



# From Survival to Growth: Enhancing Design Systems via Seamless Collaboration

Hi first



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Design System Architect  
[@Bridge-the-Gap.dev](https://@Bridge-the-Gap.dev)

Who are we?



**Irina Illstrova**  
Senior Design System Engineer  
[@Bridge-the-Gap.dev](https://@Bridge-the-Gap.dev)

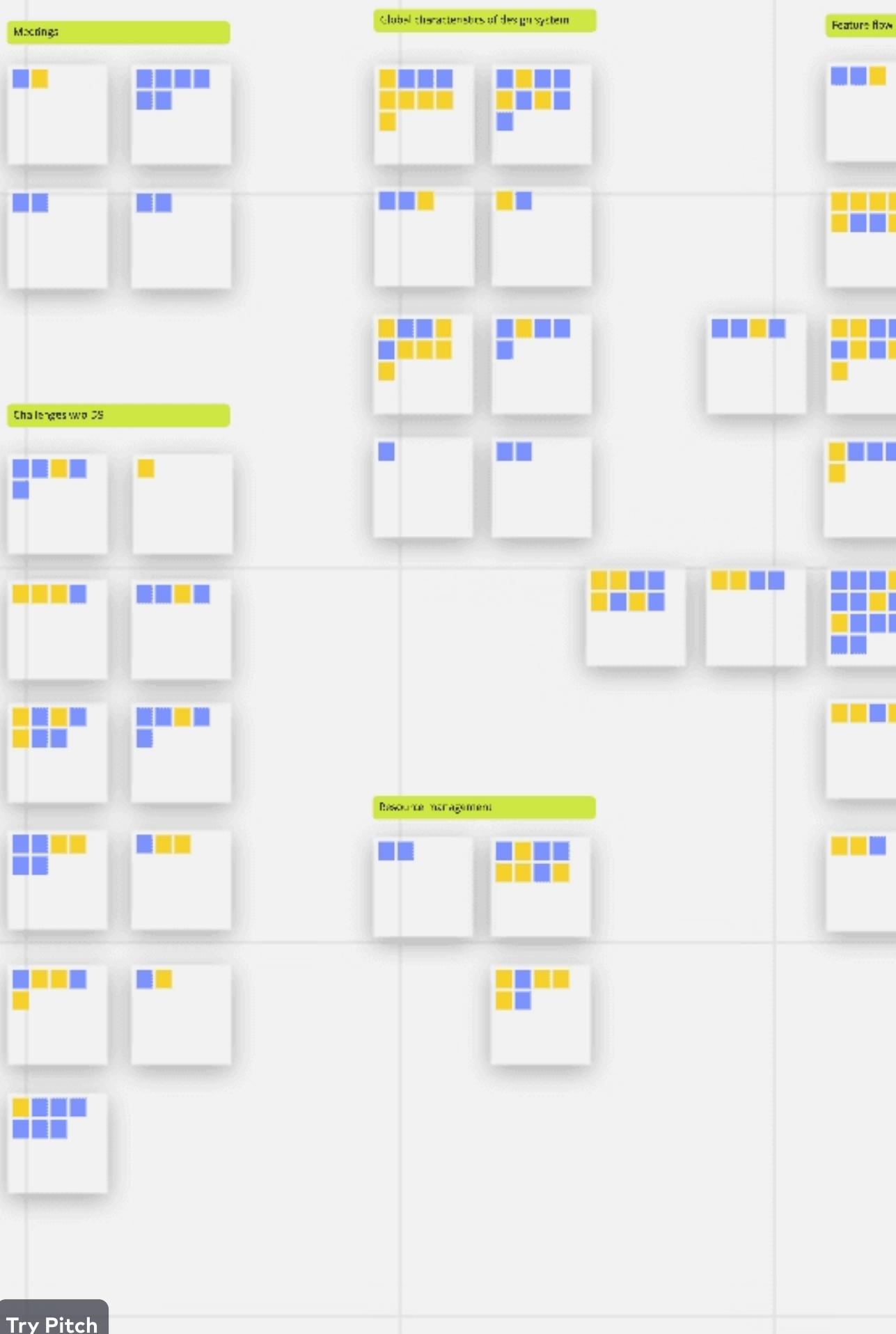


# Bridge the gap



[bridge-the-gap.dev](http://bridge-the-gap.dev)

# Bridging the Gap: Crafting Seamless Collaboration in Design Systems



## Our research

- 30+ interviews with design systems people (designers/developers)
- 300+ stickies on miro board, categorised under 15 topics

## Sample questions:

- How often do you communicate with people of another discipline?
- What problems do you face during your collaboration?
- How do you arrange handover?
- How you prioritize tasks?
- What helps you to ensure seamless communication?
- ....

*Design*

*system is*

# not a product

Business doesn't understand the value

Lack of governance

Lack of resources

Designs are not implemented  
No motivation to improve

Scalability

Non-qualified team

Lack of communication

No effective processes

# No knowledge sharing

DS is treated as UI kit

Misaligned designs and code  
No time for maintenance

Lack of contributions  
Team changes too often

Collaboration difficulties

# Adoption challenges

Legacy code

Maintaining consistency

Overengineering

DS team work in silos

Inconsistent documentation

# No interest

Lack of participation

Overthinking

Chaotic handover

Lack of clear goals

DS needs not communicated

Inconsistent documentation

Collaboration difficulties

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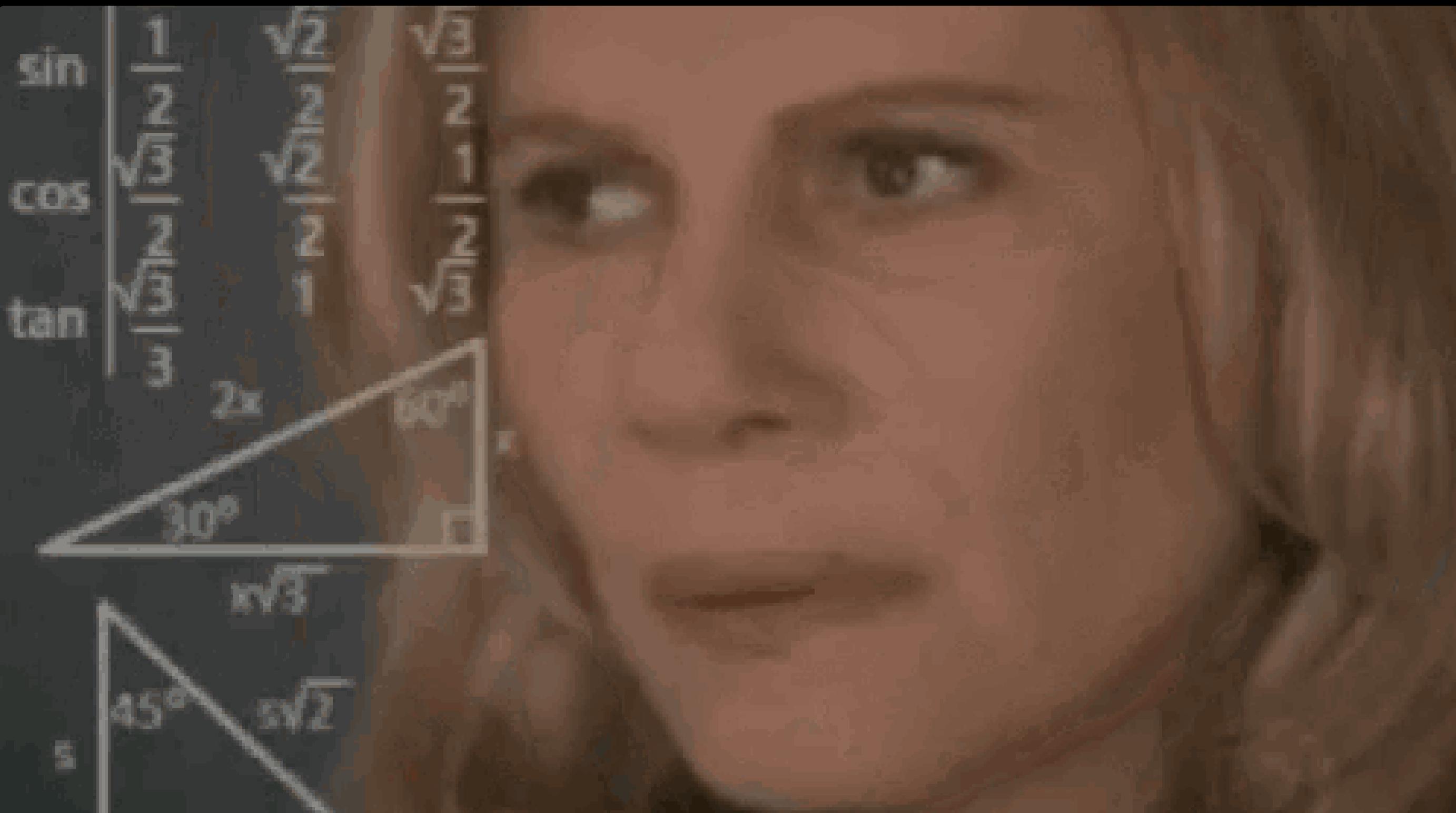
Overengineering

DS team work in silos

Inconsistent documentation

# No interest

# What Should We Do?



A photograph of four business professionals in an office setting. A man in a dark suit is in the center, looking upwards and pulling at his maroon patterned tie. To his left, a woman in a grey blazer and purple glasses is focused on her work. To his right, a woman in a white blouse is leaning over the desk. In the foreground, another person's hands are visible, holding a pen over some papers. The background shows office windows and blinds.

*Design System is not recognized*

**as a PRODUCT**

*because of*

**COLLABORATION  
BREAKDOWNS**

**Company\* does not see  
the value in a design system**

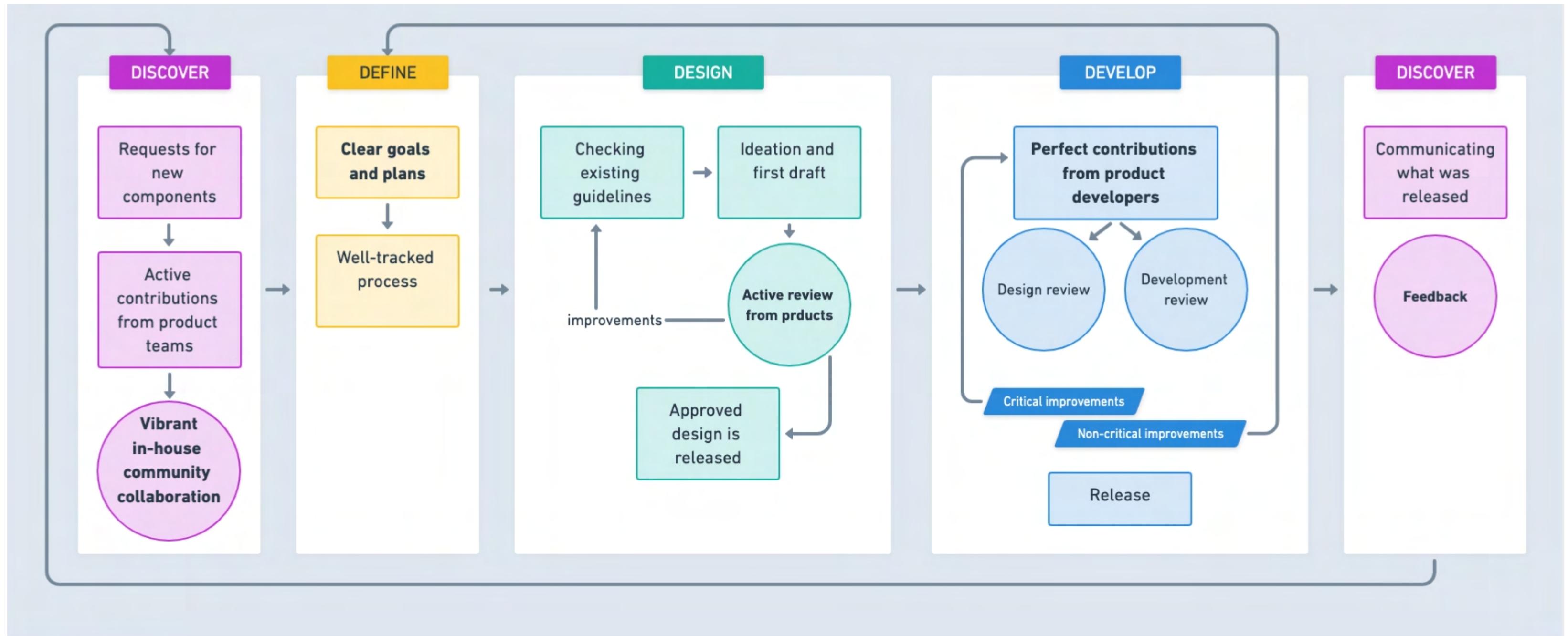
\*management, business

Organizations are structured so that

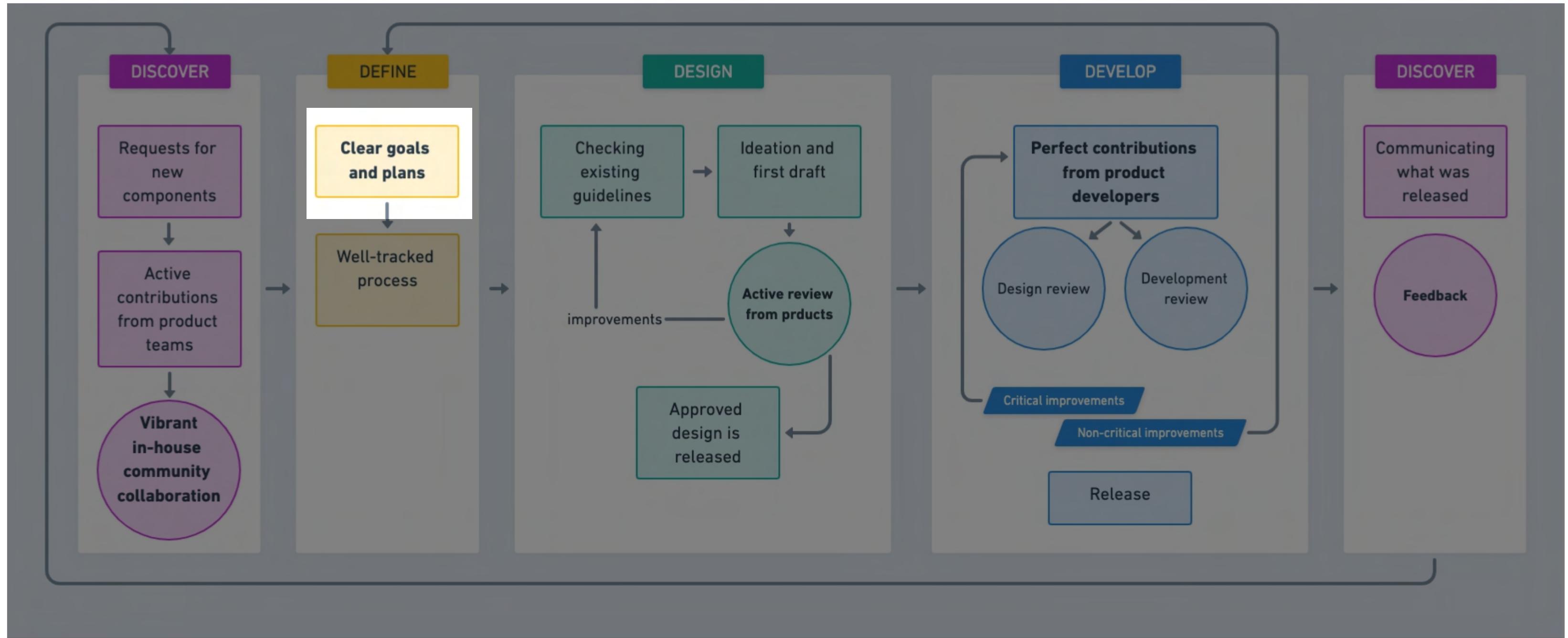
**the teams do not cooperate**

# From Survival to Growth: Enhancing Design Systems via Seamless Collaboration

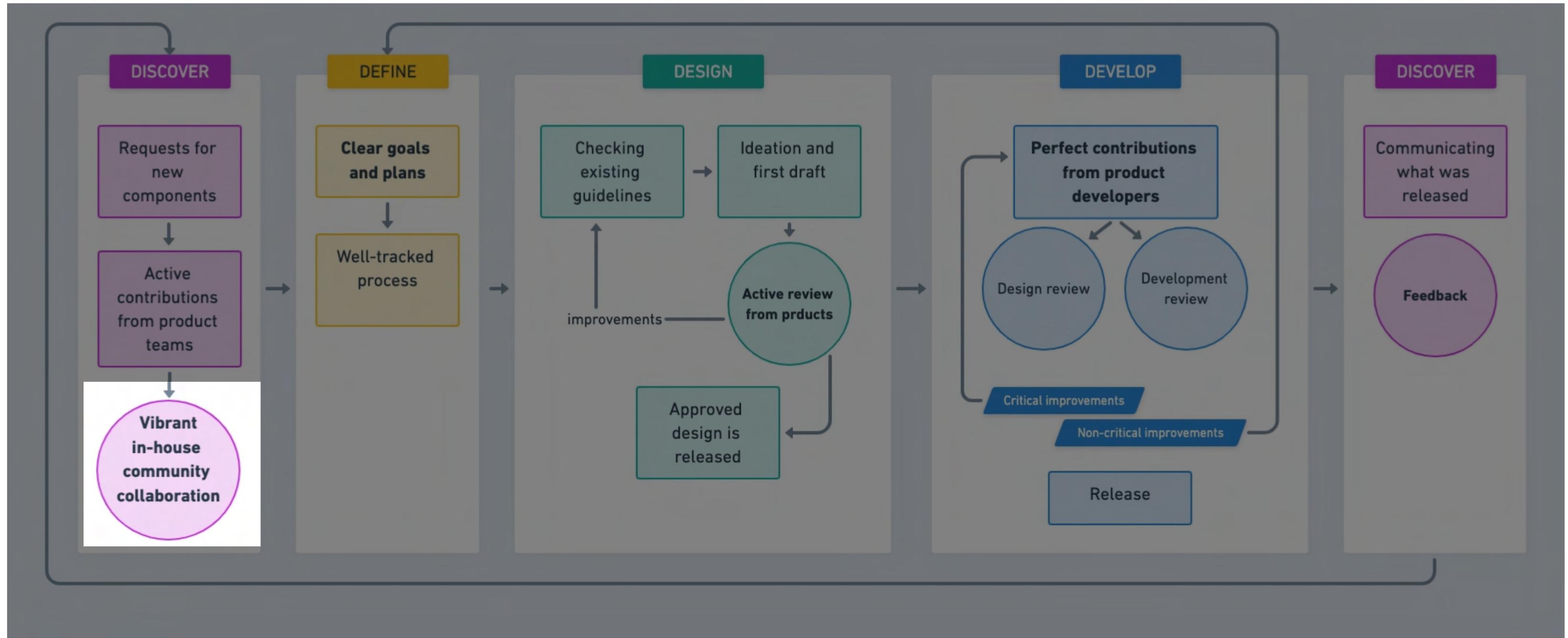
# This is what we want



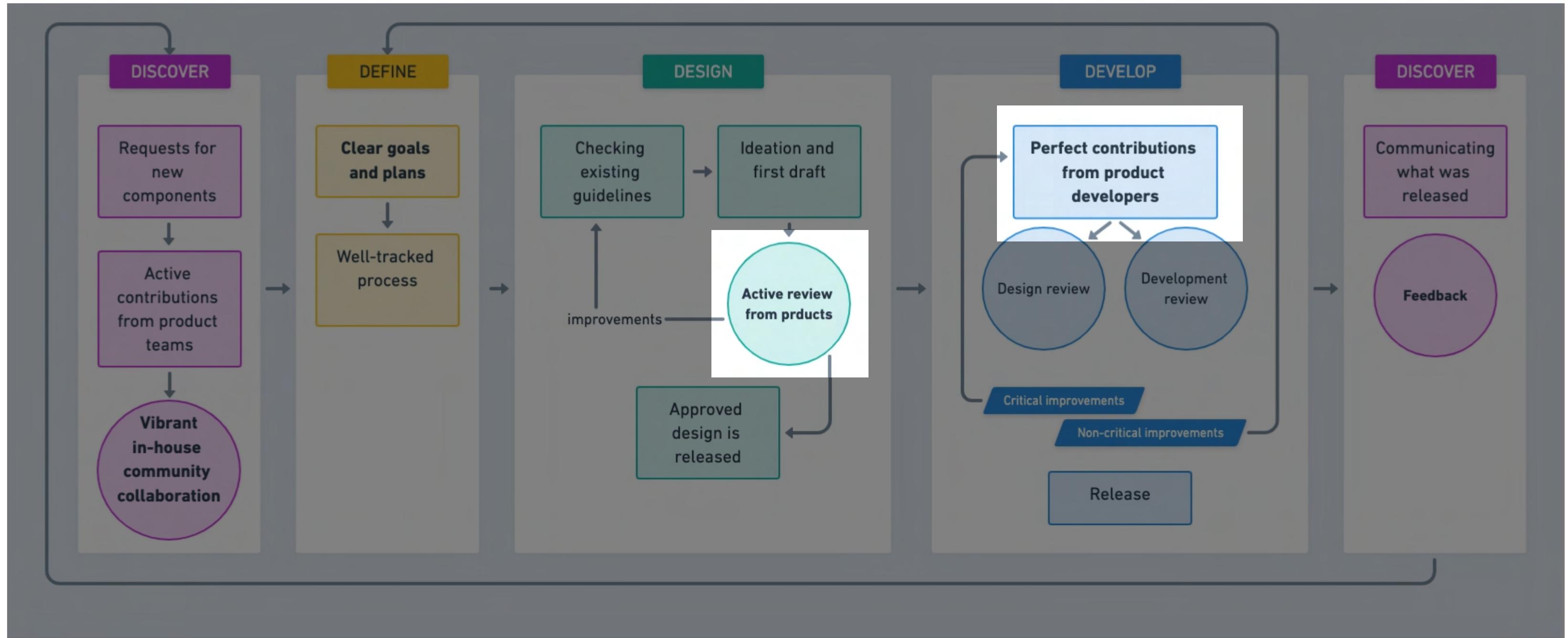
# This is what we want



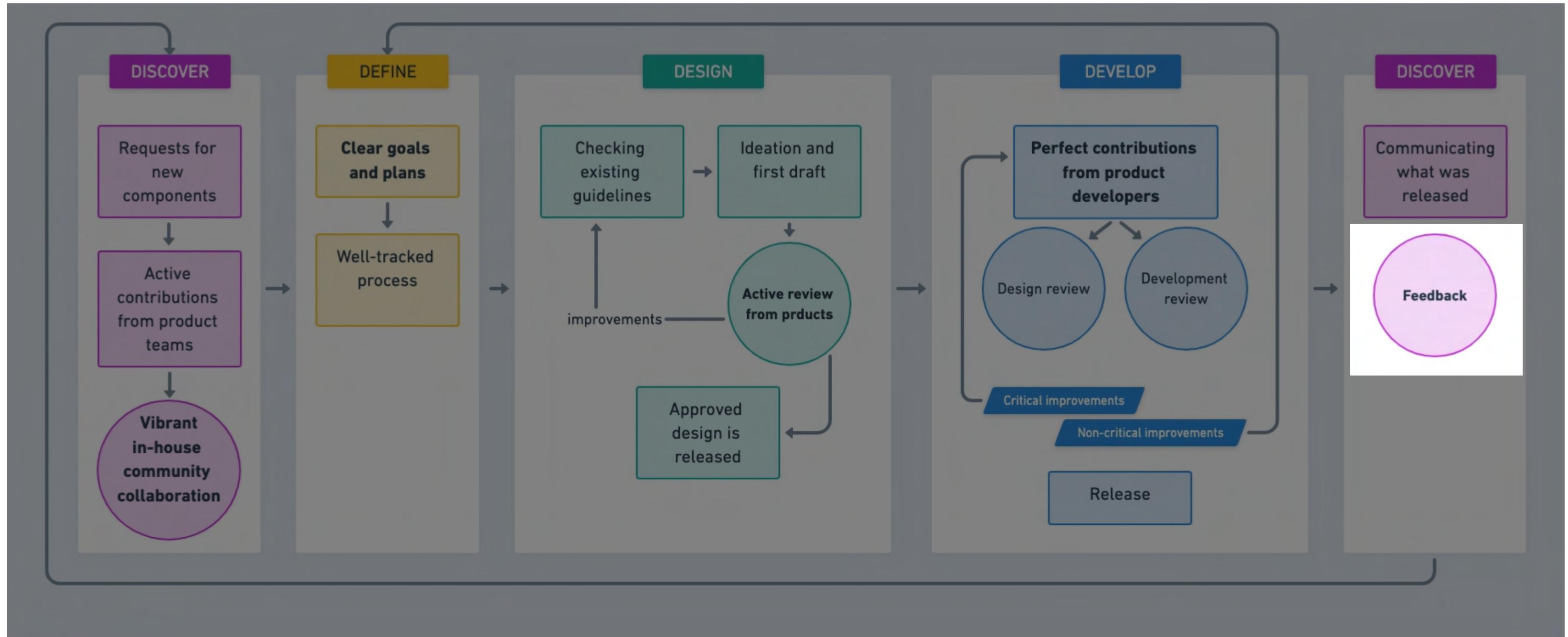
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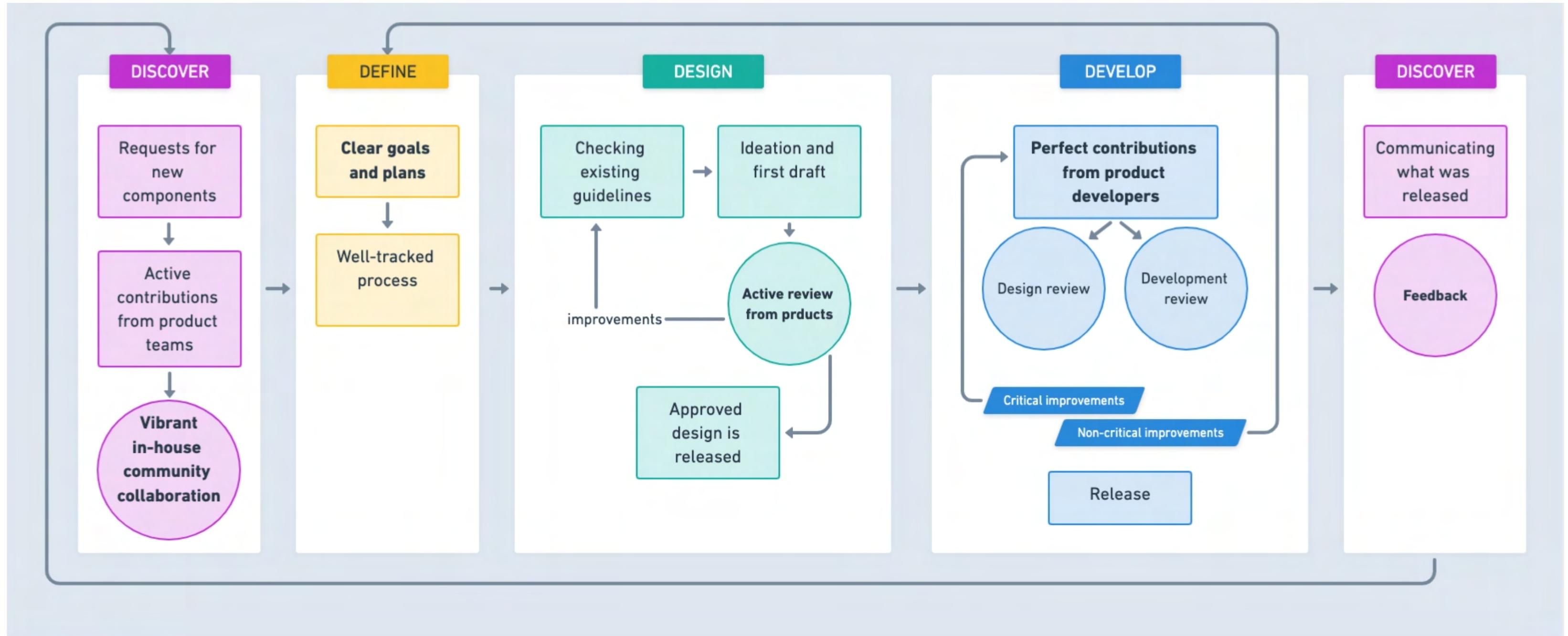
# This is what we want



# This is what we want

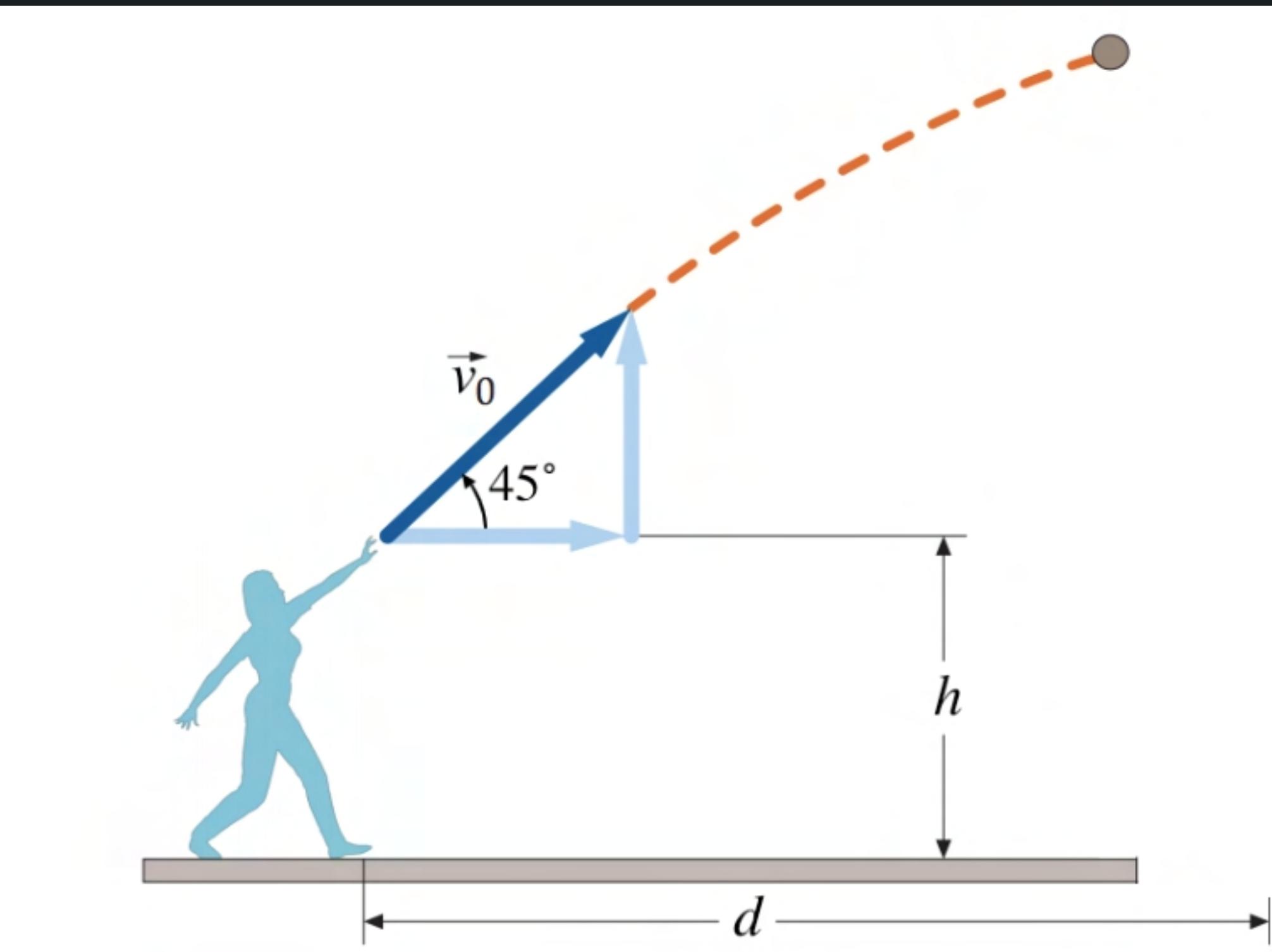


# This is what we want





# What Could We Do?



# Collaborate vertically



# Collaborate horizontally

Into Design Systems

bridge-the-gap.dev

# Collaborate vertically

Try Pitch



# The Never-Ending Job of Selling Design Systems

by Ben Callahan @ A List Apart on February 11, 2021

<https://alistapart.com/article/selling-design-systems/>



**data!**

# Ready-made

- + Easy to get started
- Doesn't always "tell the full story"

## Examples:

- Figma Stats
- Omlet
- Componly
- ...and more

# Custom-made

- + Gives you exactly the set of data you're looking for
- + Can be tailored for large-scale projects used across multiple organizations
- Requires development and maintenance

## Toolbox

- Github API
- React-Scanner
- NPM package tracking



## Bridge the Gap

[bridge-the-gap.dev](http://bridge-the-gap.dev)

- ROI (= return of investments)

## Measuring production costs

### Example: Button component

Production time = 10h

integration costs= 2h

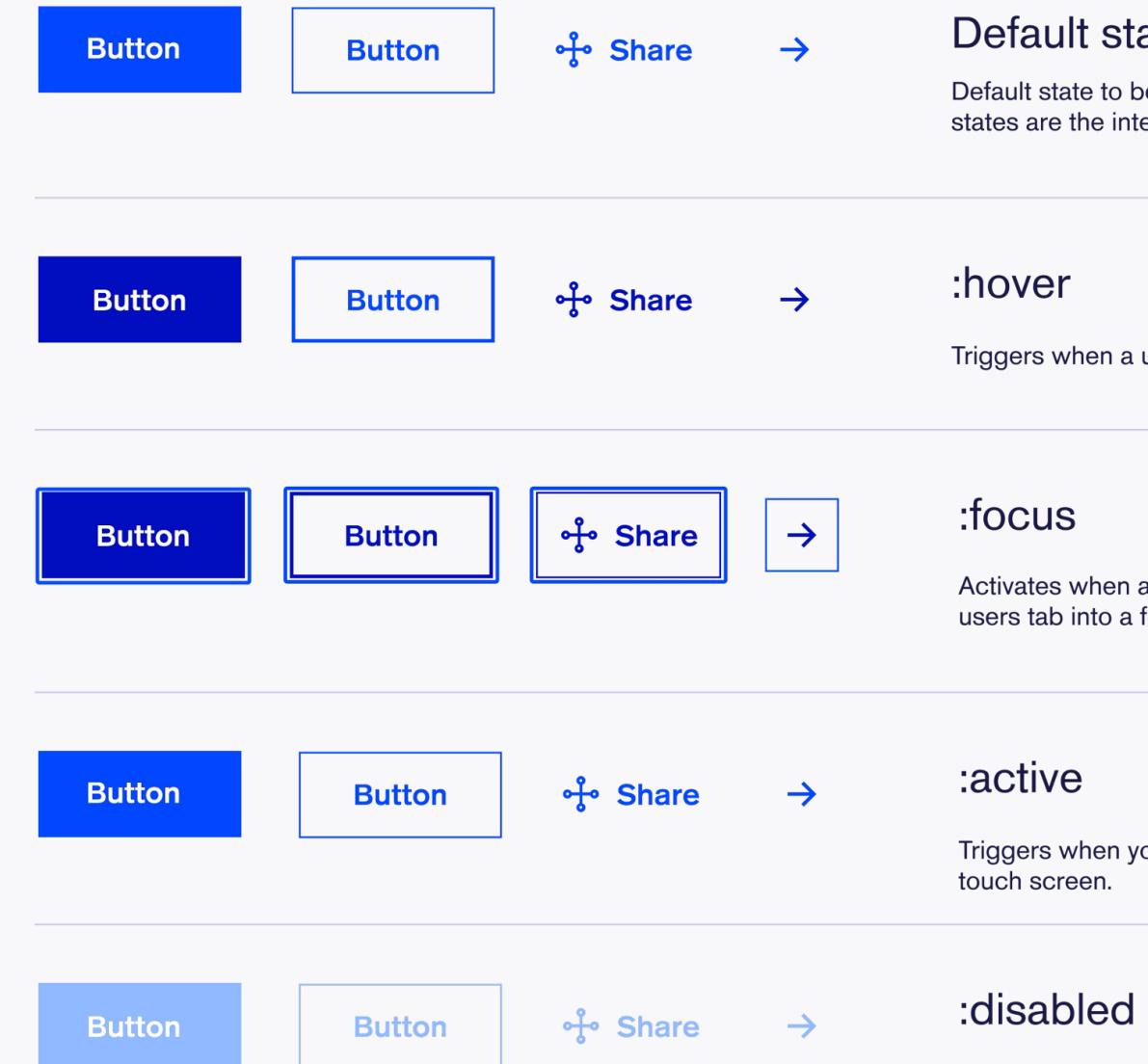
supports costs= 20h/year

amount of projects=5

component lifetime= 3years

Title	Costs
Without Design System	$\$ = (10h + 20 \times 3y) \times 5 = 350h$
With Design System	$\$ = (10h + 20 \times 3y) + 2h \times 5 = 80h$
Saved on the button for 3 years	$350h - 80h = 270h$

LEARN MORE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0aqBxIp15hg>



# 3 components with and without design system

Component	Production (h)	Lifetime (y)	Support (y)	Integration (h)	Projects	w DS	w/o DS	Saved
Button	10	3	20	2	5	80	350	
Input	20	3	40	2	4	148	560	
Hero	30	1	60	10	2	110	180	
<b>Total</b>						338	1090	<b>752</b>

**COST SAVINGS:** 752 HOURS = 18.8 WEEKS = 4 MONTHS

**LEARN MORE:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OaqBxIp15hg>



# Speak numbers with business

- ROI (= return of investments)
- Adoption rate
- Adoption dynamics
- Component usage over time
- Migration maturity

Flowers need  
time to bloom.  
So do you ❤

Quando comincio  
il parco

Climb Higher,  
Communicate Smarter!



Into Design Systems

bridge-the-gap.dev

# Collaborate horizontally

# Designers/Developers Collaboration challenges

The design is shared only after it is done and approved, but often technical feasibility is not taken into account

Developers are pressured to get features done, and don't have time to implement components right

Designs are not implemented as intended, and there is no process to validate them before it's published on production

A close-up photograph of a wooden index card catalog. The catalog has several drawers, each labeled with a year and a number. The visible labels include '1882', '1900', '1900', '1900', and '1932'. The wood has a warm, golden-brown tone.

# Documentation

# Documentation



User Research

Industry Research

Structure

Automation



Cross-team survey



Live workshops with design system users



Collect analytics of design system documentation



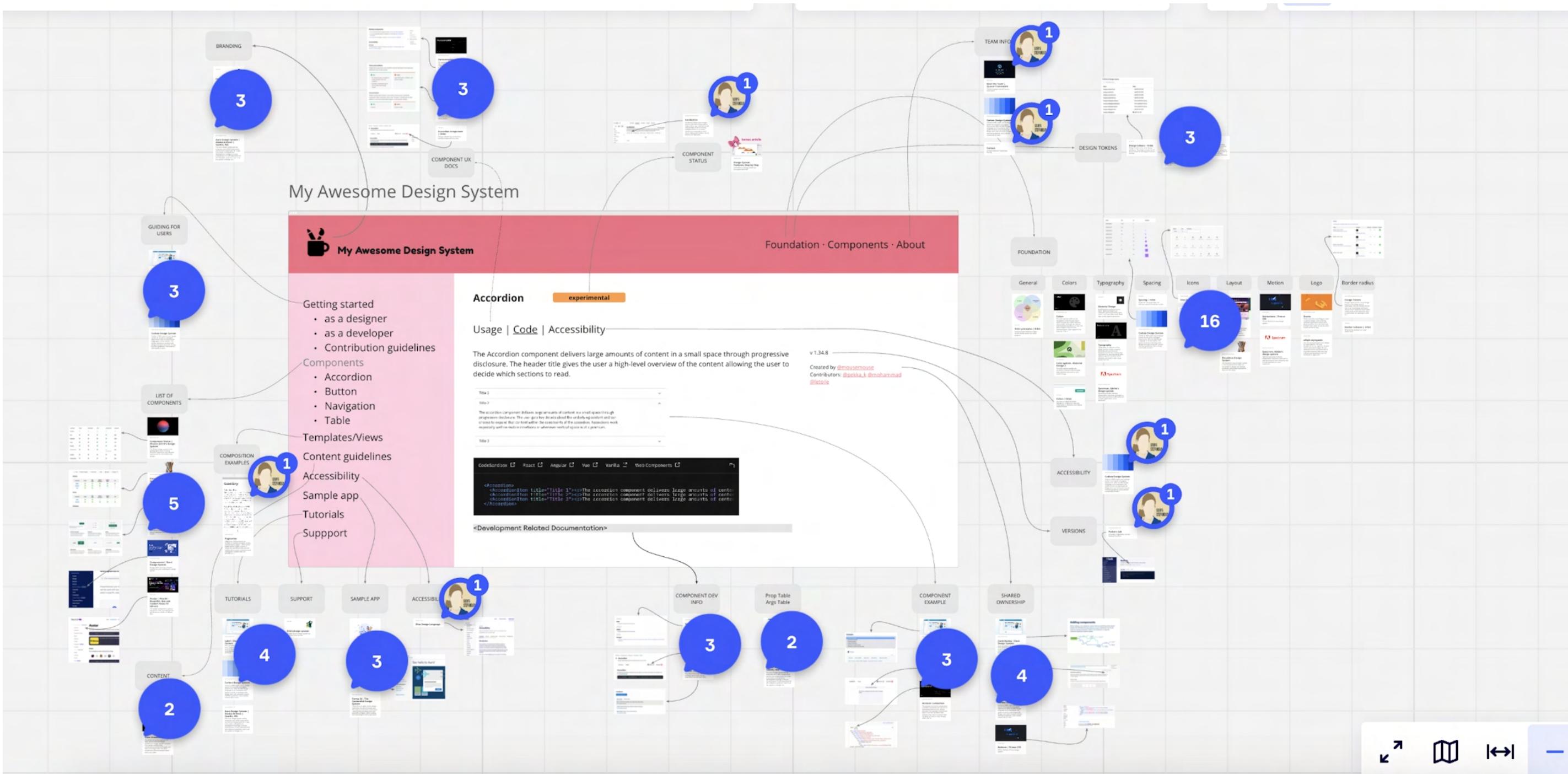
Tracking most common users questions

## User Research

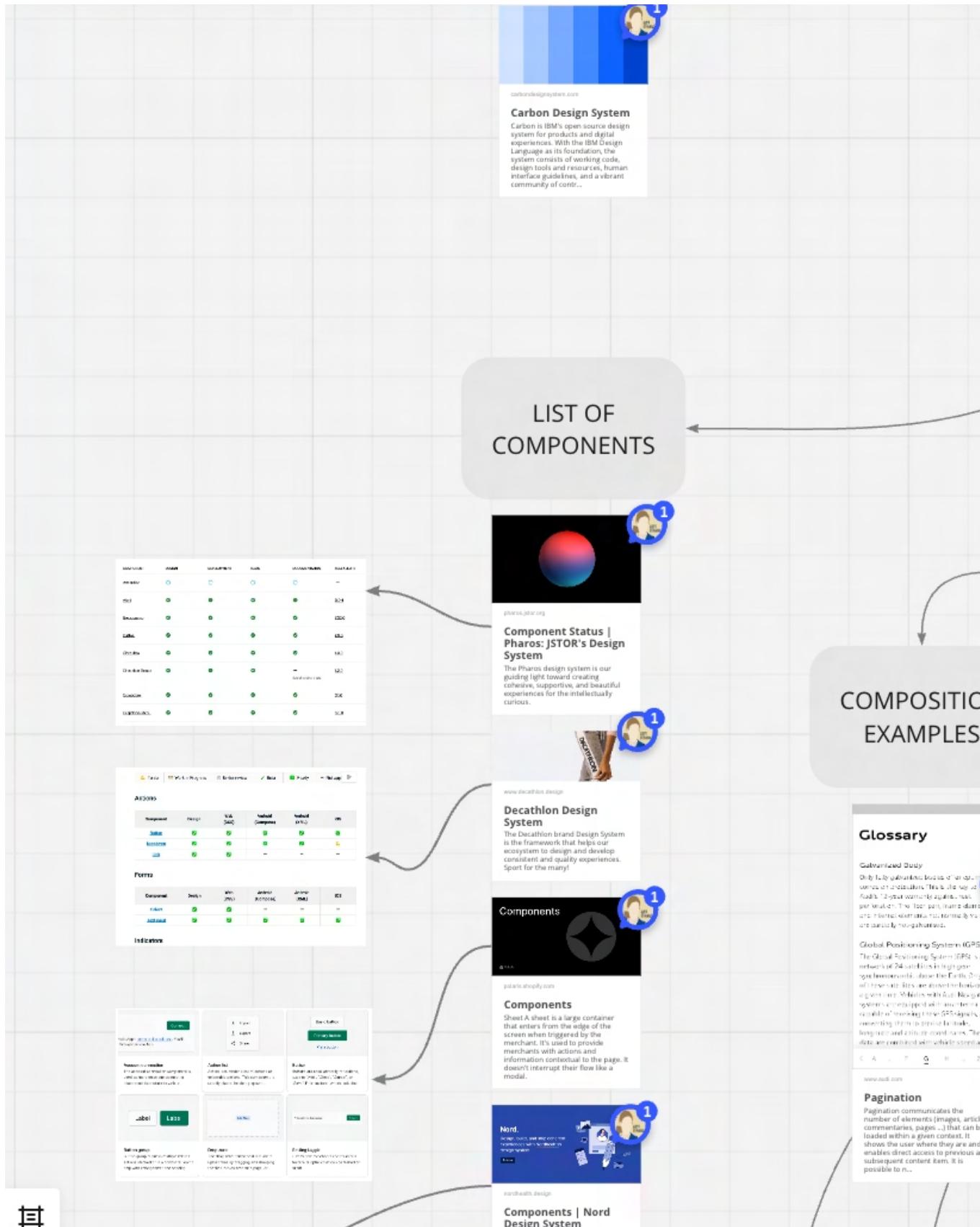
## Industry Research

## Structure

## Automation



# Link to Miro



- as a designer
- as a developer
- Contribution guidelines

## Components

- Accordion
- Button
- Navigation
- Table

## Templates/Views

## Content guidelines

## Accessibility

## Sample app

## Tutorials

## Support

## COMPONENTS

- Description
- Do's and don'ts
- Component API
- Examples/playground
- Patterns with component
- Links to code/design resources
- Changelog
- ...

## FOUNDATIONS

- Design tokens
- Accessibility
- Localization
- Responsive design

## RECIPES/PATTERNS

Reusable UI fragments composed of core components

## GENERAL INFO

- Introduction
- Technical instructions
- Contributions
- What's new (Changelog)
- Roadmap
- ...

User Research

Industry Research

Structure

Automation

```
/** Component description, auto-generated from code comments */
export const ComponentName = (props) => {
  ...return <div>My awesome Component</div>
```

## ComponentName

[Github](#) | [Figma Design](#) | [Guidelines](#)

Table of Contents

Overview

Props

Variants

### Overview

Component description, aut-generated from code comments

```
import { ComponentName } from '@brand/package-mname';
```

Copy

```
export interface ComponentProps {
  // Prop description and type, auto-generated from code
  propName: string;
  anotherProp: number;
  isAwesome: boolean;
}
```

### Props

Name	Description	Default
propName	Prop description and type, autogenerated from code string	"default value"

### Variants

#### Variant 1

Story description, generated from code comments



Storybook 7+

Try Pitch

User Research

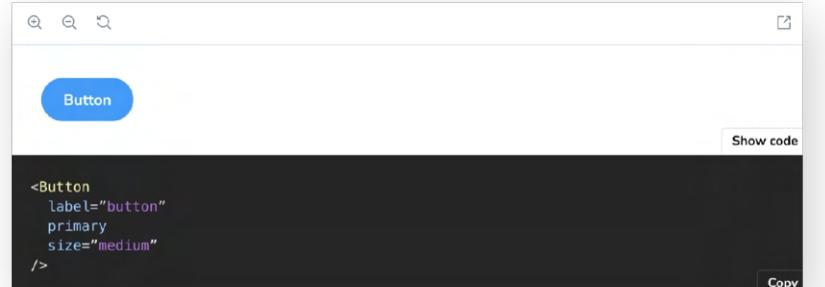
Industry Research

Structure

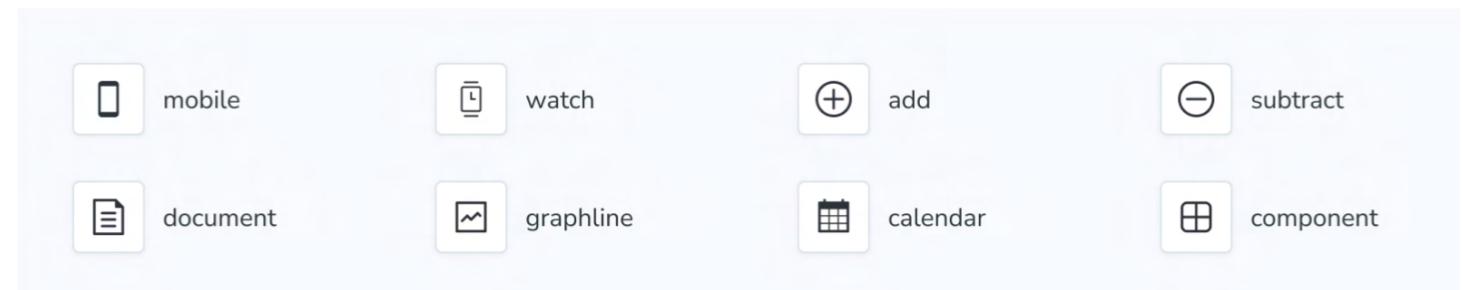
Automation



Name	Description	Default	Control
primary	Is this the principle call to action on this page?	false	<input type="radio"/> False <input checked="" type="radio"/> True
label*	The button label string	-	Button
backgroundColor	For custom buttons string	-	Choose color...
size	How large should the button be?	medium	<input type="radio"/> small <input checked="" type="radio"/> medium <input type="radio"/> large
onClick	Optional click handler	(() => void)	-



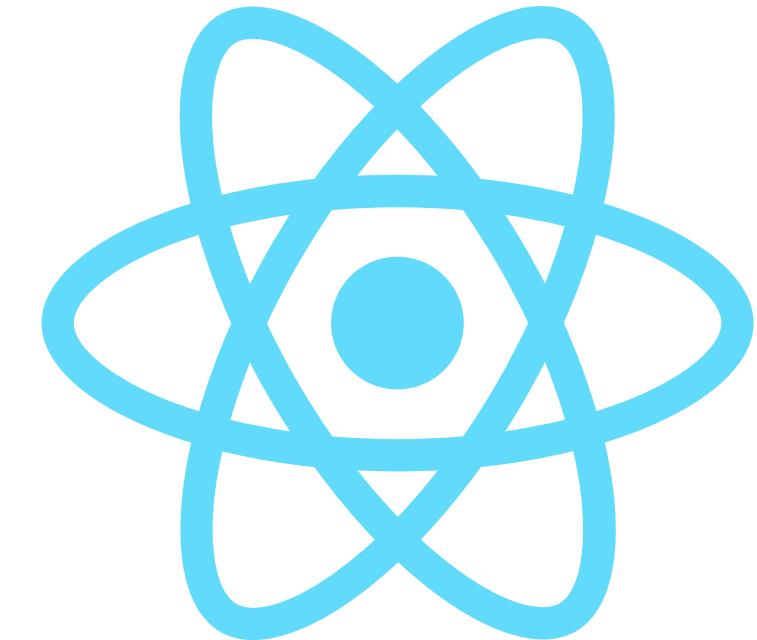
12px Was he a beast if music could move him so?  
14px Was he a beast if music could move him so?  
16px Was he a beast if music could move him so?  
20px Was he a beast if music could move him so?  
24px Was he a beast if music could move him so?  
32px Was he a beast if music could move him...  
40px Was he a beast if music could...  
48px Was he a beast if music...



# Doc Blocks

+

# Custom Doc Components





# Engaging In-House Community

# Introduction for new-joiners

- Ready-made 30-minute introduction
  - for designers / developers / business
  - all the contacts
  - all the links
  - demo
  - leave material on hands
- Run regularly  
*every second Tuesday of the month*

→ Introduction for new joiners



# Introduction for new-joiners

- "Introduction to design system" is a part of company's onboarding process
- Actively advertise about the event
  - reach out team leaders
  - post in relevant channels
- Also works for long-standing colleagues (!)

→ Introduction for new joiners





## Demo meetings

- Demo after every sprint
- Feature-related demos  
*components, documentation updates, process changes*
- Private demos

Introduction for new-joiners  
→ Demo meetings

# Design System Cafe

Hey Engineering Crew!

Just a quick heads-up, this Friday we're rolling out the red carpet for our Design System Cafe session. It's a chill, open-door event for everyone who gets a kick out of UI development or design. Think of it as an easygoing place for snappy presentations, thought-provoking discussions, and invaluable feedback sessions – all around the amazing XXX design system and UIs at large.

This week, we're excited to present [...].

So, come on down! We're stoked to share our latest work and even more eager to hear your insights. See you there!

Introduction for new-joiners  
Demo meetings  
→ Design System Cafe





## Informing des/dev channels

- Posting about releases
- Posting about large plans and changes
- Updating on regular meetings

Introduction for new-joiners  
Demo meetings  
Design System Cafe  
→ Design and development channels

# Knowledge sharing

As a designer:

- invite your fellow developers
- share screen
- open Figma and design

Introduction for new-joiners  
Demo meetings  
Design System Cafe  
Design and development channels  
→ Knowledge sharing



# Knowledge sharing

As a developer:

- invite your fellow designers
- share screen
- run Storybook, open code, open Figma
- implement recent designs

Introduction for new-joiners  
Demo meetings  
Design System Cafe  
Design and development channels  
→ Knowledge sharing





# Design System Ambassador

DS team → Product team

- DS team member temporarily joins a product
- Tasks
  - Adopt new components into the project
  - Upgrade the library
  - Implement best practices

Introduction for new-joiners

Demo meetings

Design System Cafe

Design and development channels

Knowledge sharing

→ Design System Ambassador



# Design System Ambassador

DS team → Product team

What do we get?

- Increased adoption
- In-depth engagement
- Direct and instant feedback loop

Introduction for new-joiners

Demo meetings

Design System Cafe

Design and development channels

Knowledge sharing

→ Design System Ambassador

# Design System Associate

Product team → DS team

- **Product team member** temporarily joins the DS
- Tasks
  - Documentation improvements
  - Product-specific improvements onto DS
  - Refining components for another team

Introduction for newjoiners  
Demo meetings  
Design System Cafe  
Design and development channels  
Knowledge sharing  
Design System Ambassador  
→ Design System Associate



# Design System Associate

Product team → DS team

What do we get?

- Effective ways of working between teams
- Firsthand insights for the DS team
- Personal advocacy of the DS
- Real-world feedback (both directions)

Introduction for newjoiners  
Demo meetings  
Design System Cafe  
Design and development channels  
Knowledge sharing  
Design System Ambassador  
→ Design System Associate





## Feedback and Research

- Constant feedback gathering
  - Instant feedback form in the documentation
  - Polls about specific features
  - Follow-ups (after demo, introduction, from the associates)
- Research approach for every large change

Introduction for new-joiners

Demo meetings

Design System Cafe

Design and development channels

Knowledge sharing

Design System Ambassador

Design System Associate

→ Feedback and Research

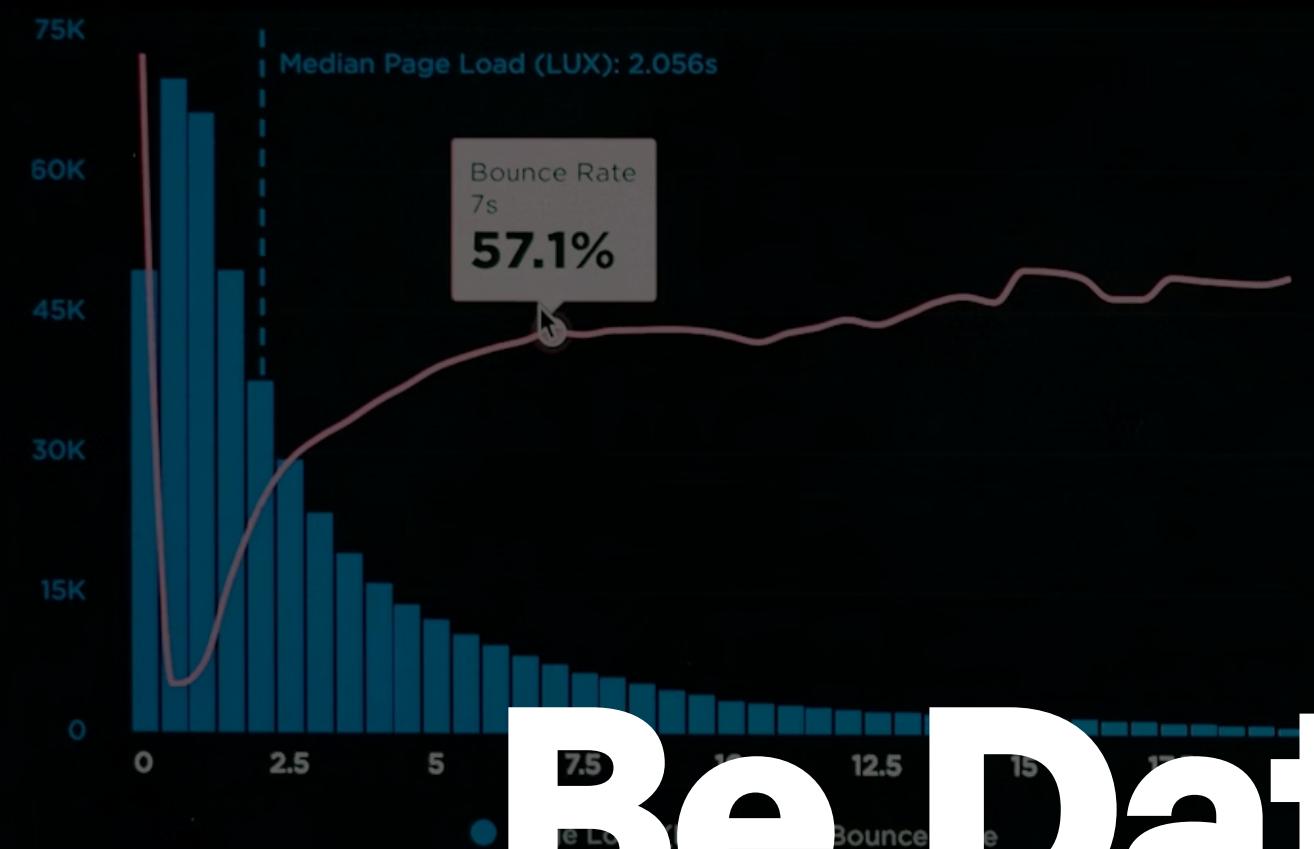


anything  
else?

## USERS: LAST 7 DAYS USING MEDIAN ▼

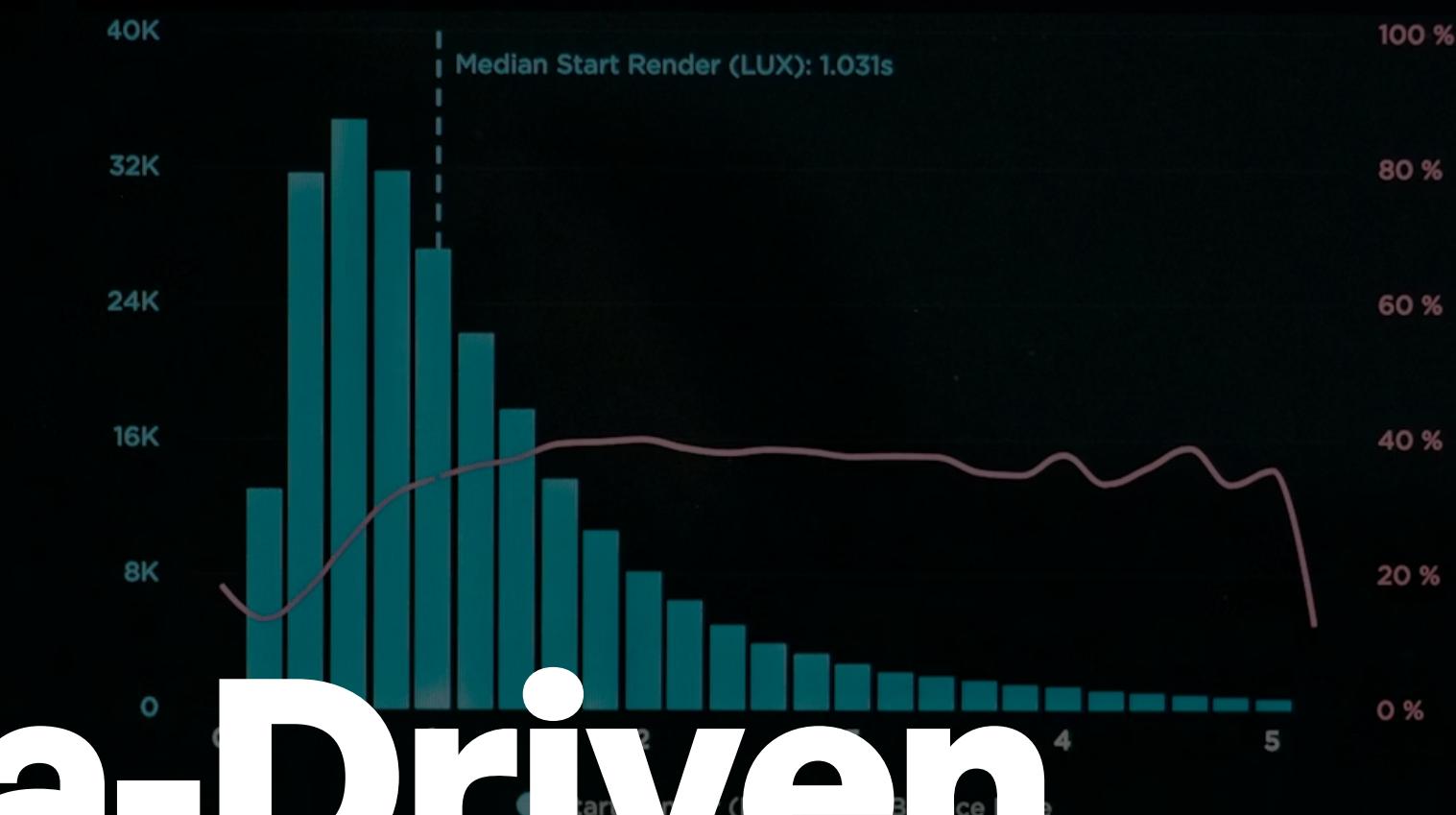


### LOAD TIME VS BOUNCE RATE



OPTIONS

### START RENDER VS BOUNCE RATE



OPTIONS

### PAGE VIEWS VS ONLOAD

Page Load (LUX)

**0.7s**

Page Views (LUX)

**2.7MpvS**

Bounce Rate (LUX)

**40.6%**

### SESSIONS

Sessions (LUX)

**479K**

Session Length (LUX)

**17min**

PVs Per Session (LUX)

**2pvs**



## Data-driven when communicating value and success

- Adoption rate and its dynamics
- Components usage in Figma
- % of copy-paste in code
- Our components vs third-party components
- How fast new components are getting into product(s)



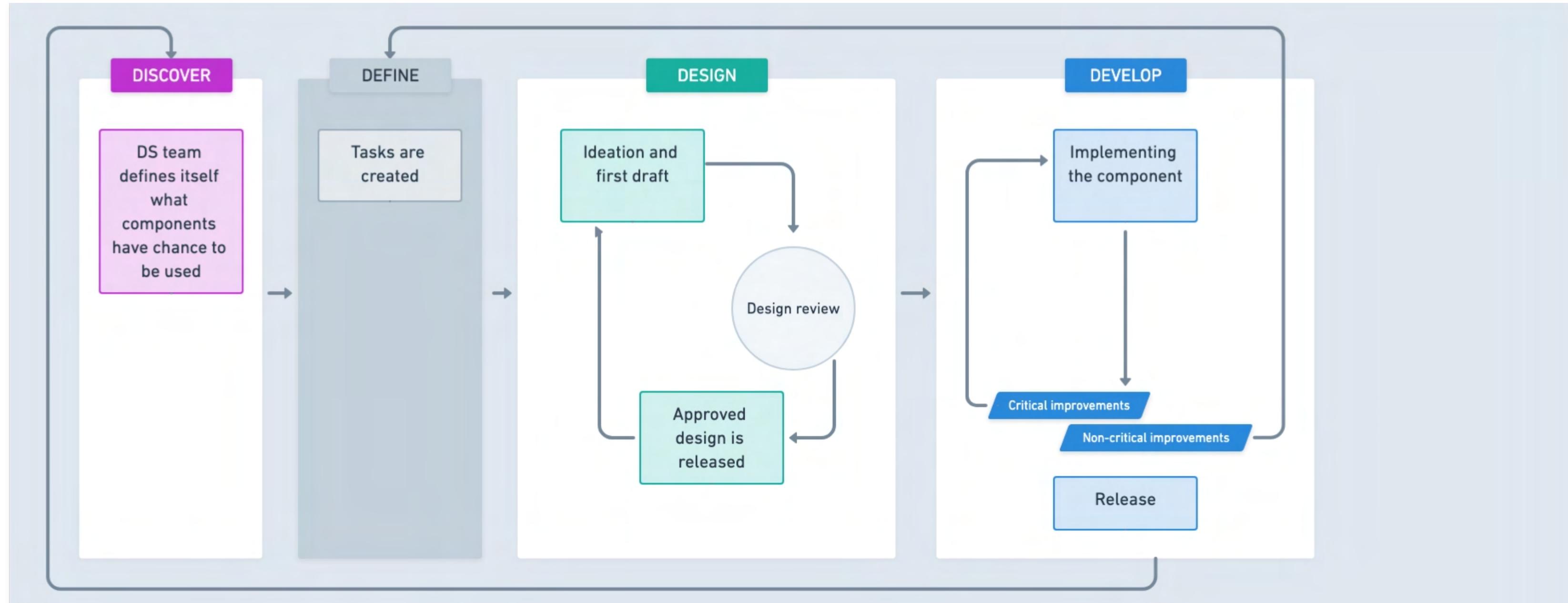
# Data-driven when explaining decisions

- Why we have decided to work on these components?
  - We got requests in polls
  - We saw the need by stats
  - It was ready to adopt from a product
  - ...
- Why we have these priorities
  - We got that many requests
  - Doing this will increase adoption rate as...
  - This is already done on products
  - ...

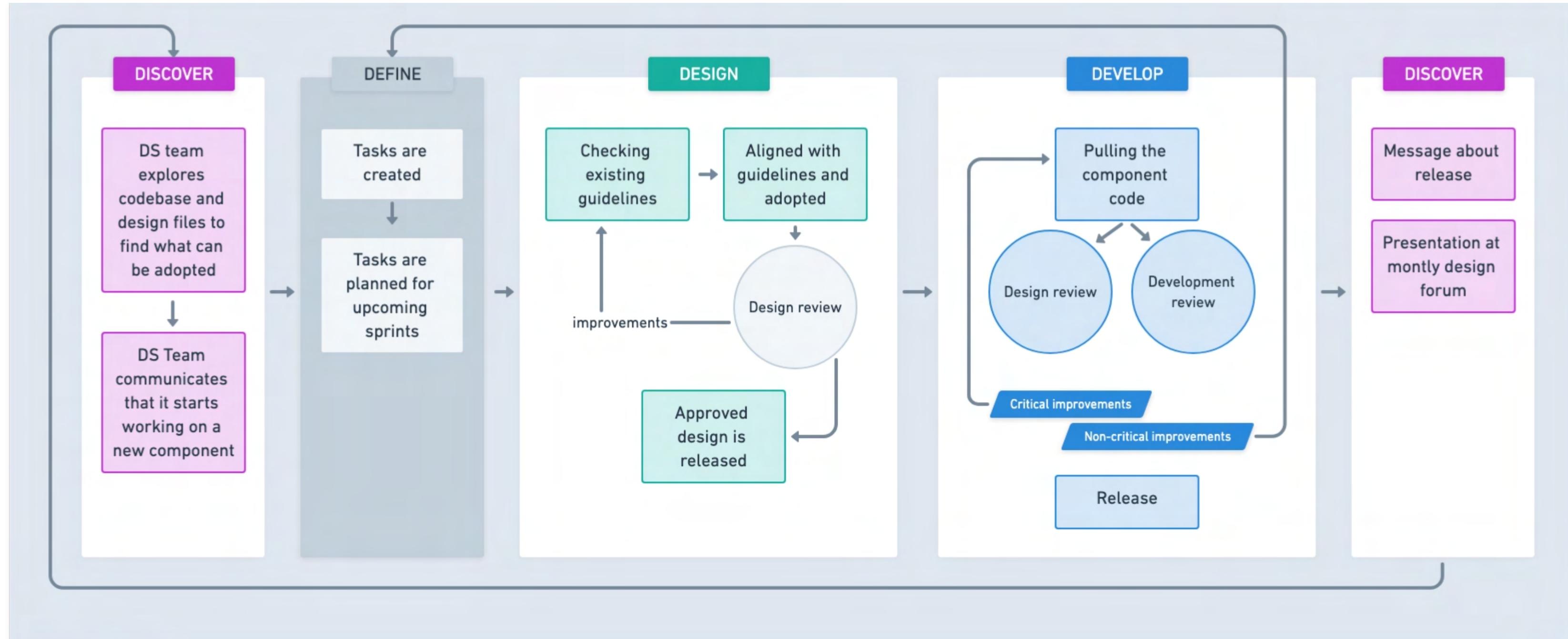


# Design System Process Evolution

# I do everything myself



# Pulling out contributions





## Contribution pre-requisites

- Good contribution guidelines
- Well-structured design files
- Intuitive stages
- In-time reviews
- Automated tests
- Code previews

# Getting first contributions



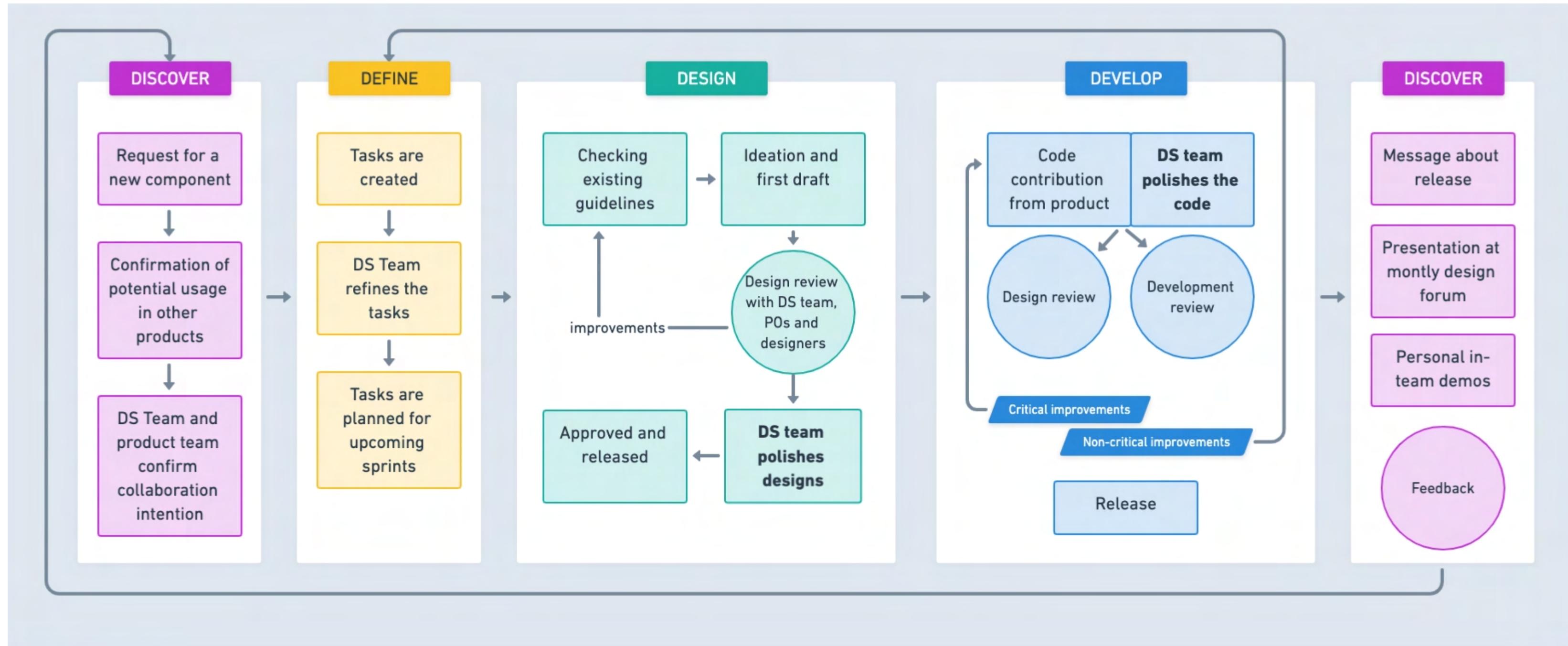




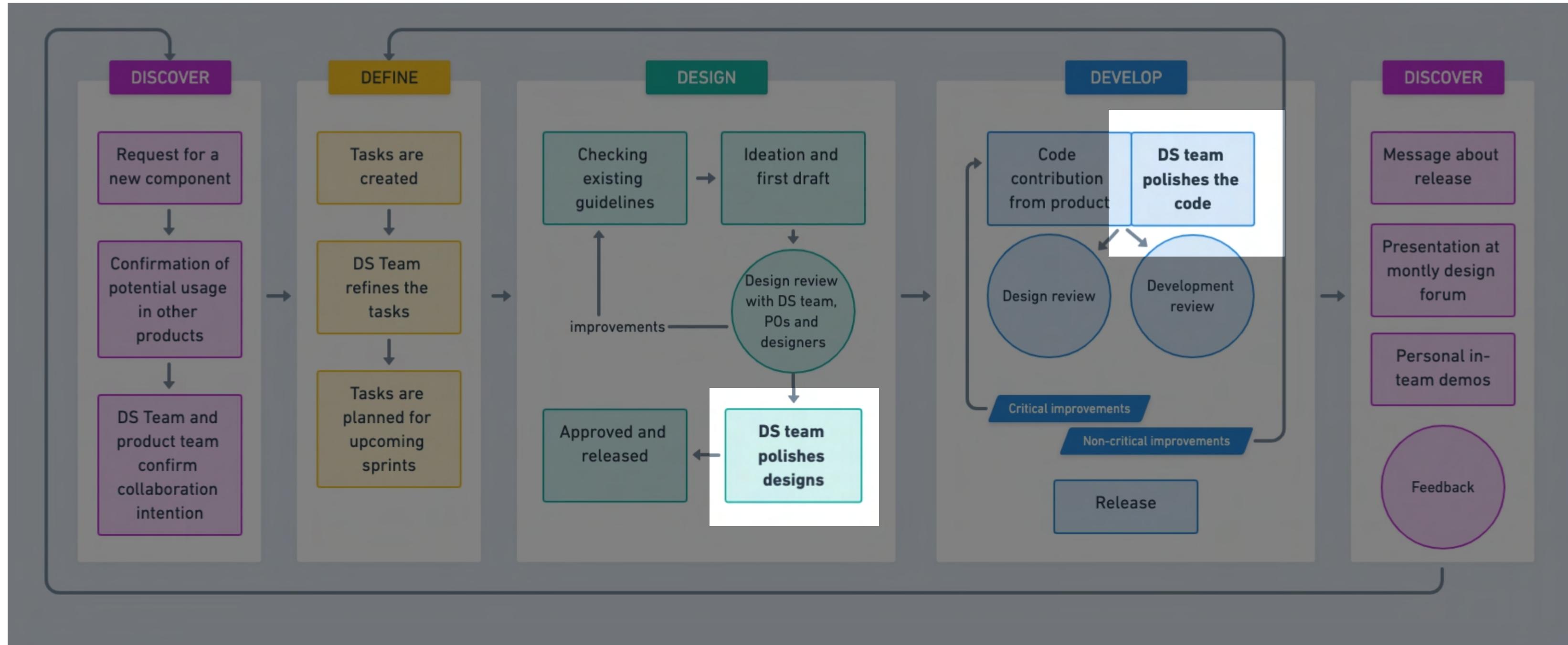
# GATEKEEPER

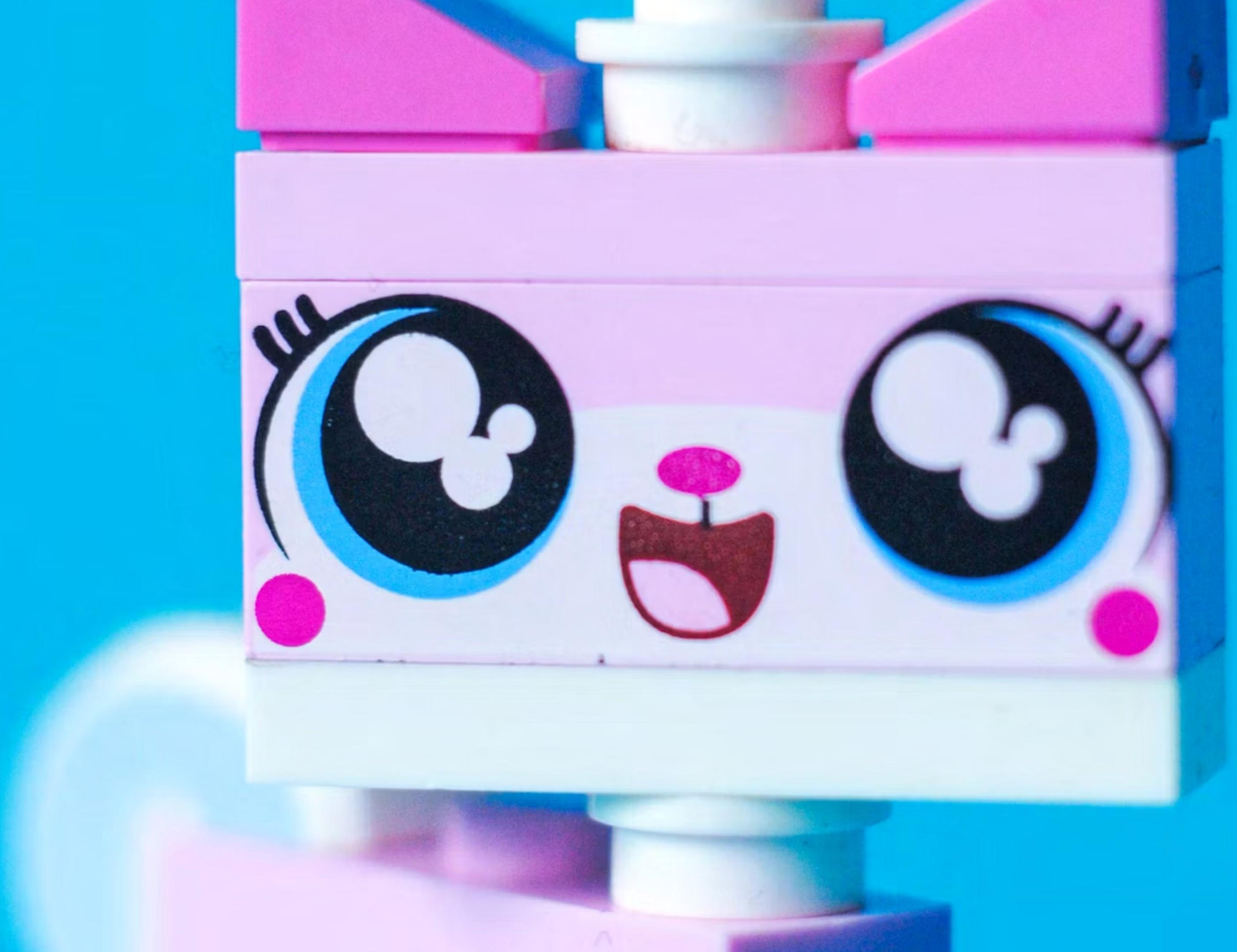
# GUIDING GUARDIAN

# Gatekeeper → Guiding Guardian

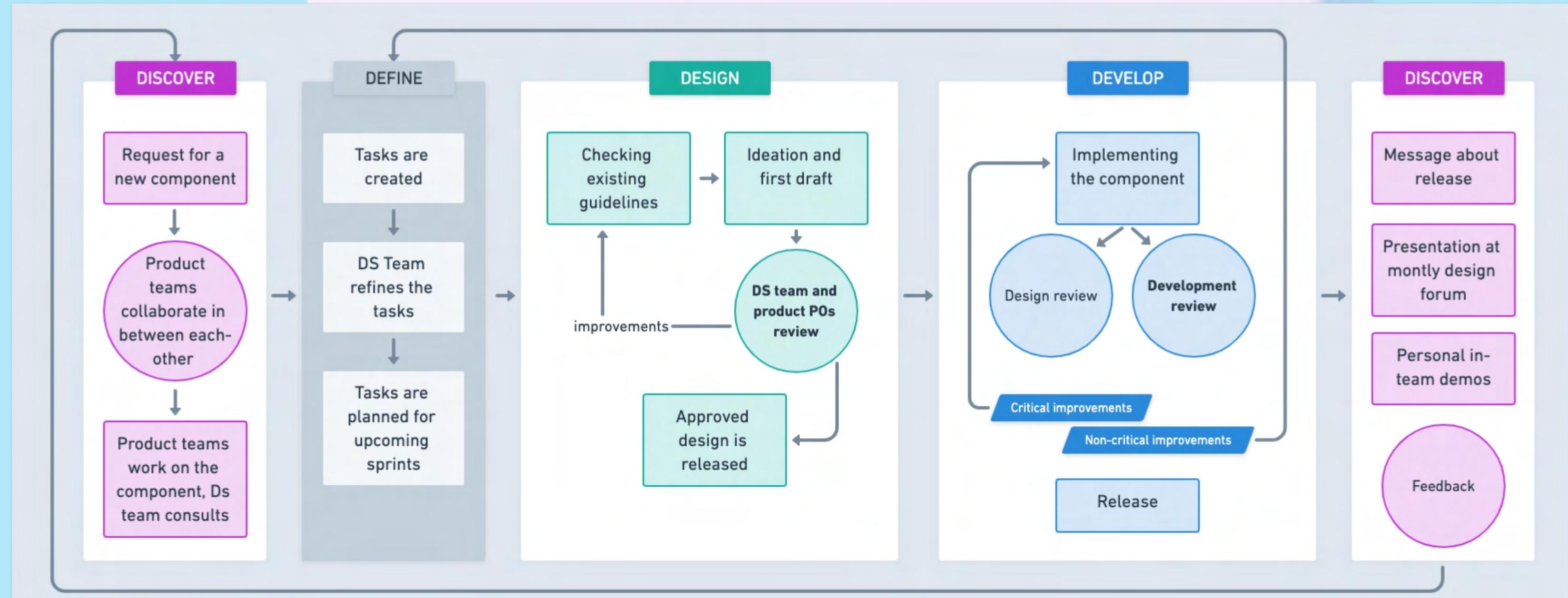


# Gatekeeper → Guiding Guardian

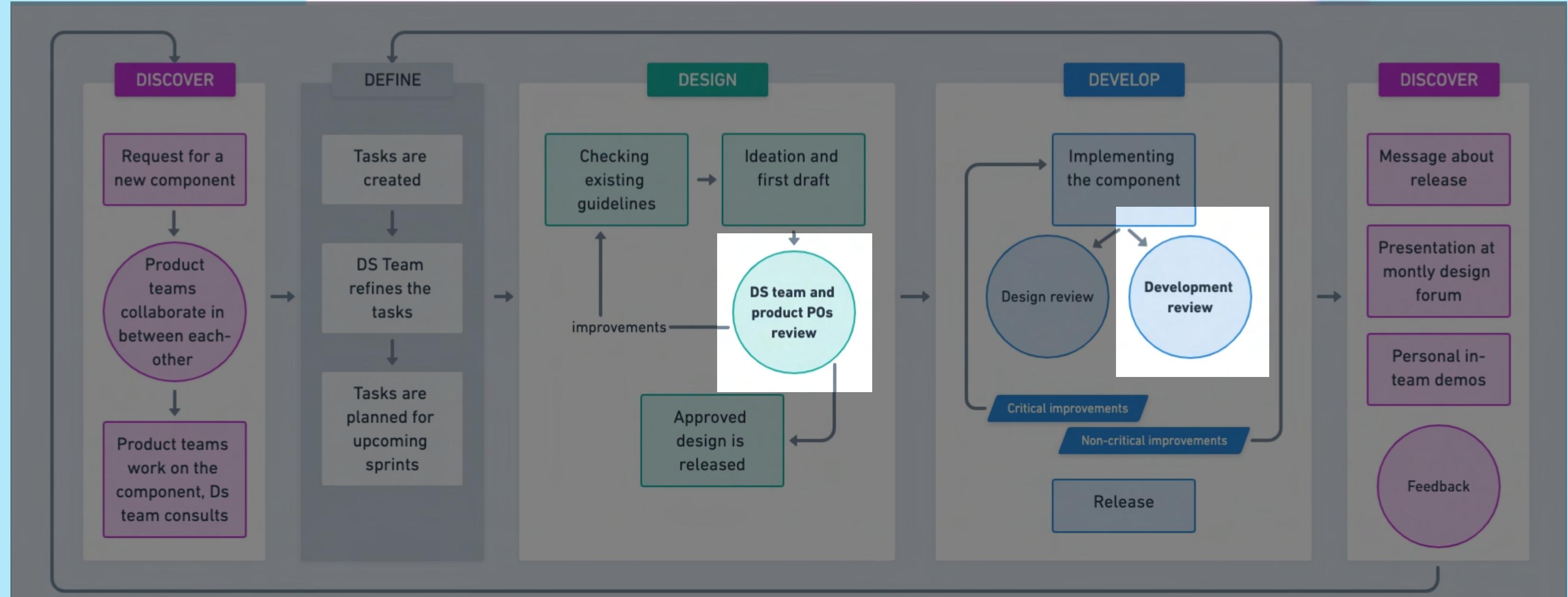




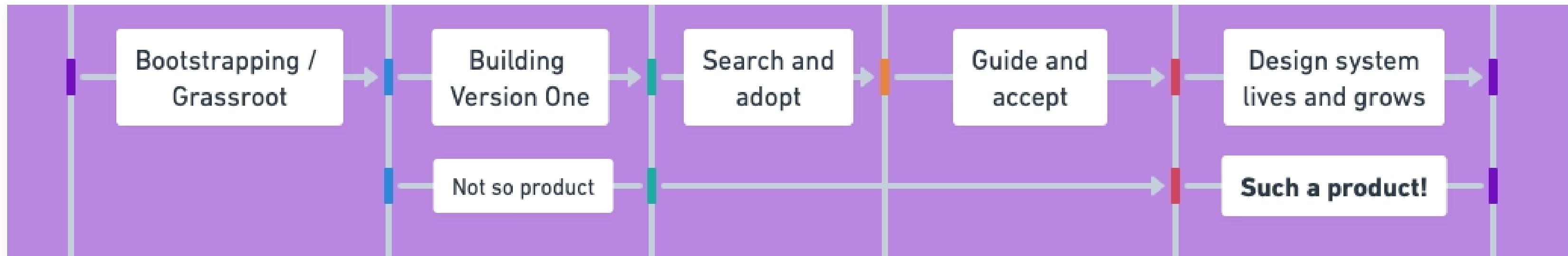
# Perfect Contribution



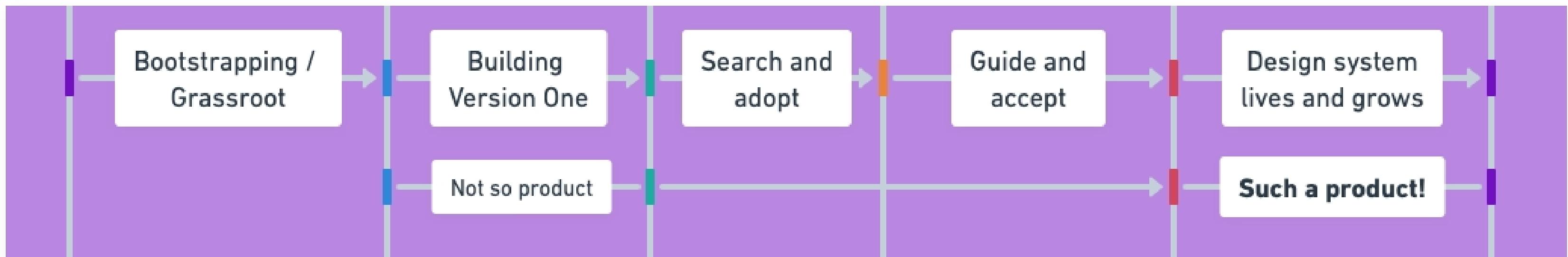
# Perfect Contribution



# Maturity levels: jump, jump, jump



# Maturity levels: the jump is made





collaborate vertically



collaborate horizontally



develop the process

A big, big thank you to our research  
participants!

And our (ex-)colleagues, with whom we learned a lot  
together

A big, big thank you to our research  
participants!

And our (ex-)colleagues, with whom we learned a lot  
together

Recap & Questions? Let's keep talking.

# Bridge-the-Gap.dev



Varya



Irina



# Want to make a presentation like this one?

Start with a fully customizable template, create a beautiful deck in minutes, then easily share it with anyone.

[Create a presentation \(It's free\)](#)