the leading design company? What makes Apple the best design company out there or have the best design products?" And he said, "It's not because we have the most designers or the best designers." He said, "Because every single employee embraces the fundamentals of design. Our users, how it works, the nitty gritty details of every little element of what the user experience is, every product manager, every engineer, everyone believes in all of that and fights for it from the very beginning." So they have a shared definition of done.

That story is always stuck with me because essentially if you have a culture of design, which sounds really pretentious that I'm saying that as a designer, but you have a culture of design that seeps through the entire company, the designers themselves don't have to sit there and fight for like, "But our users

need X." If everyone in the company says our users need X and Y and Z and they all feel that and they have that shared definition of like, "Until the users can do X, Y, and Z, it's not done. I don't care if it's shipped last week or next year, that's the definition of done," that changes how you build products in a dramatic way. And that's where design can be the most fruitful.

Chris Strahl: That's awesome. So I guess if we were to bring it all back, everybody in design that is especially a recent grad, especially is starting out there in the early part of their career, yeah, there's a lot of change that's going to happen in that industry and that change is going to be really disruptive to the things you were trained on and kind of the fundamentals you learned, but ultimately there's an opportunity here to take that work and apply it differently in a way that is potentially a lot more interesting and a lot more fulfilling.

Nick Hahn: Yeah, absolutely. And bringing it back to design systems, what they enable us to do as a practice, as a design is codify the basic decisions that we'd have to make over and over again. How that table looks, how the button's going to work, what happens when you register? All of those little micro decisions or macro decisions that each individual team has to make, you've standardized it. And then you have a system, a literal system that lets you evolve that with new requirements as they become a thing. And then that frees up your time as a designer to then go work with the business people, go work your engineering partners and build those bridges versus just pumping out design after design.

Chris Strahl: So when you're aiming at this future that you talk about where we have this group of designers that for the first time ever has this empowerment and they have a system that supports this empowerment and that system also starts to leverage that collaboration with other disciplines, specifically engineering product. And you have this kind of wonderful harmonious flywheel that exists between this group of people. What is design's role in that that brings the most value? Very specifically when it comes to this future, where do you see design really delivering?

Nick Hahn: Yeah, so if you think about a project lifeline, a timeline, you've got things like discovery, you've got solutioning, you've got production. You've got different phases, and there's plenty of different names for this, but essentially it moves us from a place where we are largely stuck in the production phase to moving into discovery where one of our natural peers is research teams, right? And lots of times they're embedded with design teams. Sometimes they're separate groups, sometimes they're embedded. When research brings their knowledge to the table and they have time to do their work, they're doing it in parallel with existing initiatives. So you don't have a research team researching necessarily exactly what you're building now. Maybe that's happening, but you should have a research team researching what you could do next and then next, then next.

Chris Strahl: The mythical phase two.

Nick Hahn: The mythical phase two. Right. It's actually priming the pump for phase two. And I think as design, if we are actively thinking about what is phase two and phase three look like while phase one is being built, we can then work with our business partners. When you're in deep dive, let's say phase one's getting built and it's in hardcore production mode and engineers are grinding out stuff, they're doing QA testing and all that, that production ready stuff, you shouldn't wait until that's done to start phase two. Thinking about phase two. You should have been thinking about phase two months in advance and priming that pump. That's where design can set. Once the system is up in place, you no longer have to sit at the later stages of that production pipeline. You're in the earlier stages. And you're sitting there with your PMs, your product managers and the research teams, and you're driving the strategy of where the product can go versus just making it look good or making it function well.

Chris Strahl: Yeah, bringing it back to your car assembly line, so we're in the process of buying a third row car right now because we got two kids and like, "Hey, we outgrew our Subaru" and facts of life, right? It's either a minivan or some third row SUV. So when we sit there and we look at what third row SUV we're going to buy, it's definitely the companies that have taken the most innovation from their other vehicle lines and vehicle models and rolled that in to their SUV offering. And it's very apparent. You can definitely tell the organizations that have basically thought about their assembly line as a very distinct thing versus those that started thinking about what does this mean for other makes and models of cars as a part of that production process. It's led to some really clear ideas of what exactly we want to buy because we can understand how design has played into the vehicle purchase that we're looking at. And I think that there's a metaphor there for the broader product experience.

Nick Hahn: Yeah. For all you designers listening, how many times have you been mid production? Like code is being written, production's getting done, and you're making fresh design decisions? That doesn't happen in the physical product where we can't... You can't change design while something's on the production line. Not that we have to be that strict because it's software. We can be more flexible and agile world allows us to do that. But largely the fundamental design decisions of how the product's going to work needs to happen earlier than when you're doing production ready code that's getting security and compliance and accessibility tested, right?

So us moving to a model that is more like the car industry where we're doing clay models, we're building out prototypes that are being driven by real people and we're learning what it's like to actually test those things, that's more of the model that design systems enables us to do because we're spending less time in the production phase and more time in that strategy and product development phase.

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Chris Strahl: Awesome. Well, hey Nick, I just want to say a huge thank you. It's great to finally get you on the podcast. Love the conversation and can't wait to have you back.

Nick Hahn: Yeah, man. Awesome to be here. I can talk about this for six more hours, so let me know.

Chris Strahl: Awesome. Well, hey, have a great day. Thanks for listening to everybody. Take care.

That's all for today. This has been another episode of the Design Systems Podcast. Thanks for listening. If you have any questions or a topic you'd like to know more about, find us on Twitter at @TheDSPod. We'd love to hear from you. Show ideas, recommendations, questions, or comments. As always, this pod is brought to you by Knapsack. You can check us out at knapsack.cloud. Have a great day.