

How design tokens **empower** brand consistency at scale



Bonjour 🙌



I'm Louis Chenais



- W3C Design Tokens Community Group Editor
- Design System aficionado

Find me on

- @chucknOrisk
- lucho.cool



What's in store for us

- 01 Why we need design tokens
- 02 What are design tokens?
- 03 Design tokens best practices
- 04 Demo of a Design API
- 05 Q&A Session

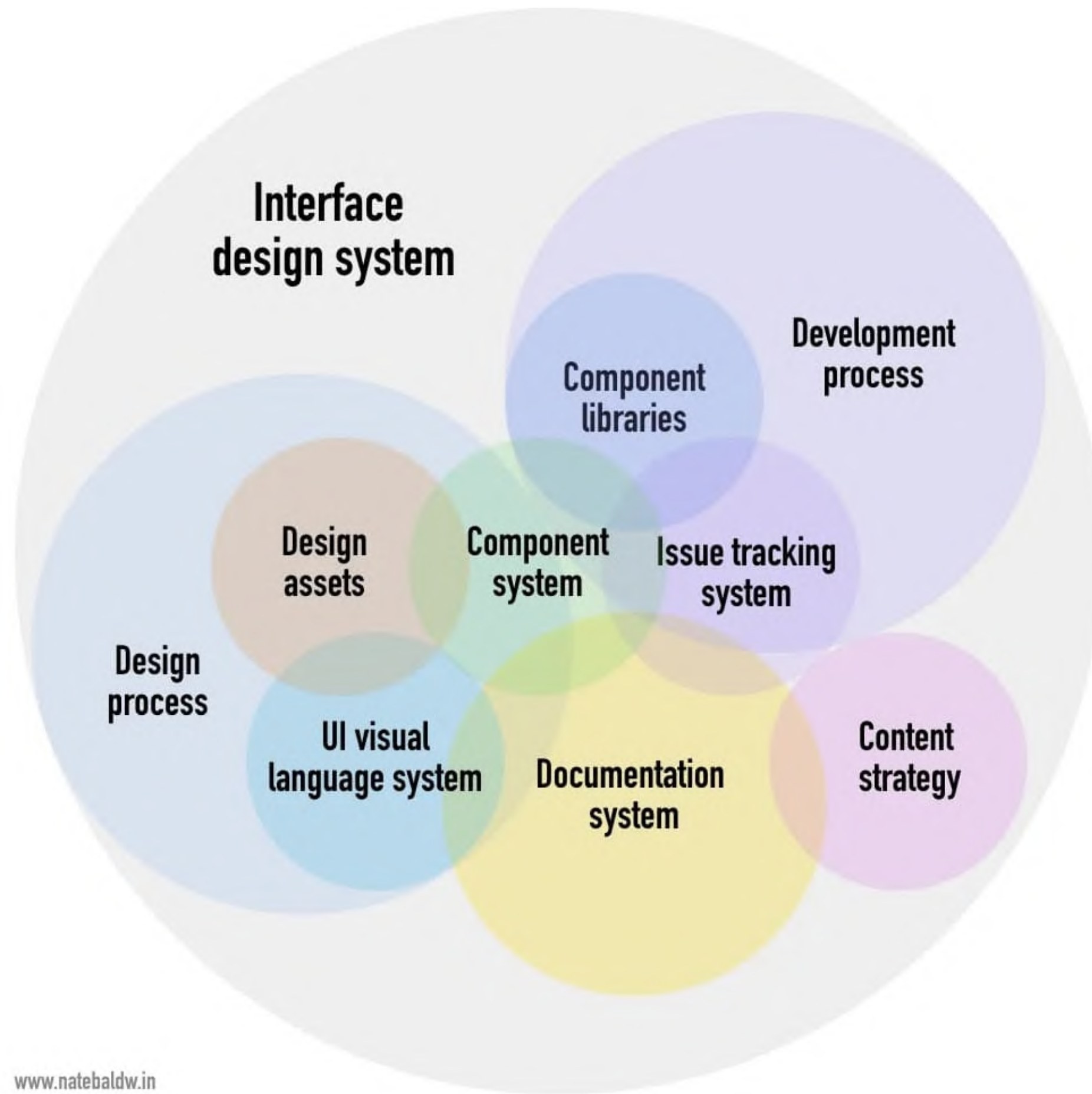


1. Why we need design tokens

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



**Design systems help teams to work
together better**



"A design system is the official story of how an organization designs and builds digital interfaces."

Brad Frost

@brad_frost

However...

**... we still all spend too much time
recreating styles in our daily tools
over and over**

Anatomy of a SaaS

1. A SaaS is composed of features
2. A feature is made of interfaces
3. An interface is composed of components
4. A component is composed of design tokens





DESIGN TOKENS

2. What are design tokens?



Foundation

Encore Foundation

The basic building blocks that
make Spotify ‘Spotify.’

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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

Ethan Marcotte

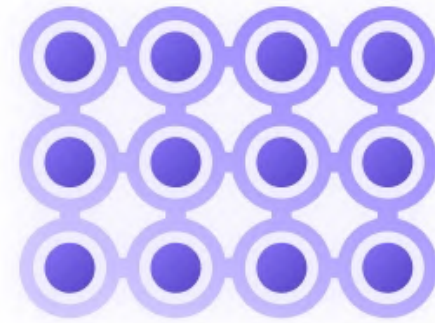
@beep



Atoms



Molecules



Organisms



Templates



Pages



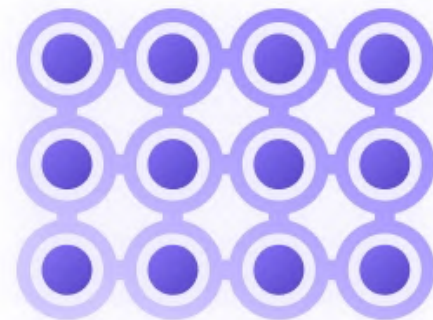
Design Tokens



Atoms



Molecules



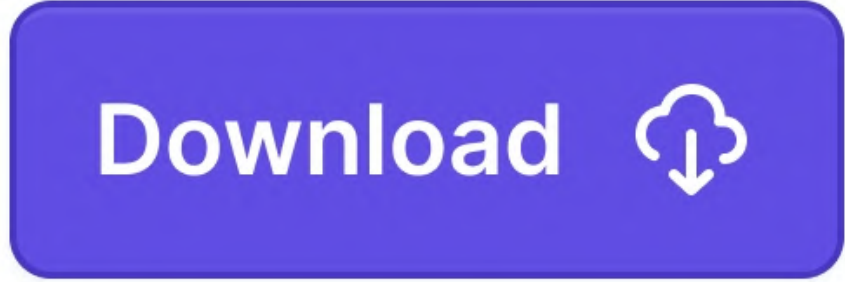
Organisms

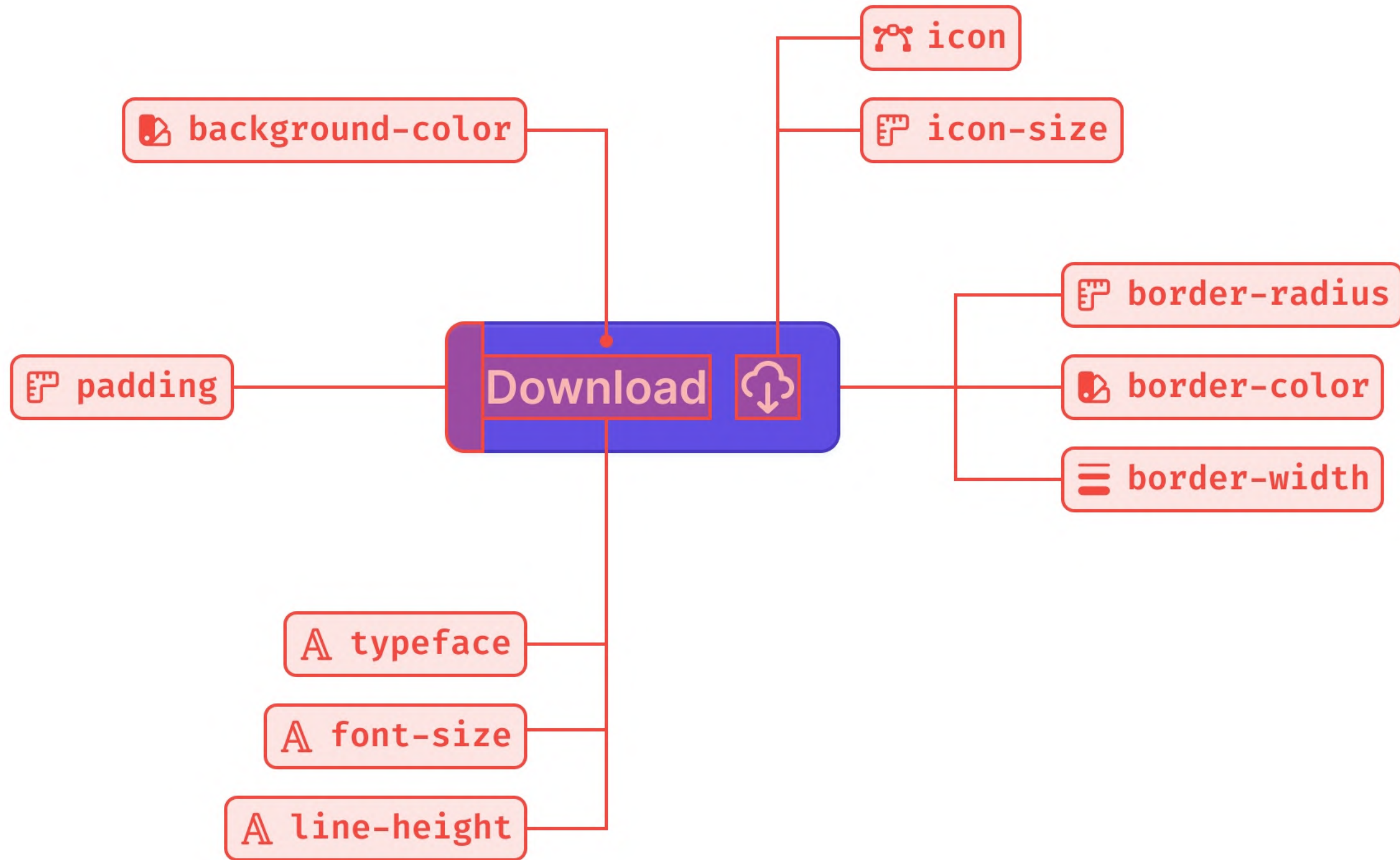


Templates



Pages







Simple vs Composite



Available types

Simple

 Color

 Dimension

 Duration

 Font Family

 Font Weight


 Cubic Bézier

 Stroke Style

Available types

Simple

 Color

 Dimension

 Duration

 Font Family


 Font Weight


 Cubic Bézier

 Stroke Style


Composite

 Typography

 Border

 Shadow

 Gradient






 Transition

Available types







Simple

-  Color
-  Dimension
-  Duration
-  Font Family
-  Font Weight
-  Cubic Bézier
-  Stroke Style

Composite

-  Typography
-  Border
-  Shadow
-  Gradient
-  Transition

Other

-  Number
-  String
-  Boolean
-  Array
-  Object
-  Null

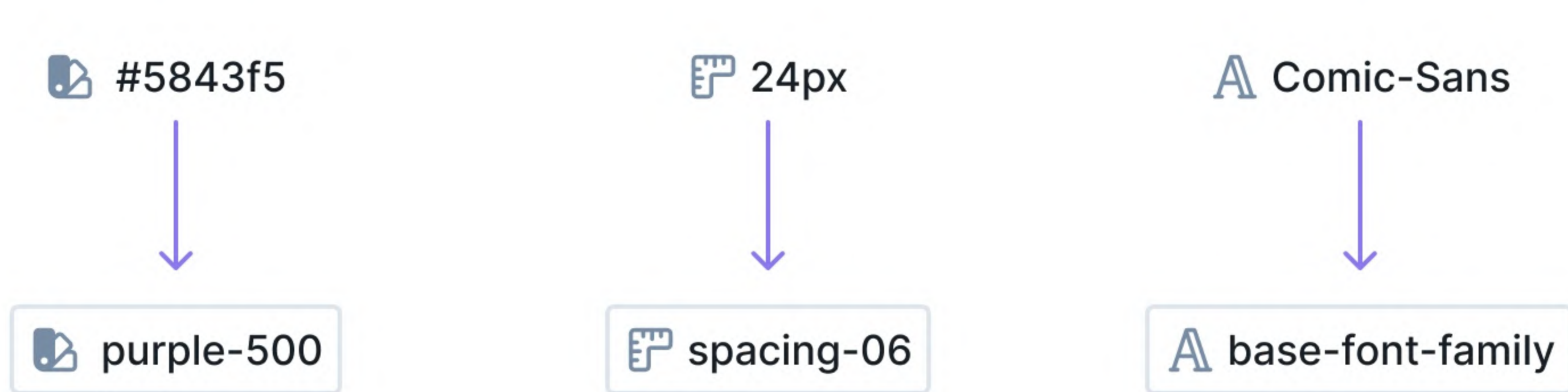


Core vs Alias



Core Tokens

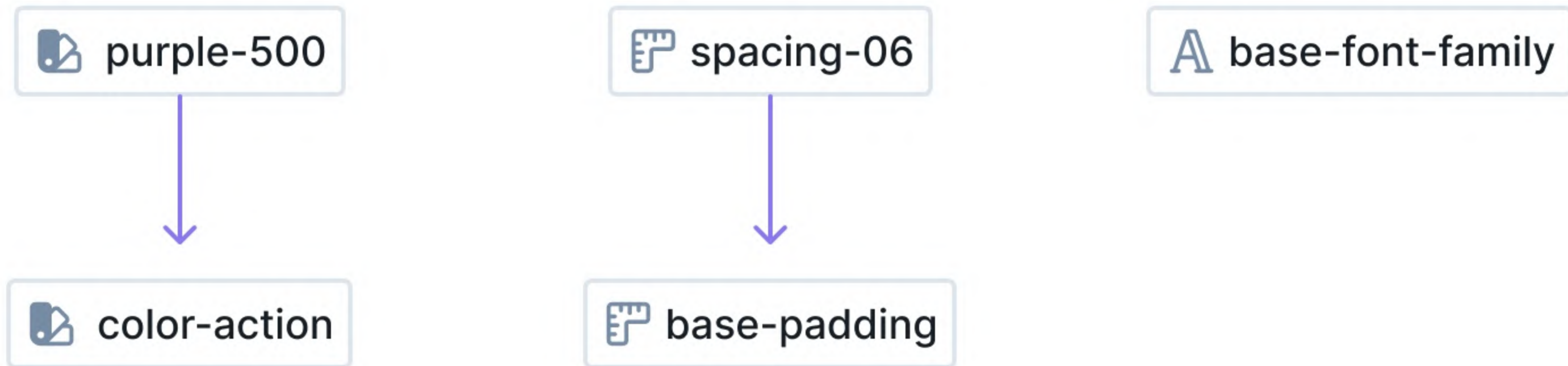
A “core token” is the translation of a value into a semantic and agnostic identification.

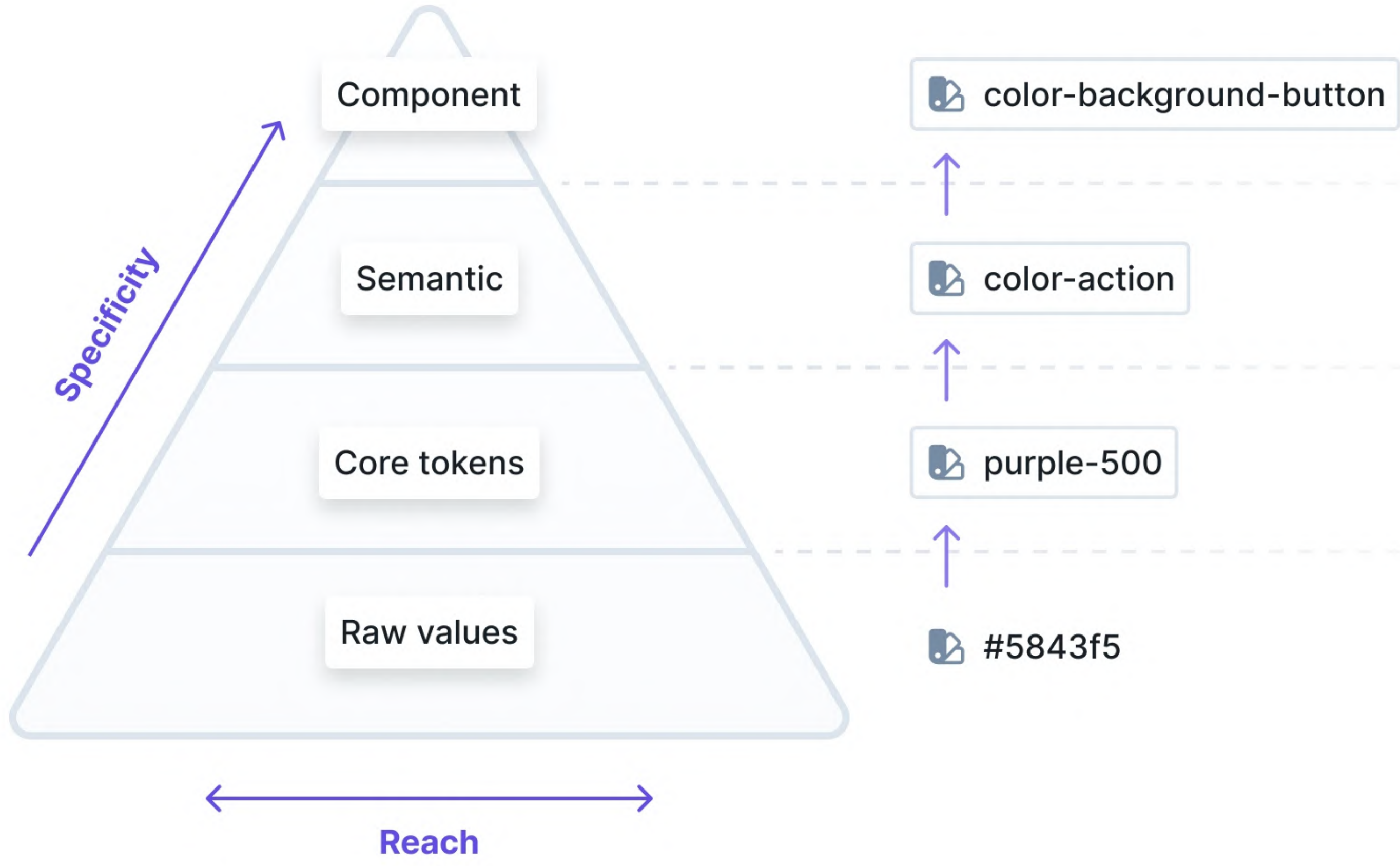


Alias Token

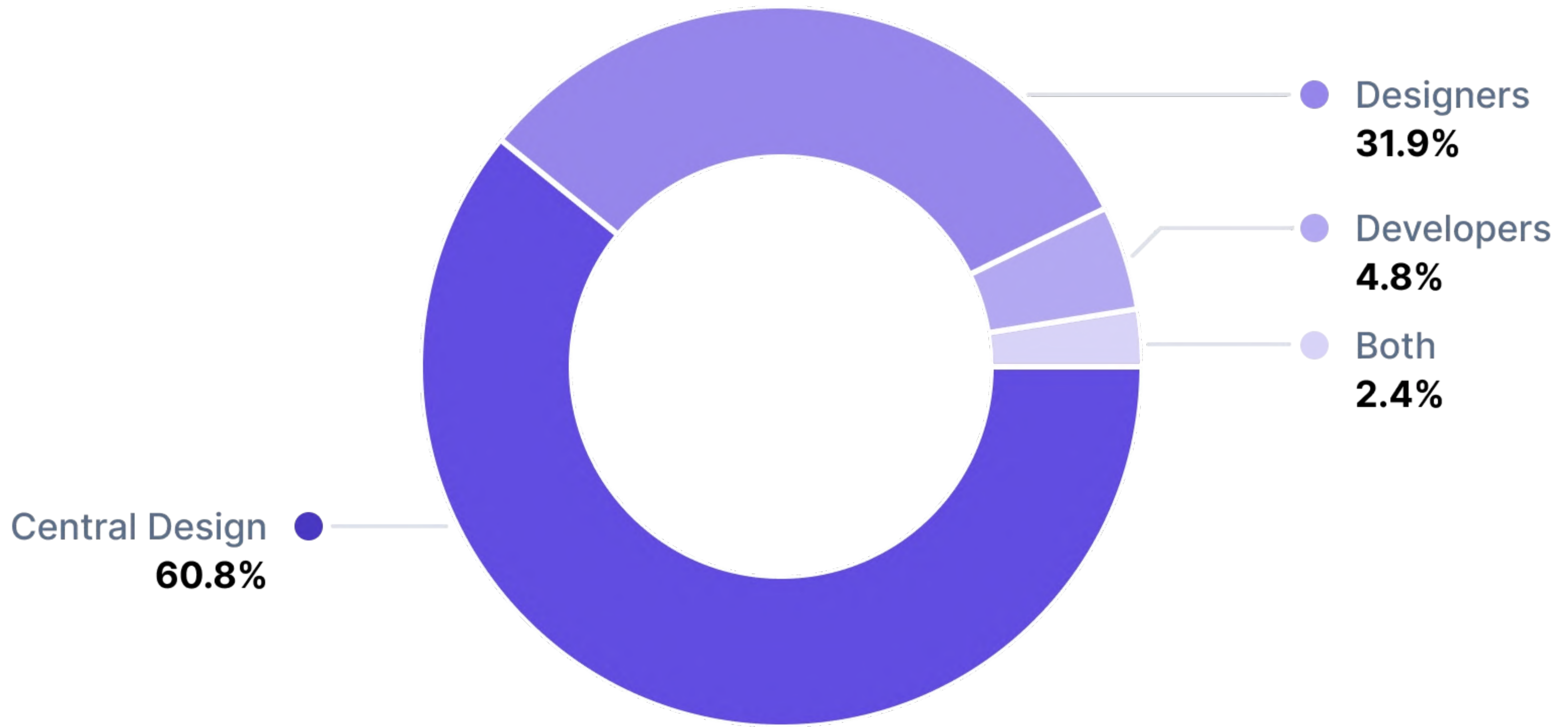
An alias token is the representation of the intent of a core token.

The specificity of an alias token can vary from one usage to the other. Common usages are semantic and component values.





**Who's responsible for managing
design tokens?**



[Source: State of Design Tokens 2022](#)

**Design tokens don't travel well within
our design systems (yet)**



**Our market direly needs a design
token standard widely spread so that
design decisions can transit freely
across an organization tools
ecosystem.**

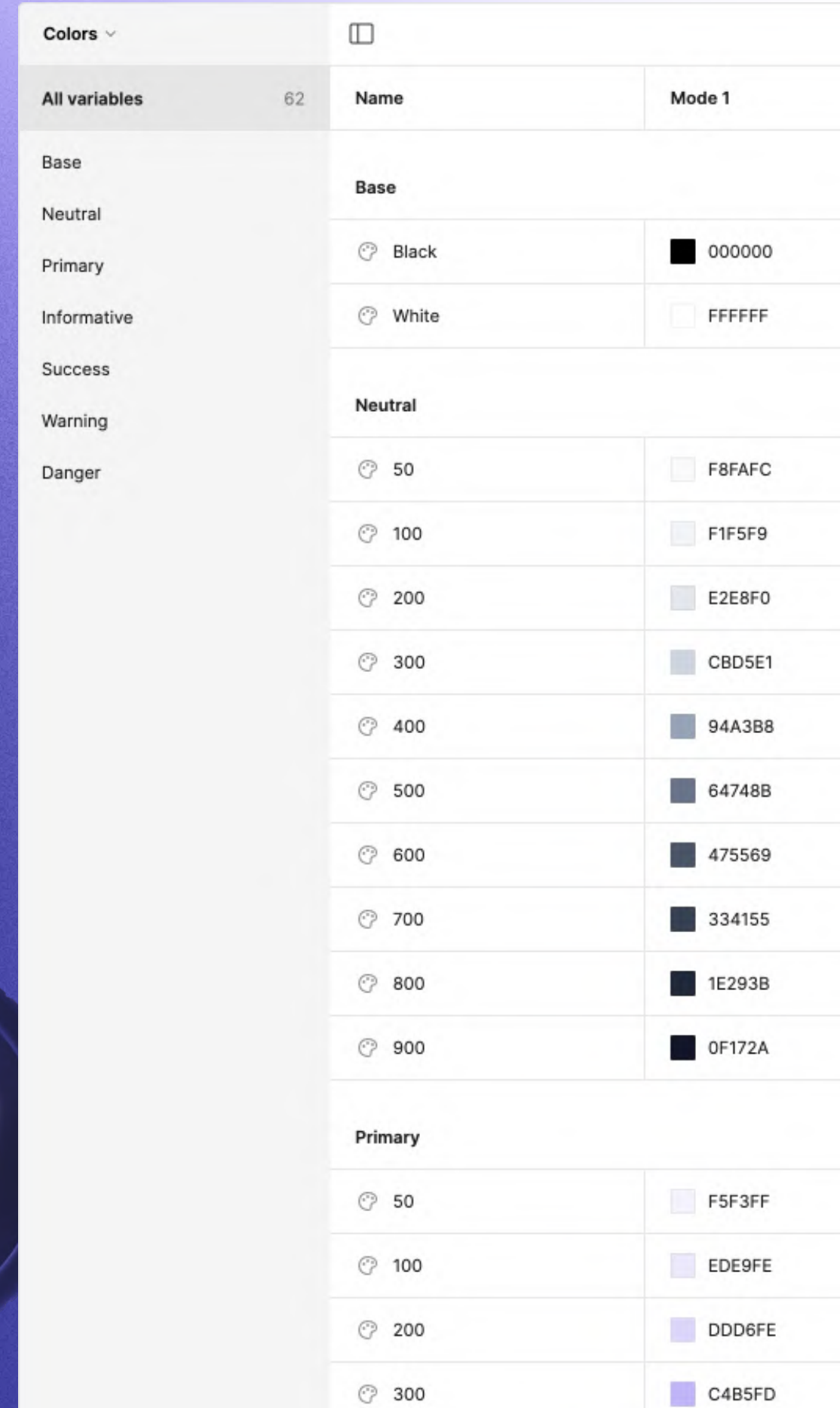
Design Tokens Community Group

1. Created in 2019 by [Kaelig Deloumeau-Prigent](#) & [Jina Anne](#) to gather the design tokens community
2. The need for a standard is now stronger than ever: a call for editors is made in February 2020
3. In June 2020 all editors are found and officially spread across different design token modules
4. In June 2022, a 2nd editor's draft is shared to the community and tool makers are invited to start implementing the format



Figma Styles & Variables

- Figma released a new feature called "Variables" in June
- We can now define variables and aliases targeting different modes, and organize them in groups or collections

A screenshot of the Figma design tool's 'Colors' panel. The panel shows a list of color variables organized into groups: Base, Neutral, and Primary. Each variable is represented by a name, a color swatch, and a hex code. The 'Base' group includes 'Black' (000000) and 'White' (FFFFFF). The 'Neutral' group includes variables from 50 to 900, with hex codes ranging from F8FAFC to 0F172A. The 'Primary' group includes variables from 50 to 300, with hex codes ranging from F5F3FF to C4B5FD. The panel also shows a 'Name' column and a 'Mode 1' column.

Colors ▾		Name	Mode 1
Base			
	Black	■	000000
	White	■	FFFFFF
Neutral			
	50	■	F8FAFC
	100	■	F1F5F9
	200	■	E2E8F0
	300	■	CBD5E1
	400	■	94A3BB
	500	■	64748B
	600	■	475569
	700	■	334155
	800	■	1E293B
	900	■	0F172A
Primary			
	50	■	F5F3FF
	100	■	EDE9FE
	200	■	DDD6FE
	300	■	C4B5FD

Specify Design Token Format

- Specify helps you sync your design tokens and assets within your design system
- Specify collects Figma Styles, Figma Variables, assets, tokens from Tokens Studio and distribute them in your desired destination in the right format, automatically
- SDTF = DTCG + Figma Styles, Variables, Tokens Studio + assets



3. Design token best practices



Prioritize design token efforts



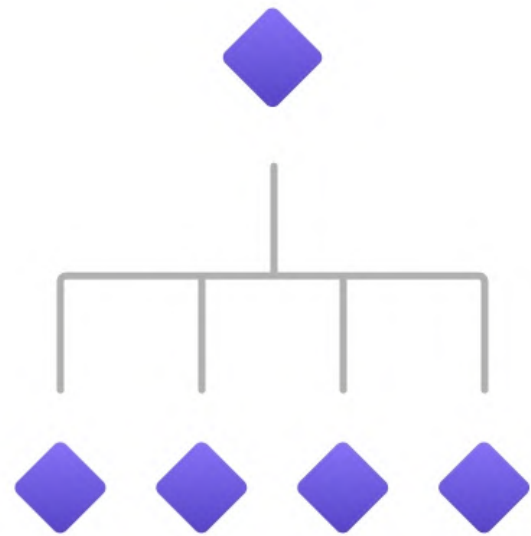
**Start working on the type of tokens
that will bring you the most value
from *day-1*.**



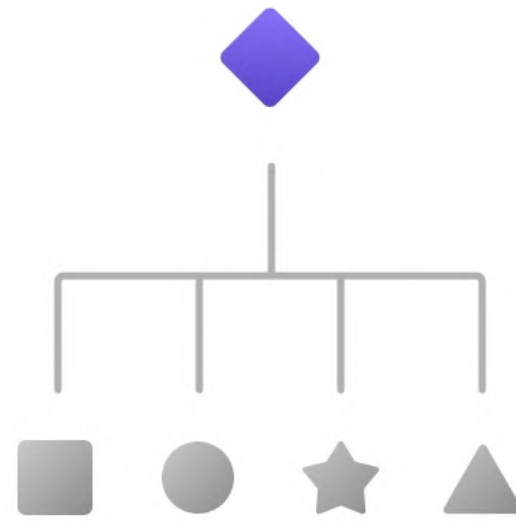
**Make an inventory of your
design token areas**



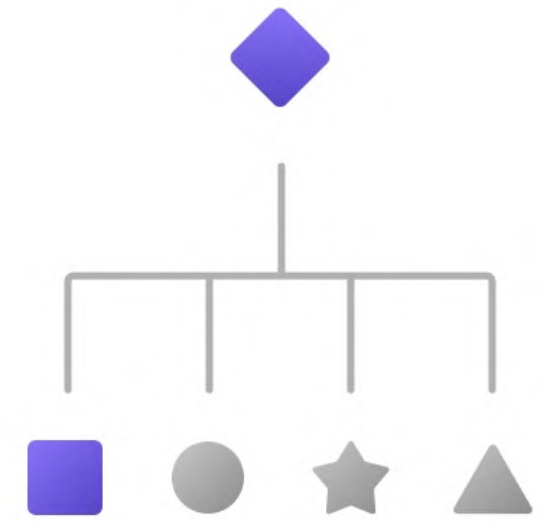
Identify your organization brand architecture



Branded House



House of Brands



Hybrid

ATLASSIAN

 Bamboo

 Bitbucket

 Clover

 Compass

 Confluence

 Crowd

 Crucible

 Fisheye

 Jira

 Jira Align

 Jira Service Management

 Jira Software

 Opsgenie

 Sourcetree

 Statuspage

 **Trello**



AXE

LUX



VOLKSWAGEN

AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT



Audi



PORSCHE



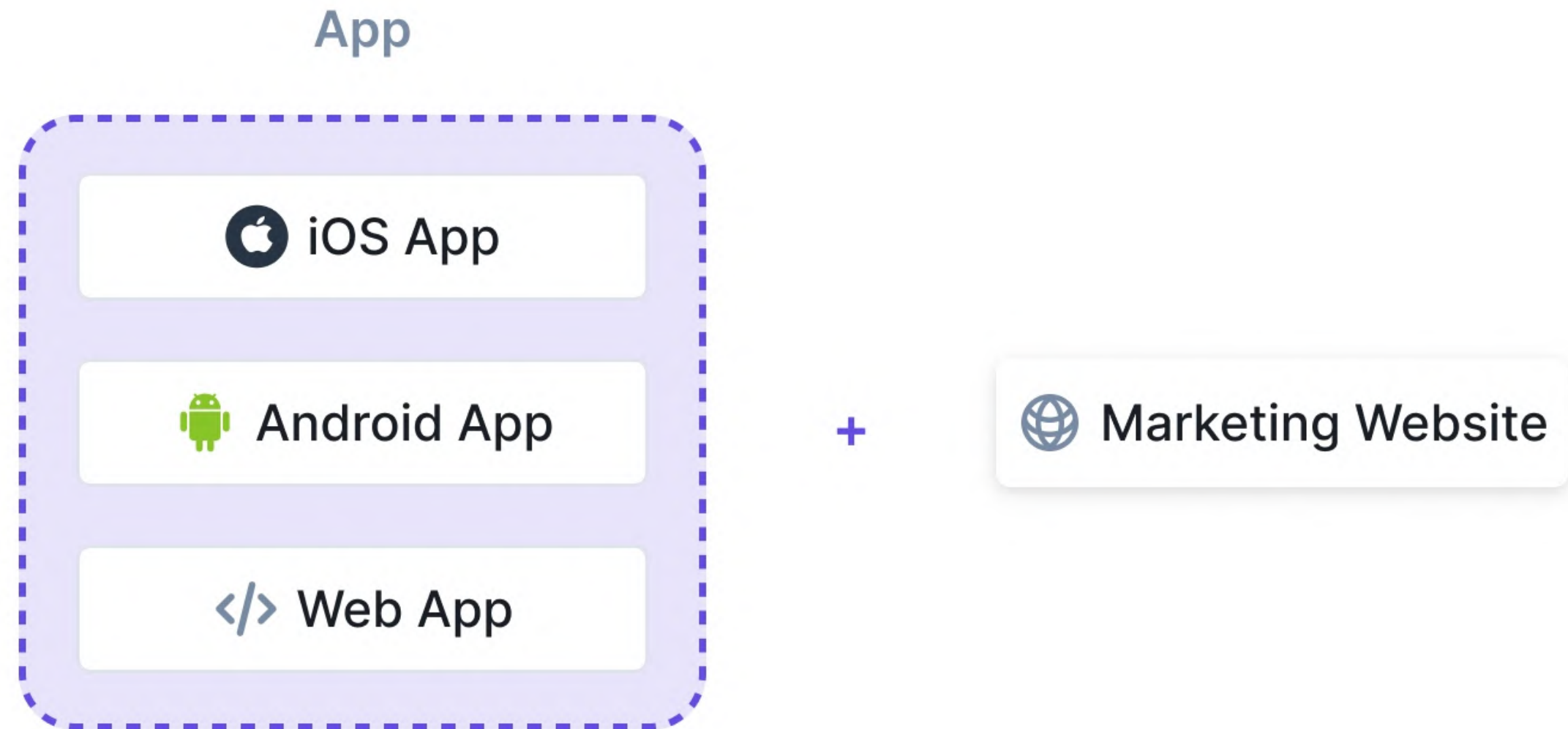
BENTLEY



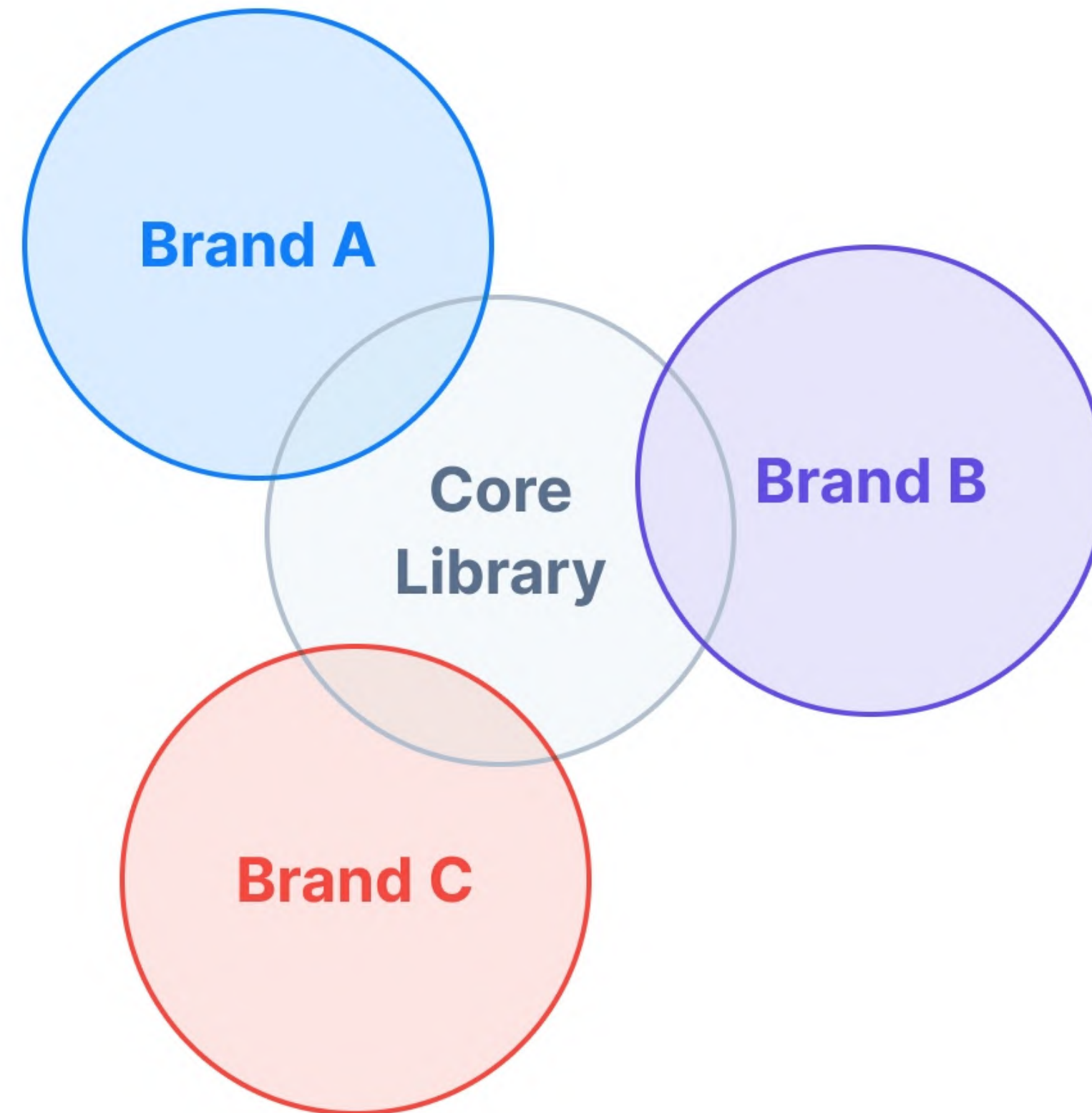
Commercial
Vehicles



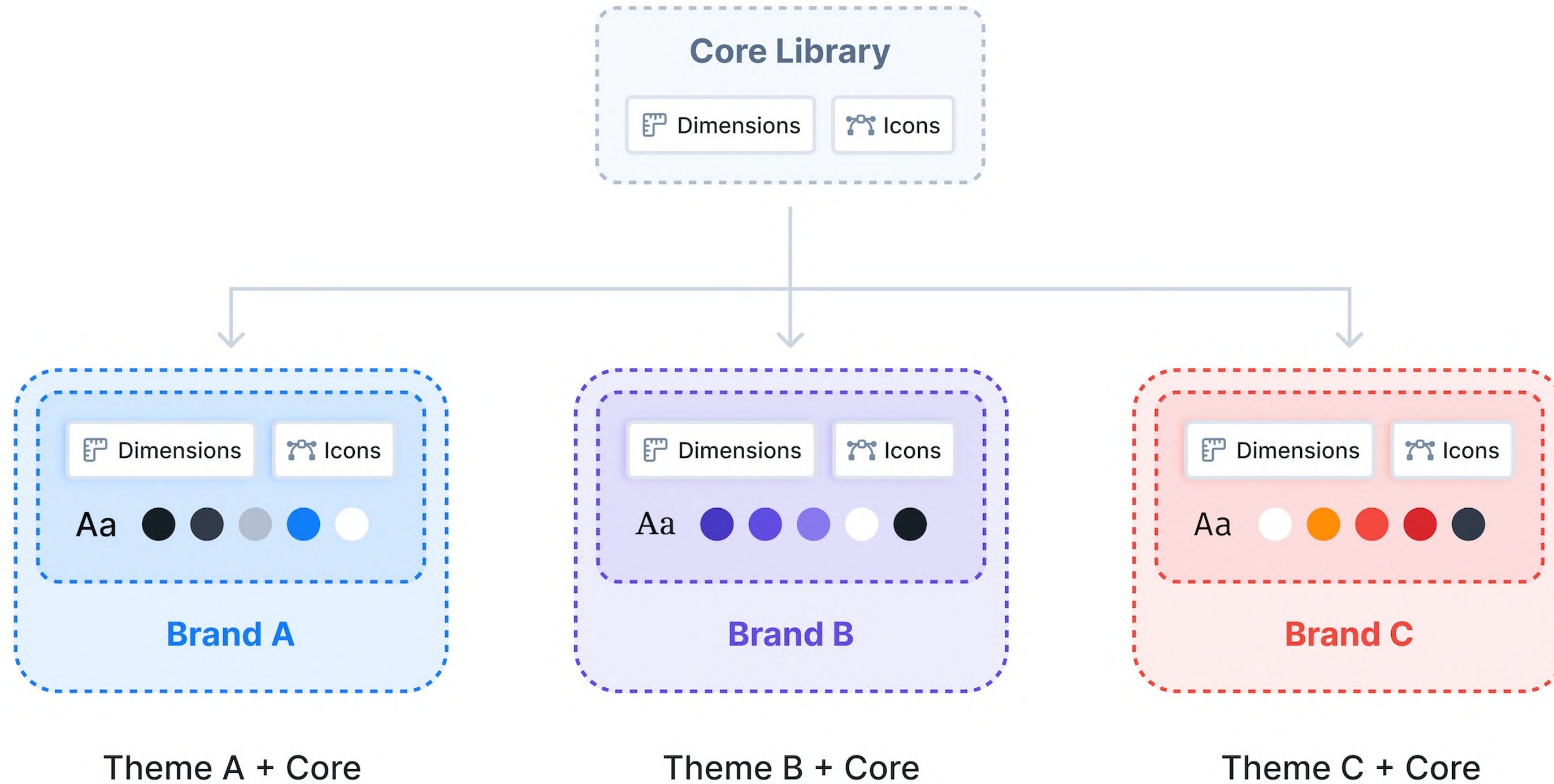
SaaS common brand architecture

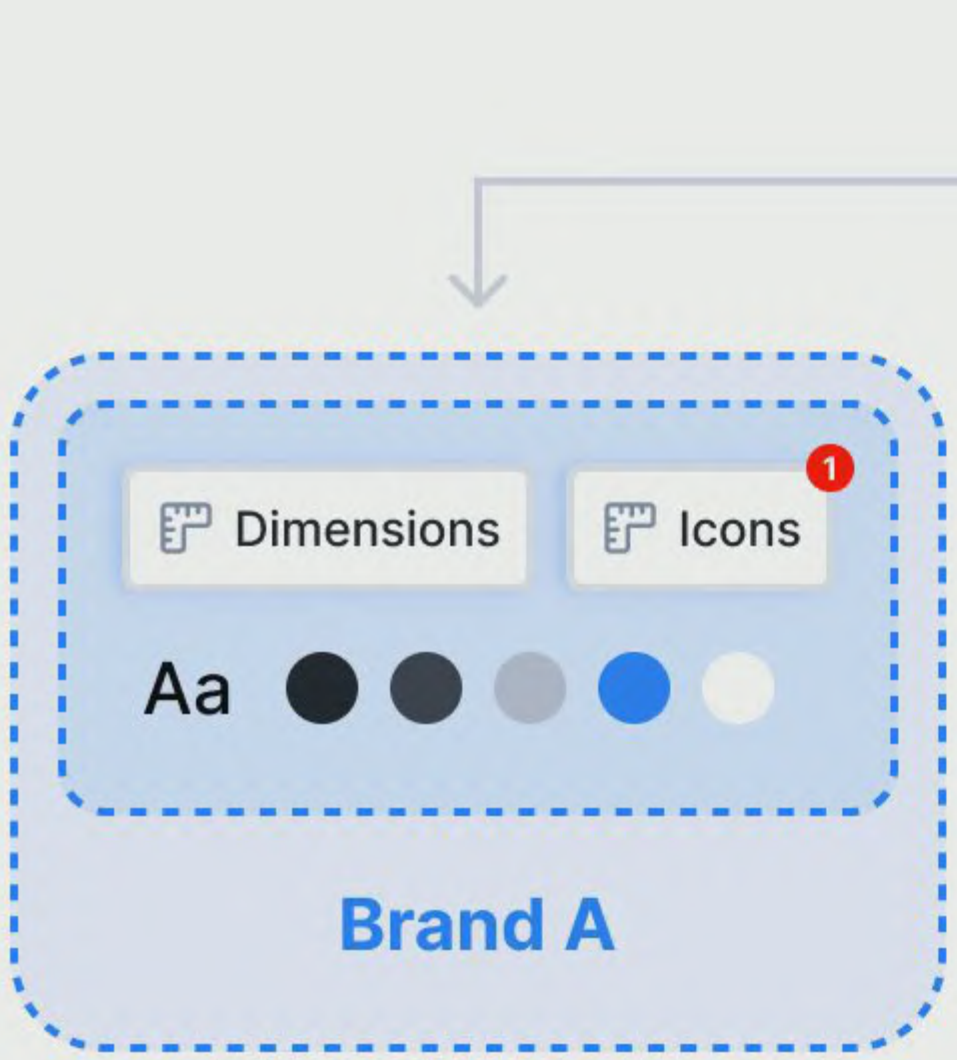
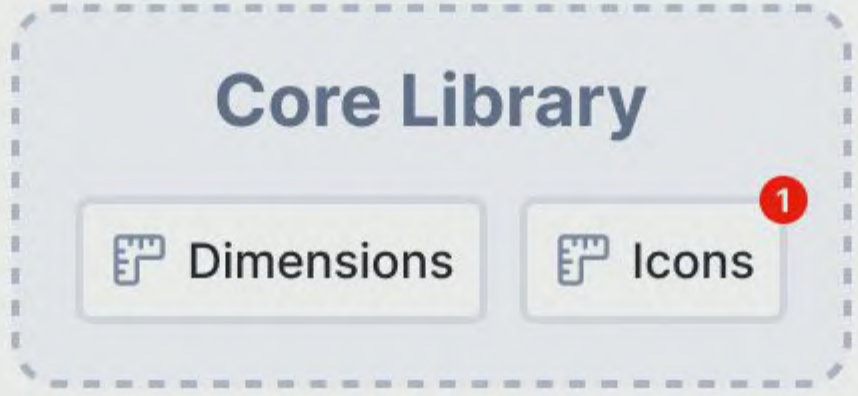


1. Determine your platform's/brand's common core

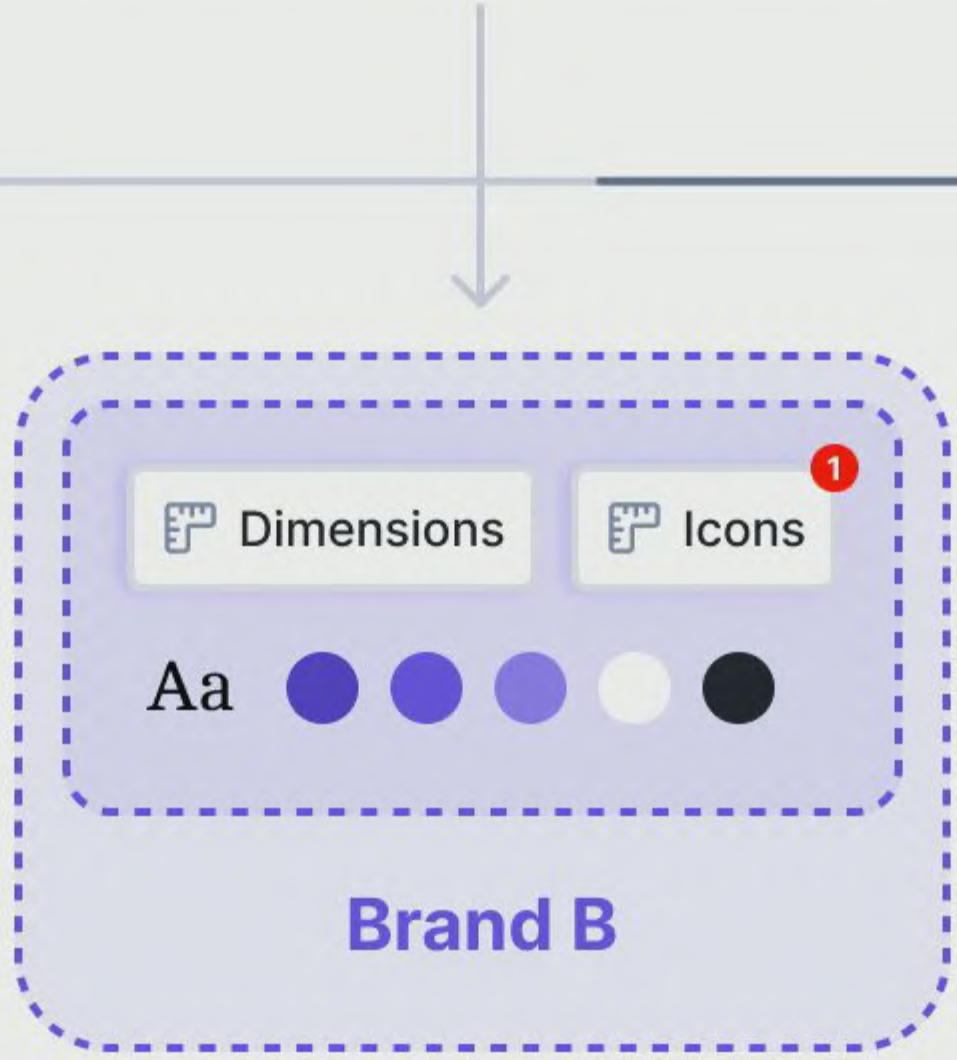


1. Determine your platform's/brand's common core

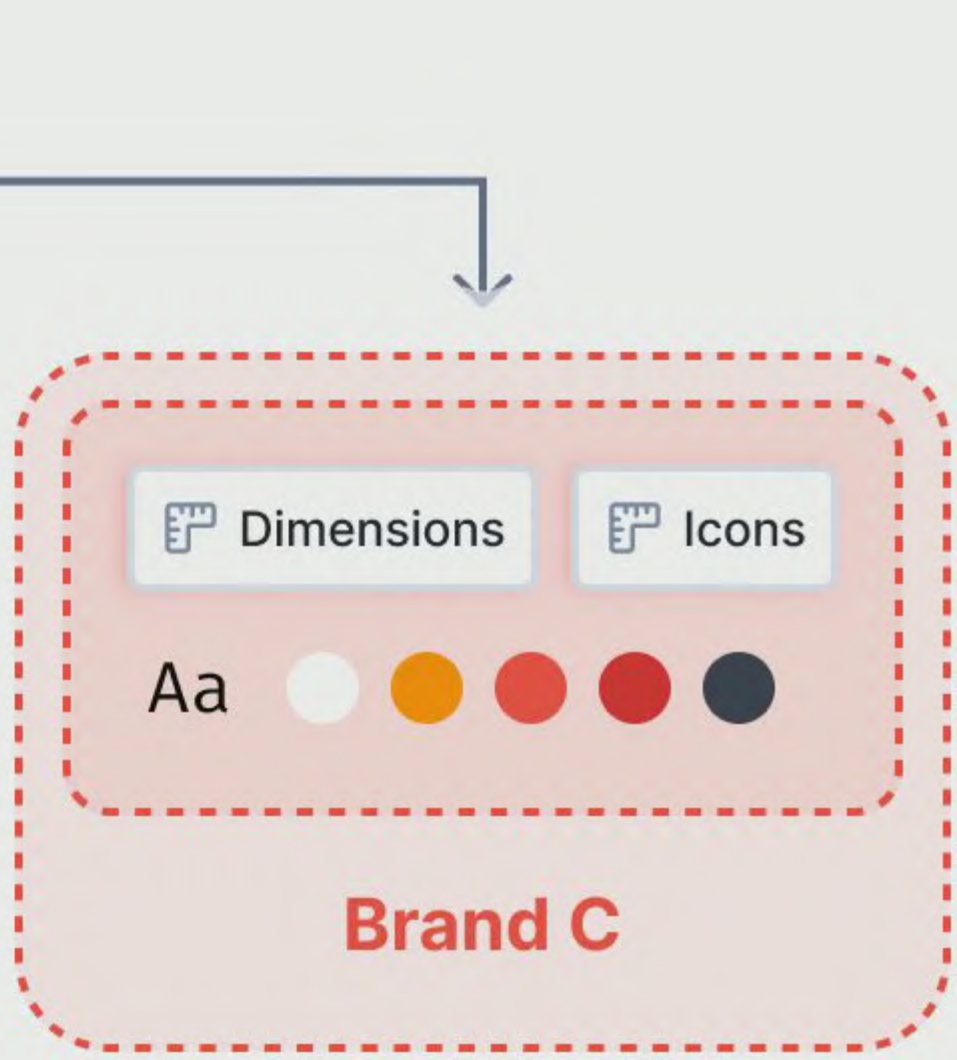




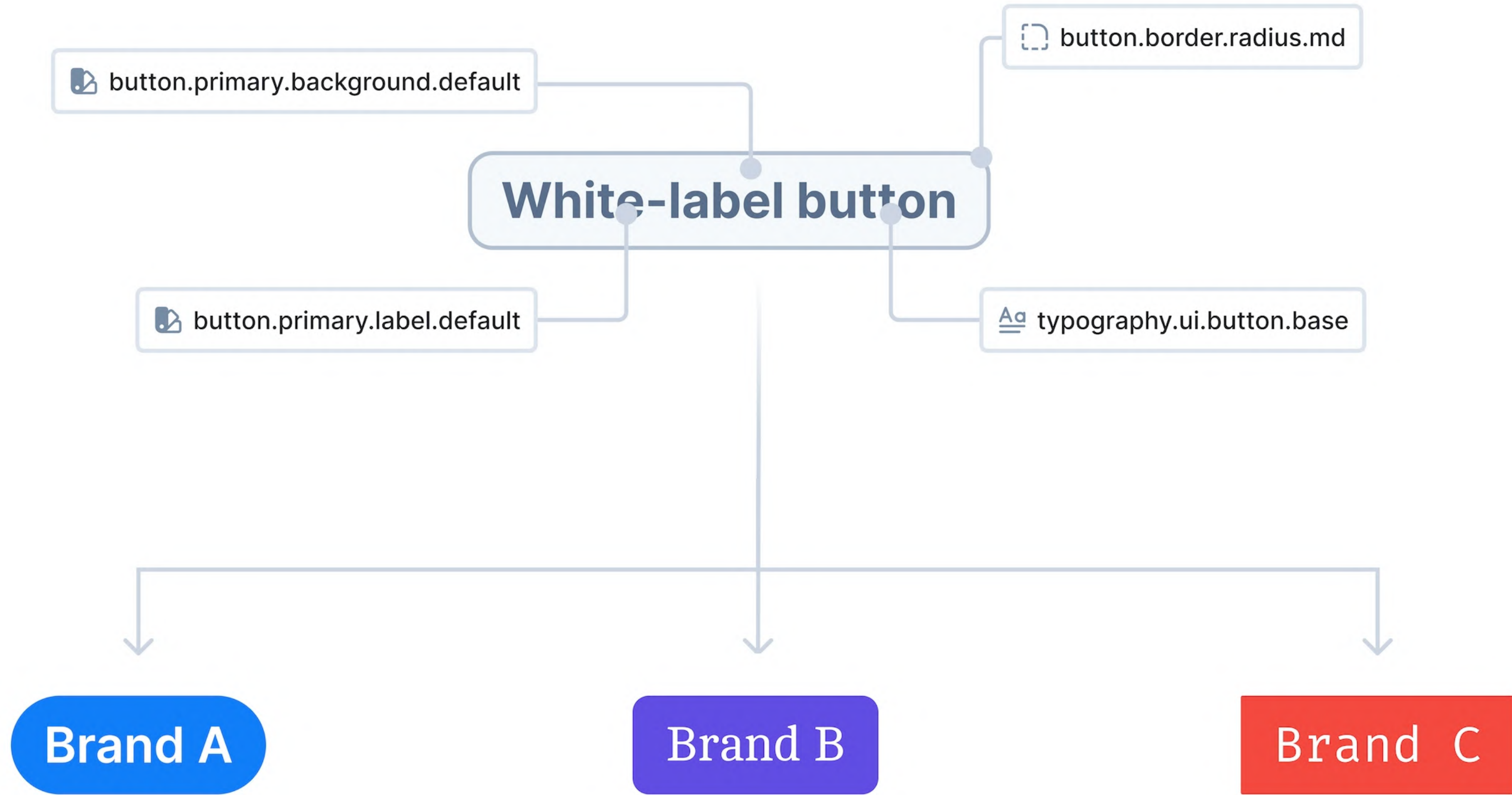
Theme A + Core




Theme B + Core



Theme C + Core



If in doubt, focus on token types that bring the most value for your end users: color, spacing/sizing, typography. Because w/o them our UIs are basically empty.



**Define a token taxonomy
that sticks**

Color

 color.input.background.error

Radius

 radius.medium

Elevation

 elevation.level.2

Ease

 ease.appear.emphasize



**Automate the synchronization
of your design tokens and assets**



Design/Engineering Communication

Slack Bot Documentation

Design Tools

Sketch Plugin

Figma Integration

Menubar App

User Experience

Tokens on NPM

Web Apps

Mobile Apps

Design API

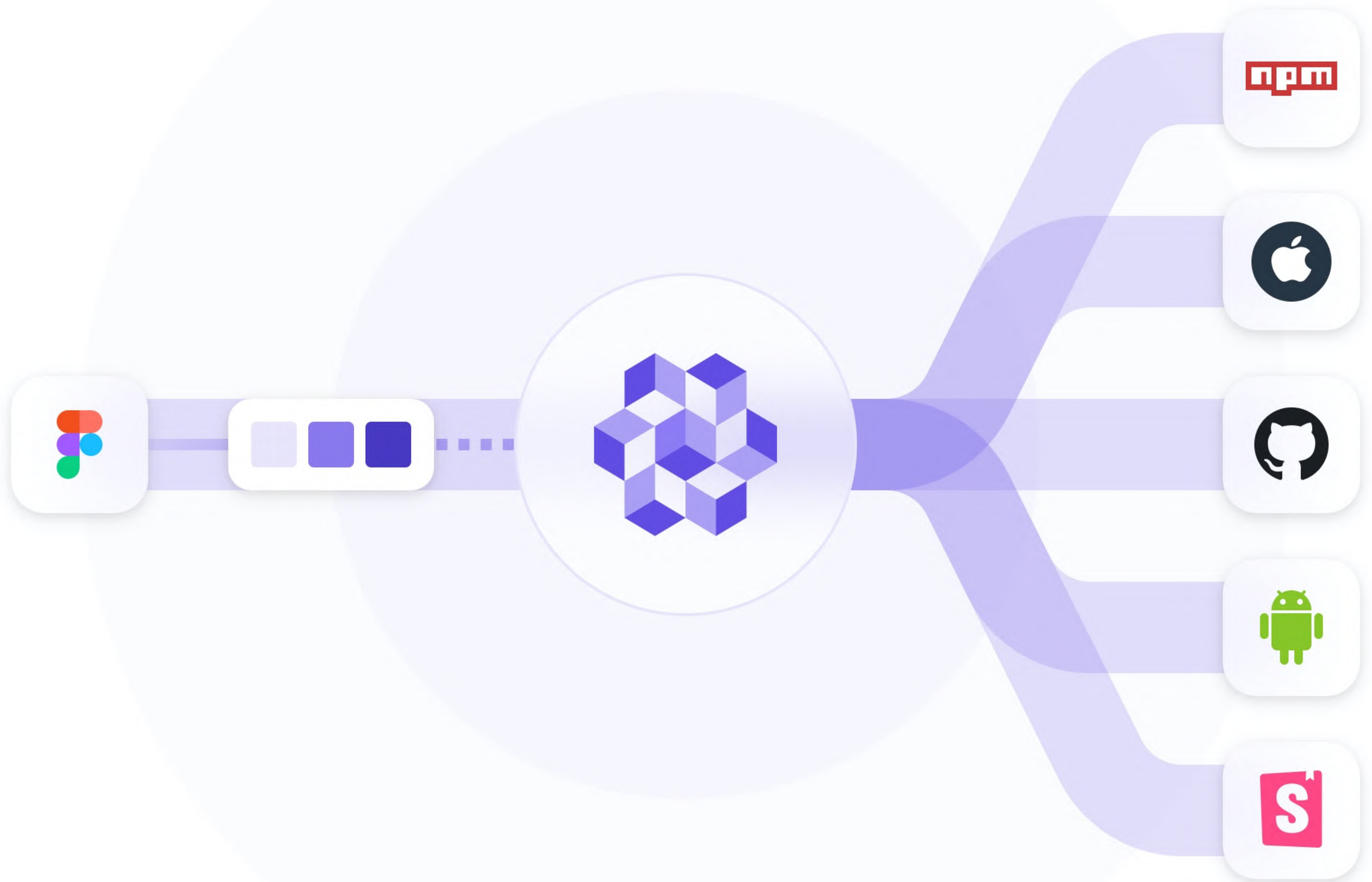


Specify

Linting GitHub Hooks

Engineering Tools

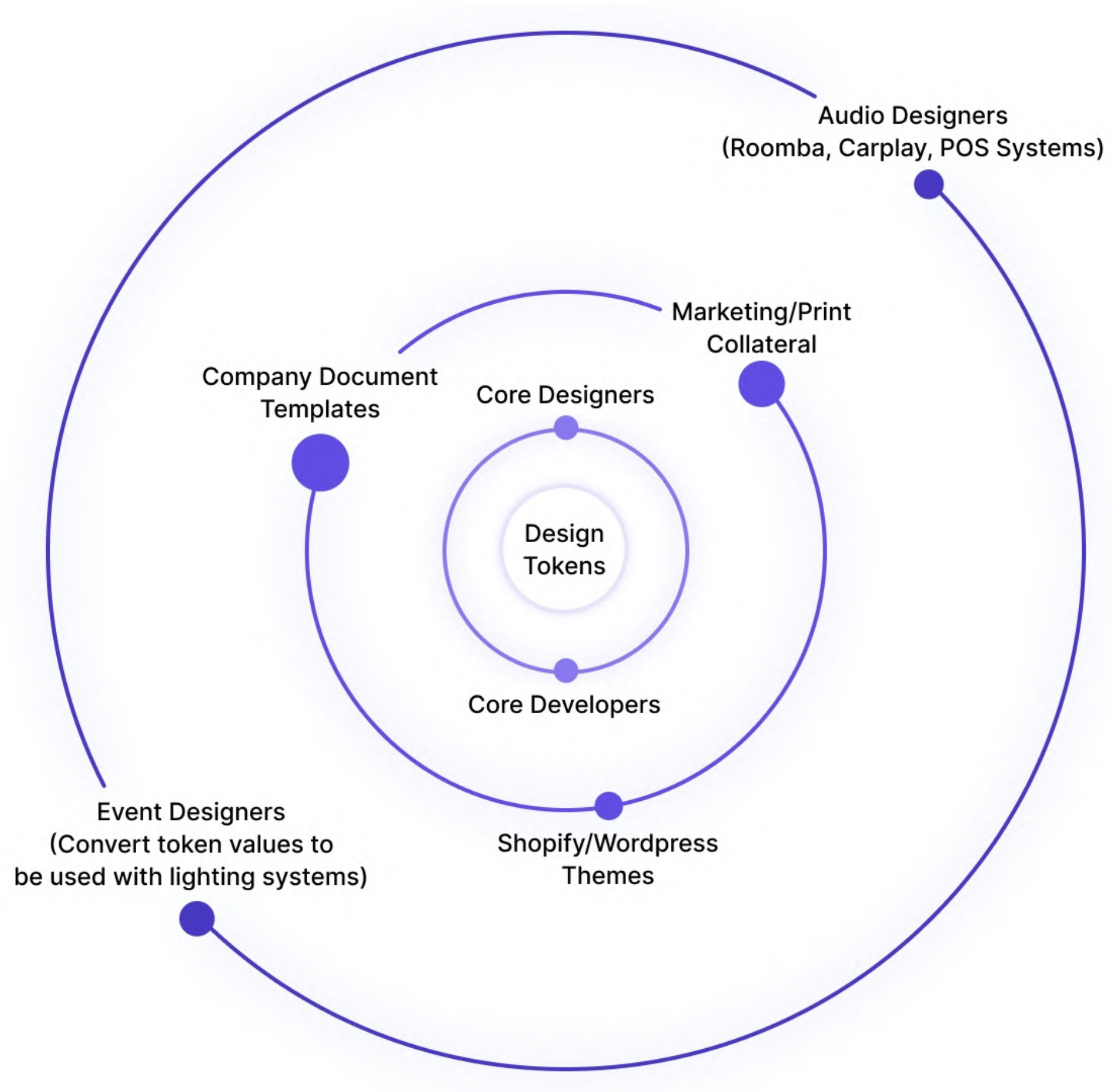






Demo





Type

Space

Color

Greys

Radius

Toggle helpers

Theme settings

Base size 14

Multiplier 1,3

Rounding Custom None 1

Line height 1,4

Line height curve -2

Line height rounding Custom None 1

letter spacing curve -0,15

Font

Amount

2x1
40px 48px -0.6px

Ag
123

x1
31px 37px -0.45px

Ag
123

1
24px 29px -0.3px

Ag
123

m
18px 23px -0.15px

Ag
123

Big box padding S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Small box padding S M L XL 2XL 3XL

List spacing S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Button padding x S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Button padding y S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Button shape SHARP ROUND PILL

Button radius S M L

Accent hue

Background color

Foreground color

Alt foreground color

Body color

Create task

AR-06

75% Done

Natural Lighting Optimization

Develop a comprehensive approach to maximize natural light in the building by strategically placing windows and using design elements that enhance daylight penetration.

Labels

Eco-friendly Innovative Residential Lighting

Sub tasks

- AR-02-01 Plan Rooftop Garden Layout 27 Sep
- AR-02-02 Choose Plant Varieties 30 Sep
- AR-02-03 Design Irrigation System 04 Oct
- AR-02-04 Evaluate Structural Support 08 Oct

Activity

- Olivia Created task
- Liam Assigned to Liam
- Sophia Updated priority to Medium
- Mason Added label: Innovative

[Shaper V2 - Generative Design Tool for UI Interfaces](#)

Hayk An

Button 12	Button 13	Button 14	Button 15	Button 16
Button 17	Button 18	Button 19	Button 20	Button 21
Button 22	Button 23	Button 24	Button 25	Button 26
Button 27	Button 28	Button 29	Button 30	Button 31
Button 32	Button 33	Button 34	Button 35	Button 36
Button 37	Button 38	Button 39	Button 40	Button 41
Button 42	Button 43	Button 44	Button 45	Button 46
Button 47	Button 48	Button 49	Button 50	Button 51
Button 52	Button 53	Button 54	Button 55	Button 56
Button 57	Button 58	Button 59	Button 60	Button 61
Button 62	Button 63	Button 64	Button 65	Button 66
Button 67	Button 68	Button 69	Button 70	Button 71
Button 72	Button 73	Button 74	Button 75	Button 76

[Tweet by @markacianfrani](#) 
Mark A. Cianfrani



Shoukran 🙏

Louis Chenais



Specify

Co-founder & Chief Evangelist

Lets stay in touch

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- louis@specifyapp.com