

Rafael Flores

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Open to: Design leadership roles • Hybrid/Remote (Americas/ET)

Summary

Systems-minded design & platform leader (15+ yrs) with a track record of **owning end-to-end product experiences** and **scaling design systems** across regulated, high-trust domains (benefits/money movement; retail health; pro-audio hardware↔software). Built orgs of **20+** (managed managers), partnered deeply with PM/Engineering/Research/Compliance, and shipped **cohesive, auditable workflows** across Web/iOS/Android that balance craft and speed. Recent work: **AI-assisted design ops** (drift detection, linting plugins, internal component chatbot) and DS modernization (tokens/Variables, contribution model, release trains). Hands-on with **APIs/SDKs (Python)** and an **automation platform** with simulate/paper/live modes, kill-switch, audit logs, and alerts.

Core Strengths

- **Platform & systems thinking:** settings/permissions, configuration, error/recovery, auditability; migration/deprecation and release management.
 - **Design Systems at scale:** tokens/Variables, contribution model, versioning/deprecation, migration guides, **release trains**; **Figma ↔ Storybook ↔ Zeroheight**; CI & visual regression.
 - **People leadership:** hired and coached teams to **20+** with **4–5 manager DRs**; career paths, psychologically safe culture, clear design reviews.
 - **Research & measurement:** usability testing, contextual inquiry; KPIs (adoption, error/defect rate, time-to-merge, CSAT/NPS); executive-ready narratives.
 - **AI-assisted quality:** drift-detection dashboards, linting for tokens/variants/a11y, and an internal **component chatbot** to unblock teams.
 - **Accessibility & inclusion:** **WCAG 2.1/2.2** embedded in delivery; **Section 508** experience; **R-to-L**/ localization inputs; content governance.
 - **Global collaboration:** partnered closely with **offshore engineering** across time zones to maintain quality and speed.
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Experience

Alight Solutions — Product Design Director (Design Systems & Accessibility)

2021 – Aug 2025 • Remote - Built/led Design System & a11y practice; **managed managers**; partnered with Product/Engineering/Compliance on platform & quality strategy. - **Modernized Design System** (tokens/Variables, contribution model, versioning/deprecation, migration guides, **release trains**) aligned **Figma ↔ Storybook ↔ Zeroheight**; added CI & visual regression gates. - Standardized trust-critical states (empty,

error, review/undo, limits); embedded a11y/content checks → **late-stage defects ↓ ~50%**. - **Improved design→dev lead time ↓ ~30%** via KPIs (adoption, error/defect rate, time-to-merge) and tighter PR/review rituals; **component adoption ~50%**. - **AI-assisted ops**: LLM drift detection on guidance/component usage; **internal DS chatbot**; **Figma lint plugin** for tokens/variants & a11y.

BMO Financial Group — User Experience Team Lead

Jan 2019 – Nov 2020 • Chicago - Led UX across retail & business banking (Web/iOS/Android); **experience architecture** for account opening, **money movement**, servicing. - Facilitated **design sprints/vision workshops** with research to align stakeholders and iterate quickly; established DS governance & content/a11y standards. - **People**: team lead for two ICs; collaborated with distributed engineering partners.

Walgreens (Contract) — Sr. Product/Interaction Designer

Feb 2018 – Dec 2018 • Chicago - Drove mobile standards and delivery rituals to raise craft & speed across consumer health/retail experiences.

InnerWorkings (INWK) — Lead UX (*earlier role*) - Led UX for **VALO** (B2B marketing procurement tooling): multi-party workflows, approvals, analytics.

American College of Surgeons — NCDB (*earlier role*) - Clinician-facing data workflows; **usability testing & contextual inquiry**; de-identified data handling.

Shure — GUI Software Engineer (*earlier role*) - Built a **web app** for **firmware updates** and **real-time control** of pro-audio devices; partnered with embedded/industrial/software/test engineering; **global compliance** exposure (CE/FCC/EMEA/Prop65).

Additional earlier roles — Hyatt (Lead Mobile Product Designer); Manifest (Sr Experience Designer; **Allstate executive dashboard in Tableau**); TandemSeven (UX for wealth clients incl. Goldman Sachs & JPMorgan)

Selected Work

- **Automation Platform: TradingView → AWS → Alpaca** (*independent*) — serverless job-runner with **simulate/paper/live modes**, feature flags, **global kill-switch**, **audit logs & alerting**; idempotency & retries; **ops console** (job history/replay).
 - **Unified DS & governance** — contribution model, versioning/deprecation, migration guides, DS **change notes**, **release trains**; consistent quality at scale.
 - **AI in the toolchain** — drift dashboards surfacing guidance/component divergence; **linting** for tokens/variants/a11y; **internal component chatbot**.
 - **Analytics & dashboards** — adoption/quality KPIs; executive dashboards (Tableau) using **Tufte** principles for clarity.
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Impact

- **Component adoption ~50%; design→dev lead time ↓ ~30%.**
 - **Late-stage design defects ↓ ~50%** after standardized states + embedded a11y/content checks.
 - **Research cadence:** ~2 studies/quarter informing roadmaps and quality bars.
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Tools & Practices

Figma (components, variables, prototypes) • **Storybook** • **Zeroheight** • **Tableau** • **Experimentation/analytics** (A/B tests; quant + qual inputs) • **CI/visual regression** • Facilitation (design reviews, sprints/workshops, executive readouts)

APIs & SDKs (hands-on): Kraken SDK & REST API (Python) • Alpaca SDK & REST API (Python) • Webhooks
• **AWS serverless** (API Gateway, Lambda, DynamoDB-backed persistence)

Standards & Compliance

WCAG 2.1/2.2 • Section 508 (federal) • **HIPAA training & de-identified data** (ACS/NCDB) • **Global compliance exposure** (CE/FCC/EMEA/Prop65)

Leadership Highlights

- Grew org to **20+**; **4-5 manager direct reports** (managers of managers).
 - Founded **a11y** and **Design System** teams; contributed to product-design org decisions.
 - Partnered with **offshore engineering**; ran design sprints/workshops with research.
 - Defined DS patterns consumed **across Alight** to reduce weeks of design effort.
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Keywords

Design system, tokens, variables, contribution model, versioning, deprecation, migration guides, release trains, CI, visual regression, settings, permissions, configuration, auditability, approvals, money movement, fintech, B2B, healthcare, HIPAA, Section 508, accessibility, WCAG 2.1/2.2, localization, RTL, research ops, usability testing, contextual inquiry, analytics, dashboards, Tableau, Tufte, AI drift detection, linting, internal chatbot, Python SDKs, webhooks, AWS serverless