

CONSTANT EVOLUTION

Designing the compass

New AI processes, blurring roles, and the shift from artifacts to systems.

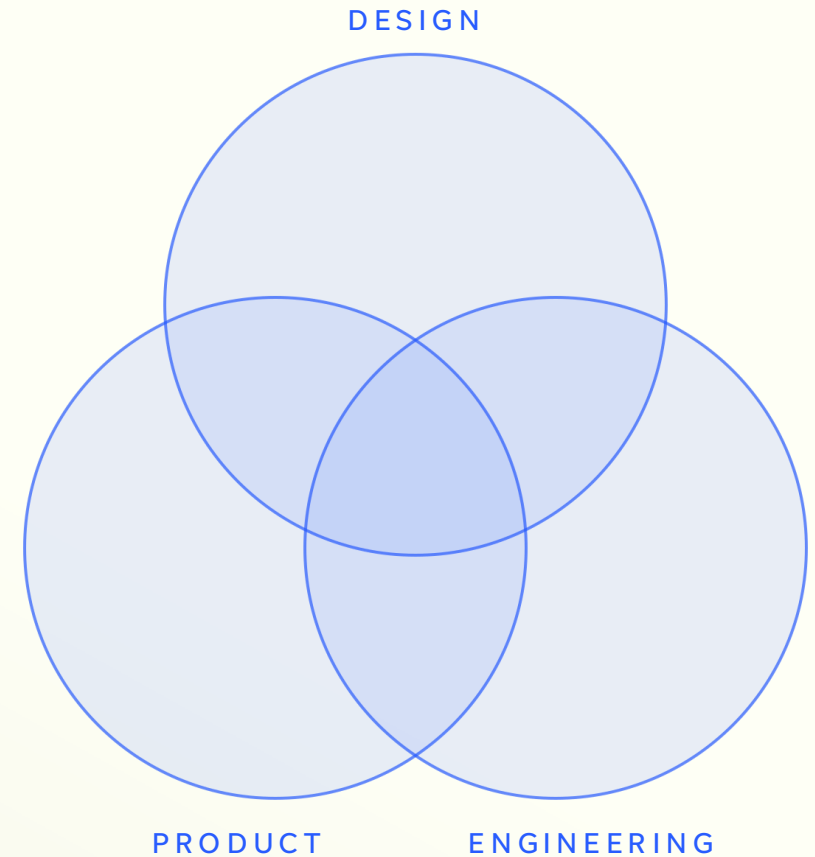


Anyone can make a thing now.

AI has collapsed the distance between an idea and an artifact. Product managers prototype. Engineers generate interfaces. Designers ship code. The lines between our roles are blurring, and the volume of what gets made is rising fast.

More output means more noise.

But it's just a thing until we all agree it's the right thing.



“..._final_final_revised_FINAL.file” is a battle scar, not a badge of honor.

Designers learned to measure their worth in finished screens, exhaustive specs, and survived approval cycles. Those habits made sense in a process that punished ambiguity. So, when a tool makes artifacts cheap, it can feel like it makes the designer cheap too.

The first instinct is to protect hard-earned turf. My job is to help the team see past that impulse to the freedom beyond it.



Where we are

Experimentation is encouraged, not yet required. Many still default to labor-intensive specs they shouldn't have to produce.



What I'm asking

Pressure-test first instincts quickly. State intent clearly enough that AI can take the wheel on execution. Spend the time saved on judgment and craft.



What's next

AI checkpoints built into our workflow, so experimentation becomes practice.

We used to draw maps. Now we design compasses.

AI moves products from command-based interactions to intent-based outcomes. Linear, fully designed pathways will become rare. Experiences will take shape around each person's curiosity in the moment.

Our work shifts from designing pages to defining scenarios: the conditions, rules, and signals that let good outcomes emerge.

The value was never the map.

Our team's purpose remains constant: [Inspire](#), [Illuminate](#), [Inform](#), [Indulge](#), [Include](#).



THEN

The map

Linear pathways. Designed pages.



NOW

The compass

Fluid needs. Defined scenarios.

Build something living, not something finished.

If any tool can generate an interface, the design system becomes the product. It holds the rules every artifact inherits, whether a designer, a developer, or a model made it.



DNA

Brand is the instruction set. Felt everywhere, expressed contextually.

When it's strong, weak expressions read as mutations.



Particle

Raw values: tokens, color, spacing, type.

8px unit



Atom

The smallest functional element.

button, label



Molecule

Atoms bonded for one task.

search field



Cell

A reusable module with one clear job.

card, nav bar



Organism

A full interface section.

home feed



Ecosystem

One product's complete experience.

a single app



Civilization

Shared standards across every product.

the design system

IN PRACTICE

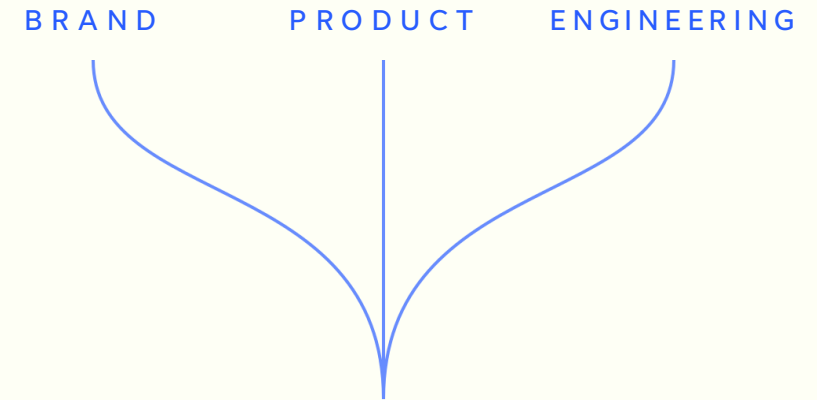
Once the system is live and connected, static specs disappear. Design review changes from “Does this match the picture?” to “Does this use the system correctly?” That remains a human judgment call.

A federation, not a free-for-all.

As roles blur, governance must be shared. Brand, Product, and Engineering each hold a voice in the system. Each gains consistency by resisting the urge to be special, in exchange for being trusted.

A design system doesn't create consistency.
Consistency happens when people agree to stop making exceptions.

Designers who let go of the artifact end up owning something larger: **the rules** every artifact follows.



THREE VOICES

One Sound

Federation, not fracture