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Design Systems in Practice

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A pragmatic approach to improving quality, speed, consistency and confidence across a complex, multi-platform organisation (without slowing teams).

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What's Inside:

Executive Summary

Design systems succeed when ownership is clear, contribution is safe and teams feel supported, not constrained

Key Takeaways:
- Plan and assess objectively
- Prioritise and improve incrementally
- Build trust through transparency
- Treat design systems as cultural infrastructure, not just tooling.

Problem Statement:
As organisations scale across platforms and teams, design decisions fragment, quality becomes inconsistent and delivery slows. Unless shared foundations are actively owned, governed and adapted.

Success Metrics:
Measure success across adoption, quality and delivery, combining quantitative signals with team feedback.

Adoption
- Usage of modular components
- Reduction in duplicated variants.

Quality
- Accessibility defects per release
- Consistency through reviews.

Delivery
- Time to implement common patterns
- Reduction in rework and regressions.

Team
- Qualitative confidence and satisfaction signals from teams.

Operating Model:
A lightweight, repeatable collaboration flow that enables scale without friction:
Propose → Review → Test → Release → Communicate.

This model supports teams to:
- Propose improvements and new components
- Contribute safely without breaking the system
- Challenge decisions with evidence and context.

Decision Making:
Consult widely, decide clearly, document openly.

Clear decisions are essential when:
- Brand conflicts with usability
- Speed conflicts with quality
- Platform needs across platforms.

Risks & Failures:
Actively managed risks include:
- Over-governance slowing delivery
- System drift caused by exceptions
- Loss of trust through opaque decisions
- Under-resourcing leading to stagnation
- Mitigation comes through clear ownership, prioritisation and visibility.

Why Me:
I've operated and evolved design systems in complex, regulated, multi-platform environments, balancing quality, speed and scale across consumer, enterprise and infrastructure products. My focus is on building systems teams trust, adopt and sustain over time.

Context & Constraints

Designing within real-world complexity and constraints

Context:
The design system must operate effectively across;

- Platforms: Web, apps, hardware and print
- User groups:
  - Internal: Design, Product, Engineering, Brand, Marketing
  - External: Parents, children and partners
- Global: Localisation and market variation
- Accessibility & compliance: WCAG AA, PAS 1899, BS
- System scope: A living product and service
  - Not a static library.

Tell me about:
How you elevated visual quality, interaction design or brand expression while maintaining usability and consistency (across mobile and web)...

Benchmark:
Within these constraints, a high-quality system delivers;

- Clear design principles aligned to brand and values
- Predictable component behaviour across platforms
- Accessibility as a default baseline (WCAG min. AA)
- Clear ownership and safe contribution paths
- Measurable improvements in delivery speed and quality

SITUATION. **T**ASK. **A**CTION. **R**ESULT:

Responsible for design system optimisation for ASOS and bp pulse
The task was to use insights, benchmarks and standards to guide opportunities
Next I setup a team, created a plan, assessed, prioritised, improved and impacted overall quality
Together we aligned on principles, ways of working and maintain shared libraries and toolkit.

Design Systems at Scale

Lessons from operating design systems in complex, regulated environments

	ASOS	bp pulse
Platforms	Web, Apps, Print	Web, Apps, Hardware, Print
Scale	200+ Countries	UK, US, China, Germany, Netherlands
Audience	Consumer + Enterprise	Consumer + Enterprise + Infrastructure
Accessibility	WCAG AA + Audits	WCAG AA + PAS 1899
Strength	Scale & Governance	Cross-platform Consistency
Challenge	Complexity & Legacy	Speed, Safety & Fragmentation

Plan: Roadmap & Milestones

From assessment to sustained impact over time

Understand & Assess

0 to 30 days

"The goal in the first 30 days isn't to redesign, it's to see clearly, agree on reality and build trust."

Prioritise & Align

31 to 60 days

"Progress comes from shared priorities, not individual opinions."

Improve & Embed

61 to 90 days

"Quality improves when good defaults become effortless."

Rhythm & Learning

90+ days

"A design system succeeds when teams sustain it without friction."

0 to 30 days: Understand & Assess

Establishing a clear, shared view of the current system

Q. What's good?
Identify strengths already enabling teams to move quickly and with confidence. And protect them.

Focus:
- Areas of genuine component reuse
- Strong accessibility baselines
- Design / engineering alignment
- Patterns teams already trust and adopt.

Outcomes:
- Audit existing design landscape
- Inventory components, patterns, tokens
- Review documentation quality
- Map platform divergence (web, app, hardware)
- Agreed opportunity map / heat map
- Prioritised backlog, EPICs and stories.

Q. What's not so good?
Surface friction that slows delivery, creates inconsistency or increases cognitive load.

Focus:
- Inconsistent component variants across platforms
- Accessibility applied late or unevenly
- Documentation lagging behind implementation
- Local fixes diverging from the core system
- Unclear ownership and decision-making.

Q. What's missing?
Expose gaps that limit scalability, contribution and long-term sustainability.

Common gaps:
- Clear design principles (the "why")
- Feedback loops from end users
- Defined success metrics
- Contribution and deprecation processes
- Visibility of upcoming changes and decisions.

How are insights gathered?
Combine qualitative insight with practical heuristics to build a grounded, unbiased view.

Internal
1:1s and group sessions with Design, Engineering, Product, Brand and Marketing.

External
Review of high-traffic flows, support tickets, usability and accessibility signals.

Heuristics
Best practice reviews, platform conventions, accessibility and usability.

Opportunity: Identify & Prioritise

Focusing effort where it delivers the greatest impact

Approach:
Systematically identify improvement opportunities by balancing user impact, team friction and delivery effort.

Method:
- Identify high-traffic, business-critical touch points
- Map pain points across design, build and user experience
- Assess delivery effort, risk and dependencies.

Framework:
Impact (Traffic × Pain) ÷ Effort = Priority

Tell me about:
How you assessed an existing system or design landscape and identified the most meaningful opportunities for improvement...

Area	Traffic	Pain	Effort	Priority
Buttons & CTAs	High	High	Low	→ Now (P0)
Forms & Inputs	High	Medium	Medium	Next (P1)
Motion Patterns	Medium	Low	Medium	Later (P2)
Edge-Case Layouts	Low	High	High	Defer (P3)

SITUATION. **T**ASK. **A**CTION. **R**ESULT:

We collected data / feedback / pain points / observations to identify opportunities
The task was to simplify the work and create a sequence based on effort
Next I setup a backlog with structured information / atoms / molecules / components / layouts / pages and reviewed with the team to refine estimates and priority
Together we reviewed data, empathised on pain points, aligned on effort and agreed the sequence of work.

31 to 60 days: Elevate Quality

Raising the quality bar without slowing delivery

Approach:
Improve visual and interaction quality where it has the greatest user and team impact, while reinforcing consistency and accessibility by default.

Actions:
- Re-establish shared design principles aligned to brand, usability and accessibility
- Align visual language across platforms without forcing uniformity
- Improve interaction quality in high-traffic, high-impact areas
- Bake accessibility into components rather than treating it as a review step.

Tell me about:
How you partnered with designers and engineers to drive adoption, contribution and long-term sustainability...

Principles → Workflows → Artefacts:
Quality improvements are sustained when intent, process and output are aligned.

Why / How / What:
- Why: Shared principles (brand, accessibility, usability)
- How: Predictable workflows between Design & Engineering
- What: Tokens, components, patterns, documentation.

Managing Libraries & Tooling:
Ensure the system remains reliable, maintainable and easy to adopt.

Practices:
- Single source of truth
- Versioned releases
- Clear deprecation rules
- Component testing (visual + accessibility)
- Sync with engineering equivalents.

Ways of Working:
- Set up dedicated design system squad
- Set up backlog and tooling
- Set up shared calendar and milestones
- Set up design critique workspace

Outcomes:

Design Quality
- A shared culture of design quality
- More consistent, confident application of brand expression across core UX
- Improved interaction clarity in high-traffic patterns (e.g. forms, navigation, CTAs)
- Improved customer satisfaction.

Accessibility & Usability
- Accessibility as a design default
- Fewer late-stage fixes and stronger confidence in inclusive design.

Ways of Working
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Regular multi-disciplinary design critiques
- Showcases and demos that reinforce quality standards and shared learning
- Transparent workflows from proposal through release
- Reduced friction in delivery and decisions.

SITUATION. **T**ASK. **A**CTION. **R**ESULT:

We set up shared moments and workspaces to discuss designs to establish awareness / culture
The task was to engage at a multi-disciplinary level to evangelise best practice / giving and receiving feedback / align decisions with principles
Next I setup a series of workshops, collect feedback to develop a shared understanding with opportunities
Together we discussed workflows and shared feedback to create a framework with principles, ways of working and shared libraries and toolkits.

61 to 90 days: Adoption Model

Embedding the system into how teams work

Approach:
Establish clear, shared ownership to guide direction while enabling contribution.

Core Team:
- Design
- Engineering
- Product.

Responsibilities:
- Set direction and guard quality
- Agree prioritisation and sequencing
- Define and maintain release cadence.

Tell me about:
How you navigated differing opinions, trade-offs, or organisational constraints to reach pragmatic outcomes...

Ways of Working:
Adoption depends on transparency, trust and predictable collaboration.

What works?
- Dedicated design system squad
- Regular critiques and cross-discipline reviews
- Capability showcase and advocacy
- Open, visible backlog.

What doesn't?
- Gatekeeping decisions
- Silent or undocumented changes
- One-off exceptions that bypass the system.

What's missing?
- Explicit time allocated to system work
- Recognition and reward for contribution.

Navigating Trade-offs:
Create structured spaces to surface differing perspectives and reach pragmatic outcomes.

Common example:
Brand Consistency vs. Platform Conventions

Techniques:
- Design critique sessions
- Heat-maps (pain vs. effort)
- Transparent, prioritised backlog.

Outcome:
Pragmatic decisions that balance quality, speed and constraints, not theoretical perfection.

SITUATION. **T**ASK. **A**CTION. **R**ESULT:

We set up weekly design critiques and shared spaces to discuss designs and review work
The task was to setup interactive workspaces, apply shared principles and establish a repeatable playbook
Next I setup a workspace with guidelines, templates and post-its, invited teams to a shared calendar and facilitated the weekly event
Together we discussed work from different angles / disciplines, guided decisions with design principles and evidence to manage workflows for new / updated / deprecated components, layouts.

91+ days: Impact & Learning

What changed and what informs future decisions

Outcomes:
Improvements observed across product quality, delivery efficiency and ways of working.

Measured impact:
- Faster, more predictable delivery
- Improved cross-platform consistency
- Fewer regressions and rework
- Increased confidence in accessibility compliance
- Stronger trust and collaboration across teams.

Learning:
Key insights gained from operating, evolving and sustaining a shared system.

Key Learnings:
- Listen to understand before prescribing solutions
- Shared principles unlock faster decisions than detailed rules
- Visibility reduces friction and rework
- Divide work thoughtfully to maintain momentum
- Sustainable systems require shared ownership, not central control.

Tell me about:
~~The impact the work had on product quality, team efficiency, or ways of working and~~ **what you learned along the way...**

Before:

- Design quality varied across teams and platforms
- Accessibility issues were often identified late in the process
- Teams relied on local patterns and one-off solutions
- Design decisions required repeated clarification and negotiation
- The system was seen as helpful, but not always essential.

After:

- A clearer, shared quality bar for visual and interaction design
- Accessibility considered earlier and more consistently by default
- Increased reuse of system components across core product
- Faster, more confident decision-making across disciplines
- Stronger trust in the system as the source of truth.

SITUATION. **T**ASK. **A**CTION. **R**ESULT:

See above.

Thank You!

I'd welcome the opportunity to connect and explore how I can help.

Design Systems & Toolkits

Establishing shared foundations that scale quality, accessibility and delivery

bp pulse Design System

For Web, Apps, Print & Hardware

Challenge:
Support global growth by creating a scalable design system that works across multiple markets (UK, US, DE, NL, China) and touchpoints ranging digital products, physical environments and services, maintaining consistency, accessibility and delivery speed.

Role & Contribution:
Led the end-to-end design system initiative, operating at Product Design Lead level

Partnered with Brand, Marketing, Product and Engineering teams across regions to define shared principles, governance and accessibility standards

Set direction for multi-platform support, enabling teams to design and build consistently.

Solution:
Implemented a modular, responsive design system with reusable components and visual language

Established accessibility-first patterns and documentation to support at scale

Bridged digital interfaces and physical touch points, ensuring consistency from apps and websites to on-site.

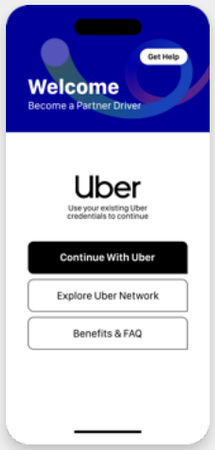
Outcomes:
Increased development velocity through shared components and guidelines

Strengthened accessibility compliance and global brand recognition

Enabled the successful launch of the UK Hub and EV-only sites, supporting bp pulse's next phase of growth.

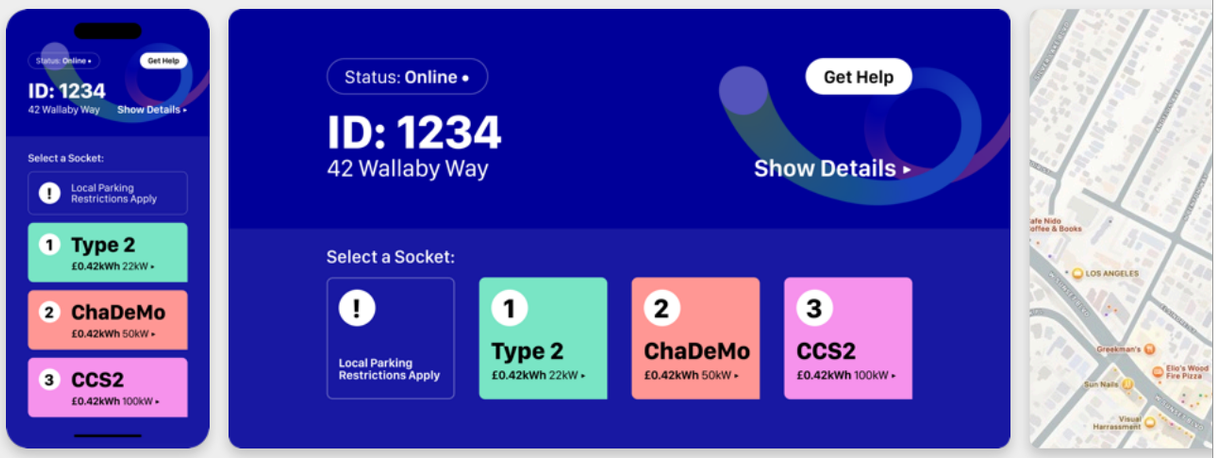
bp pulse Design System

Start → Drive → Park → Connect → Charge → Pay → Manage



bp pulse Design System

Start → Drive → Park → Connect → Charge → Pay → Manage



ASOS Design System

For Web, Apps, Print & Back Office

Challenge:
Improve consistency, scalability and speed across ASOS's customer-facing and internal platforms, while supporting localisation, multiple markets and complex data formats across a rapidly evolving global e-commerce ecosystem.

Role & Contribution:
Led design system initiatives across multiple product teams, operating within a large, distributed organisation

Partnered closely with Product, Engineering and Operations to align UI consistency, accessibility standards and Back Office tooling

Helped define shared principles and patterns to support both customer-facing experiences and internal workflows.

Solution:
Delivered a unified design system covering digital, print and internal tools

Created a Back Office toolkit for custom applications, supporting multiple languages, regions and data types

Embedded accessibility, documentation and governance to scale consistency.

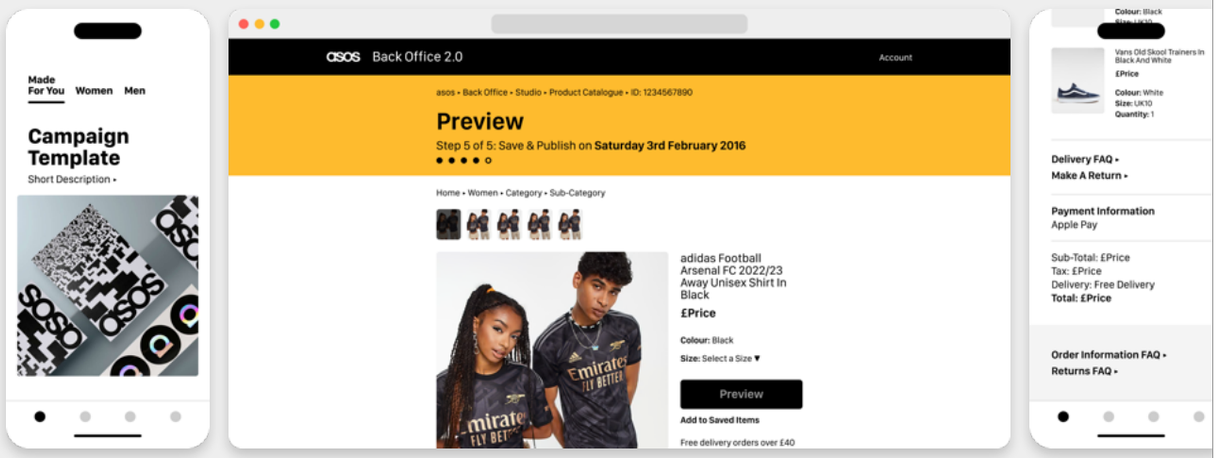
Outcomes:
Improved design and development through shared components

Delivered consistent user experience across teams, platforms and markets

Supported international growth and the evolution of internal tooling across the ASOS platform and infrastructure.

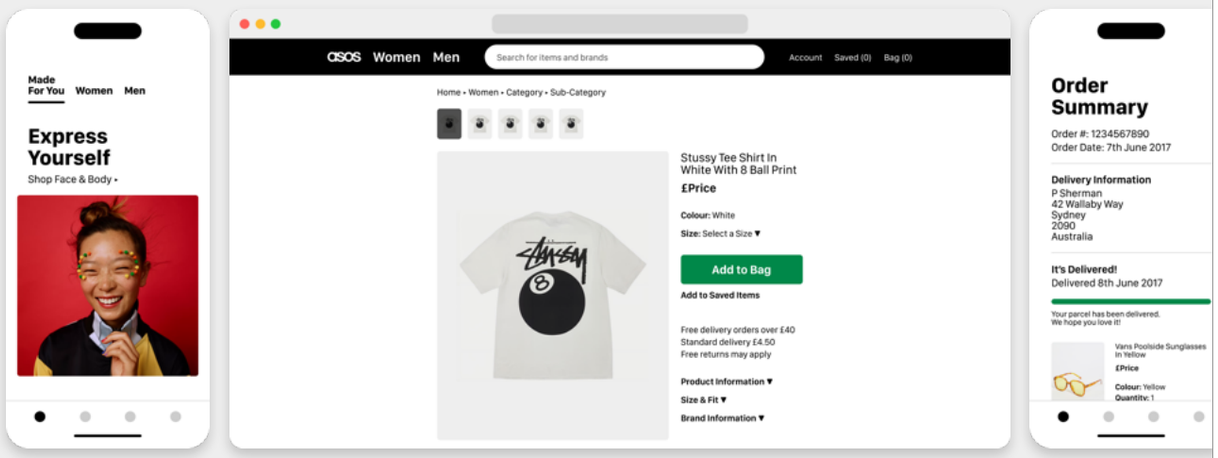
ASOS Design System

Start → Enrich → Review → Publish → Manage



ASOS Design System

Start → Explore → Add-To-Bag → Place Order → Manage



Apple Developer Program

For Web & Apps

Challenge:
Standardise visual and interaction guidelines across Apple's Developer Platform, spanning iTunes Connect, marketing assets and internal tools, while supporting scale, consistency and best-in-class developer experience.

Role & Contribution:
Collaborated with cross-functional teams to design and manage the Apps Database, centralising application information, assets and build metadata

Contributed to interface guidelines, workflows and tooling across web and platform experiences

Worked closely with R&D, PR, Retail and Developer Relations to support platform launches and adoption.

Solution:
Designed templates, internal tools and documentation to support asset management and workflows

Promoted best practices aligned with Apple's Human Interface Guidelines (HIG) for developers and partners

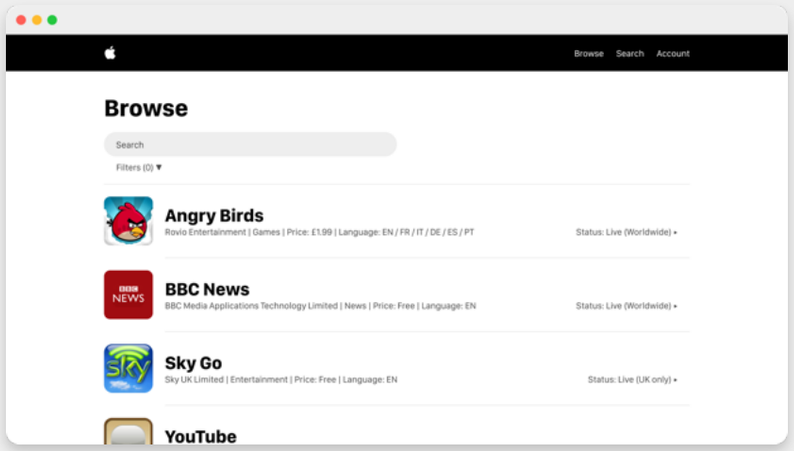
Helped connect design standards with operational tooling to support end-to-end app submission and management

Outcomes:
Supported wider adoption of Apple's design standards across the developer ecosystem

Improved efficiency and reliability of internal workflows supporting global platform launches.

Apple Developer Program

Start → Enrol → Build → Submit App → Manage



Apple Developer Program

Start → Enrol → Build → Submit App → Manage