STAKEHOLDER PITCH

Prepared for design, product, and technology leadership

Craftline

A governance operating layer for enterprise design systems

A proposal to move beyond documentation and dashboards into measurable design-system governance: file audits, component inventory, exception workflows, AI-assisted remediation, and accountable lifecycle review.

Pitch objective: secure alignment to build a production-grade governance tool that works with Figma and complements existing market tools.

1. Executive Thesis

Design systems at scale do not fail because teams lack documentation. They fail because governance becomes invisible: designers detach components, teams create local variants, exceptions live forever, and leaders cannot see risk until engineering handoff or production drift.

The market already offers strong documentation, token, analytics, and code-quality tools. But our ask is more operational: detect misuse, assign ownership, manage exceptions, and route component decisions through a repeatable workflow.

The problem	We have visibility gaps between Figma behavior, design-system policy, and delivery governance.
The opportunity	Create an AI-assisted governance layer that turns design-system drift into evidence, decisions, and remediation tasks.
The outcome	Higher design-system adoption, faster review cycles, fewer handoff surprises, and a clearer path from component proposal to release.

1	4	AI	Figma
governance source of truth	core workflow gates	remediation acceleration	primary design evidence source

2. Why This Matters Now

As design systems mature, the challenge changes from creation to control. The system needs to answer questions that documentation alone cannot answer:

- Which teams are using approved libraries correctly?
- Which components are being detached, duplicated, or locally modified?
- Which exceptions are approved, expired, or unmanaged?
- Which component proposals deserve investment and which duplicate existing patterns?
- Where can AI reduce manual audit and remediation effort?

A tech-savvy stakeholder should see this as an operating-system problem, not a documentation problem. We need event data, rules, workflow state, identity mapping, and AI summaries wrapped into one governance experience.

Manual reviews and scattered feedback	Structured audit evidence and routed remediation
Designers discover violations late	Self-checks and automated scans catch drift earlier
Exceptions live in chats or docs	Exceptions have owners, expiry dates, and migration plans
Leaders see adoption as anecdotes	Leaders see adoption, risk, and workflow health as metrics

3. Market Landscape

Several mature tools address adjacent parts of the problem. They are valuable, but they do not fully satisfy the governance and enforcement ask.

Tool	Strength	Why it is not fully aligned with our ask
Figma Library Analytics	Library usage, insertions, detaches, team-level adoption, styles and variables analytics.	A strong data source, but not a configurable governance workflow, exception system, or AI remediation layer.
zeroheight	Documentation, styleguides, component education, Figma sync, releases, governance guidance.	Excellent enablement layer, but not focused on active Figma misuse detection and remediation ownership.
Knapsack	System-of-record, design/code alignment, documentation, role-based workflows.	Closer to governance, but detached-component attribution and AI-assisted audit workflow are not its primary value proposition.
Supernova	Design tokens, Figma imports, documentation, code delivery automation.	Strong token pipeline, less focused on designer behavior audits, exception expiry, and component misuse detection.
Luro	Design system adoption analytics across Figma and product surfaces.	Relevant adoption measurement, but not the full governance charter, council workflow, and remediation operating layer we need.
Tokens Studio	Token creation, token sync, Git-backed token source of truth.	Important for token governance, but not broader component lifecycle and Figma file audit governance.
Storybook + Chromatic	Engineering-side component states, visual regression, UI quality gates.	Catches code/component regressions, not design-file misuse or Figma governance issues.

4. The Gap We Can Own

The missing category is a design-system governance command center. It should sit above the existing toolchain and convert fragmented signals into decisions.

Governance setup	Define charter, approved libraries, decision rights, severity model, exception policy, and SLAs.
Component inventory	Register official components, owners, lifecycle status, risk level, library source, and enforcement coverage.
Figma audit layer	Detect detached instances, local components, local styles, unauthorized variants, deprecated usage, and token drift.
Workflow layer	Route findings into intake, design authority, accessibility, engineering readiness, and release governance.
AI efficiency layer	Summarize violations, suggest component replacements, draft remediation tasks, detect duplicate proposals, and generate leadership summaries.

This does not replace Figma, zeroheight, Supernova, Tokens Studio, Storybook, or Chromatic. It coordinates them around governance.

5. Proposed Product: Craftline

Craftline is the governance layer for the design system. It turns policy into measurable control and turns Figma drift into actionable workflow, while keeping the tone designer-friendly: guidance first, enforcement where it matters.

Module	What it does	Stakeholder value
Governance Setup	Charter, decision rights, approved libraries, severity SLAs, exception policy.	Creates the policy source of truth before automation begins.
Component Inventory	Approved component registry with owner, lifecycle status, risk, and coverage.	Defines what the scanner should treat as official.
Audit Console	File-level findings for detached components, local overrides, deprecated usage, token drift.	Makes quality issues visible before handoff.
Workflow Board	New components, changes, exceptions, remediation, approvals, releases.	Turns governance from conversation into operating rhythm.
Designer Scorecards	Adoption, repeat issues, remediation speed, coaching actions.	Supports enablement and accountability without creating a blame culture.
AI Governance Assistant	Summaries, recommendations, duplicate detection, remediation drafts.	Reduces manual audit effort and speeds decisions.

6. High-Level Architecture

The product should use a hybrid architecture because Figma plugins cannot silently run in every file. Automatic governance belongs in the backend; plugin scans enrich evidence when designers or reviewers open a file.

Figma	Plugin scan, REST API, Library Analytics, webhooks where available.
Scanner	Queues file scans, captures snapshots, compares changes, identifies rule violations.
Governance API	Stores components, libraries, rules, users, teams, violations, workflow state, and approvals.
AI layer	Classifies drift, drafts summaries, suggests remediation, flags duplicate component proposals.
Integrations	Connects to zeroheight, Jira/Linear, Slack/Teams, GitHub, Storybook, and analytics exports.
Dashboard	Gives design leads and managers operational visibility into governance health.

Operating principle: Figma is the evidence source, the governance API is the source of truth, and AI is the acceleration layer.

7. AI Efficiency Opportunities

AI should not be positioned as magic. It should be positioned as a workflow accelerator around evidence, triage, and communication.

AI capability	How it helps	Control needed
Audit summarization	Turns hundreds of node-level findings into a readable file-level summary.	Always links back to evidence.
Remediation recommendation	Suggests approved component replacements or token fixes.	Uses approved inventory and rules only.
Duplicate proposal detection	Compares new component requests against existing inventory and prior rejected ideas.	Human council remains final approver.
Risk scoring	Prioritizes findings by severity, file criticality, component risk, and release proximity.	Score must be explainable.
Leadership narrative	Generates weekly governance digest by team, component, and trend.	Aggregated by default; avoids policing individual designers.

The AI promise: reduce manual audit work, shorten decision cycles, and make governance easier to follow.

8. Roadmap To An Actual Tool

Phase	Focus	Deliverables
0	Governance foundation	Charter, approved libraries, decision rights, severity model, exception policy.
1	Component inventory	Component registry, owner mapping, lifecycle status, risk and coverage fields.
2	Manual governance MVP	Editable setup, inventory, workflow, exception requests, manual audit import.
3	Figma scanner	Private plugin, node scan, detached/local override detection, JSON evidence export.
4	Backend and database	Auth, role-based access, persistent scans, users, teams, rules, audit history.
5	Automation	Scheduled scans, Figma REST ingestion, webhook-triggered queue, snapshot diffing.
6	AI workflow layer	Summaries, remediation suggestions, duplicate proposal detection, weekly digest.
7	Enterprise integrations	Jira/Linear, Slack/Teams, GitHub, Storybook/Chromatic, zeroheight links.

Recommended next build step: complete the Governance Setup and Component Inventory modules, then add manual audit import before building the Figma plugin.

9. Decision Ask

We should proceed with a focused build because the market validates the need but leaves a clear gap around governance operations.

Approve discovery	Validate governance model with design system leads, product design managers, accessibility, and engineering.
Approve MVP scope	Governance setup, component inventory, workflow, manual audit import, AI summaries.
Approve integration path	Use Figma Analytics and REST data where available; build a private plugin for deeper scan evidence.
Approve success metrics	Adoption improvement, reduction in unmanaged exceptions, lower repeat detachments, faster remediation, shorter component review cycle.

The pitch in one sentence: Build the governance layer that turns design-system rules into measurable, AI-assisted operating workflows.

10. References

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