

Austin M.
Design Leader

Empathetic mentor and design leader focused on creating authentic relationships that foster transparent, collaborative and inclusive cultures.

Over the length of my career in design, I've worked with multi-disciplined design teams of varying sizes, interviewed thousands of designers, and studied how design operates and matures within companies worldwide. During this time I've noticed the lack of education supporting design storytelling, nurturing individual growth, and modern design recruitment.

My role as a leader, mentor, and designer is to balance thoughtful guidance with diverse levels of empowerment to support individual decision-making. Working with me means working transparently and inclusively, sharing in-progress work early and often, and framing problems as opportunities within a set of yet-to-be-understood contexts. I prioritise collaboration over independence. The best way to deliver meaningful outcomes is through shared responsibilities.

As a leader, I focus on achieving unique ideas with proactive action by creating authentic relationships that encourage deliberate measurable outcomes. If a team I'm working with fails, I don't see such situations as finite or defining but, instead, see failure as a chance for us to learn something and adapt to what we achieve next.

I strive to build a respectful yet playful culture determined to discover patterns and trends, push for minimum-viable solutions to see ideas come to fruition, and praise curious questions about how something fits into the big picture. Support comes from helping connect ideas, projects, and individuals or providing nudges on varied or alternative outcomes. I align myself with company values by routinely using them as tie-breakers or evaluation methods.

My strengths are primarily in having and encouraging a growth mindset based on self-awareness, creating a work-life balance where ideas can incubate and thrive, encouraging creative thinking, and acting authentically in everything I do. These strengths are my own and what I work to incorporate into the teams I work alongside. Through this, I hold my team big while supporting them ruthlessly to achieve success.

I've championed the coexistence of product, design, and engineering throughout my career, using agile processes and lean UX methodologies. Through partnerships with executive-level stakeholders, I have helped mature design within companies and deliver value in unlocking innovation through design.

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2021 — Present
Remote

Director, Platform Design at Kraken Digital Exchange

I am currently leading the platform design team focused on delivering initiatives that cover the following. Establishing the Design Systems team, defining the strategy, setting the tone for our visual language documentation, and working with cross functional partners to launch the initiative. Leading the design for all cross-product experiences, focused on Kraken's global expansion. Establishing the Client Support Systems design team which incorporates Kraken's two-sided marketplace, to connect our clients, through support center with our CE agents using our admin tools. Defining the wider design team processes, from hiring practices, career matrices, establishing design tools, ways-of-working and design critique ceremonies.

As a leader I'm focused on creating authentic relationships that encourage deliberate and thoughtful outcomes, my favourite decisions are the transparent and inclusive ones. I strive to build a respectful yet playful culture and believe this leads to amazing customer outcomes. I hold my team big and support them ruthlessly in their journey towards success.

2020 — 2021
Remote, Sydney

Program Design Manager at Telstra

Leading a large integrated team of cross-functional designers and writers within Telstra digitisation. The team is distributed across 3 states, working with onshore/offshore development teams in multiple time zones. Leading the design work end-to-end to deliver Telstra's prospect-to-order digital eCommerce checkout, covering subscription based mobile products and services, fixed nbn internet services and Telstra's new energy offering.

Additional to the leadership and mentorship of the design team I support the conversation to help the business understand the importance of design as a function. To ensure we deliver a great customer experience by partnering with stakeholders to help them understand the impact of design maturity. As part of this, I've defined and implemented many new design processes to enable the team to successfully work remotely. These processes help define design at every stage from initial ideation, through user testing, design validation, and final artifact delivery across UX, UI, and Content.

Furthermore, I am also leading the requirement to up-skill accessibility within the organization to ensure Telstra meets its commitment to being WCAG 2.1 compliant.

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2019 — 2019
Sydney, Australia

Experience Design Principal at Kayo Sports

During my time I oversaw the product design of the multi-platform sports streaming service owned by the Fox Sports media company. My responsibilities saw me play a critical role in the design process across iOS and Android Apps as well as Apple and droid TV Apps. Working closely with the engineering and design teams I was responsible for steering the program of work and was instrumental in the delivery of a new user experience design framework. Additionally, I provided strategy, user research gathering, and design solutions for Kayo's product and service development from conception to market.

2017 — 2018
Sydney, Australia

Program Design Manager UX/UI at NSW Department of Justice

As the UX program manager, I led the design team in the delivery of the AVL project (Audio Visual Link). A video conferencing technology that allows two or more people in separate courtrooms, correctional facilities, and specialty facilities to communicate live. As part of the project, we also designed, tested, and delivered the booking and management system for this communication across ALL courts and correctional facilities in NSW. AVL will save NSW taxpayers millions of dollars each year by eliminating the high cost of transporting accused persons across the state for bail and sentence hearings as well as other court appearances.

The technology also allows children and other vulnerable victims to give 'in-camera' evidence from a private location, reducing the stress and trauma of taking part in the criminal and civil justice system. It also allows expert witnesses, who cannot travel, to provide evidence from regional, interstate, or overseas locations.

2015 — 2017
Sydney, Australia

Experience Design Principal at Westpac Bank

I was responsible for leading and managing the customer-centered design team within Westpac. We were UX and service design specialists who helped define and shape the business's new product streams and helped launch technology solutions. Embedded within the organisation to help rethink and reshape the customer experience and service proposition through design and innovation.

2014 — 2015
Sydney, Australia

Experience Design Lead/Manager at CommBank

As the experience design manager, I oversaw the project from the initial vision, strategy, and concept design of the Bank's new property platform. This process included customer research, person, and concept validation. Following the successful delivery of the vision, I

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oversaw the hiring of the UX, design, and development team to deliver the program. From initial discovery activities through to initiative and feature inception, I was responsible for implementing a lean UX process and assisting with the development of the Bank's agile principles.

Additional to these tasks my role has also seen me oversee and deliver a huge variety of UX-based activities such as concept strategy and ideation, regular validation through research, customer persona development as well as UX leadership, mentorship, and career management of a small UX and UI design team. I was responsible for managing multiple scrum teams delivering multiple projects across iOS, Android, and web.

2017 — 2014
Sydney, Australia

Experience Design Strategist at CommBank

I was engaged to work on the future of mobile strategy and experience for the Bank's native App. During the initial 3 month engagement, I was responsible for researching and presenting a number of design hypotheses to the executive stakeholder team to help transform the App from a transactional companion to a self-service wealth tool. A number of key features identified during this discovery went on to be implemented, transforming it into the market-leading banking App.

2013 — 2013
Sydney, Australia

Experience Design Lead/Manager at Deloitte Digital

At Deloitte Digital I worked as a design leader in the national practice. across a variety of digital work from experience and UI/UX design to design thinking implementation and agile design training to digital strategy and creative leadership through visual design and creative mentorship. Always delivering within an agile framework projects which included large scale CMS design and build projects, experience design through to UI design, service design, and business design. These were developed across a multitude of platforms such as iPad & iPhone Apps as well as responsive site design.

2011 — 2012
Sydney, Australia

Digital Creative Director at M&C Saatchi

I was responsible for overseeing all digital design and thinking on a number of large campaign projects as well as numerous successful new business pitches.

Please refer to my LinkedIn profile for previous experience.

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Pascal Potvin

Design Principal at Kraken

Austin is a leader who helps others around him grow. He is attentive and gives folks around him space to get their work done. He provides great feedback and likes to challenge designers around him to bring different perspectives into account. His work ethics are pristine, and he is easily adjustable to a given situation. His ability to go out of his way to help others has made him stand out. His unique ability to organize the working process and let employees demonstrate their professional skills' full extent helps everyone coordinate. A combination of humor and empathy helps to lift the spirit in stressful situations. Austin is an asset to any team.

John Lazzara

Head of UX at Telstra

Austin is an effective design leader and great to work with. I hired Austin in March 2020 to lead future state digital sales experience with a team of UX, Visual design & copy designers. He has done an amazing job working with many stakeholders to bring this work to life. He is smart, dedicated and has a solid design practice.

Sean McVeigh

Head of Customer-centric
Design at Westpac Bank

Exceptional Experience Designer that has that rare blend of great design capability, strategic thinking, creative collaboration. Able to transform fuzzy/complex problems into a simple customer value proposition; through hands on creative direction, and guiding multidisciplinary design teams and business owners.

Inga Latham

GM, User Experience and
Design at Commonwealth Bank

Austin is a very talented Experience Designer. As the User Experience Lead, he took a high profile project from business case concept to delivery. He managed both internal & external agency teams with a high degree of personal accountability & a focus on maintaining standards as well as ensuring the customer was at the center of all business discussions & decisions.

Drew Unsworth

GM, Digital Retail Banking at
Commonwealth Bank

Austin was brought in to help form our early thinking on a major customer experience. Not only did he throw himself at the task with a huge amount of energy he was able to combine UX/VD and Business thinking in the solution. He stretched out thinking further than we imagined and helped establish the road-map for future delivery.

Abigail Thomas

Director, Customer Experience
at Deloitte Digital

Austin is a big creative thinker. He comes up with new concepts and ideas readily and finds it easy to articulate his ideas visually. He also has that rare quality of being open and flexible when his ideas are challenged - either by colleagues or by clients - perhaps because he is confident he can always come up with new ideas.