



AI Design Stack Cheat Sheet

Updated July 27, 2026

This sheet pairs with [AI in Design 2026](#) on devlinpeck.com. The article covers the core roster in depth; this sheet adds backups and niche picks, and it is the part you keep at your desk.

How to use it:

1. Find the design job you need to do.
2. Start with the recommended tool and the starter prompt. Swap in your own details for anything in brackets.
3. If the recommended tool misses, run the same prompt in the backup before you rewrite the prompt.

Brand assets

Job	Recommended	Backup	Starter prompt
Logo concepts	Looka	Ideogram	Minimal wordmark logo for [brand], [industry], two colors max, flat vector style
On-brand social graphics	Canva Magic Design	Adobe Express	Instagram post announcing [event], use [hex] and [hex], bold sans-serif headline
Stock-style brand imagery	Adobe Firefly	Shutterstock AI	Lifestyle photo of [product] on a wooden desk, soft natural light, no visible logos

Pro tips:

- **Looka:** generate 20 or more concepts before judging any. The value is in volume, not the first batch.
- **Canva Magic Design:** load your fonts and colors into a Brand Kit first, then every generation starts on brand.
- **Adobe Firefly:** it is trained on licensed content, so it is the safer pick when legal review is strict.

Workflow tip

treat AI logo output as a concept round, not a final mark. Pick the strongest direction, then rebuild it as a clean vector so you own scalable source files.

UI drafts

Job	Recommended	Backup	Starter prompt
Wireframes from a brief	Uizard	Stitch	Wireframe a 3-screen mobile onboarding flow for [app type], light theme
Hi-fi screens in Figma	Figma Make	UX Pilot	Dashboard screen for [product]: sidebar nav, progress cards, recent activity feed
Marketing site draft	Framer AI	Relume	Landing page for [product]: hero, three feature blocks, pricing table, FAQ

Pro tips:

- **Uizard:** feed it a photo of a whiteboard sketch instead of text. It converts sketches to wireframes faster than you can describe them.
- **Figma Make:** point it at an existing file so it picks up your components instead of inventing new ones.
- **Framer AI:** write the real page copy before you generate. Layout quality tracks the quality of the words you give it.

Workflow tip

generate three layout variants of the same screen, then combine the best pieces manually. One generation is a suggestion. Three generations show you the pattern space.

Image generation

Job	Recommended	Backup	Starter prompt
Hero images and illustration	Midjourney	Adobe Firefly	Editorial illustration of [subject], muted palette, clean negative space, 16:9
Images with legible text	Ideogram	Recraft	Poster that says "[exact text]" in bold retro type, cream background
Editable vectors and icons	Recraft	Adobe Illustrator	Set of 6 line icons for [app type], 2px stroke, rounded corners, single color

Pro tips:

- **Midjourney:** save your best prompt endings (style, lighting, ratio) as a reusable suffix and append it to every prompt.
- **Ideogram:** put the exact text you need in quotation marks. It renders quoted strings far more reliably.
- **Recraft:** export as SVG, not PNG, so you can recolor and resize assets in your own tools.

Workflow tip

build a one-line style suffix for your brand ("flat illustration, [hex] palette, soft shadows") and reuse it verbatim. Consistency across images comes from repeating the suffix, not from luck.

Video

Job	Recommended	Backup	Starter prompt
Short clips from text	Runway	Google Veo	8-second slow push-in on [scene], golden hour, shallow depth of field
Avatar presenter videos	HeyGen	Synthesia	[Paste 60-second script] Friendly presenter, office background, medium shot
Animate a still image	Kling	Runway	Animate this image: gentle camera orbit, subtle motion in [element]

Pro tips:

- **Runway:** describe camera movement in film terms (push-in, pan, orbit). Vague motion words produce warped results.
- **HeyGen:** write scripts for the ear, not the page. Read your script out loud once before you generate.
- **Kling:** start from your strongest still image. Animation quality is capped by input quality.

Workflow tip

generate in 5 to 10 second segments and cut them together in an editor. Short segments fail cheap and give you full control over pacing.

Design-to-code

Job	Recommended	Backup	Starter prompt
Single component or screen	v0	Bolt	Pricing table with three tiers, most popular tier highlighted, responsive, Tailwind
Working prototype or app	Lovable	Replit	Build a waitlist app: email capture form, admin list view, CSV export
Figma file to code	Anima	Builder.io	Convert this frame to a responsive React component, preserve auto layout as flexbox

Pro tips:

- **v0:** ask for one component per prompt. Composite requests degrade every part of the output.
- **Lovable:** describe the data model in your first prompt (what gets stored, what gets shown). Retrofitting data is the expensive part.

- **Anima:** clean up your Figma auto layout before converting. The tool mirrors your structure, including the messy parts.

Workflow tip

always read the generated code before you ship it. These tools produce a strong first draft, not a reviewed pull request.

Evaluating any new AI design tool

New tools launch weekly. Run this checklist before a tool earns a spot in your stack.

Tool being evaluated: _____ Date: _____

- ☐ **Output quality:** I ran my three hardest real briefs, not the demo prompts.
- ☐ **Output quality:** results were usable with minor edits, not just impressive screenshots.
- ☐ **Editability:** I can export editable source files (vectors, layers, code), not flat images.
- ☐ **Editability:** I can revise a specific part of an output without regenerating everything.
- ☐ **Licensing:** the terms allow commercial use of outputs on my plan.
- ☐ **Licensing:** I know what the model was trained on, or my legal team accepts the vendor's indemnity.
- ☐ **Brand control:** I can lock fonts, colors, or style references so outputs stay on brand.
- ☐ **Brand control:** two people using the same brand inputs get consistent results.
- ☐ **Price model:** I know whether I pay per seat, per generation, or per credit.
- ☐ **Price model:** I estimated a real month of my usage and the number still makes sense.

Decision rule

a tool joins the stack when every box is checked. One unchecked licensing box is a no, regardless of output quality.

Print this page again for each new tool you evaluate.

Have any questions? Email me at devlin@devlinpeck.com