Design System Best Practices for Scaling Businesses

For Design Teams

- **Leverage Atomic Design Principles**: Structure components hierarchically (atoms, molecules, organisms) to ensure scalability and maintain consistency across designs.

- **Use a Component Library Aligned with Development Libraries**: Align design tools like Figma or Sketch with the component libraries developers are using to maintain consistency.

- **Standardize and Name Design Tokens Clearly**: Define and document design tokens (colors, typography, spacing) with consistent naming conventions to ensure alignment across design and development tools.

- **Design custom components for reusability and collaborate early with developers**: Create flexible components with variations, align them with the design system, and work with developers to address constraints, document behaviors, and ensure scalability.

For Development Teams

- **Component-Driven Development**: Build reusable, scalable components using frameworks like React, Vue, or Angular, directly reflecting the design system.

- **Utilize Existing UI Libraries for Base Components**: Use existing libraries like MUI (Material UI) for web-based projects, or React Native Paper for mobile to help accelerate development, reduce maintenance, and leverage a community that keeps components updated and accessible.

- **Align on and Automate Design Tokens**: Use tools like Style Dictionary or token automation tools to efficiently implement and update shared design tokens.

- **Automate Component Previewing and Testing**: Leverage tools like Storybook for component isolation, sharing, and collaboration, and Chromatic for automated visual UI testing to detect regressions early.

Cross-Functional Practices

- **Incorporate Accessibility Standards**: Collaborate on creating accessible components, ensuring compliance with guidelines (e.g., WCAG) and maintaining inclusivity.

- **Shared Component Libraries and Tokens**: Use a single library for components and design tokens to ensure teamwork and consistency across the product.

- **Dedicated Time for Maintenance**: Plan and allocate focused time for design and development teams to maintain, update, and evolve the design system.

- **Align on Naming Conventions**: Develop consistent naming for components and styles across teams to streamline communication.

- **Regular Syncs for Alignment**: Schedule regular design <> dev meetings to discuss feedback, address issues, and align on updates or improvements to the design system.

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The best design systems are living systems that grow and adapt with your products and teams.

Brad Frost,

Creator of Atomic Design

Thank you.
Muchas gracias.