

VARUN GOPALAKRISHNAN

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Staff Product Designer • AI-powered Products • Design Systems • Brand

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Product designer with 14+ years leading end-to-end design for B2B and B2C startups, from zero to one through scale. Most recently at Dusk, a US live-music platform, I designed AI-powered products: a conversational AI assistant used weekly by 70% of active venues, and a generative AI production system behind 80 flyer templates. Before that I co-founded YourTribe, shipped 400+ websites at Thrive, and built my own app, AudioCraft. I do my best work on ambiguous problems, alongside founders, PMs and engineers.

CORE SKILLS

Product Design • Conversational AI & Generative AI UX • Brand Strategy • Product Strategy • Design Systems • UX/UI • Team Leadership • GTM Design • Conversion Optimization • User Research • Web Design • Brand Design • Product Management • Marketing

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Grew Dusk's Flyer Builder users 712%** - 80 templates in 320 variants, produced with a generative AI system I designed and built
- **Built YourTribe's brand and product from zero** - platform now serves 1,000+ startups with 35% improvement in user activation
- **Launched AudioCraft** - my own product, grown to 4,500+ downloads and 650+ MAUs with \$0 spent on marketing
- **Delivered 400+ high-converting websites at Thrive Agency** - average 25%+ conversion lift over previous designs
- **Reduced design-to-dev handoff time by 40% at YourTribe** - through scalable design systems and component libraries

EXPERIENCE

Staff Product Designer | Dusk | 2026

B2B live-music platform connecting venues, artists and agents · New York (Remote, contract)

- Grew unique Flyer Builder users 712% - expanded the library to 80 templates (320 variants) that fill in from each booking, produced with a generative AI production pipeline I designed and built (configuration library, master prompt, quality standard)
- Redesigning AI Chat, a conversational AI assistant that knows which screen you're on - designed seven structured answer-card types and a handoff model where the assistant recommends and the product's own tools take the action; 70% of active venues use it every week
- Audited every booking path, found an unintended loophole nobody knew about, and redesigned booking states so every booking ends in a defined state - shipped on web and mobile, so booking analytics now count everything
- Worked directly with the CPO and engineers - owned interaction models, specs, and launches end to end

Co-founder & Head of Product and Brand | YourTribe | 2023 - 2026

Founding Product Designer, 2022 - 2023 · B2C marketplace and B2B employer branding platform for startup jobs

- Led product design from MVP to scale - built dual-sided platform serving job seekers and founders with one cohesive design system
- Built brand from scratch - positioning, visual identity, tone of voice, and storytelling architecture that increased brand recall by 50%
- Headed the marketing function - campaign narratives, social strategy, and performance creative driving 60% reduction in sourcing time
- Built and led a team of designers, marketers, and product thinkers - acting as bridge between product, brand, and growth

Founder & Designer | AudioCraft | 2023 - Present

Mobile app that helps music enthusiasts learn from audio tracks

- Took product from concept to launch - strategy, UX/UI, and go-to-market, achieving 4,500+ downloads and 650+ MAUs
- Solved core UX challenge - made complex audio editing feel simple for non-technical users
- Managed full product lifecycle - user research, iterations, creator partnerships, and monetization strategy

UX Strategic Consultant | Netsicle & Thrive Agency | 2023 - 2024

Consulting for US-based digital marketing agencies

- Developed UX strategies for agency clients - focusing on engagement, usability, and conversion optimization
- Led teams through research, audits, and prototyping - delivered actionable recommendations that improved client conversion rates by 30%+
- Provided thought leadership on UX trends - helped clients stay ahead of industry shifts

Lead Designer | Thrive Agency | 2020 - 2022

Digital marketing agency, Arlington, Texas (Remote)

- Designed and shipped 400+ WordPress sites, WooCommerce stores, and landing pages - established systematic approach to high-converting layouts
- Led team of designers - assisted in recruitment, training, and mentorship of junior designers
- Acted as branding consultant - helped clients build or rebrand their products and services
- Managed multiple projects simultaneously - developed schedules, timelines, and budgets while maintaining quality

Digital Designer | Thrive Agency | 2016 - 2020

- Hands-on execution of web design, logo design, and marketing collateral for agency clients

Web Designer | dZine-hub | 2011 - 2015

- Designed eBay templates, Magento storefronts, and marketing assets - built foundation in e-commerce design

Training eXperience Mentor (Part-time) | CareerReactor (Remote) | 2022 - 2023

- Mentored emerging designers - provided feedback, evaluated progress, and guided career development

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Bachelor of Engineering (Computer Science) | Saveetha Engineering College | 2008

UX Intensive Program | ColleJ | 2022

Google UX Design Certificate | 2021

Interaction Design for Usability & Mobile UX Design | IDF | 2020

Professional UX/UI Bootcamp | Design Boat | 2020