

Nishant Kaku

Product Design & Research Leader | Payments & Fintech, User Journeys, Design Systems, Mobile & Web

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SUMMARY

Product design and research leader with 15+ years leading design teams, who builds design functions, design languages and design systems from the ground up. Led UX for three years at Cashfree Payments, a B2B payments platform, owning the merchant journey from onboarding and KYC through payment integration, web dashboard and mobile app. Now Director at Housing.com (12M+ monthly active users); previously built the design and research function at Domino's India from 1 to 15. 20+ years in design, 13+ in product and UX. HFI-certified in usability and user experience (CUA, CXA).

At Cashfree, lifted **signup-to-KYC conversion 17%**, grew **active users 32%** and cut **support tickets 46%**. At Domino's, delivered **₹20 Cr (INR 200 million) in incremental annual revenue**. At Housing.com, built the Bricks design system from zero, cutting component delivery from **2 weeks to 2 days**.

EXPERIENCE

Director, Design & Research

Dec 2025 to Present

Housing.com (REA India), Gurugram

Head design and research for a property portal with 12M+ monthly active users, across consumer, seller and broker products on mobile and web. 7-member team embedded in product squads, reporting to the CPO.

- Set the design language and built the Bricks design system from zero (tokens, core components, documentation, governance), replacing per-designer files with one shared source. Component delivery fell from **2 weeks to 2 days**.
- Moved design from a service model to **product co-ownership**, with regular design critiques and a competency framework that set the quality bar for the team.
- Built research capability within the design team, coaching designers to run studies independently. Studies include a 140-renter survey, and buyer research that **helped reshape the new-projects roadmap**.
- Led design of the login and search rebuilds with Product and Engineering, adding **40K and 10K leads a month** and raising login rate 10% and filter usage 30%.
- Took Houzy, a conversational AI property-search experience, **from concept to beta**, defining its persona, failure handling and adaptive results UI.

Associate Director, UX

Aug 2022 to Nov 2025

Cashfree Payments, Bengaluru

Led UX strategy and a team of 8 for a B2B payments platform through its shift from enterprise-led sales to self-serve SME, owning the merchant journey across onboarding, KYC, payment integration, web dashboard and mobile app.

- Onboarding: lifted **signup-to-KYC conversion 17%** and cut completion time from 21 to 13 minutes by simplifying an 8-step merchant onboarding flow.
- Engagement and retention: grew **active users 32%**, reduced uninstalls 18% and cut **support tickets 46%** by rebuilding the post-onboarding merchant experience.
- Activation: framed the problem and drew the first wireframes for the self-integration journey, turning a technical payment integration into a guided self-serve flow. It reached 87% completion and raised **activation-to-transaction conversion 3.5%**.
- Mapped the end-to-end merchant journey in service blueprints with Legal, Operations, Sales, Banking Alliances and Customer Success, and built four SMB merchant personas that **defined the SMB charter**.
- Led RiskShield, a **fraud and dispute analytics dashboard**, from a generic industry view to personalised nudges showing each merchant what they were missing.

Lead Manager, UX

Oct 2020 to Jul 2022

Jubilant FoodWorks (Domino's, Popeyes), Noida

Headed UX design and research for Domino's and Popeyes online ordering. Built the function from 1 to 15 across design and research, with a research practice and a design system.

- Led Domino's India's first major UX overhaul in 15 years, delivering **₹20 Cr (INR 200 million) in incremental annual revenue** and ₹1 Cr (INR 10 million) in annual cost savings.
- Lifted **new-user conversion 20%** and store-pickup conversion 46% with the address and location revamp.
- Took the iOS app to a **lifetime-high 4.7 rating** and launched Popeyes India's online ordering from zero.

Principal Designer, UX

Apr 2014 to Sep 2020

Info Edge (99acres, Shiksha), Noida

Design lead across Shiksha (ed-tech) and 99acres (property listings).

- Grew **registrations 150%** year on year through a personalisation programme.
- Led the revamp of internal CRM, CMS and LMS tools used by sales and content teams.

Earlier

2005 to 2014

- Creative Lead at Brentwoods Education and Assistant Manager, Graphics at Paytm | 2013 to 2014
- Deputy Art Director at India Today Group, leading creative teams from 2010 | 2008 to 2013
- Graphic Designer at Horizon Print Services | 2005 to 2008

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

- PGPpro (Executive MBA), Leadership & Strategy | Indian School of Business, Hyderabad | 2021 to 2022
- International Immersion Programme, part of ISB PGPpro (Emerging Markets, Global Business Management & Corporate Entrepreneurship) | National University of Singapore | 2022
- Certified User Experience Analyst (CXA) | Human Factors International | Licence 2018-520
- Certified Usability Analyst (CUA) | Human Factors International | Licence 2015-5831
- MFA, Animation | Arunachal University of Studies | 2011 to 2013

SKILLS

Leadership | Design vision, strategy and roadmap, team building and mentoring, design critiques, design operations, executive stakeholder communication

Design | End-to-end product design for mobile and web, user journeys, design systems and governance, wireframes and prototypes, Figma, Framer

Research | Usability testing, user interviews, surveys, journey mapping, service blueprints, workshop facilitation

Fintech | Payments, merchant onboarding and KYC, payment integration, fraud and dispute analytics

AI | AI-assisted design and research workflows, conversational and agentic UX (Houzy), an AI portfolio assistant built on Cloudflare Workers and LLM APIs

SPEAKING AND WRITING

Talks and panels at Shiv Nadar University, Bennett University and Chitkara University. Articles on design leadership at nishantkaku.com/writing.