How design tokens empower multi-brand design systems

Louis Chenais
Specify

Into Design Systems #2
2021 Sept 28th

Pitch

Bonjour 👋

Pitch

I'm Louis Chenais

Specify

Co-founder
& Chief Evangelist

- W3C Design Tokens Community Group Member
- Design System aficionado

Previously

Front-End Developer @ SportEasy, 5emeGauche & Ultranoir

Find me on

- @chuckn0risk
- lucho.cool

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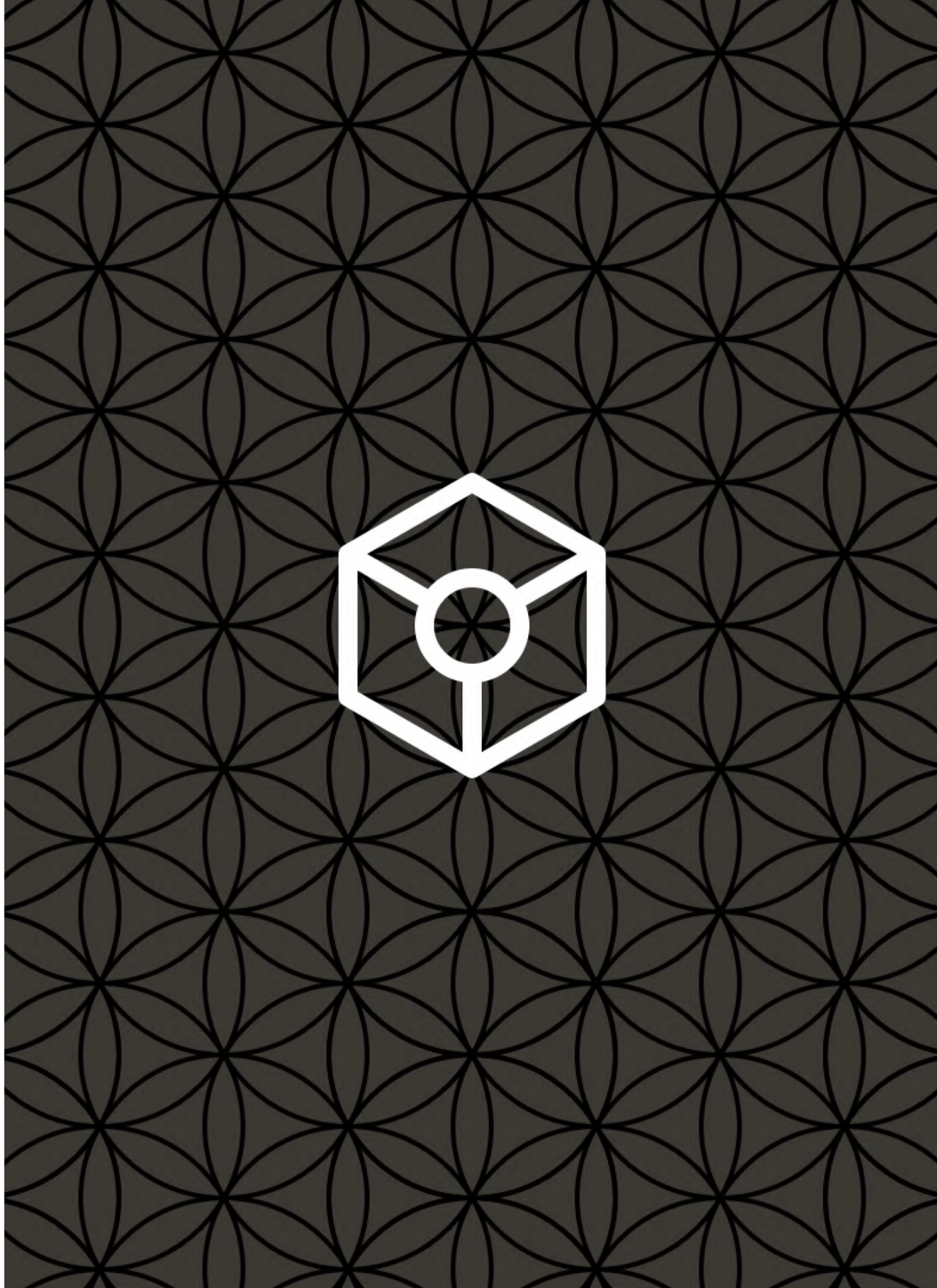
Why this topic?

What's in store for us

1. What are multi-brand design systems?
2. How brand models shape design systems?
3. What is a Design API?
4. Demo of a Design API



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1.

What are multi-brand design systems?

What does multi-brand even mean?

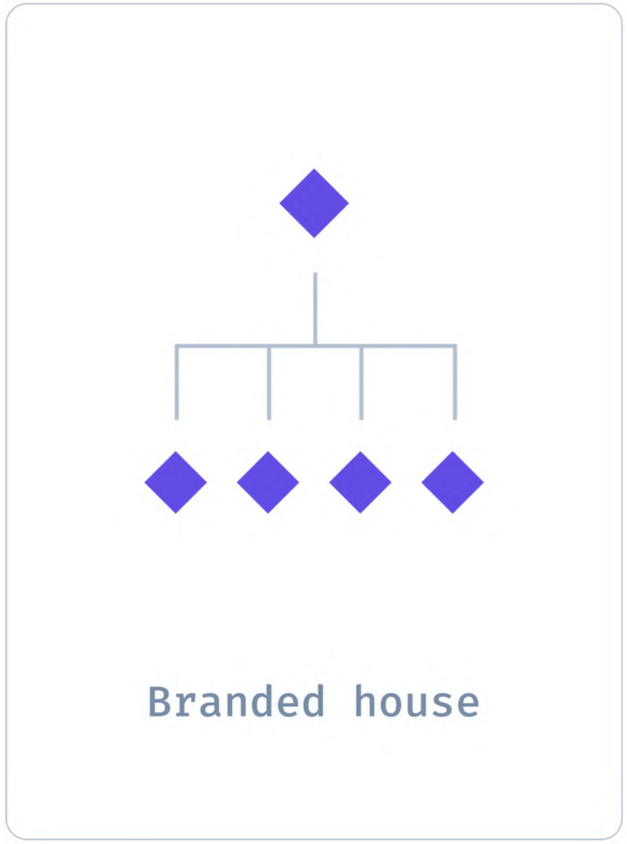
Many enterprise companies have a big product portfolio:

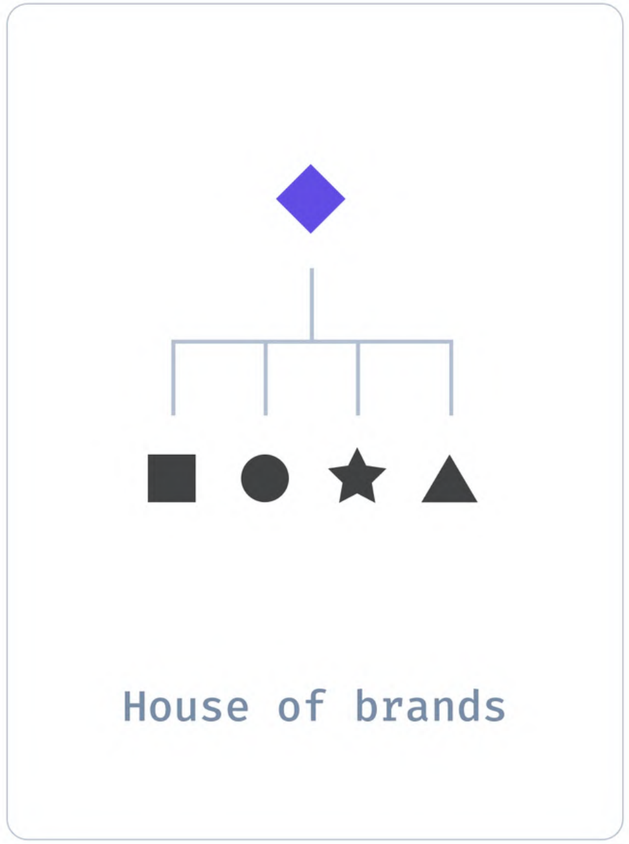
1. Google
2. Atlassian
3. Microsoft
4. Amazon
5. Volkswagen
6. General Electric
7. Unilever
8. Procter & Gamble

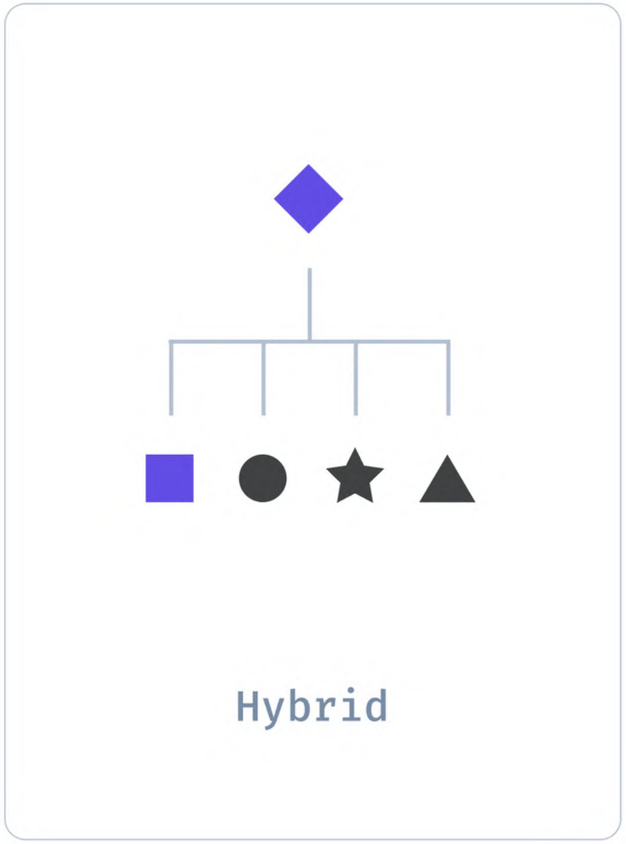
That portfolio can even be:

1. Multi-product
2. Multi-brand
3. Multi-platform

Brand architecture models

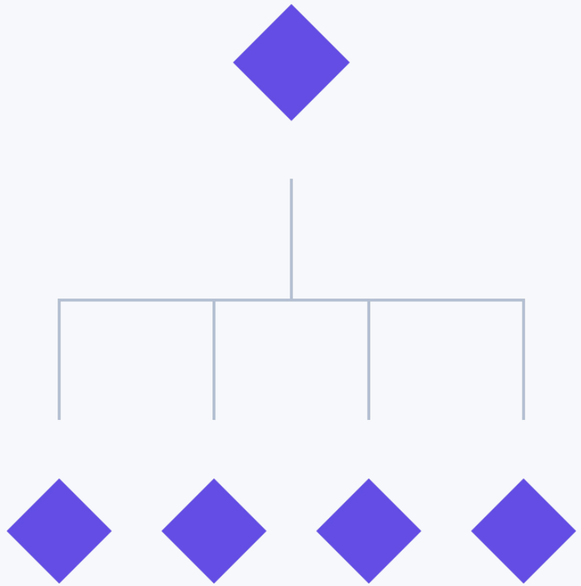






Branded House

The firm is the brand. It's a collective of complementary brands that cater to unique audiences but benefit from shared equity under the same umbrella.



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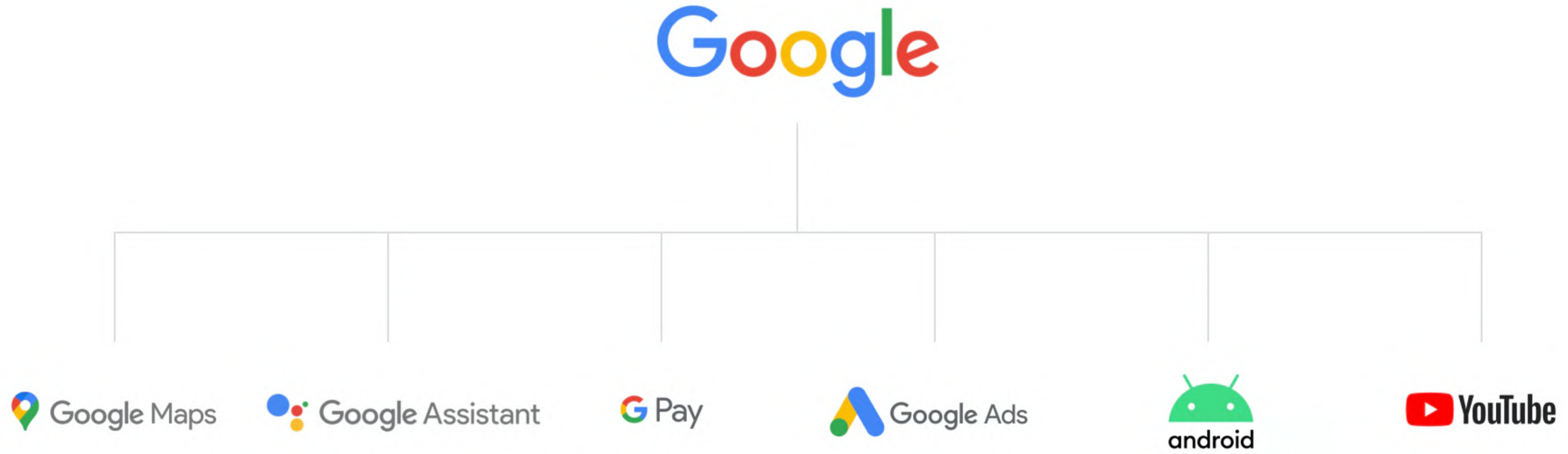
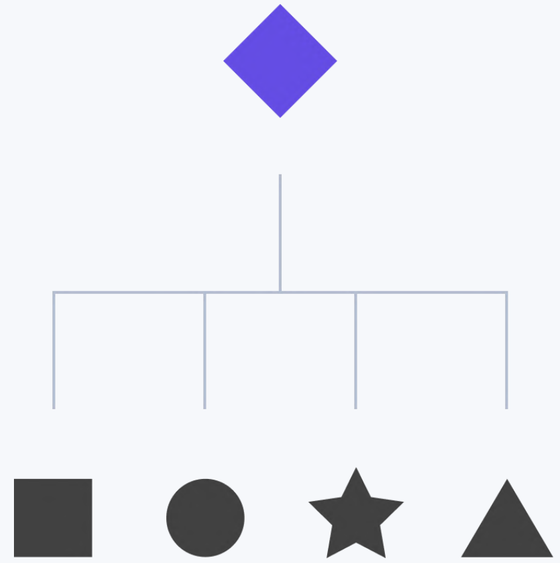

Google
Google Maps
Google Assistant
G Pay
Google Ads
android
YouTube

GE Oil & Gas
GE Aviation
GE Healthcare
GE Capital
GE Power & Water
Water & Process Technologies
GE
Lighting

- Bamboo
- Bitbucket
- Clover
- Compass
- Confluence
- Crowd
- Crucible
- Fisheye
- Jira
- Jira Align
- Jira Service Management
- Jira Software
- Opsgenie
- Sourcetree
- Statuspage
- Trello

House of brands

The branding is focused on the subset brands. Subset brands benefit from a strategic or operational alliance, but may serve customers in different ways, without an obvious connection for the consumer.



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AXE

LUX

HELLMANN'S
EST.1913

BEN & JERRY'S

OMO

Surf

Cornetto

Popsicle

Dove

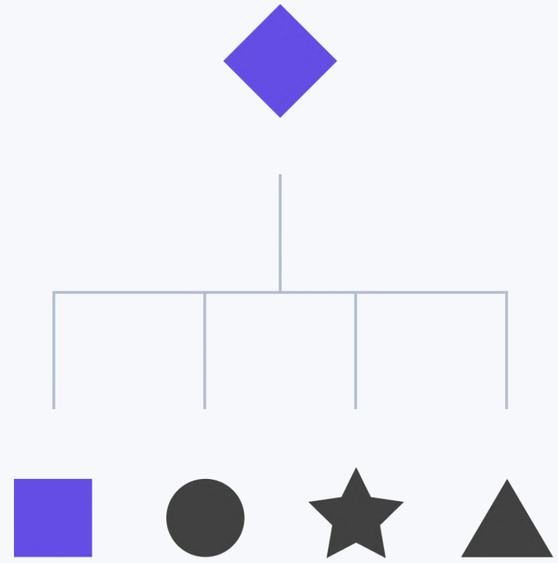
Lipton

KLONDIKE

LUVS
Pampers
aussie
Herbal Essences
PANTENE
Puffs
Charmin
Bounty
BRAUN
Venus
Gillette
THE ART of SHAVING
NEW YORK
P&G
Clearblue
VICKS
Meta
MUCIL
Pepto Bismol
Prilosec
Crest
Oral-B
Fixodent
IVORY
Secret
Tide
OLAY
SNOWBERRY
Mr. Clean
Swiffer
DAWN
febreze

Hybrid

The hybrid model aims to incorporate elements of both the branded house and house of brands models to give each brand maximum advantage. Hybrid brand model is often the result of acquisitions.



Pitch

Microsoft

Office

XBOX

Windows

bing

amazon
amazonfresh
amazon
web services
amazonkindle
amazon echo
amazon alexa
prime
amazon
mechanical turk
WHOLE
FOODS
MARKET
Zappos
.com
POWERED by SERVICE

VOLKSWAGEN

AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT

Levers you can pull to adapt a multi-brand design system:

1. Typography
2. Image art direction
3. Tone of voice
4. Animation
5. Audio guidelines
6. Content density
7. Color subsets
8. Colour
9. Iconography

Your branding is like water. Let it soak your products. Let it flood your market. Let it bring life to your whole organization.

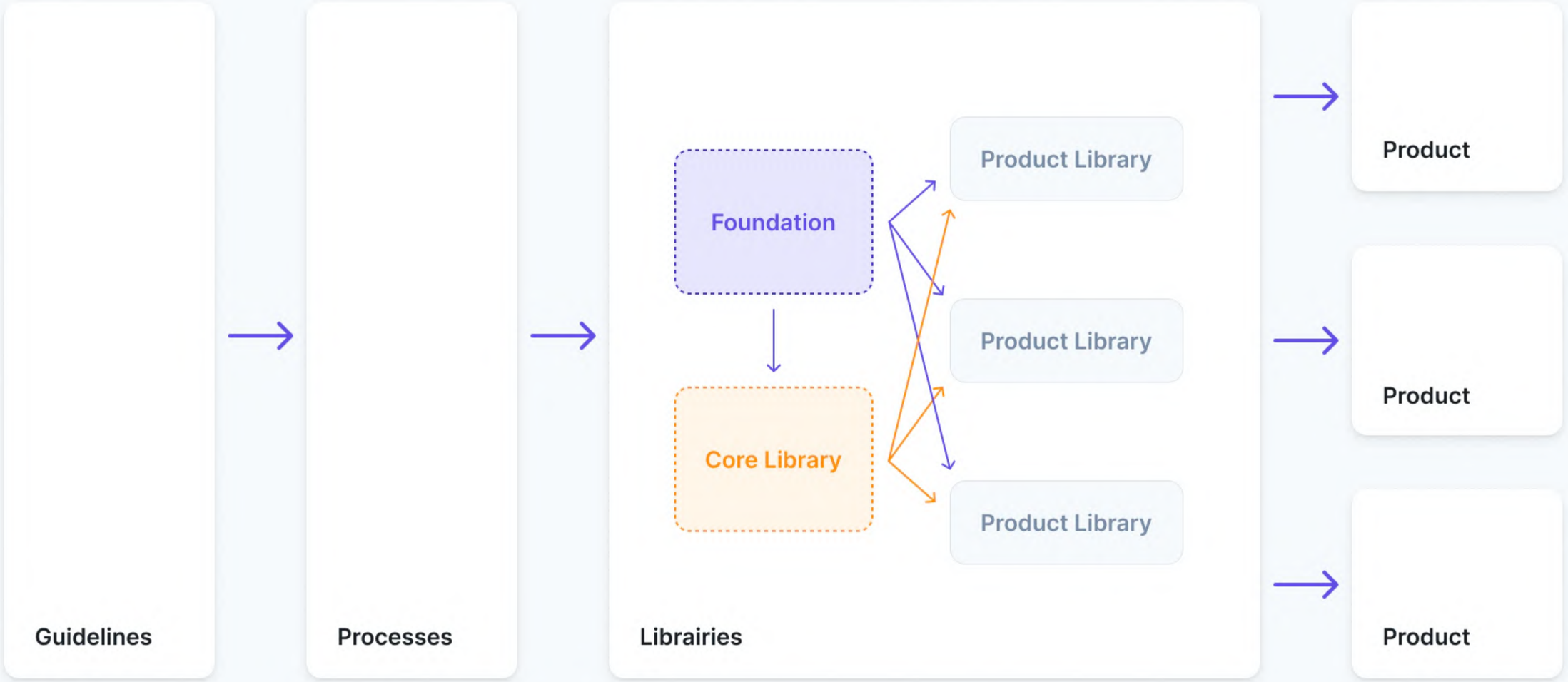
1.

How brand models shape design systems?

Credits: Sergej Spomer

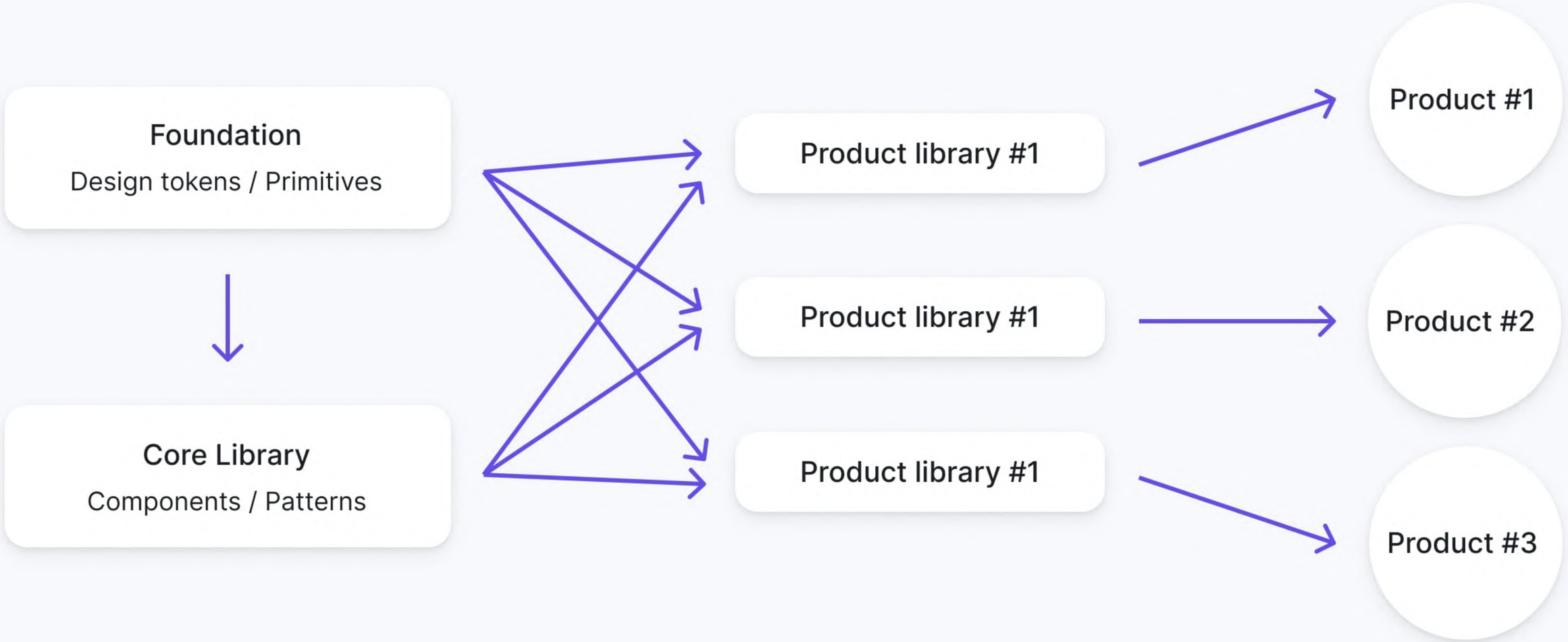
Design System Architecture

Design System Architecture



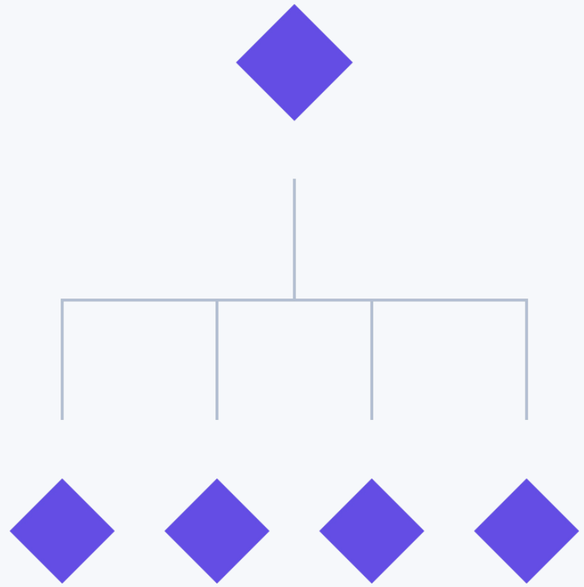
Credits: Sergej Spomer

Design System Architecture



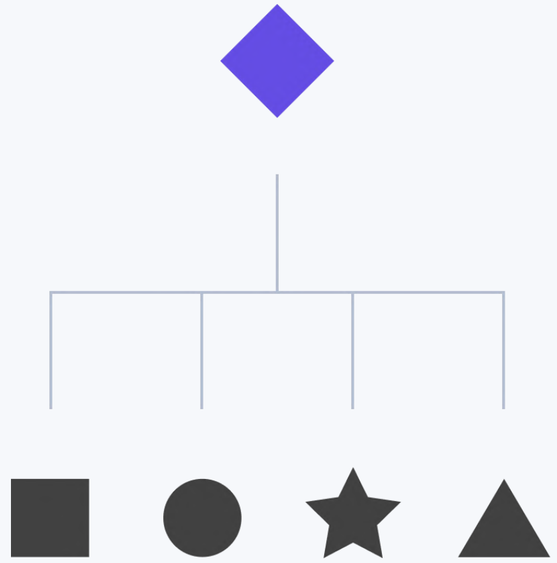
Branded house

- One central design system feeding all the sub-brands
- Design system is "strict" and changes are controlled
- Overriding styles on components is discouraged



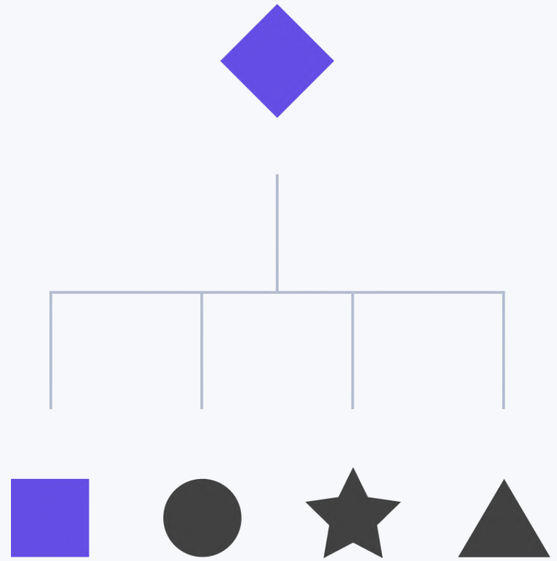
House of brands

- One central design system feeding all the sub-brands with as much elements as possible
- Every sub-brand has its own design system



Hybrid

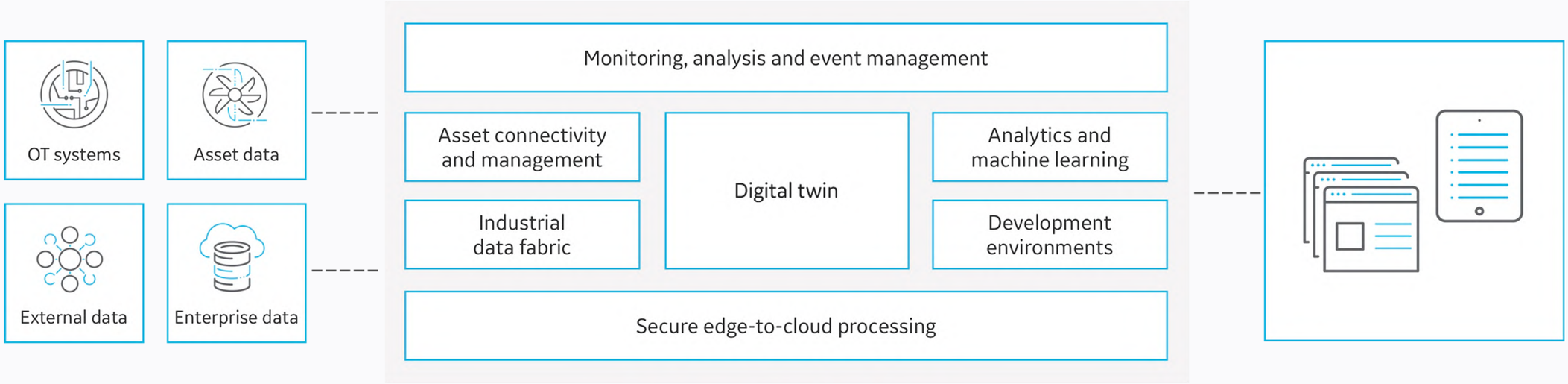
- Mix of branded house and house of brands
- One or several design systems will feed the organization



PREDIX

GE Oil & Gas
GE Aviation
GE Healthcare
GE Capital
GE Power & Water
Water & Process Technologies
GE
Lighting

PREDIX



IT and OT Data

Industrial IoT Platform

Industrial Applications

STITCH DESIGN SYSTEM

GAP BANANA REPUBLIC OLD NAVY ATHLETA HILL CITY

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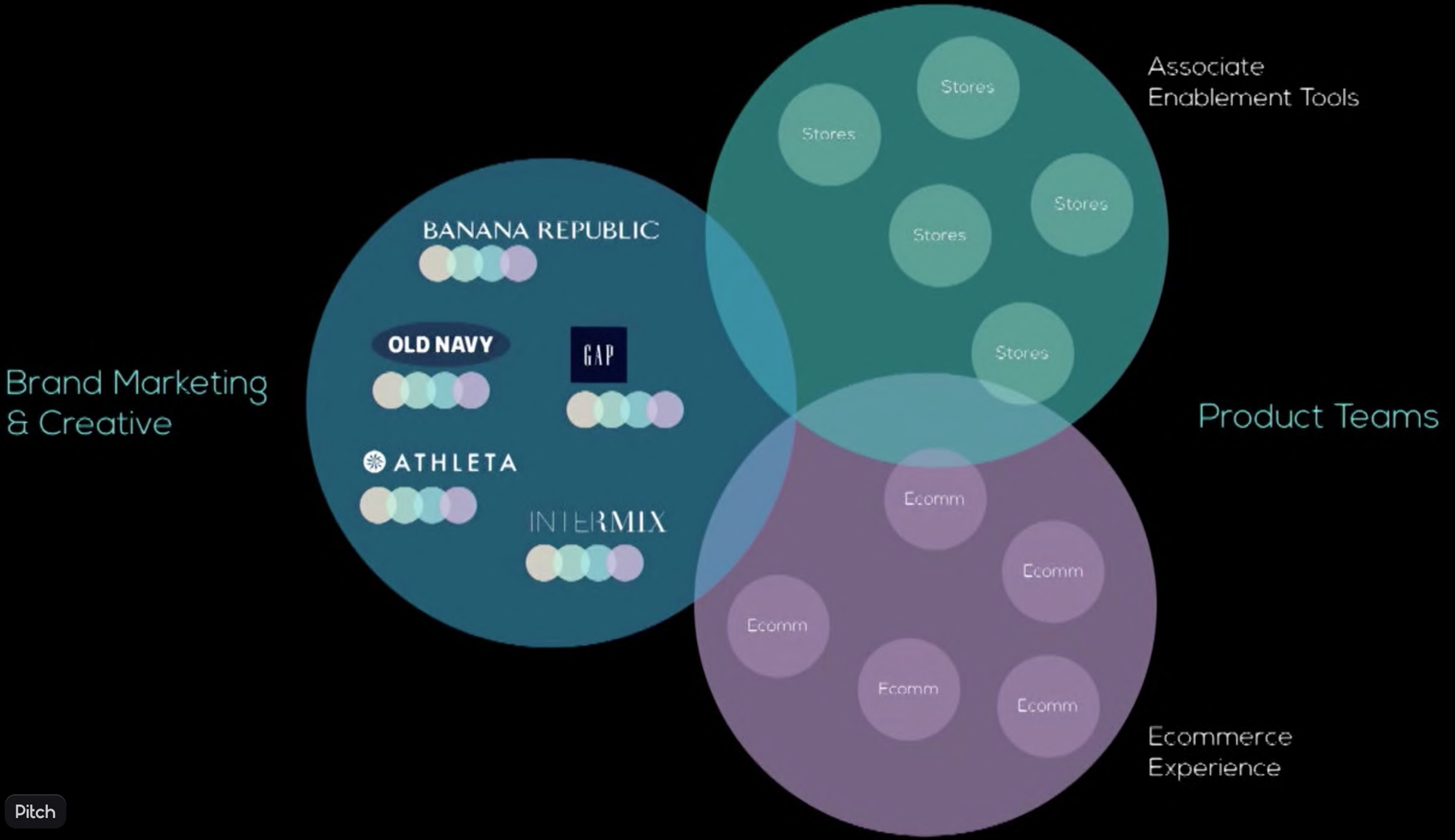
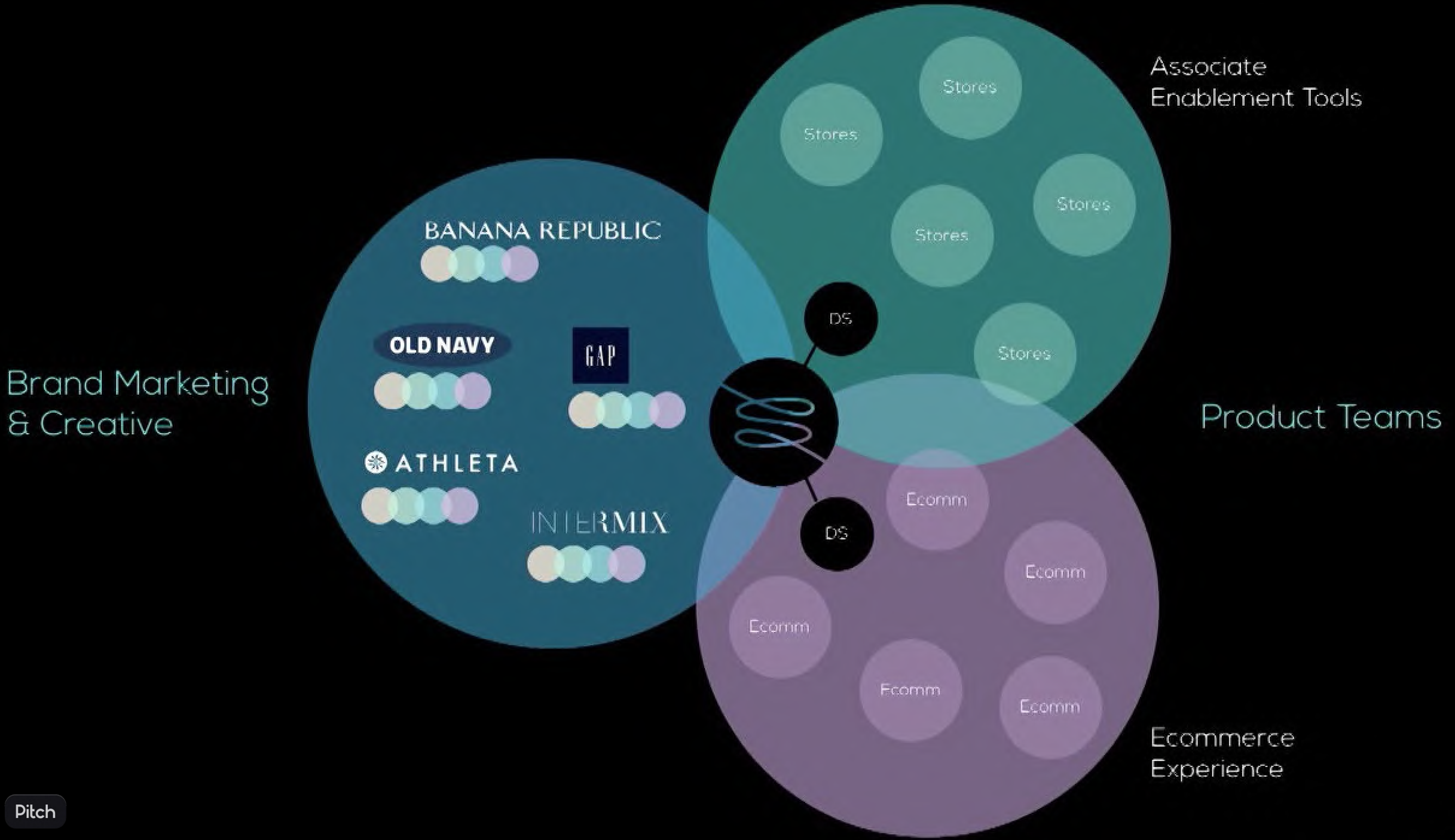
Why Stitch was created

- 30+ style sheets
- Bloated code / Page load
- No shared terminology
- Updates near impossible
- Brand expression hampered


Associate
Enablement Tools
Stores
Stores
Stores
Stores
Stores
Brand Marketing
& Creative
BANANA REPUBLIC
OLD NAVY
GAP
ATHLETA
INTERMIX
Product Teams
Ecomm
Ecomm
Ecomm
Ecomm
Ecomm
Ecommerce
Experience


Brand Marketing
& Creative
BANANA REPUBLIC
OLD NAVY
GAP
ATHLETA
INTERMIX
DS
DS
Stores
Stores
Stores
Stores
Stores
Associate
Enablement Tools
Product Teams
Ecomm
Ecomm
Ecomm
Ecomm
Ecomm
Ecommerce
Experience

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Shared Resources
Shared Values
Shared Language
Shared Destination
Shared Understanding
Shared Equity
Shared Execution
LIBRARIES
STANDARDS
DOCUMENTATION
ROADMAP
COMMUNICATION
CONTRIBUTION
GOVERNANCE

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Key metrics

- 75% design and dev time savings leveraging re-usable code and design, netting $2.5M YOY cost savings
- 50-80% time saving
- 300% return on investment
- 100% on brand

"Design systems are not just about style guides, component libraries, UI kits, etc. A good design system empowers change in your company culture."

— Jina Anne I @jina

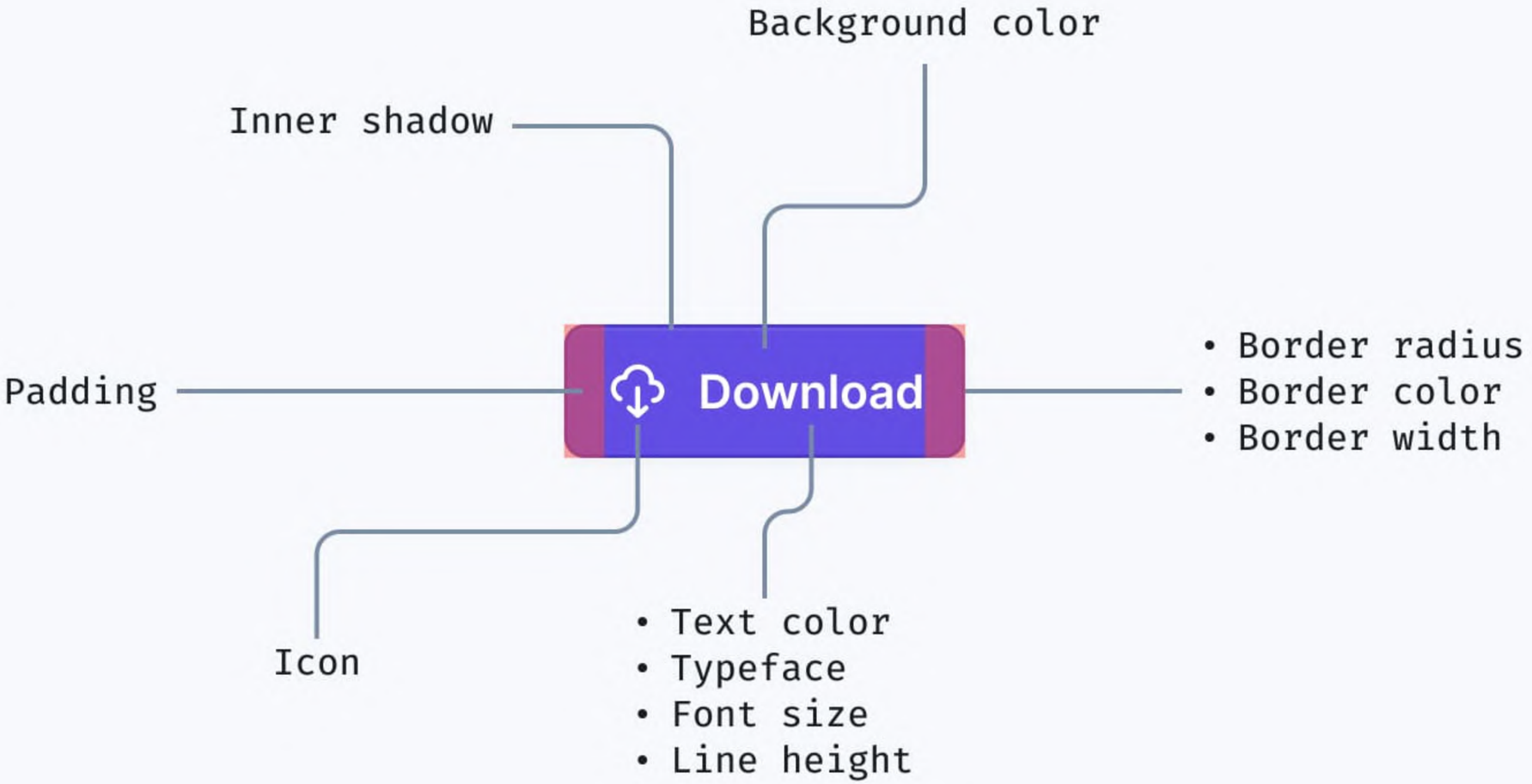
Design tokens:
divide and conquer

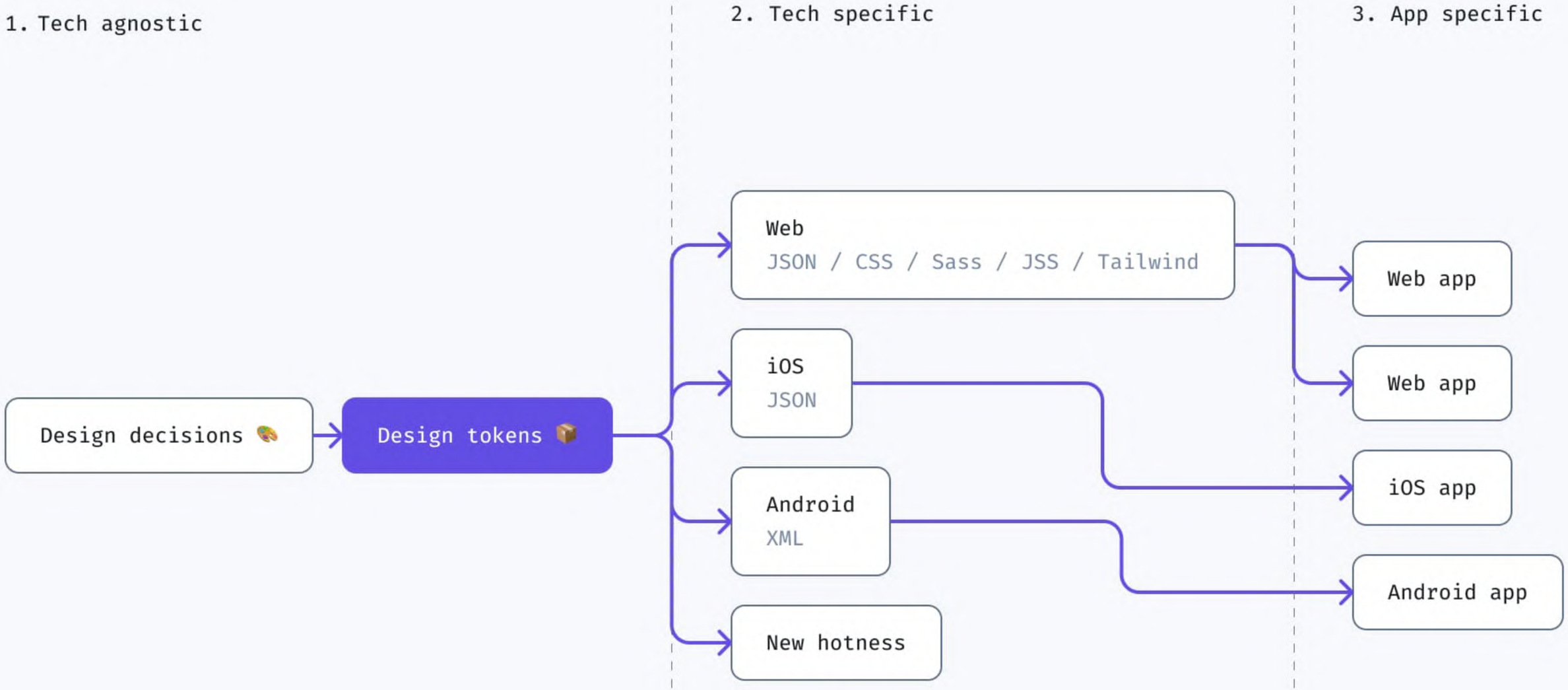
DESIGN TOKENS

"Design tokens are a language for communicating intent between different parts of a system."

— Ethan Marcotte | @beep

DESIGN TOKENS
ATOMS
MOLECULES
ORGANISMS
TEMPLATES
PAGES


Background color
Inner shadow
Padding
Download
• Border radius
• Border color
• Border width
Icon
• Text color
• Typeface
• Font size
• Line height


1. Tech agnostic
2. Tech specific
3. App specific
Design decisions 🎨
Design tokens 📦
Web
JSON / CSS / Sass / JSS / Tailwind
iOS
JSON
Android
XML
New hotness
Web app
Web app
iOS app
Android app

2.

What is a Design API ?

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Current situation 🤕

Crafting cohesive user experiences across several platforms is a real challenge.

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Nowadays:

Design systems to the rescue

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"A design system isn’t a project. It’s a product, serving products."

— Nathan Curtis | @nathancurtis

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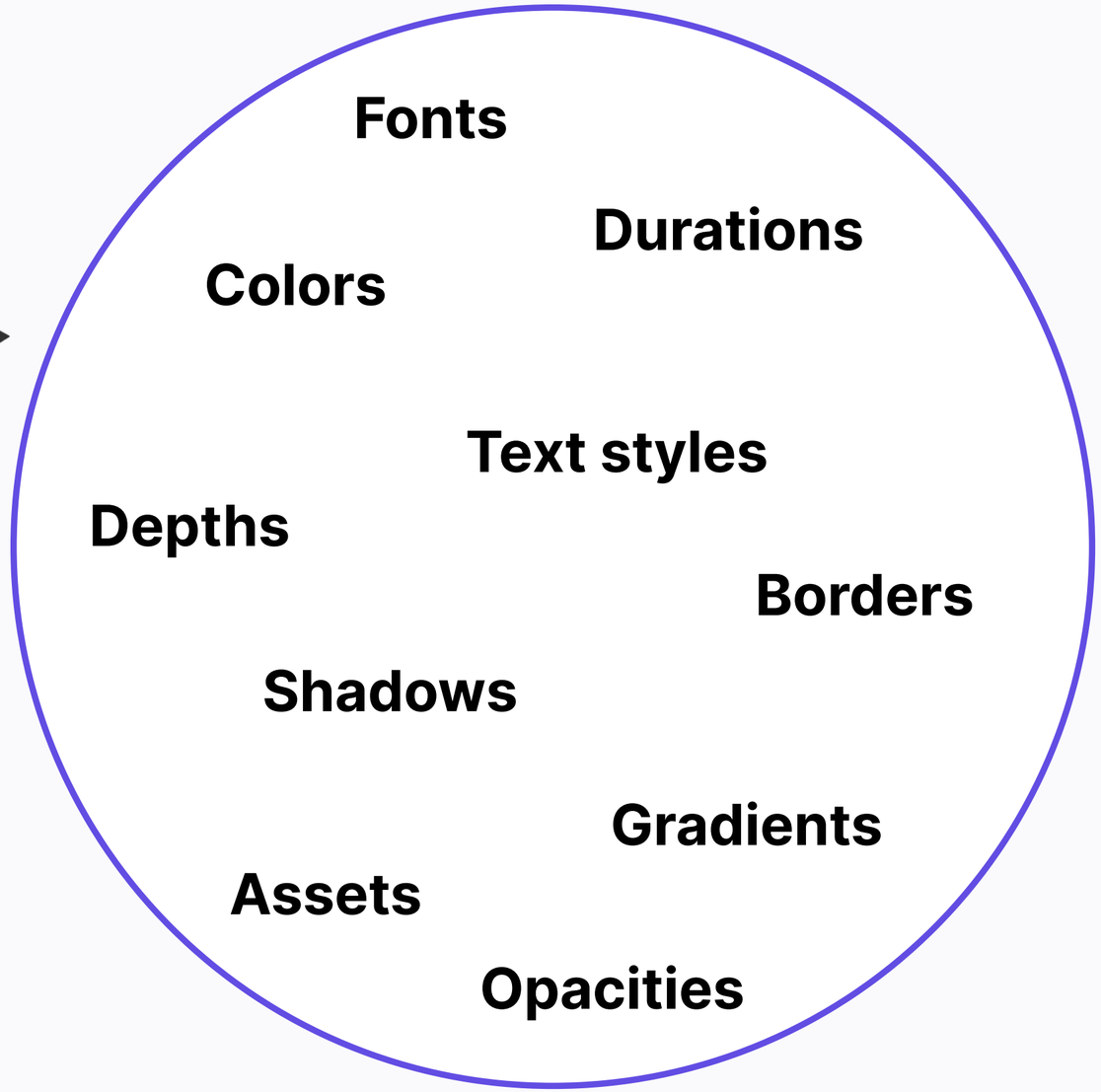
Design tokens



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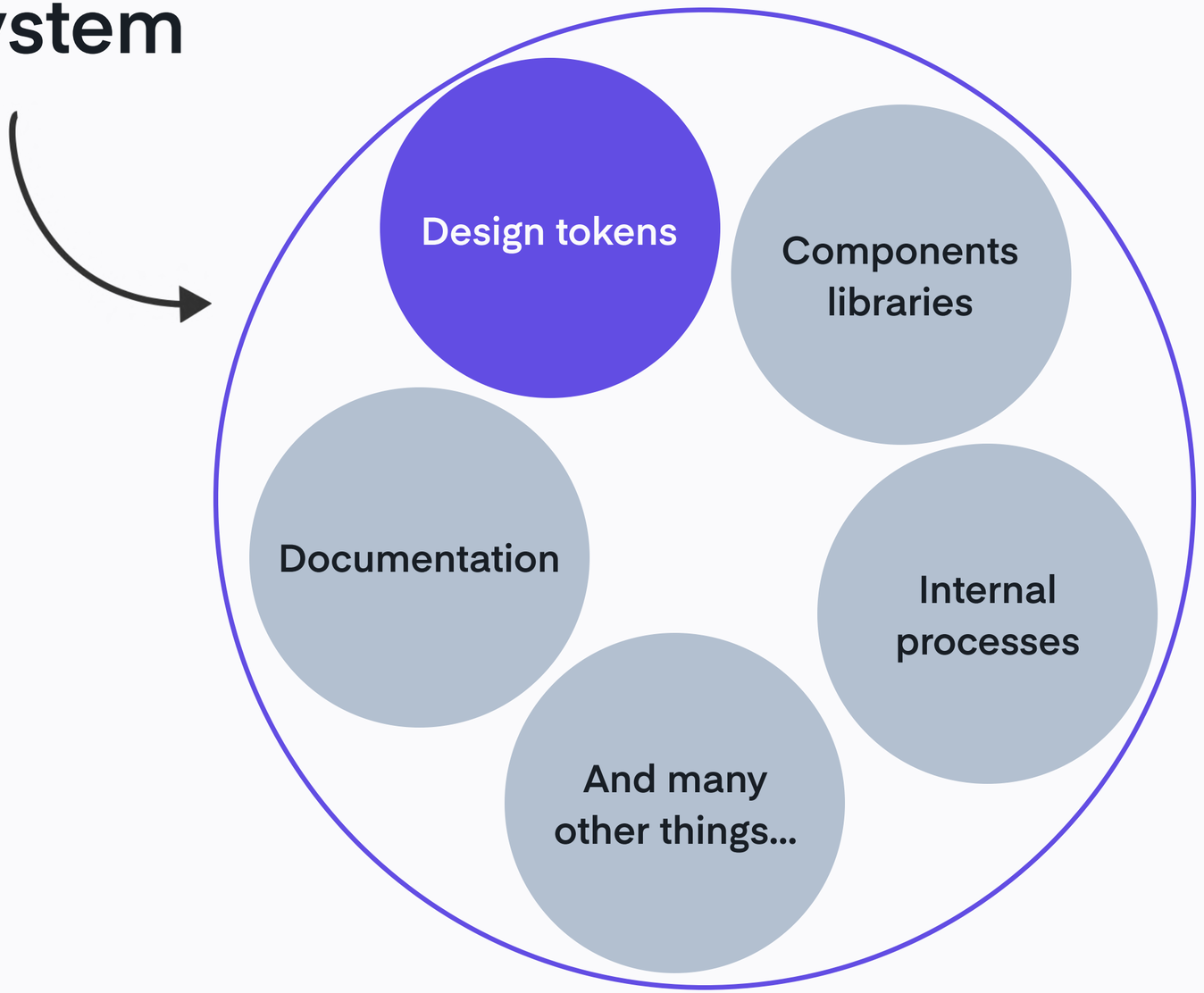
Design system



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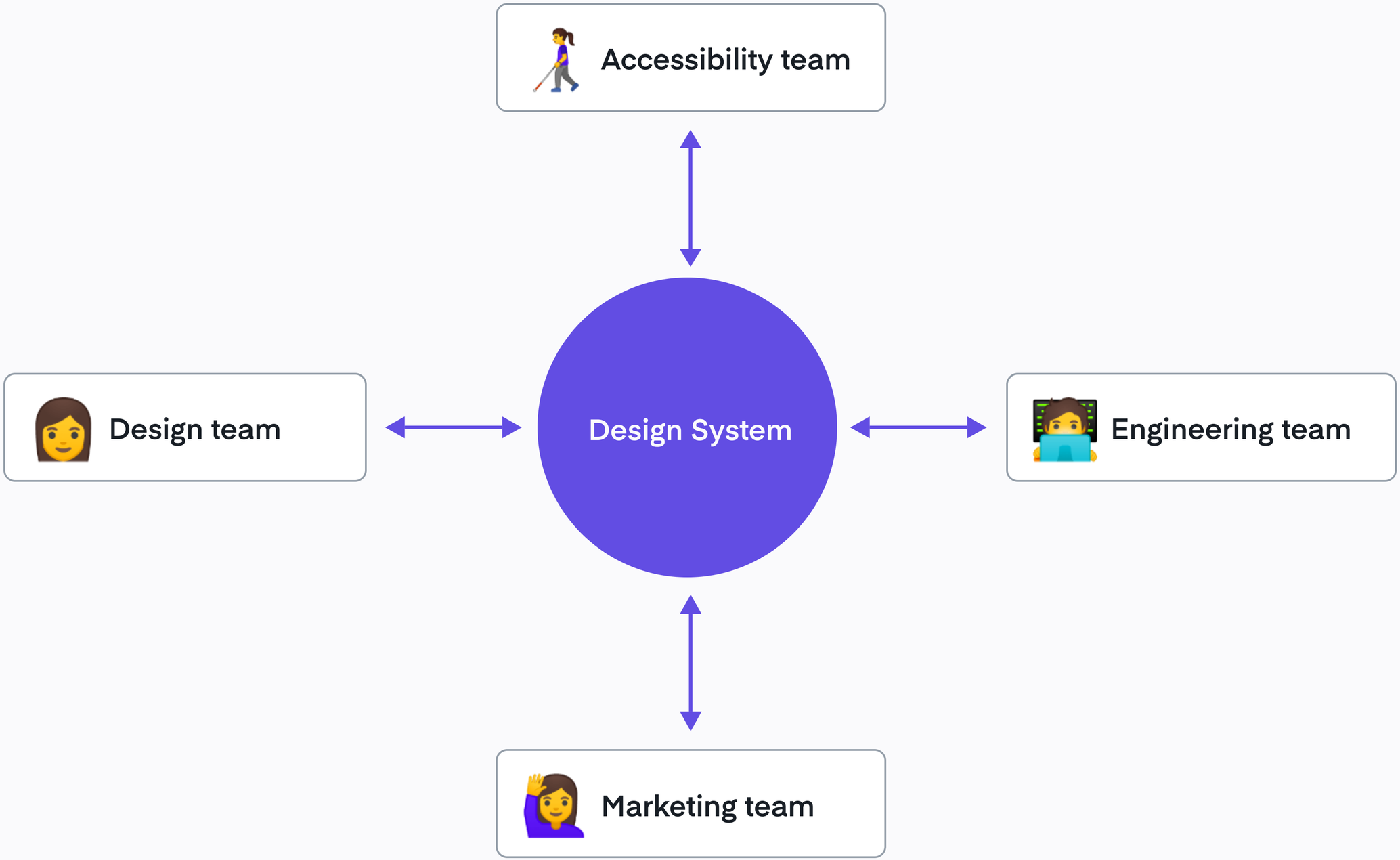
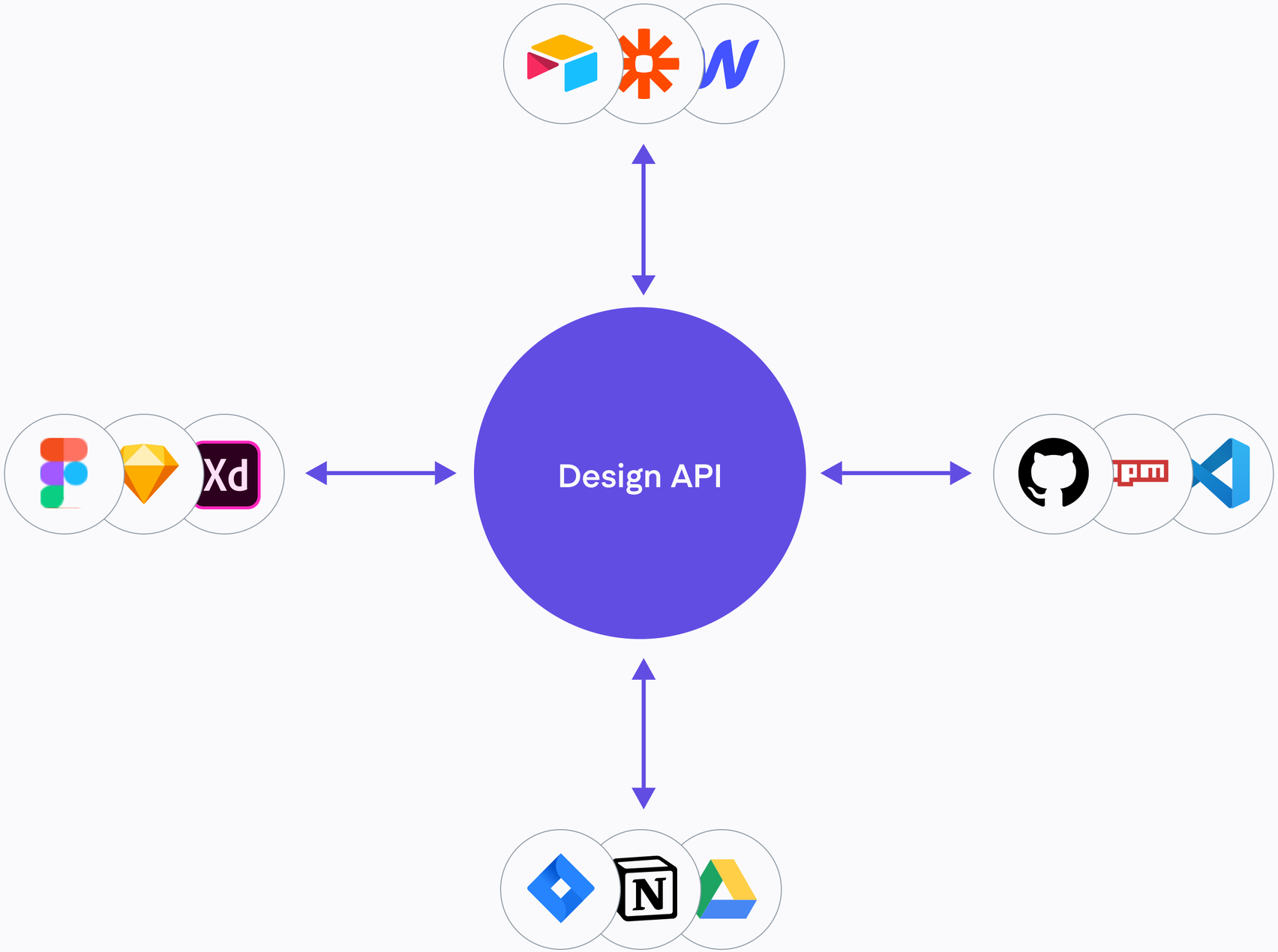

Accessibility team
Design team
Design System
Engineering team
Marketing team

Pitch



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Design APIs are the logical evolution of design systems.

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"An interoperable, guessable design API is the foundation of a fully networked design system, [...]. It’s the next step in the evolution of design systems."

— Matthew Ström | A design API in practice

Pitch

4.

Demo of a design API

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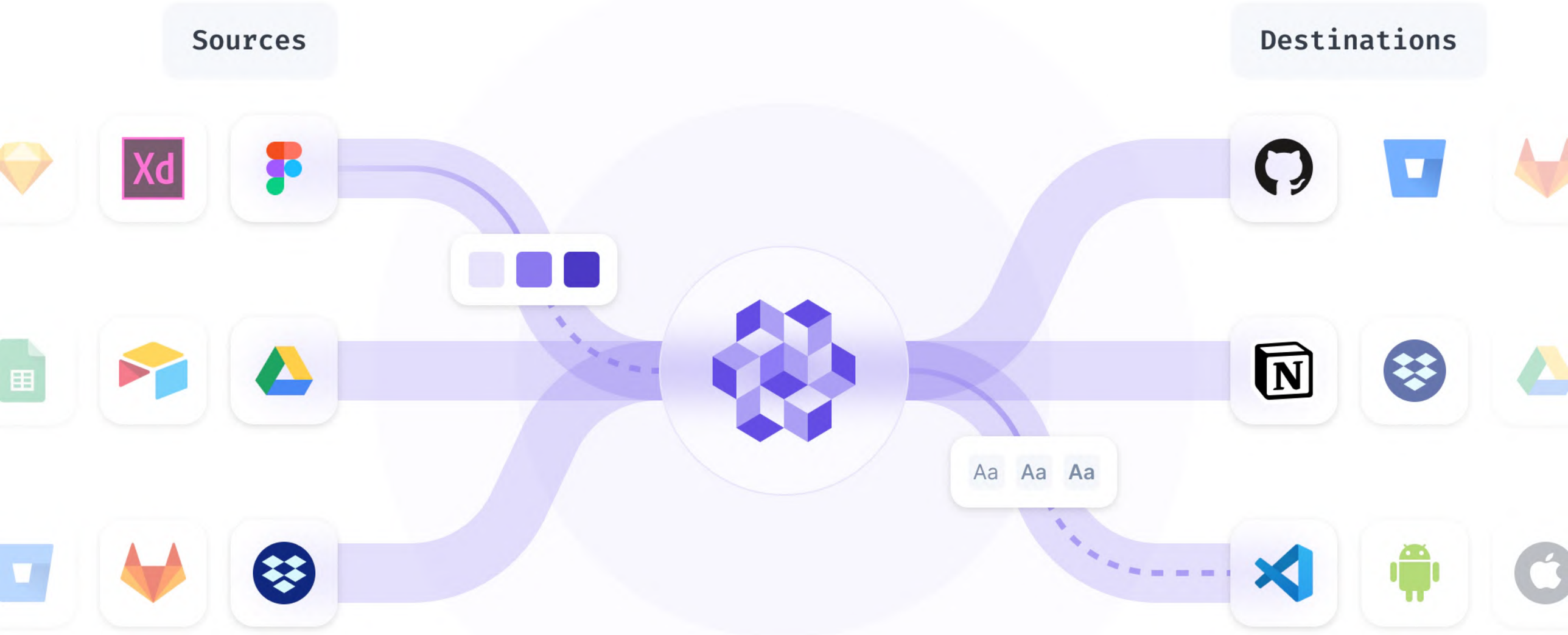
Sources
Destinations
Xd
Aa Aa Aa

Wanna try?

specifyapp.com

Pitch

Shoukran 🙏

@chuckn0risk • lucho.cool

Pitch