Grant Blakeman, Designer & Engineer

Los Angeles, California
linkedin.com/in/grantblakeman • hello@grantblakeman.com • 303-918-7037

Summary

My career has been focused on the web—designing and building custom interfaces and user experiences for everything from small startups to established products and large companies. I have experience in product design, backend and frontend engineering, and particularly enjoy roles that intersect these disciplines.

Professional Experience

Staff Design Engineer
LinkedIn
Full-time – *Nov 2021– Present*
Senior Design Engineer (Contract) – *May 2019 – Nov 2021*

- First full-time Design Engineer at LinkedIn – helped define engineering practices and culture within the Design org; trained and mentored other Design Engineers
- Built impactful internal tools, including:
    - A suite of Figma plugins that improved design-to-engineering handoff, ensured customer privacy, and closed critical gaps in LinkedIn's design workflow
    - A reusable Figma plugin boilerplate to accelerate development and prototyping new tooling ideas
- Created a Figma file linter CI tool, saving thousands of hours in engineering/design time by catching off-system errors and poor Figma file hygiene before handoff
- Prototyped GenAI features in internal tooling: quality governance, design feedback, and code generation
- Acted as a bridge between Design Systems and engineering teams to align frontend implementation with design intent

Engineer, Designer, and Owner
Interdiscipline, Self-employed
2006 – 2021

- Ran a small, independent design and development studio as a solo practice, scaling with contractors/partners and leading projects as needed
- Notable work:
    - Frontend engineering for multiple SaaS and social network apps
    - Backend architecture and engineering for SaaS, custom CMS, and e-commerce for everything from agencies to startups to Fortune 500 companies
    - Served in Technical Co-Founder and/or Contract-CTO roles for several clients in the SaaS and e-commerce spaces including two different meal planning startups, a high-end commuter bicycle company, and an art toy company from the founder of Kidrobot
- Ran an independent development studio with focus on frontend engineering and product delivery

- Designed and built modern UIs for SaaS apps, social platforms, and e-commerce businesses
- Maintained a React-based social network app solo, shipping new features and fixes post-team transition
- Built a custom CMS that served as the backbone for many clients' projects. The CMS was adaptable, extensible, and (most importantly to clients), easier to use than alternatives at the time
- Redesigned and rebuilt a popular online cycling publication with major performance and infrastructure cost improvements
- Served in Fractional Technical Co-Founder, CTO, and Product Strategist roles for several clients in the SaaS and e-commerce spaces

Co-Founder (Leadership, Product, and Engineering)
Forge Group / Switchboard, Self-employed
2016 – 2017

- Led a volunteer-based, political action tech org; balanced leadership, hiring, product, and engineering responsibilities
- Practice in finding product-market fit on the right timeline – hard lessons learned

Product Design and Frontend Engineering
Highrise (37signals/Basecamp subsidiary), Contract
2015 – 2016

Provided product design and frontend development for an aging Rails app and new, static marketing (also snuck in a logo modernization/refresh)

Co-Founder (Product, Design, and Frontend Engineering)
Hilite, Self-employed
2012 – 2014

A social network for sharing interesting text snippets from around the web—part Pinterest-for-words, part link-blog

- Drove product strategy and features while collaborating on the product design and engineering architecture
- Built out the app's frontend

Co-Founder (Product, Design, and Engineering)
Backstage, Self-employed
2007 – 2011

An e-commerce/SaaS startup focused on connecting musicians with their fans

- Designed and built a single-sign-on system/launcher to deal with auth across multiple services
- Built out a digital e-commerce system: credit card processing (pre-Stripe), PCI compliance, transactional emails, allowing band admins to manage products, issue refunds, promo codes, etc.
- Architected the service against anti-patterns: fake emails, obfuscating downloadable files on AWS with unique, time-sensitive links, etc.

Technical Co-Founder, Contract (Brand and Product Design + Frontend and Backend Engineering)
Lilly's Table, Contract
2009 – 2010

A subscription-based, meal planning service

- Designed the brand, worked on business strategy with my founder chef client, designed the product, and then built the frontend and backend of this SaaS app
- Architected and built a recurring billing system against the Authorize.net API (pre-Stripe)

Graphic Designer and Art Director
HaifleighBrandWorks, Full-time
2004 – 2006

I started my career in traditional graphic design, print design, brand identity, and brand storytelling. It continues to influence how I think about product design and development.

- Developed digital services as a first-time offering for the agency

Technical Skills

- Frontend and Backend Engineering
- JavaScript/TypeScript, Svelte, React, CSS, HTML
- Ruby, Ruby on Rails, and a bit of Python and Swift/SwiftUI
- Design systems, design/engineering collaboration
- Product design and strategy

Education

University of Colorado Boulder, Leeds School of Business
Bachelor's Degree, Marketing – *2001 – 2004*

Boston University, Questrom School of Business
Coursework in General Management – *2000 – 2001*