AKMAR HISHAM ZULKEFLI

Designing Systems Across Brand, Space & Interface

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SUMMARY

Design strategist with 12 years in design, including 5+ years building digital products, across property, publishing, and non-profit sectors. Trained as a Mechanical Engineer, I bring structured systems thinking to design strategy — shaping product vision, leading multi-disciplinary teams, and grounding decisions in evidence from user research.

I have operated at the intersection of design and business strategy throughout my career: conducting research with 1,500+ participants to inform campaign and product direction, architecting cross-platform information systems at scale, leading brand and service redesigns with C-suite stakeholders, and developing new revenue streams through prototyped digital products. I am accustomed to working across disciplines — with developers, product owners, copywriters, and senior leadership — and to translating design intent into decisions that stick.

EXPERIENCE

IOI City Mall Oct 2022 – Present

Senior Executive, Graphic Designer — scope spanning product & system design

- Built the wayfinding signage system in Figma — the production mechanics behind cutting a full signage update cycle from 80 hours to 4.
- Conceptualised and designed PRIOS (Property Investment Operation System), the inter-department evolution of the signage system — covering 800 tenants and 1,600 data points. The operational problem it surfaced was subsequently addressed at ERP scale through the company's Yardi Voyager procurement.
- Designed the illustrated floor maps for a wayfinding web app across 3 malls — the base layer the app's navigation sits on. The app itself was built by an external vendor.
- Designed the parking module, a new addition to the existing CLUB IOI loyalty app.
- Collaborated with property operations, marketing, and IT stakeholders to align design outputs with commercial and functional requirements.

Reed Works Sdn Bhd Oct 2021 – Sept 2022

Senior Designer — Client Creative Services

- Delivered design strategy and key visual systems for top-tier property developer clients, leading from research and communication strategy through to final production.
- Developed integrated messaging frameworks in collaboration with copywriters and account teams, ensuring brand consistency across multi-format campaign deliverables.
- Managed client relationships and presented creative decisions to senior stakeholders, advocating for evidence-based design choices.

IMAN Publication Sdn Bhd Oct 2019 – Sept 2021

Creative Lead — Design Strategy & Digital Products

- Led a team of 3 designers across brand identity, digital products, publication, and marketing — setting design standards, managing workload, and developing team capability.
- Directed a full group brand revitalisation with Board of Directors, managers, and staff: conducting brand audits, facilitating alignment workshops, establishing a central brand idea, and codifying a corporate identity system.
- Redesigned customer journeys across 4 business websites (corporate, publication, e-commerce, landing pages), rationalising the service architecture and improving channel coherence.
- Led IMAN Rewards mobile app from concept through delivery: information architecture, user flows, journey mapping, prototyping, and third-party developer coordination.
- Led the research umbrella for the company's COVID-19 digital pivot — analysed a 573-participant survey to segment readers and shape a tiered subscription strategy — and personally designed and ran the live webinar channel, the highest-earning initiative at RM17k of RM31k+ total digital revenue within 3 months.

- Awarded “Great Innovator Employee 2019” from a field of 50 employees.

MyCARE (Humanitarian NGO) Dec 2012 – Sept 2019

Senior Media & UX Executive — Design Strategy & Research (team lead)

- Led a design and media team of 4 across campaigns, digital products, and fundraising communications serving one of Malaysia's largest humanitarian organisations.
- Designed a fundraising management platform (RM100,000 development budget) handling RM15M per annum in donor funds — end-to-end from ideation and IA through wireframing, UAT, and FAT with developers.
- Developed donor personas through qualitative research with 1,500 participants — identifying trust drivers that validated creative and media channels as accountable for 57% of donor confidence, directly informing campaign strategy.
- Introduced Google Ads and Analytics as a pilot programme for stakeholders resistant to digital investment — earning RM10,000 revenue from RM178 in ad spend (56× ROI), building internal buy-in for digital-first strategy.
- Created WordPress landing pages with integrated Billplz payment gateway, generating over RM100,000 per campaign.

WNF Resources Sdn Bhd Jan 2012 – Oct 2012

Sales & Instrument Engineer

- On-site testing and data acquisition in engineering contexts — foundation for an analytical and evidence-based problem-solving approach.

Drivetrain Research Group, UTM Jan 2011 – Dec 2011

Research Assistant

- Experimental analysis in engineering research.

SKILLS & CAPABILITIES

Design Strategy: Product Vision, Design Ops, Service Design, Systems Thinking, Evidence-Based Design, Design Leadership, Stakeholder Alignment, Workshop Facilitation

UX & Research: Qualitative & Quantitative Research, User Personas, Journey Mapping, Information Architecture, User Flows, Wireframing, Low-fi & Hi-fi Prototyping, Usability Testing

Tools: Figma, Miro, Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign), Notion, Monday.com, Google Trends & Analytics, ChatGPT, Claude

Methodologies: Business Model Canvas, Semantic Content Structure, Cross-platform Design Systems

EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

B.Eng. Mechanical Engineering (Automotive) — Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) 2007–2011

Colors for Creatives & Typography — The Futur Sept 2020

Business Model Canvas (BMC) Oct 2017

ADDITIONAL

Languages: Bahasa Malaysia (Native), English (Professional)

Notice period: 2 months

References: Available upon request