VERTIKAL DESIGN SPECIFICATION

Living Document — Product / Design / Engineering Standard

Version: 1.0
Last Updated: December 31, 2025
Owner: Lead Product Designer + Frontend Engineer
Status: Authority Lock-In — Non-Negotiable

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1. IDENTITY & PURPOSE

Platform Name

VERTIKAL

Core Mission

A vertical-first cinematic ecosystem built for retention, franchise IP, and Black cultural ownership.

What We Are

- Infrastructure for creators who own their work

- A closed-loop economy (content → distribution → monetization → reinvestment)

- A badge-based trust system that signals contribution and access

What We Refuse to Be

- ❌ A startup pitching disruption

- ❌ A diversity initiative

- ❌ A content farm

- ❌ A platform that treats creators as interchangeable

Tone Principle

> "Already real. Already moving. You either build with this or fall behind."

Vertikal should never feel:

- Startup-y

- Pitchy

- Quiet

- Generic

- Apologetic

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2. VISUAL LANGUAGE

Color Palette

Base

- **Pure Black** (⬤ #000000)

- Used for backgrounds, headers, containers

Accents

- **Electric Blue** (🔵 #00A3FF) or similar)

- **Deep Purple** (🟣 #6B2FFF) or similar)

- Used for highlights, CTAs, badges, interactive elements

Gradients

- **Radial or diagonal glow**

- Subtle, never loud

- Used behind hero sections, badge blocks, feature callouts

- Example:

```css
css

  background: radial-gradient(circle at top right, rgba(107, 47, 255, 0.15), transparent 70%);
```

Depth & Atmosphere

- Use shadows and glow to create cinematic depth

- Avoid flat design

- Every section should feel intentional and layered

Visual Rules

- No stock icons

- No placeholders

- No flat gray UI

- No visual noise

- No neon/loud gradients

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3. TYPOGRAPHY SYSTEM

Headline Style

- **Large**

- **Cinematic**

- **Bold**

- NOT minimalist

- Should command attention

Example:

STOP ROTATING YOUR PHONE.
FOR DIRECTORS. NOT INFLUENCERS.

Body Copy

- **Clean**

- **Confident**

- **Direct**

- Short paragraphs (2-4 sentences)

- No fluff

Accent Usage

- Highlight important phrases with accent colors

- Color = importance, not decoration

- Use sparingly (1-2 words per section)

Microcopy

- Button labels: short, action-first

    - "Join Now"

    - "Enter Studio"

    - "Claim Your Spot"

- No "Learn More" or "Click Here"

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4. LAYOUT & SPACING

Design Principles

- **Mobile-first**

- **Section-based** (clear vertical rhythm)

- **Strong spacing** between sections

- Each section must feel intentional

Hero Anatomy

1. Logo (top-left)

2. Navigation (top-right)

3. Hero headline (center-left or center)

4. Hero subtext (2-3 sentences)

5. Primary CTA (prominent button)

6. Secondary CTA (text link or ghost button)

Section Structure

Each section should include:

- Section header (h2)

- Supporting copy (2-4 sentences)

- Visual element (badge, diagram, or content block)

- Optional CTA

Spacing Rules

- Minimum 80px between sections (desktop)

- Minimum 40px between sections (mobile)

- Padding inside sections: 60px vertical, 80px horizontal (desktop)

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5. LOGO STANDARDS

Asset

Vertikal_Logo_Master.png ONLY

Placement

- **Top-left corner**

- Always visible (sticky header or static)

- Never centered

- Never swapped with alternative versions

Behavior

- **Clickable**

- Routes to $\boxed{\text{https://vertikalapp.com}}$ from ALL subdomains

- Hover state: subtle glow or opacity shift

Size

- Desktop: 180-220px width

- Mobile: 140-160px width

❌ Never

- Hide the logo

- Replace with text-only version

- Center the logo

- Animate on scroll (keep it stable)

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6. BADGE SYSTEM

Badge Meanings

🟡 **Gold — Founding 50**

- **Who:** First 50 creators

- **Access:** Highest algorithmic priority, founding equity

- **Signal:** Visionary, early adopter

- **Permanent**

🔵 **Blue — Visionary**

- **Who:** Creators 51-200

- **Access:** Priority platform access, elevated visibility

- **Signal:** Builder, early community member

- **Permanent**

🟢 **Green — Investor**

- **Who:** Capital partners

- **Access:** Priority deal flow, founding equity positions

- **Signal:** Financial backer of infrastructure

- **Permanent**

⚪ **Titanium — Networks**

- **Who:** Studios, distributors, infrastructure partners

- **Access:** Priority access to vetted talent, early deal flow

- **Signal:** Studio-level authority, distribution power

- **Permanent**

Badge Rules by Page

Page	Badges Allowed	Focus
Homepage	ALL	Explain system, show all tiers
Creators	Gold, Blue	Production, crews, posting roles
Networks	Titanium ONLY	Infrastructure, distribution
Investors	Green ONLY	Economic engine, monetization
Beta	ALL	Hub, comparison, access

Copy Guidelines

- Badges are **earned**, not purchased

- Language: contribution, priority, access, ownership

- Never: exclusivity without merit, social status, clout

7. FEATURE DEFINITIONS

VIBE™

Name: VIBE™ (always with trademark symbol)
Never: VibeCode, Vibe Code, VIBE (without ™)

What It Is:
Real-time comment overlay system. Comments flow across the screen during playback, creating shared viewing experiences without interrupting content.

Key Points:

- Live engagement layer

- Cultural context preserved

- Creator-moderated

- Algorithm-free reactions

Routing: `/demo` or explainer page

View Therapy

What It Is:
[Define based on actual feature scope — currently unclear from live pages]

Routing: `/demo` or dedicated explainer
Never routes to: Investor page

Job Posting System

What It Is:
Core platform infrastructure. Every creator profile becomes a hiring hub.

How It Works:

1. Creators post cast & crew roles from their profile

2. Roles attach to specific productions

3. Applicants respond inside Vertikal

4. Hiring happens inside the platform

Why It Matters:

- No external job boards

- No middleware

- Crew formation happens where the work lives

- Economic activity generated directly from platform

Must Be Explained On:

- Homepage

- Creators page

- Investors page (as economic engine)

- Beta page

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8. PAGE-BY-PAGE REQUIREMENTS

Homepage: vertikalapp.com

Goal: Introduce Vertikal as a complete ecosystem

Required Sections:

1. Hero (mission statement)

2. Badge system (all four badges)

3. Closed-loop economy diagram

4. VIBE™ feature

5. Job posting system

6. Cultural ownership positioning

7. CTA to creators/networks/investors

Badge Display: ALL
Tone: Confident, cinematic, authoritative

Creators: creators.vertikalapp.com

Goal: Recruit visionary filmmakers, not influencers

Required Sections:

1. Hero ("For Directors. Not Influencers.")

2. Badge explanation (Gold, Blue)

3. Founding 50 program details

4. Job posting system (how to build crews)

5. VIBE™ reference

6. Sign-up form

Badge Display: Gold, Blue ONLY
Tone: Exclusive, builder-focused, cinematic

❌ Avoid:

- MLM/pyramid language

- Investor content

- Social media metrics

Networks: networks.vertikalapp.com

Goal: Partner with studios and distributors

Required Sections:

1. Hero (infrastructure positioning)

2. Titanium badge explanation

3. Distribution model (FAST, SVOD)

4. Access to vetted talent

5. Early deal flow

6. Contact/application CTA

Badge Display: Titanium ONLY
Tone: B2B, infrastructure-focused, premium

Investors: investors.vertikalapp.com

Goal: Attract capital partners who understand the model

Required Sections:

1. Hero (economic engine positioning)

2. Green badge explanation (3-5 sentences)

3. **How Vertikal converts watch time into jobs and economic activity**

4. Closed-loop monetization model

5. IP retention strategy

6. Contact/apply CTA

Badge Display: Green ONLY
Tone: Data-driven, economic focus, ownership-centered

❌ **Remove:**

- All "Titanium Investor Status" language

- Conflating investor badge with network badge

Beta: beta.vertikalapp.com

Goal: Serve as aggregation hub for all audiences

Required Sections:

1. Hero (why early access matters)

2. Badge comparison table

3. Links to: Creators, Networks, Investors

4. Why badges matter

5. Waitlist or demo access

Badge Display: ALL (comparison mode)
Tone: Inclusive but selective, clear paths for each audience

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9. COPY VOICE GUIDE

What to Say

- "Black culture drives global storytelling but rarely owns the rails."

- "We're not adding diversity — we're building infrastructure."

- "Ownership. Not charity."

- "IP stays owned. Revenue flows back."

- "Built for retention, franchise IP, and cultural ownership."

What to Never Say

- ❌ "Disrupting the industry"

- ❌ "Revolutionizing content"

- ❌ "Empowering creators" (passive, charity-coded)

- ❌ "Join the community" (soft, vague)

- ❌ "Diverse voices" (tokenizing)

Sentence Structure

- **Short, declarative sentences**

- No marketing jargon

- No buzzwords

- No apologies

- No hedging ("we believe," "we hope")

Tone Examples

✅ **Good:**

> Vertikal is infrastructure. Creators post jobs, hire crews, and own their IP. Revenue flows back into production. This is how culture becomes capital.

❌ **Bad:**

> We're building a revolutionary platform to empower diverse voices and disrupt the content creation industry by giving creators the tools they need to succeed.

10. CTA & ROUTING RULES

Button Destinations

Every button must route to a **real destination** or a **contextual waitlist**.

CTA Text	Route
"Join The Movement"	`/apply/`
"Enter Studio"	`/studio/` (if live) or `/apply/`
"Claim Your Spot"	`/apply/`
"Watch Live Demo"	`/demo`
"View The Thesis"	`/invest` or `/contact`
"Join Demo Waitlist"	`/demo`

❌ Never Use:

- `#` (placeholder links)
- Broken relative paths (e.g., `investors/index.html` when page doesn't exist)
- External links without context

Contextual Waitlists

If a feature isn't live, route to a waitlist page that explains:

- What the feature is
- When it's expected
- How to get early access

Example:

> Live demo launching March/April. Full beta expected June with at least 50 creators.
> **[Join Demo Waitlist]**

📋 IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

Use this checklist when building or auditing any Vertikal page:

- [ ] Logo in top-left, links to vertikalapp.com
- [ ] Pure black base with blue/purple accents
- [ ] No placeholder content or dead links
- [ ] VIBE™ (not VibeCode) used consistently
- [ ] Badge system enforced per audience
- [ ] Job posting system explained
- [ ] Strong spacing between sections
- [ ] Mobile-first responsive design
- [ ] Copy is confident, not pitchy
- [ ] CTAs route to real destinations
- [ ] No startup buzzwords

🔄 VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Changes	Author
1.0	Dec 31, 2025	Initial authority lock-in	Lead Product Designer

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📞 QUESTIONS OR UPDATES?

This is a **living document**. If you need clarification or want to propose changes:

1. Open a discussion thread
2. Tag the design lead
3. Propose changes with rationale
4. Get approval before implementing

Standard is non-negotiable. Execution details can flex.

END OF SPEC