

Nishant Kaku

Director, Product Design & Research | Consumer, Fintech & Marketplaces

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SUMMARY

Design and research leader who turns design into a product partner that drives growth. Director at Housing.com (12M+ monthly active users), still hands-on with product and craft. 20+ years in design, 13+ in product and UX, 15+ leading design teams.

Housing.com: **40K more leads a month** from the login rebuild, and an AI search product taken to beta. Cashfree: signup-to-KYC up 17%, 87% self-integration completion, **support tickets down 46%**. Domino's: first major UX overhaul in 15 years, **₹20 Cr in incremental annual revenue**, team built from 1 to 15.

EXPERIENCE

Director, Design & Research Housing.com (REA India), Gurugram

Dec 2025 to Present

Head design and research for a property portal with 12M+ monthly active users, across consumer, seller and broker products. Lead a 7-member team reporting to the CPO. Moved design from a service model to product co-ownership, with designers accountable for outcomes and shaping what gets built.

- Led design of the login rebuild with Product and Engineering, which added **40K leads a month** and raised login rate 10%.
- Led design of the search and filter rebuild, raising search-results reach 11% and filter usage 30%, and adding **10K leads a month**.
- Took Houzy, a conversational AI property-search experience, from concept to beta, defining its persona, failure handling and adaptive results UI.
- Redefined the design vision and visual language, then built the Bricks design system on it (tokens, core components, governance), cutting component delivery from **2 weeks to 2 days**.
- Built research capability within the design team, coaching designers to run studies independently; introduced a competency framework and regular design critiques. Studies include a 140-renter survey, and buyer research that **helped reshape the new-projects roadmap**.

Associate Director, UX Cashfree Payments, Bengaluru

Aug 2022 to Nov 2025

Led UX strategy and a team of 8 through Cashfree's shift from enterprise-led sales to a self-serve SME platform, across onboarding, KYC, payment integration, dashboard and mobile app.

- Lifted **signup-to-KYC conversion 17%** and cut completion time from 21 to 13 minutes by simplifying an 8-step onboarding flow.
- Cut **support tickets 46%**, grew active users 32% and reduced uninstalls 18% by rebuilding the post-onboarding merchant experience.
- Raised **activation-to-transaction conversion 3.5%**, with 87% completion on the redesigned self-integration journey.
- Built four SMB merchant personas that defined the SMB charter, and mapped the merchant journey in service blueprints with Legal, Operations, Sales, Banking Alliances and Customer Success.

Lead Manager, UX

Oct 2020 to Jul 2022

Jubilant FoodWorks (Domino's, Popeyes), Noida

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

- Led Domino's India's first major UX overhaul in 15 years, delivering **₹20 Cr in incremental annual revenue** and **₹1 Cr** in annual cost savings.
- Lifted **new-user conversion 20.3%** and store-pickup conversion 46% with the address and location revamp.
- Took app ratings to lifetime highs of **4.7 on iOS and 4.2 on Android**, and led the 0-to-1 digital launch of Popeyes India.

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
- MFA, Animation | Arunachal University of Studies | 2011 to 2013
- Certified Experience Architect (CXA™) | HFI Institute | Licence 2018-520
- Certified Usability Architect (CUA™) | HFI Institute | Licence 2015-5831

SKILLS

Leadership Design strategy, player-coach leadership, team building and coaching, org design, design operations, executive stakeholder management

Craft and tools Design systems, user research, conversational UX, prototyping, AI-assisted design and research workflows, Figma, Framer, n8n

AI Conversational search design (Houzy), an AI portfolio assistant built on Cloudflare Workers and LLM APIs, agentic research workflows in n8n

SPEAKING AND WRITING

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