

# Case Studies

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Creative Operations, Design Program  
Manager, and Cat Herder.



# CREATIVE OPERATIONS CONSULTING ENGAGEMENT

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## **Problem:**

SkinSpirit marketing was gearing up for a huge upcoming year, there was little documented processes and all project and design management was on the shoulders of one Head of Creative. The team needed hands-on management and a complete structural change in how work was done in the organization, soup to nuts.

## **The challenges facing this team included:**

- Absence of a Creative Operations infrastructure
- The need to launch a brand refresh in 2024
- Multiple photoshoots, including a large-scale beauty shoot and two to three clinic opening shoots per month
- The creative team consisted solely of freelancers, with no resourcing support
- Inconsistent brand fidelity in email designs, making it difficult for new team members to adhere to brand standards
- Lack of a central asset sharing DAM for freelance team members, causing bottlenecks in the creative process and approvals
- The need for education on creative briefing and a complete overhaul of brief content

# Solution #1: Process Clean Up

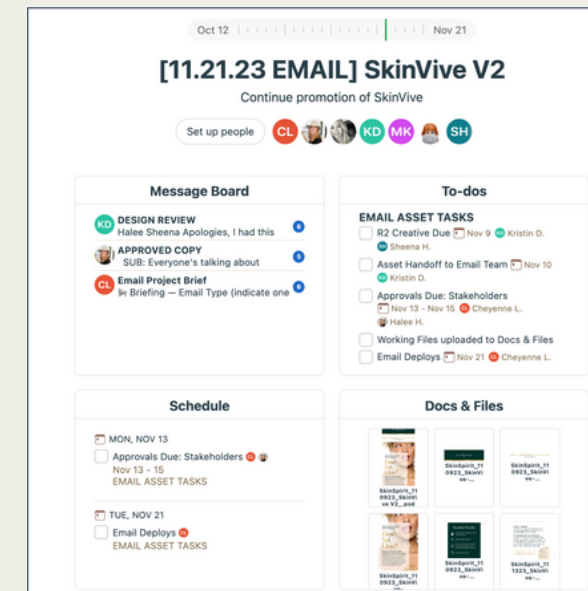
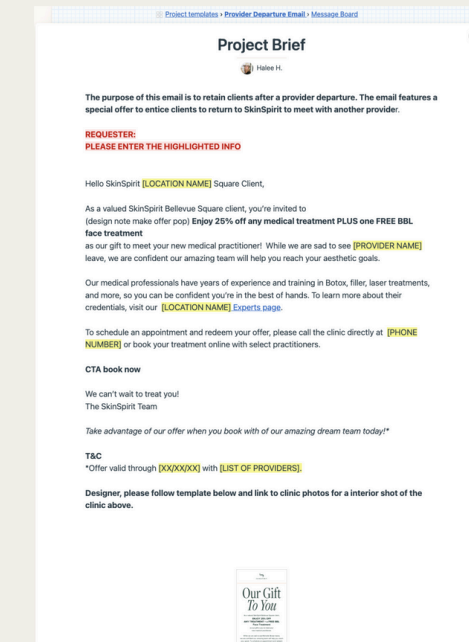
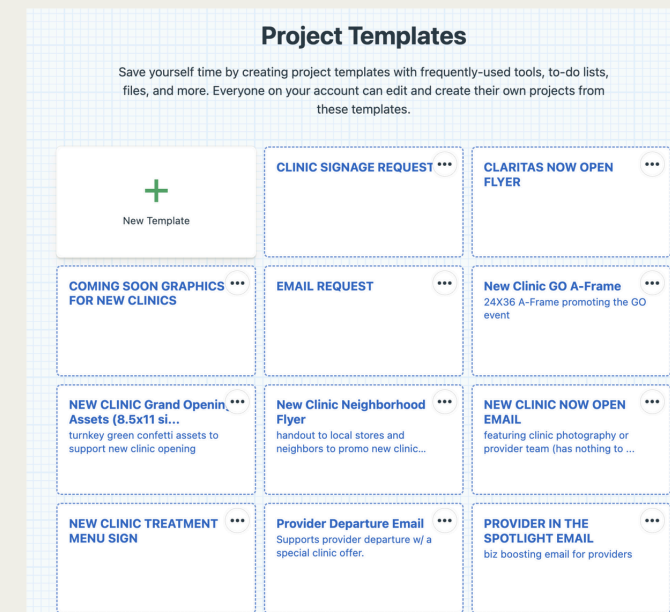
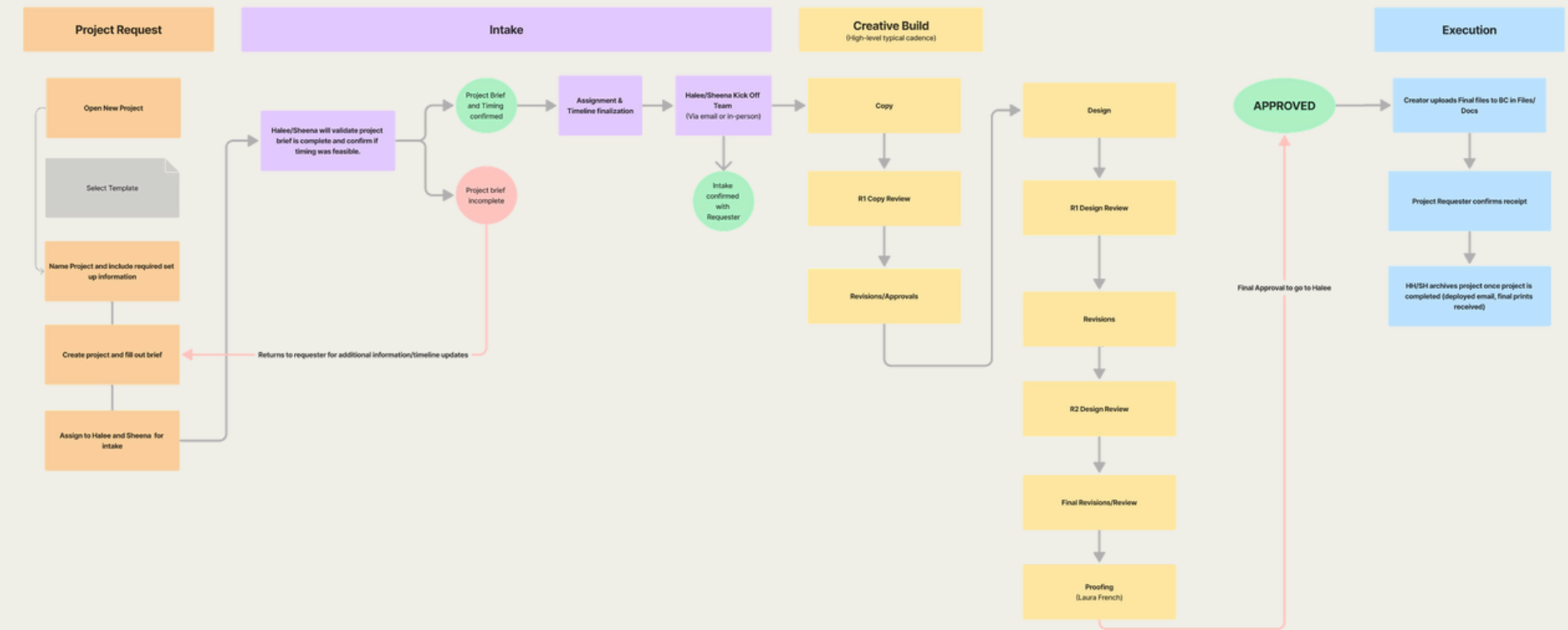
Faced with multiple challenges, I prioritized immediate work while devising long-term plans.

To address immediate obstacles, the team needed to revamp their creative workflow processes using Basecamp and Sharepoint tools.

I restructured their intake process, implemented project-type templates, and in concert with the IT team, connected to a new DAM structure for creative assets to live and open access to all creative teams.

Without all of the right information being provided by project requesters, the distributed team had gaps of information that were not being provided by the current briefs. To address the briefing process, I partnered with the Head of Creative to completely overhaul the creative briefing process and inputs.

Once the structures and processes were created, I created multiple playbooks, presentations to share-out and training sessions on our new process.



# Solution #2: Manage Brand Refresh

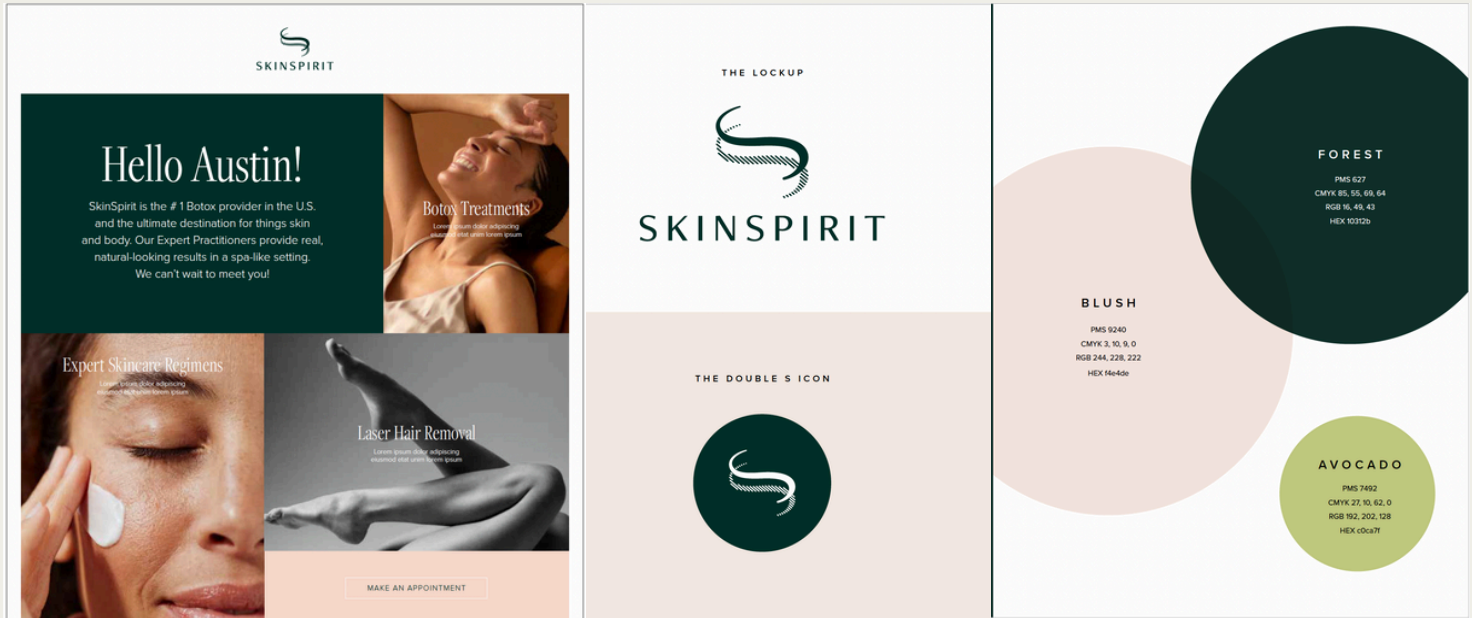
Alongside polishing current processes, I managed a nation-wide brand refresh in collaboration with the Head of Creative. We were mindful of this new branding-- ensuring it catered to all use cases, and advocated for accessibility standards.

Our brand felt dated, aged and did not embrace the joy and levity of where we were going. The new brand refresh included updating color palette, fonts, typographic and design devices. The results were stunning and gave the brand a more modern and inclusive vibe.

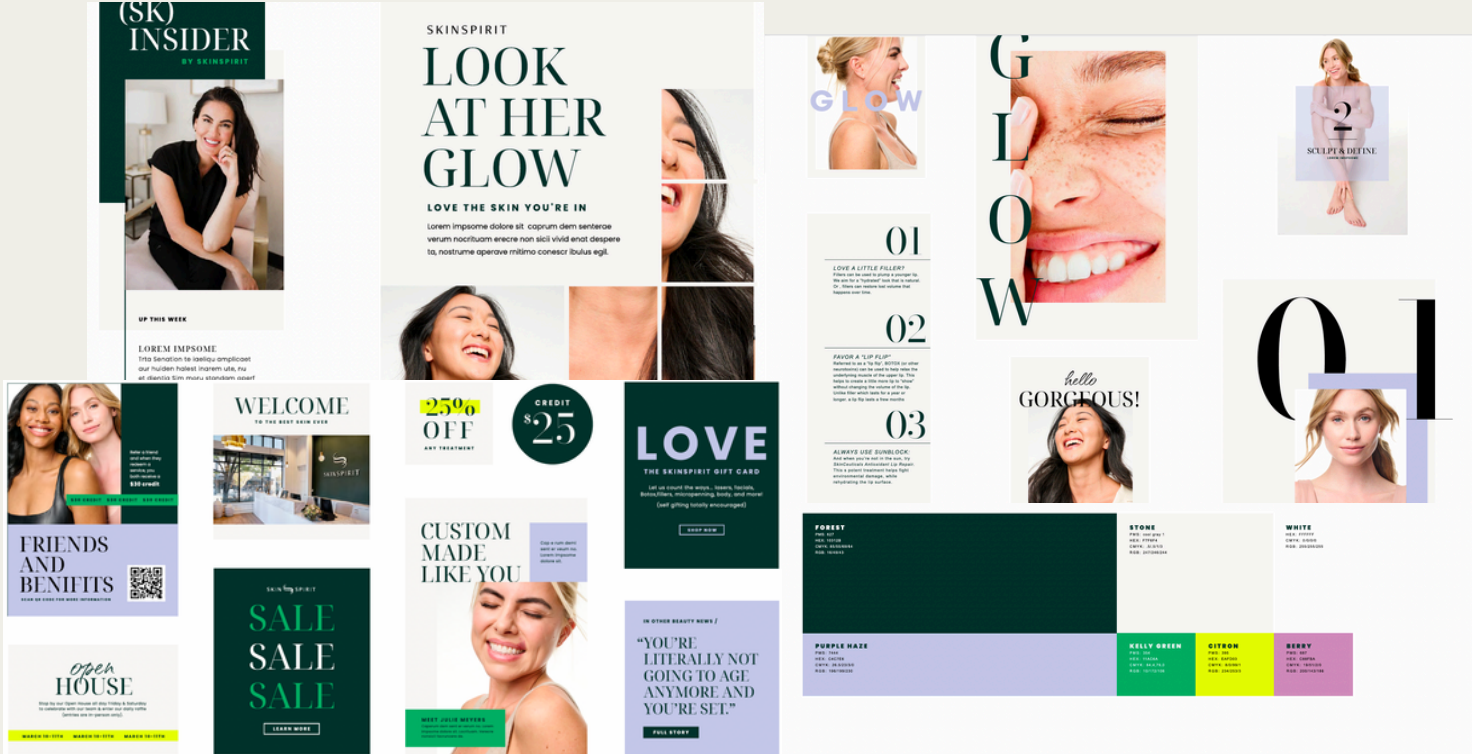
We devised roll-out plan for new branding adoption in the new creative workflow. This included auditing the timelines for all future marketing campaigns and backing out a plan to include this new look on in a timely and proactive way.

This plan helped support the overall national update for this brand and laid the foundation for larger initiatives in 2023.

## Previous brand



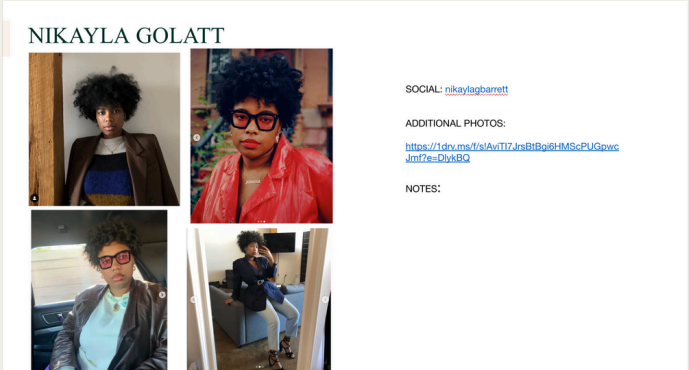
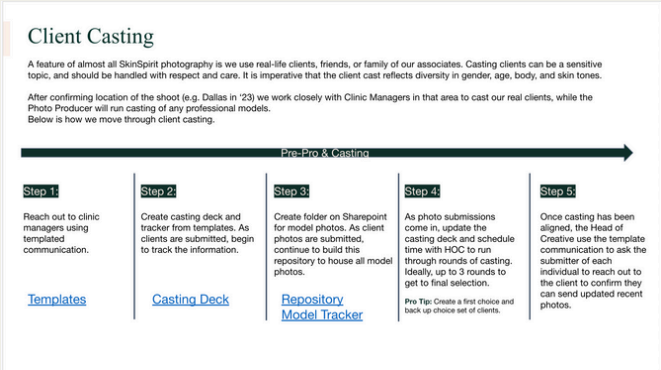
## Updates



# Solution #3: Photoshoot Management

With this new branding, we were tasked to update the photography to align to our new standards. Not only were we tasked with a full beauty shoot to align to the new brand, SkinSpirit also supports new clinic openings across the nation, that include individual clinic grand openings. Cleaning up the clinic photoshoot cycle alongside planning a beauty shoot was a monumental task to tie together.

Our photoshoots needed better organization, and from scratch, I created a process for casting, booking, and managing all future large-scale photoshoots, along with the monthly clinic opening shoots for the brand. This included developing detailed playbooks, templates, and timelines to support the different type of photography needed for the brand.



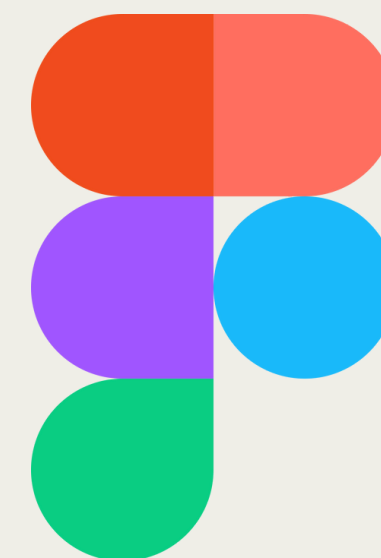
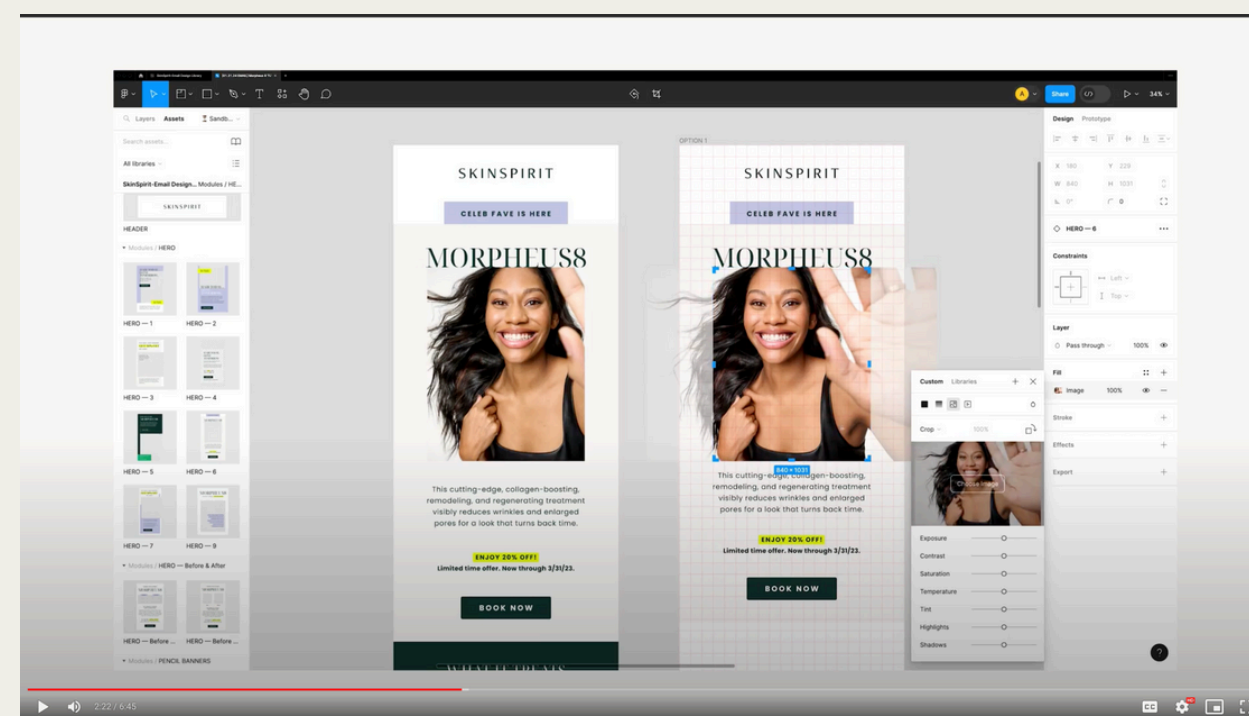
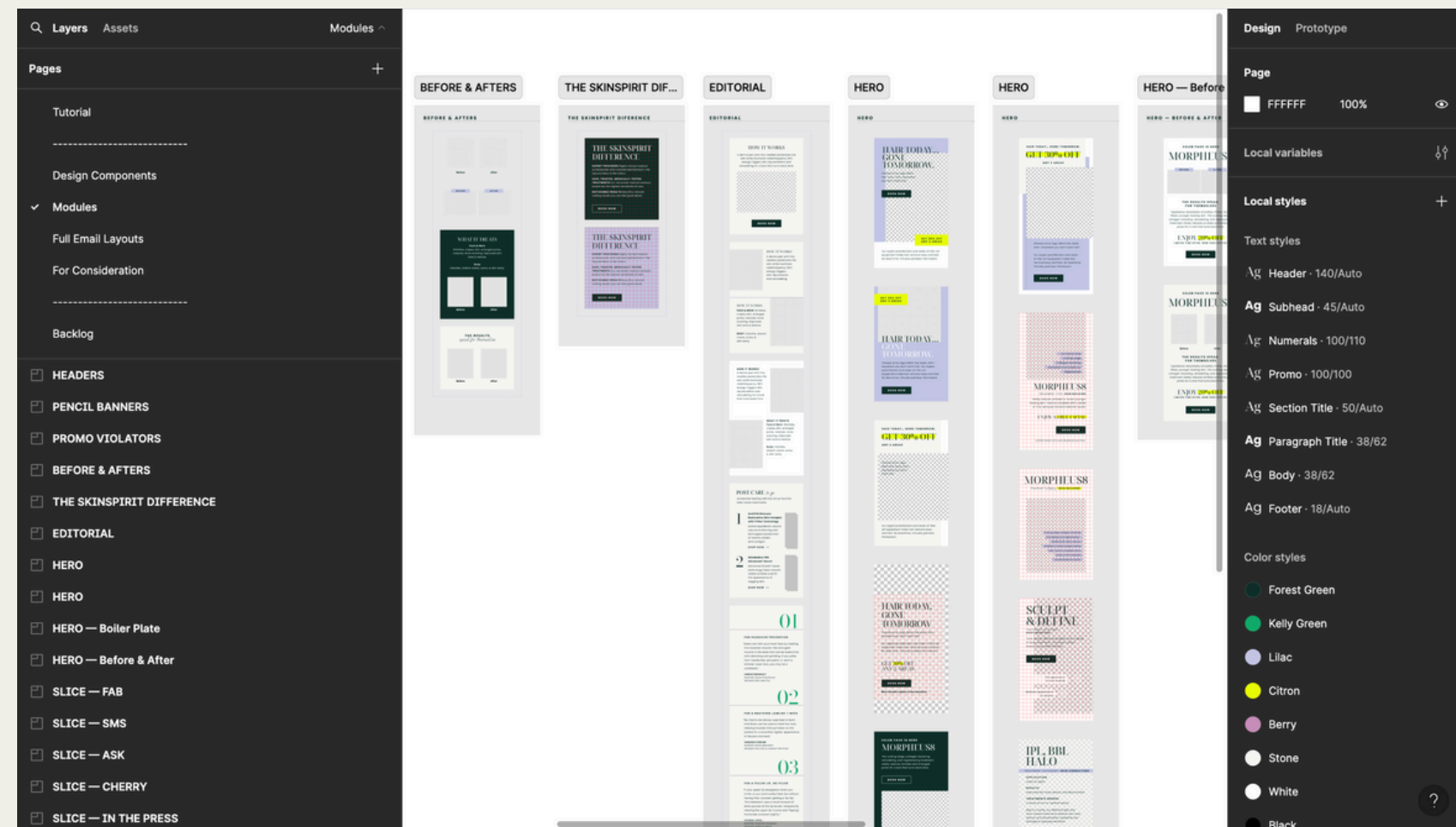
# Solution #4: Design System Library

Given the dispersed team of freelancers who worked on this brand and our new brand refresh, I needed to tackle and solve for inconsistent designs which were coming in from freelancers using outdated files. There was no central sharing of assets and all brand assets were up to interpretation to individual designs. The structure of the team did not allow for a cohesive onboarding experience which led to burning multiple hours on singular emails.

Our goal was to reduce design debt by at least 15% going into 2024.

To meet these goals, I sold through a Figma-based Design System for emails to the leadership. Collaborating with two key designers, we audited existing emails, identified patterns and built a systematic design library from scratch that launched the new branding. This system unified the team, reduced repetitive work, and eased file sharing.

I structured the entire Figma framework, including a management workflow in Figma and how it would be integrated into the existing workflow. I also created onboarding and training videos and documentation to bring existing team members into the system and leaving a structure of onboarding for designers and copywriters going forward which did not exist previously.



# IMPACTS

The Basecamp workflow became more organized, with updated creative briefs, standardized workflow and intake structures.

This made teams feel **more supported, organized, and clear** on what's expected of them. With process updates for intake, and for ongoing creative reviews, work now moves through the teams at a faster pace with clarity and solid communication.

Implementing a DAM system made assets available to our distributed team to peruse and select, **reducing bottlenecks** caused by previous sourcing work being done by Head of Creative.

Our well-planned brand refresh made it easy to roll out and included all design assets, along with relevant accessibility info for the upcoming 2024 website refresh.

The final brand book was **comprehensive, forward-thinking**, and totally delivered on our brand promise.

The photoshoots for the brand refresh were a massive success, we were able to **flawlessly cast 8 real-clients and 2 professional models for a shoot within minimal weeks preparation**, mobilizing our clinic network and leveraging a comprehensive structured approach.

Subsequent playbooks created for ongoing clinic openings has increased organization, reduced prep work and has begun to create efficiencies in this work that can be managed outside of the creative team.

Completing the Design System library successfully resulted in a **20% reduction in design debt for email marketing**. The onboarding videos and documentation have since enabled the organization to seamlessly bring on new team members and **reduce headcount from 6 to 4 part time design resources**.

This not only made things more efficient, but it also **improved design fidelity** and served as a collaborative tool that benefited everyone involved.

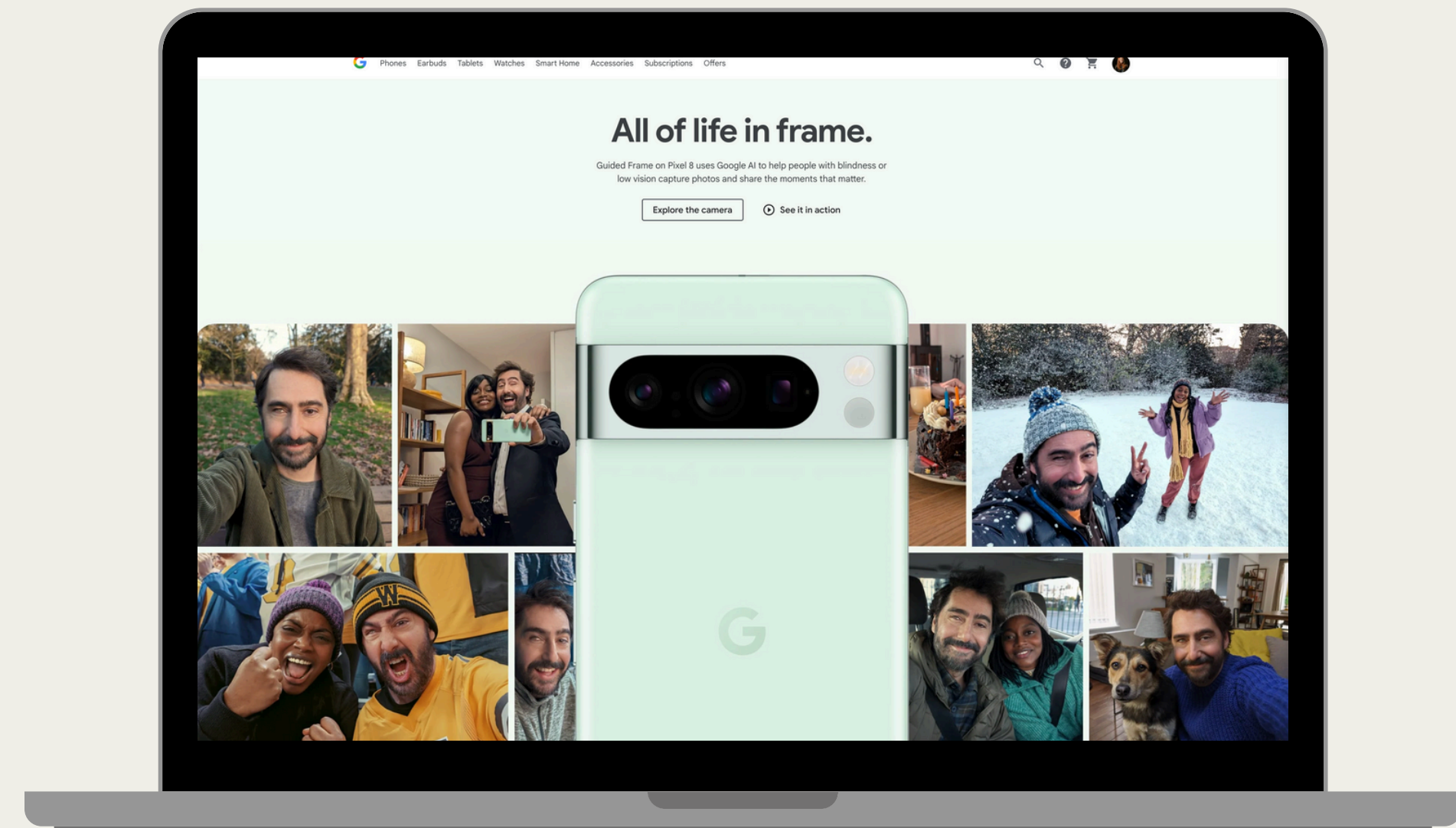
## SUPPORTING OUR DESIGN AND STRATEGIC NARRATIVE

### Problem:

The Google Store brings together cross-functional stakeholders from various levels of leadership. Our designs not only had to look amazing but also required the technical and design systems knowledge to back up our decisions.

During reviews, different teams would interpret the work based on their own perspectives, sometimes struggling to understand the design decisions and if they aligned with the brief.

Engineering teams were not being engaged until the end of the creative cycle, which would cause development issues at that stage. We needed a way to ensure all teams were aligned with the creative vision.



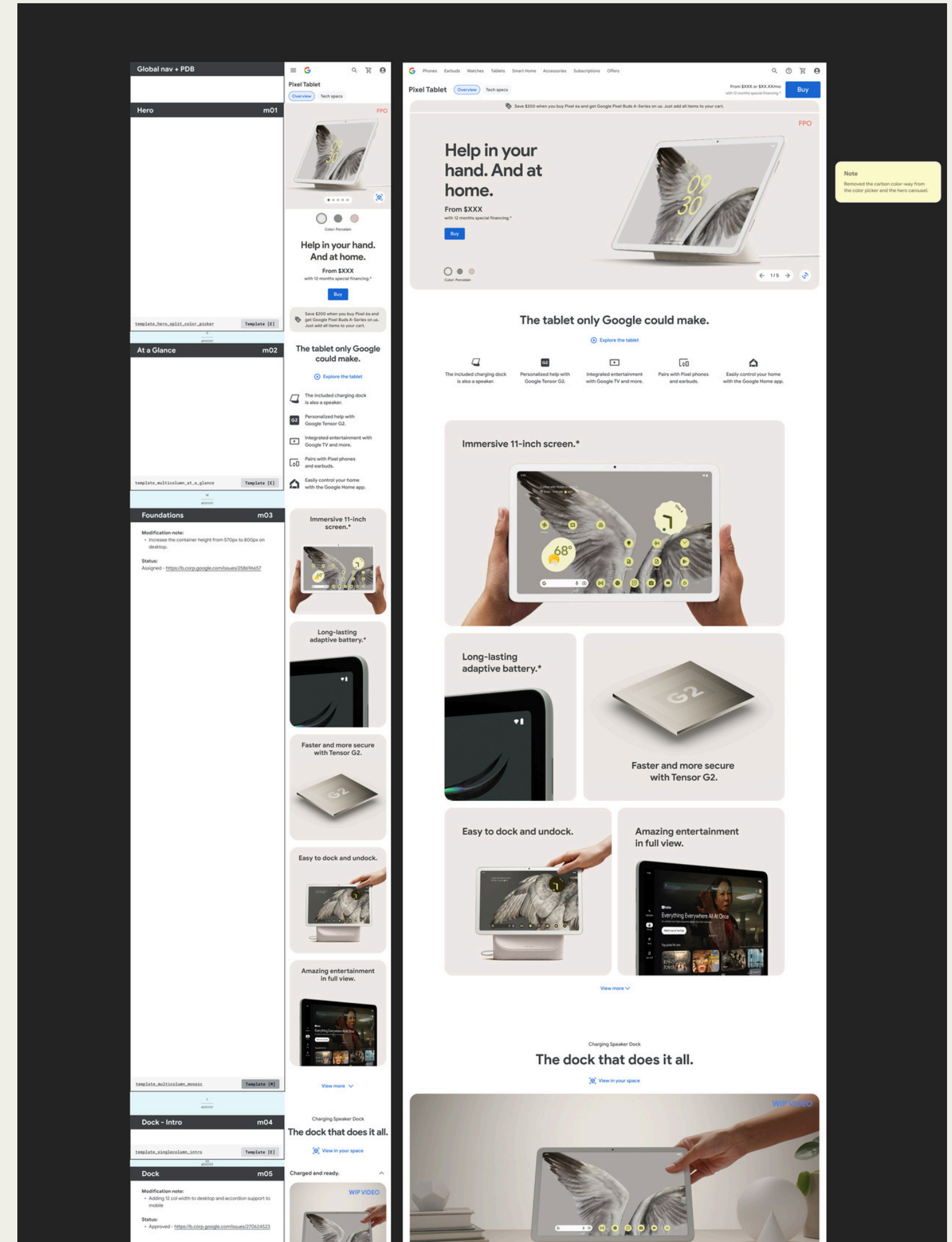


# Solution

To address this, we introduced a design annotation column that accompanied the designs, providing stakeholders with specific information throughout the review process. This included details on which modules from the design system were intended for use, the content for these modules, and the design strategy that addressed the brief. We tested these annotations with one side of the business to gather client feedback and assess the impact on our design team's timelines.

## All annotations included:

- What KSP the section aligned to
- The hierarchy notes on the page
- Name of design template to utilize, along with any updated functionality notes
- Content requirements



## Impact

Within weeks of implementation, other business verticals requested the inclusion of these new tools in all designs across our account.

The upfront annotation process, incorporating strategic thought, demonstrated our team's ability to think expansively and meet the requirements of the entire Google organization.

It provided reassurance and confidence that our team could execute a creative vision that all stakeholders were aligned to.

Our teams experienced reduced feedback churn, with a 15% decrease in feedback from product and engineering teams, fostering better relationships with these teams.

Ultimately, our QA bug issues decreased by 30% over time.

**-15%**

**Hours spent on  
design re-work**

**-30%**

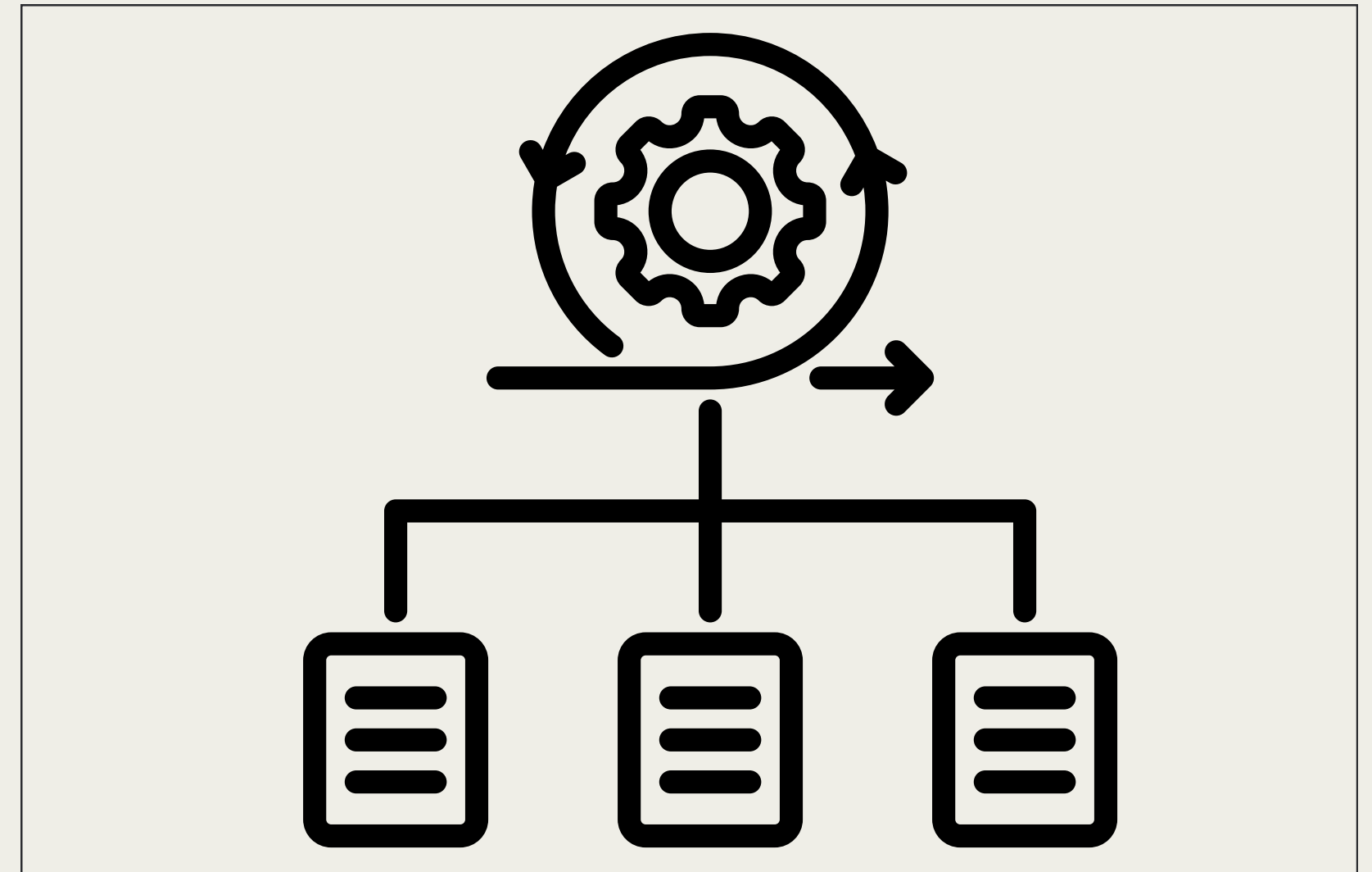
**QA Bug issues**

## PROMOTING A DESIGN SYSTEM SOLUTION

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When BASIC<sup>®</sup> developed a new Design System for the Google Store, it raised some questions about responsibilities among different teams and how this new work would be managed across stakeholders.

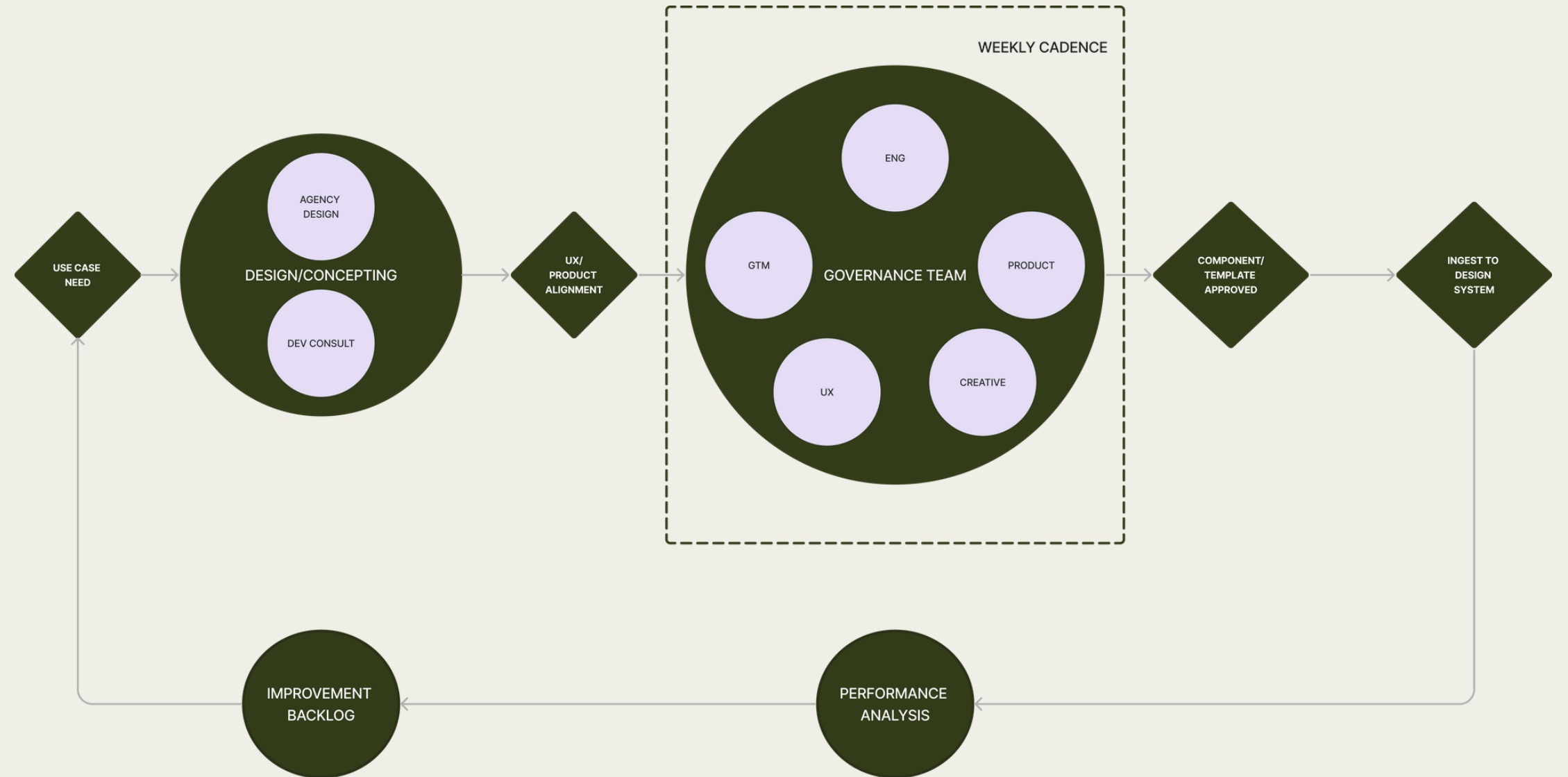
While our agency team understood our mission and value, we needed to get Google on board and actively involved to ensure the success of our vision.



## Solution

After carefully evaluating all the activities, conducting interviews, and gathering inputs, I collaborated with our Design System leads to create a comprehensive RACI chart.

We then condensed that into a communication plan, which we used to present our models to the relevant stakeholders. We worked closely with our client to align the process and rolled it out collaboratively.



## 1 million *growth*

The growth of our team necessitated more designers who would support a Design System that would ultimately reduce costs and headcount across our Design Teams long-term.

## 6 *humans*

Creating this team provided new paths for career growth within the agency for Designers and Producers to focus on product design and management, and supporting their team members with innovative design that was efficient.

## Impact

The Design System evangelism gained traction quickly.

All the teams involved were aligned and excited, shifting their focus towards exploring how they could leverage the Design System to enhance efficiency and clarity in their work.

This allowed the BASIC® Team to incorporate and build a net-new dedicated Design Systems Team into our retained team, **growing our retainer by \$100k year-over-year.**

By introducing this team, we were able to expand our reach into the UX discipline at Google, as well as **provide new career paths** for our Design Team members to become Product Designers or hone their craft of Design Systems.

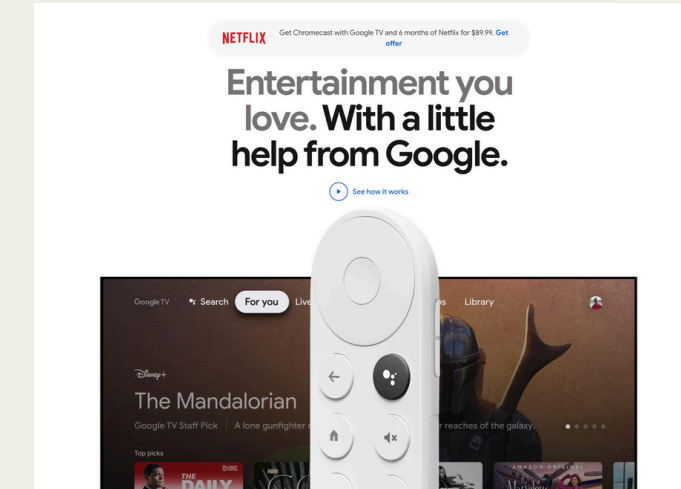
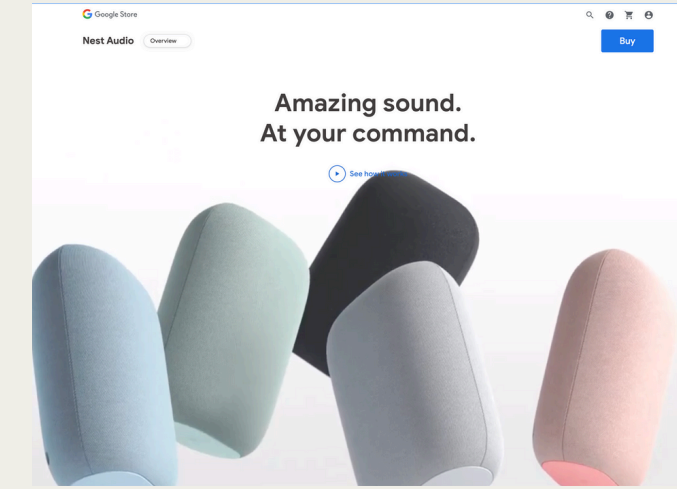
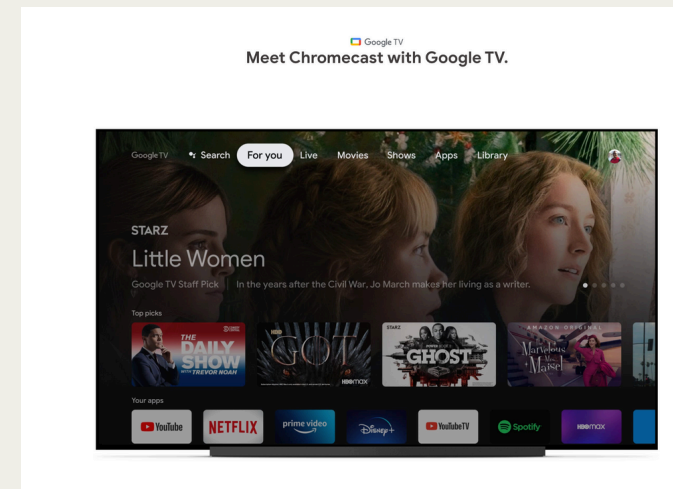
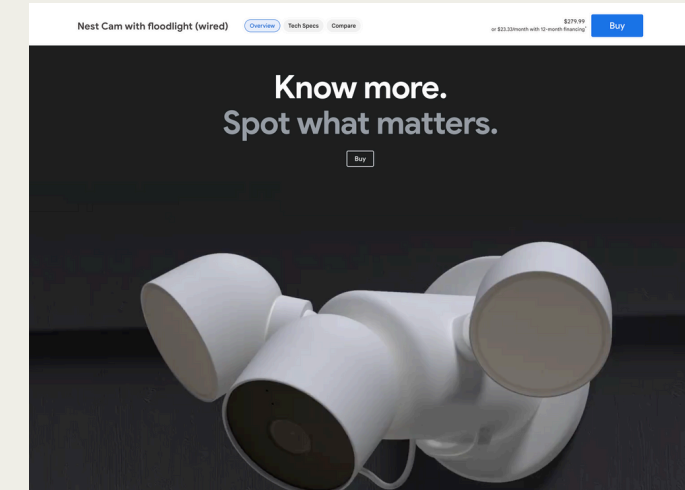
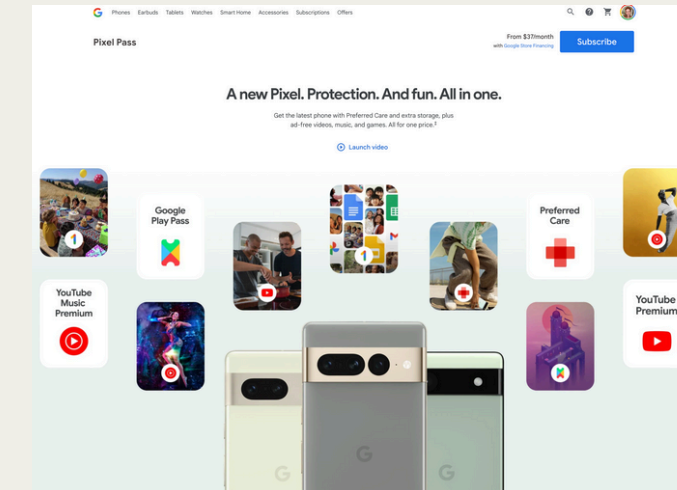
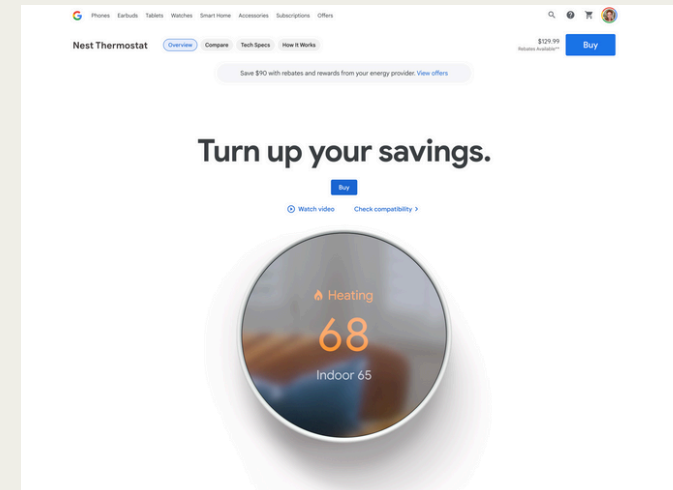
# Google Store

## Different teams, different creative, unified launch.

Within our Google account, multiple product verticals were led by different clients in the Google organization. However, despite having the same launch objectives, our creative teams were producing work that lacked consistency.

This resulted in disjointed and visionless Google Store launches, as noted by our clients.

We had to work differently, at the time on the account we lacked a consistent Design System and while we built the case for that system, we had to find a way to bring consistency and creative fidelity across the portfolio.

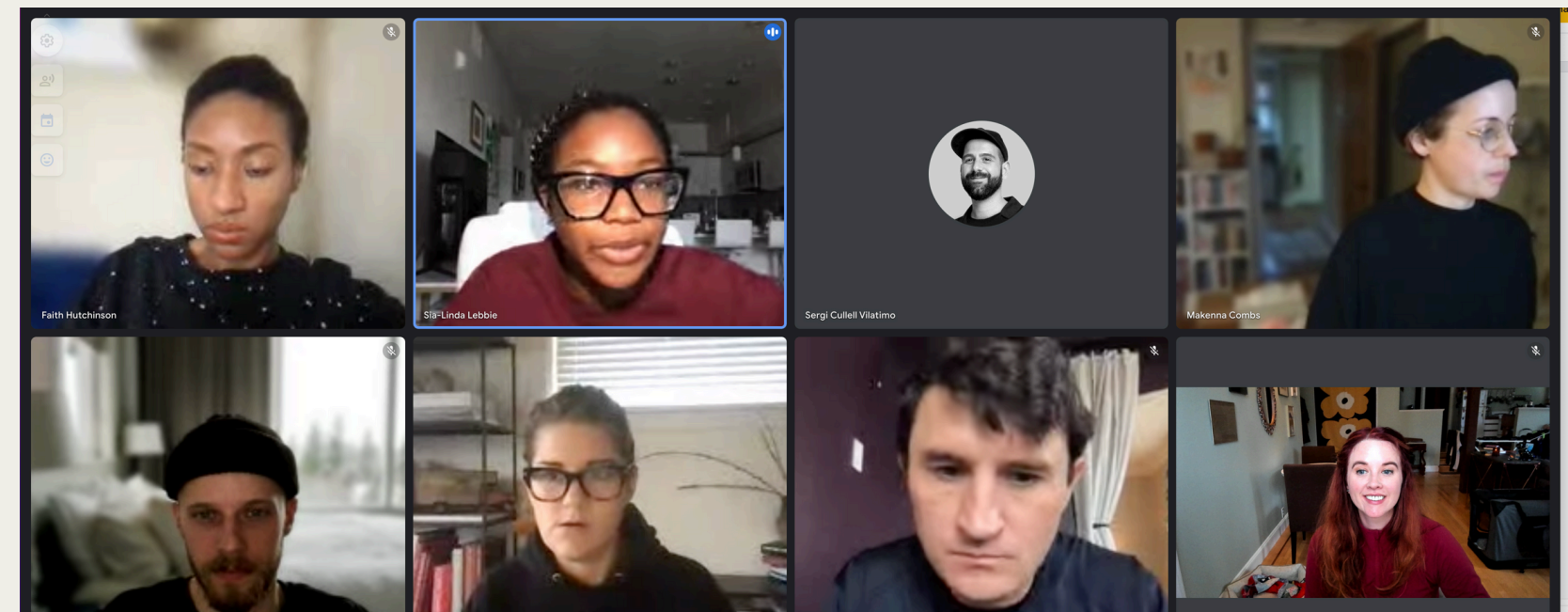
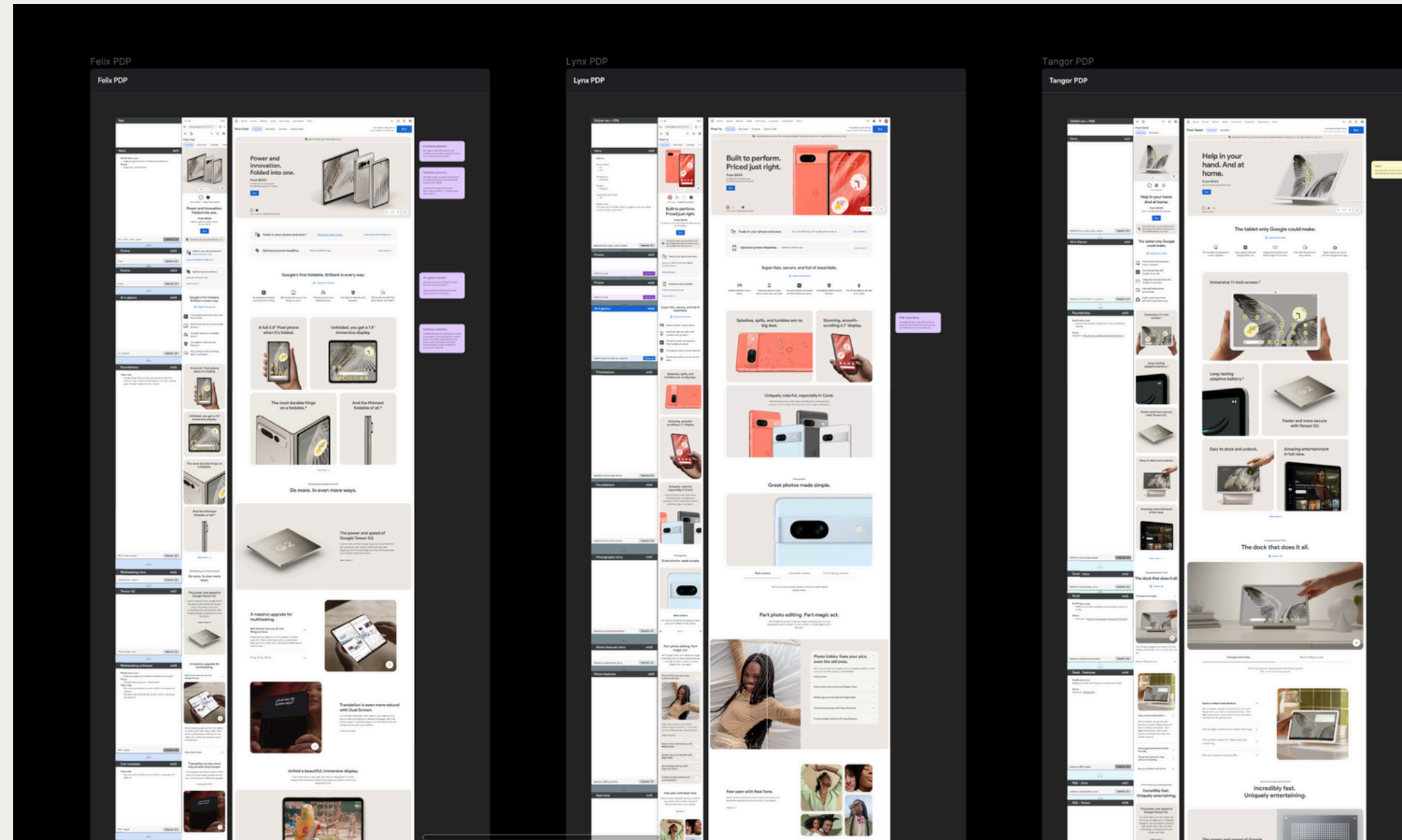


# Solution:

To address this issue, we implemented a weekly meeting during the launch creative timelines. This brought all the creative teams together to showcase and share their work.

We assigned a designer from each hardware product team to update a "cross-vertical share canvas" in Figma, which allowed our Creative leads to present and assess the work cohesively.

This collaborative approach enabled us to find the necessary symmetry to problem-solve together and foster team cohesion that we had previously lacked.

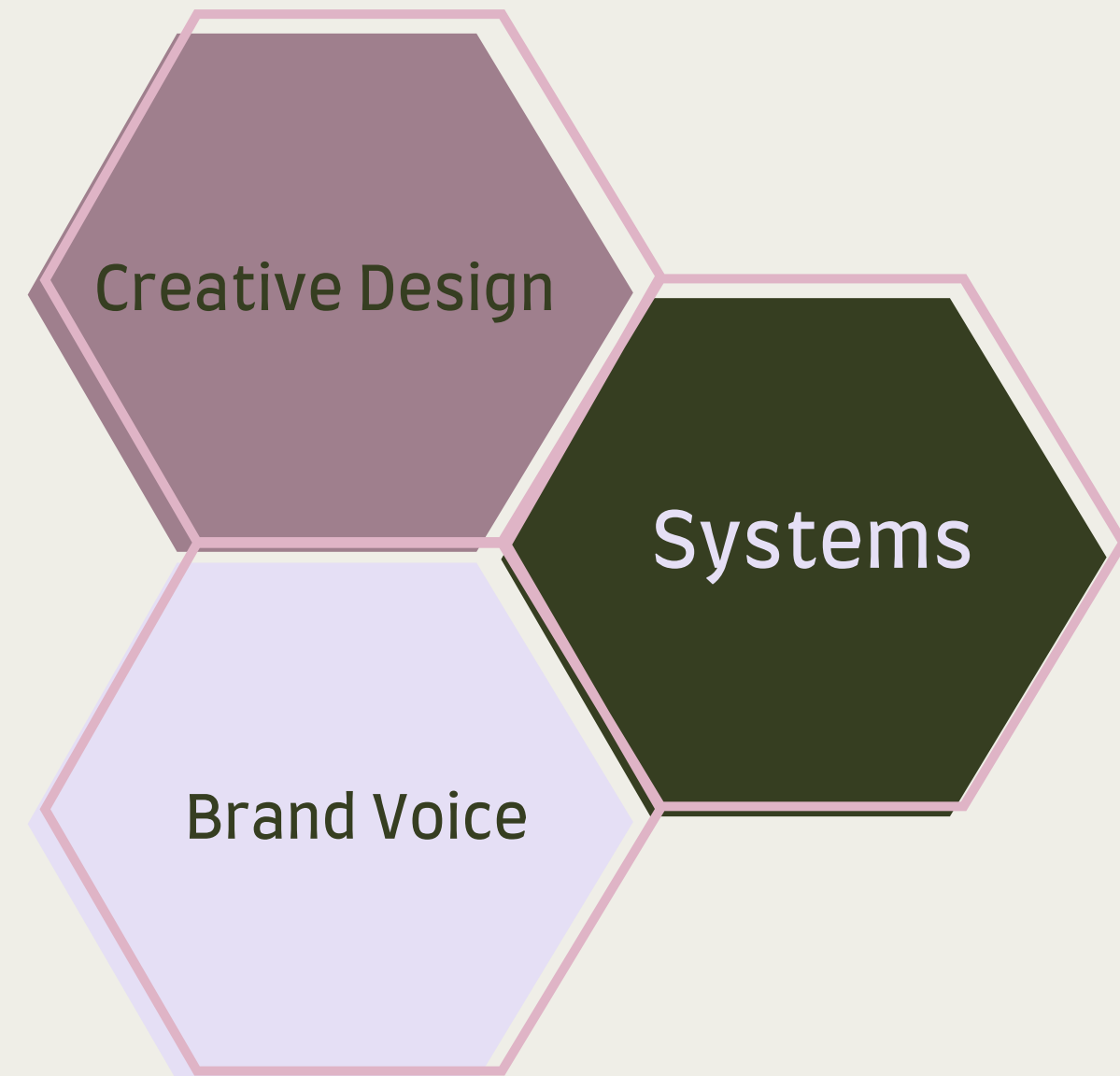


## Impact

Through this work-sharing method, we discovered design efficiencies, generated ideas for upcoming Design System, established a consistent tone in our launch copywriting, and provided a platform to share new content updates that affected all teams' work.

By involving all teams in this process, accountability and excitement for the work increased. Individual teams gained insights into their colleagues' projects and could offer strategic perspectives during client reviews, demonstrating to our clients that we were considering the broader implications of our work and supporting their vision.

This built credibility and trust with our clients.





PlayStation

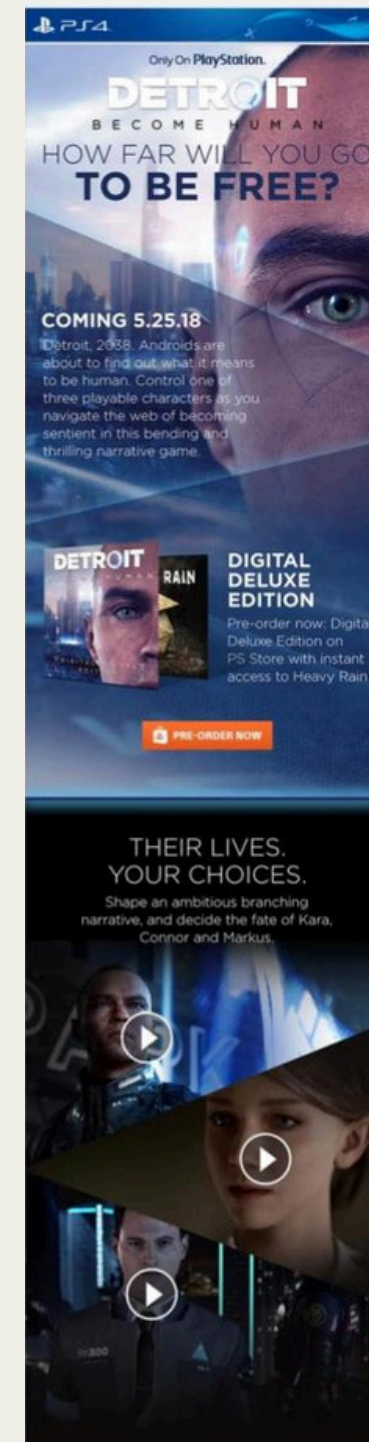
# IMPLEMENTING NEW TOOLS AND DEVELOPING A DESIGN SYSTEM.

The CRM process for PlayStation was customized, and this created challenges with development teams, requiring investment in large development teams to create the 25+ html-based emails sent per month.

To address their development challenges, caused by manually coding numerous emails each month, they opted to switch to Salesforce Content Builder for their CRM workflow.

This change was requested by the client, and Digitas was entrusted with the tasks of not only creating a cohesive design system to be utilized within this new tool but to train and evangelize stakeholders to make this switch.

Managing and communicating this multi-faceted change across various organizational layers was a complex undertaking.

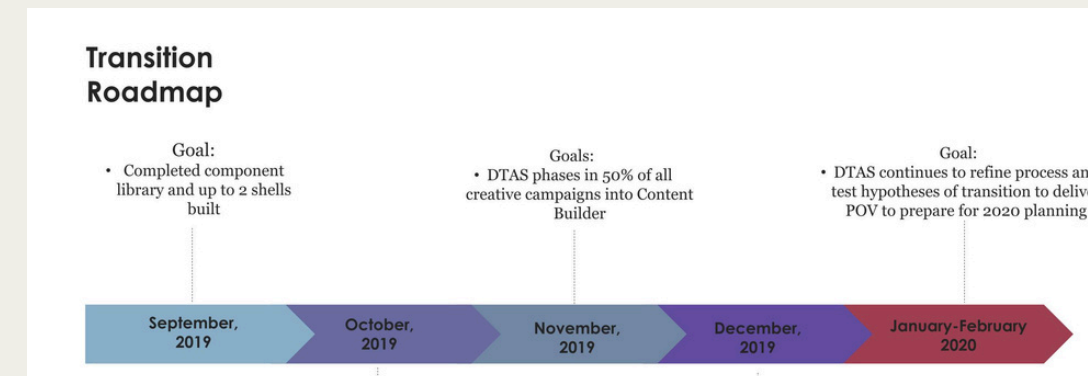


# Solution:

After assessing all impacts to the client, internal teams, agency leadership and agency partners, I created a process that solved all stakeholder pain points. Through audience-specific communication planning, I rolled out our new process to everyone.

As lead on this change management, I led the team that ultimately implemented the new design system and tooling for our design and copy teams working on the PlayStation business.

With a small team of design, strategy and project management, we assessed all current email needs and created the Salesforce modules we'd need built for the new system. By systematically working between client needs, our strategic creative needs and our stakeholders, we were able to create a new design system that could be leveraged in the new tool.



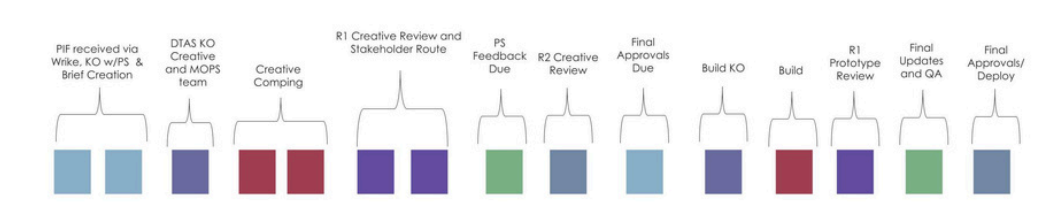
### Roles & Responsibilities

Proposed New Content Builder Model

|                                | PlayStation | Creative Strategy | Account Management | Project Management | Creative Team | MOPS | Development Team |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|------|------------------|
| PfF Initiation                 | R           | C                 | S                  | A                  |               |      |                  |
| PfF Intake/Client KO           | C           | R                 | A                  | S                  |               | S    | I                |
| Creative Brief Development     | S           | R                 | A                  | C                  |               |      |                  |
| Creative KO                    |             | A                 | S                  | R                  | C             | I    | C                |
| Creative Concepting            |             | S                 | I                  | C                  | A             | R    | C                |
| PlayStation Creative Reviews   | A           | S                 | C                  | R                  | I             | I    |                  |
| PlayStation Creative Approvals | A           | S                 | C                  | R                  | R             | C    | I                |

Legend: R=Responsible, A=Accountable, S=Support, C=Consult, I=Inform

### New Creative Content Builder Timeline-15 Days



New Creative Timeline takes into account that all CRM templates are built and consistent with less risk of variation across global brand.

Time for creatives

Additional utilize feedback.

Livelihood plan technology.

Overall timing

# PlayStation CRM: Content Builder

Version 1.2

September 2019



## Impact

With the implementation of Content Builder, our team was able to create efficiencies that included:

- Reduction of timeline by 5 days
- Re-assessment of project lead roles, with new alignment between project management and marketing operations
- A new Design System for CRM emails that created cohesion in design principles, brand creative fidelity between multiple markets and supported development to occur more efficiently.
- Inclusion of a cushion of time for easy a/b testing to be accessed through the Content Builder tool and utilization of the new componentized design system.

Through the careful audience-specific roll out plan and communication, all teams were aligned quickly and trust was maintained in our team to manage this change to completion.

**5 days**

Reduction in timeline

**R&R**

Refined team roles

**Design System**

Create, build, implement

**A/B**

Easy testing

# Thanks.

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