

# **Design management models in the face of transformation**

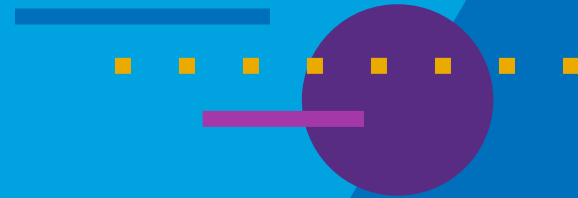
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# How to prepare for transformation?

A **transformation mindset** paired with the right **foundation** will nurture your ability to identify and respond to triggers for transformation



# Transformation triggers

2017



**Sarah joins  
Brand  
Experience!**

2018



Series D funding  
**Mariana joins  
Product!**

Signifyd Design  
is born



2019



Additional HQ  
Design  
expansion to



2020



Internal teams  
grew 4x  
Expansion to  
LATAM

2021



Series E funding  
New engineering  
leadership  
Revamp of the  
product development  
process

2022




**Refining our  
approach to  
excellence**



# Our design principles as foundation





💡 **Actionable insight:**  
Define your purpose.  
It will help you align and  
rally your teams

## BRAND EXPERIENCE

**Our mission is to  
create a best-in-class  
brand experience for  
our customers**

(and their customers too.)





**In the chat:** Have you ever built a team from scratch?

# Building from scratch

**“Lead” on  
a team of one**



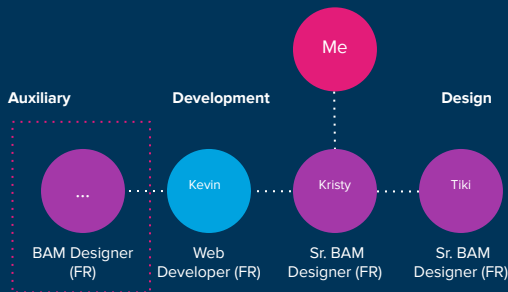
# Coming together

## Initial team build

Full-time or freelance?? 🤔

### 💡 Actionable insight:

When possible, use freelancers! Faster to build, easier to show the value on a short timeline

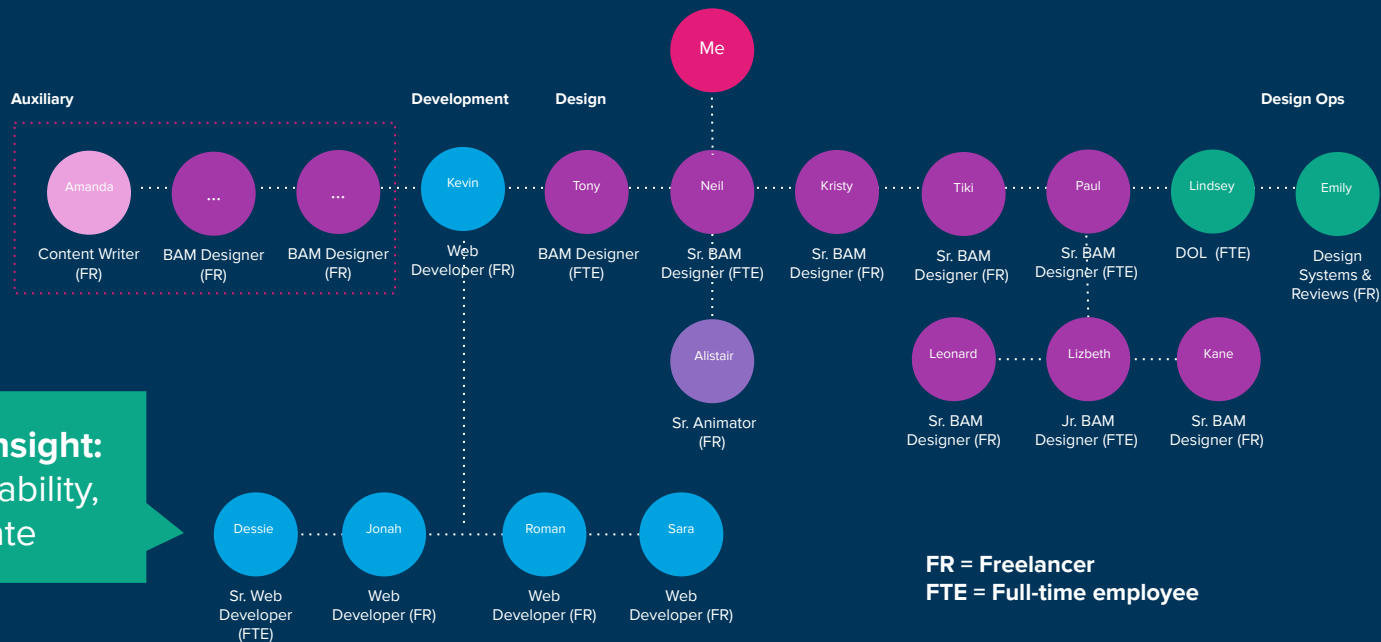


In a matter of months, we became a team of 5 with freelance designers and a frontend developer, then grew to 9, then 13, then 17....

# BX design team

2021-22

## CENTRALIZED DESIGN TEAM MODEL



💡 **Actionable insight:**  
Add FTEs for stability,  
when appropriate

# What I had learned so far

## What was working?

- The team was cohesive, the work was high quality, there was a ton of trust and goodwill, and we were growing, both in number and in our skills. We were living up to our principles.

## What were the challenges?

- Prioritization was difficult, and we were often excluded from the strategic conversations.
- It was getting increasingly hard to carve out design as a business partner because we were seen as a service.

### 💡 Actionable insight:

Poll your stakeholders along the way and listen to their feedback. Empathy mapping is a useful tool in determining friction points

# Scaling the centralized model started to no longer work

## 💡 Actionable insight:

Get ahead of the curve by implementing different skill levels early on



## Pros

- Supports an internal design community and culture
- Allows designers to work on a range of projects
- Better long-term career paths
- Create efficiencies in doing the work

## Cons

- Lack of clarity around priority and timing
- Frustration from org triggered by waiting for work

# Exploring other models – embedded?

## 💡 Actionable insight:

Research models types and create potential scenarios to determine fit



## Pros

- Design is speedier and iterative
- Designers are empowered and engaged as full team members
- Teams have greater ownership for what is delivered
- Output is higher quality

## Cons

- ~~Teams are focused on one problem for a long time~~
- ~~Designers become lonely and disconnected, community is sacrificed~~
- ~~The user experience is fractured~~

# Finding a new model – best of both worlds

## 💡 Actionable insight:

“Hybrid” can fall anywhere on a continuum. Find what makes sense for your business.

## Hybrid! 🎉 🎊 🎈

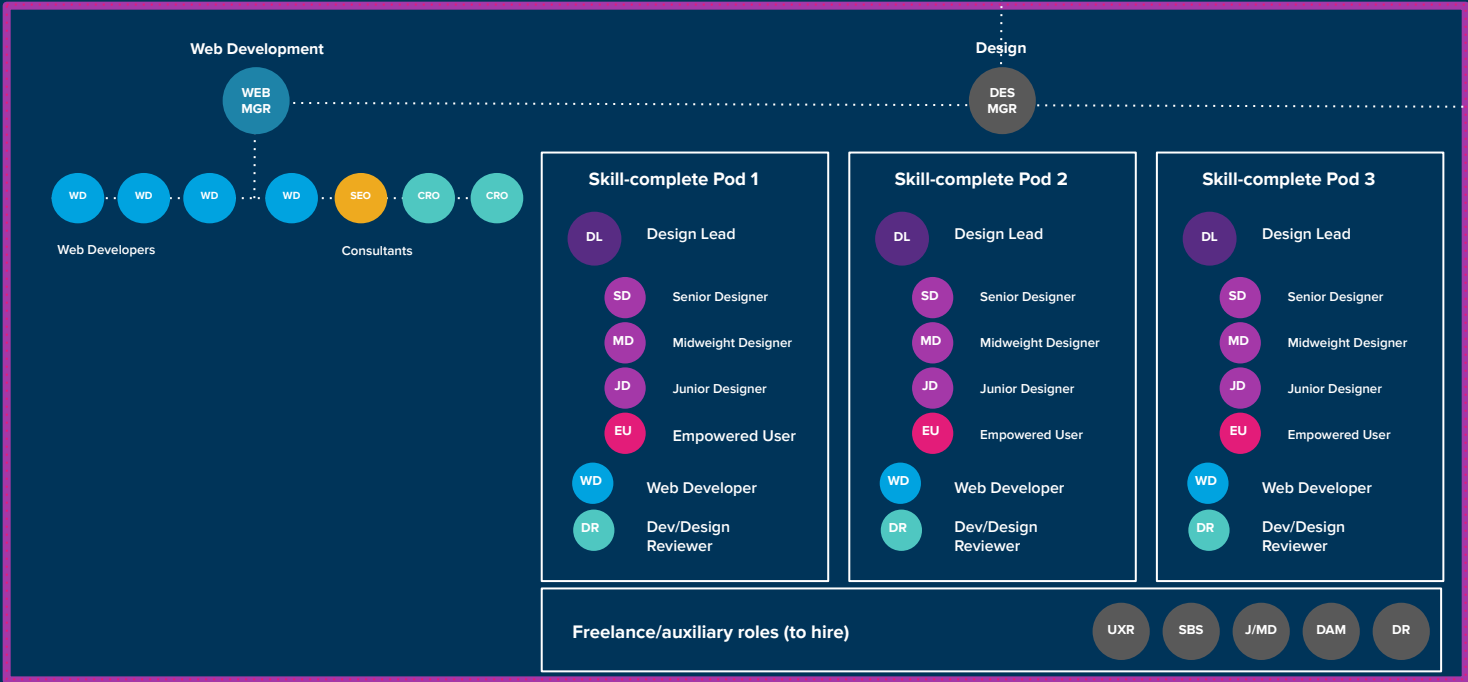
### Centralized Partnerships Pros

- The hybrid model attempts to realize the best of both the decentralized/embedded and centralized models
- The designers are not part of a general pool of resources that are assigned on a project basis. Instead, they are organized into **skills-complete teams**, which in turn are **dedicated to specific aspects of the business, at an initiative level and for specific periods of time** (ie: H1, H2)

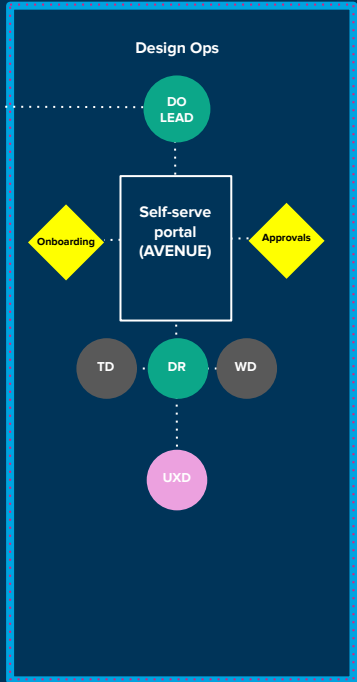


# Brand experience design team – today!

Portfolio Team



Avenue Team



# Pod formation



💡 **Actionable insight:**  
Create mentoring systems to ensure skill-set growth and foster leadership opportunities



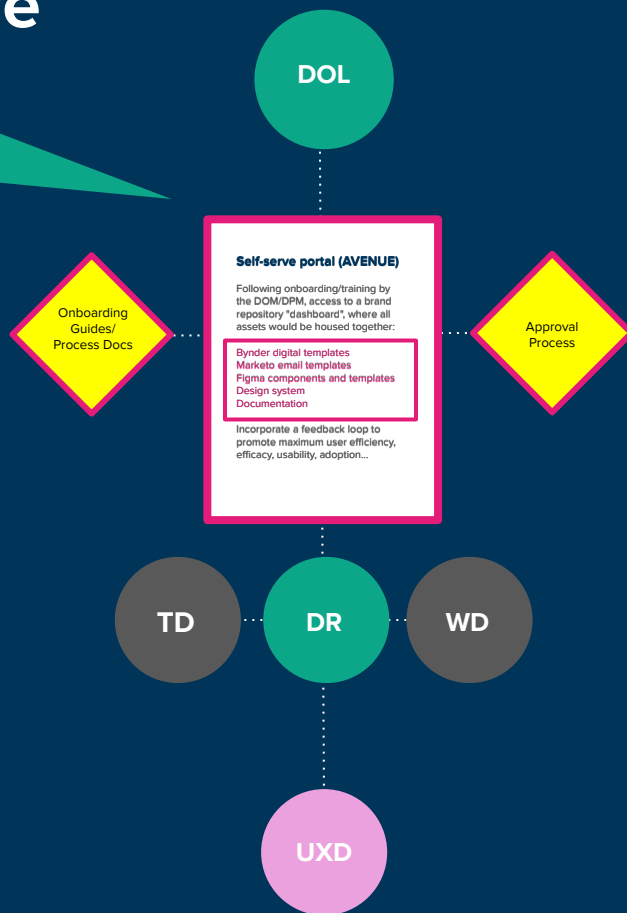


# Avenue – Self-serve

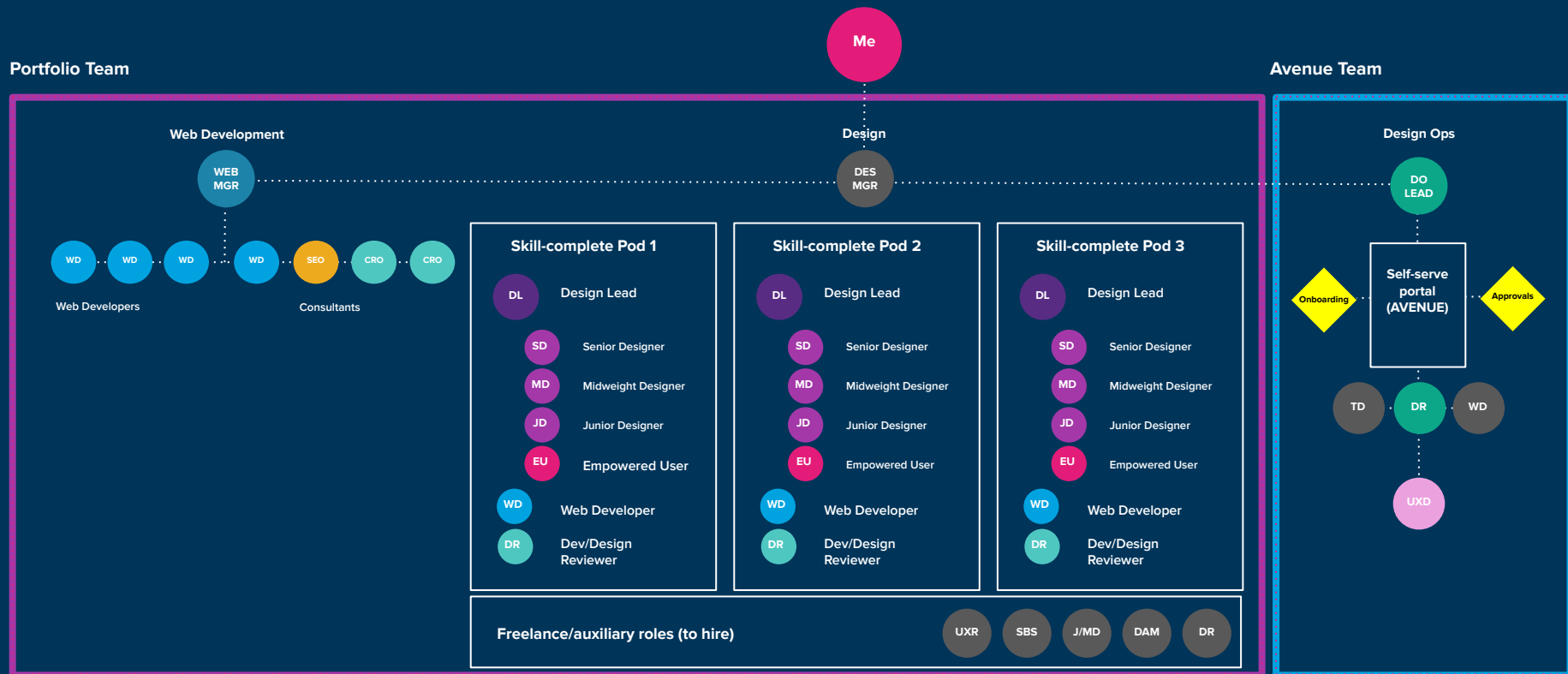


## Actionable insight:

Build systems allowing for self-serve where available to free up designer bandwidth



# Brand experience design team – today!

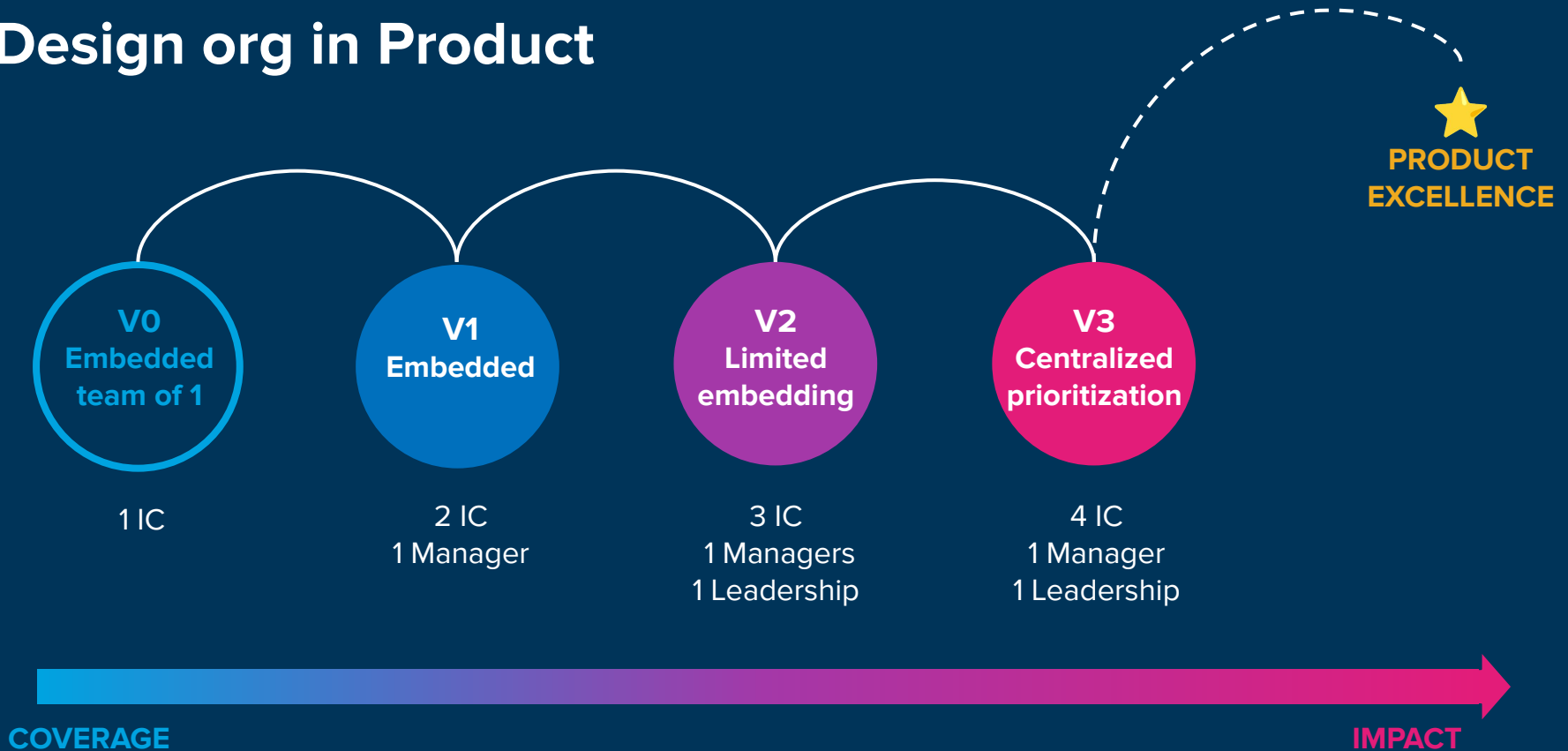




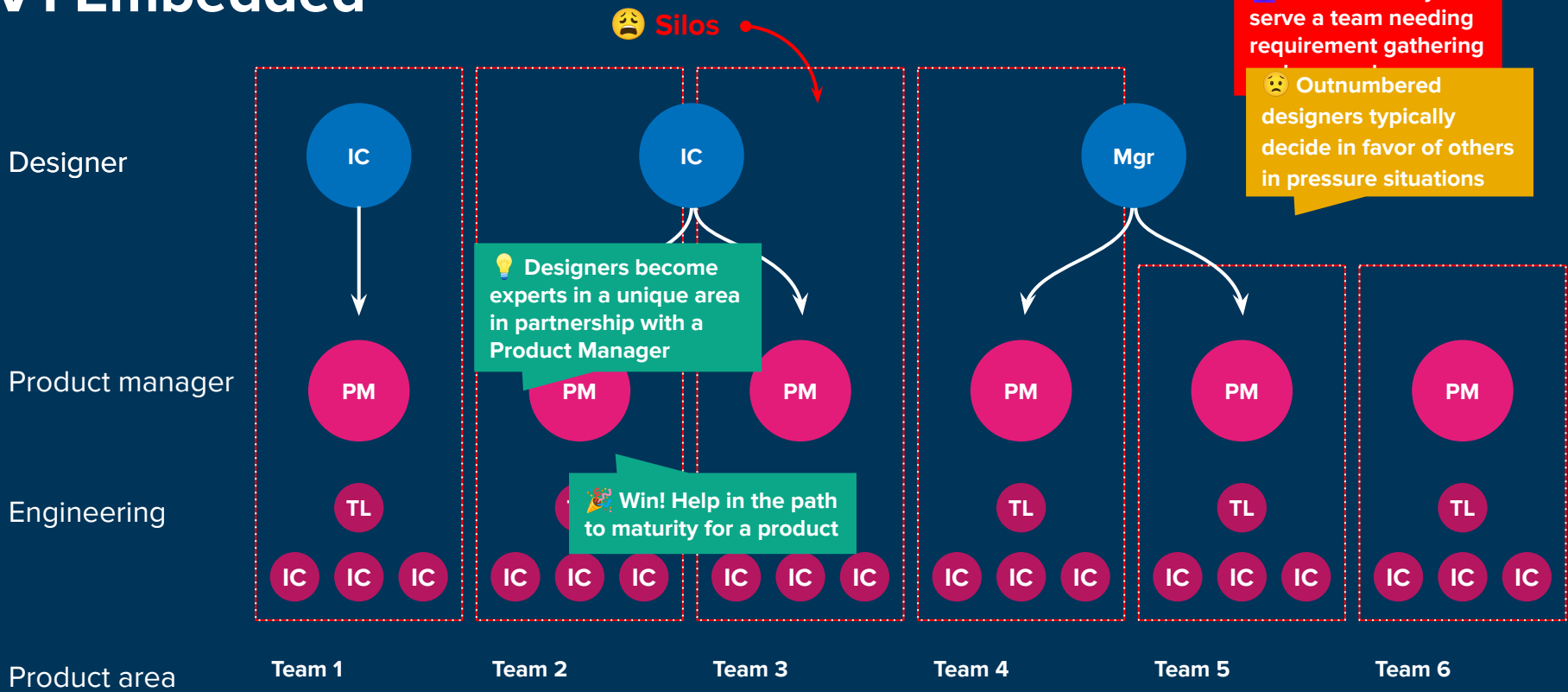
PRODUCT DESIGN AND EXPERIENCE

**Our mission is to  
propel Signifyd's  
product experience  
into the future of  
commerce**

# Design org in Product



# V1 Embedded



# V2 Limited embedding

💡 Pairing for designers, for PMs and cross-products

🏆 Win! Gained the ability to execute design-led initiatives

Designer

Product manager

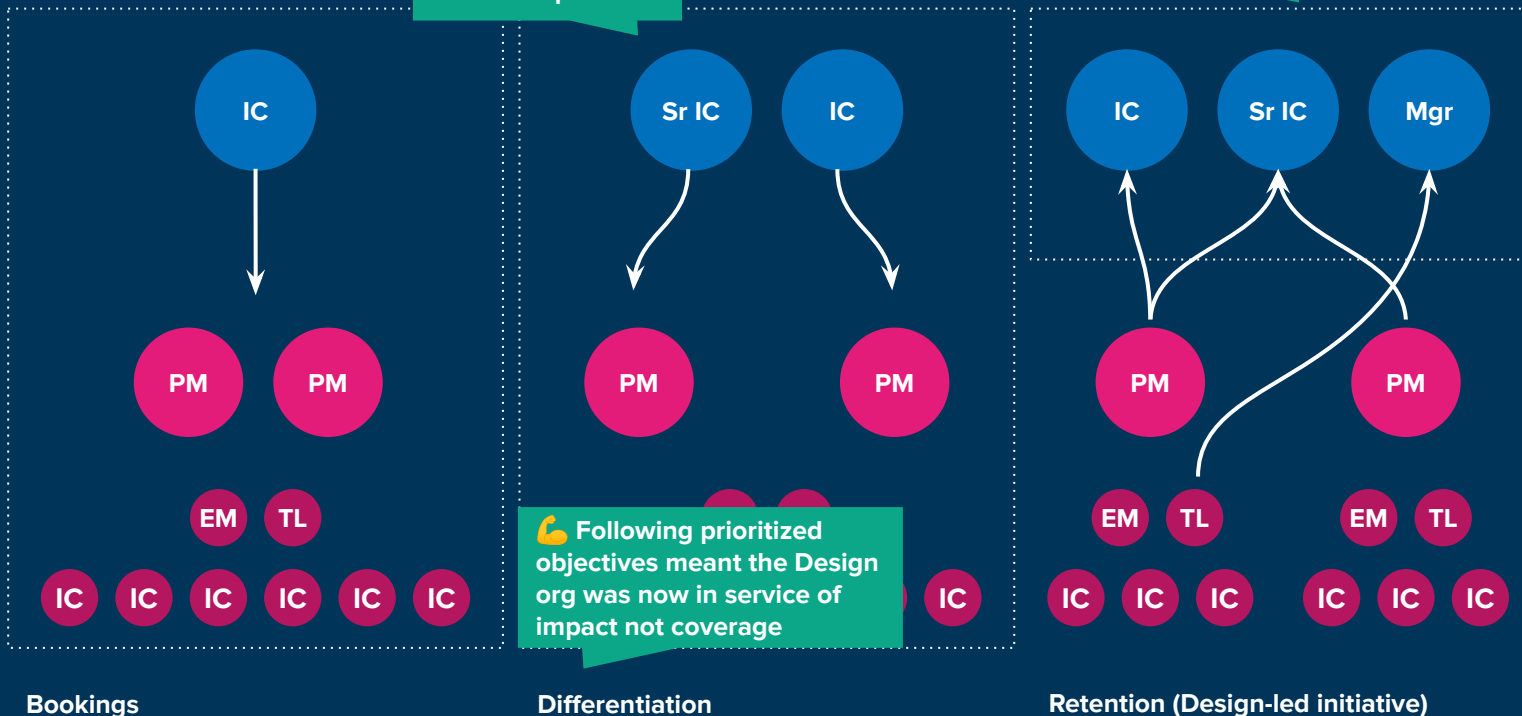
Engineering

Objective

Bookings

Differentiation

Retention (Design-led initiative)





**In the chat:** What other models have worked for you?

## MODELS OF WORKING AND NURTURING THE TEAM

1

### Design pairs

To tackle more than one design problem at a time **pairs allow faster, more comprehensive and consistent outcomes**

2

### Bigger problems

To focus only on key projects means **design can have greater impact**

3

### On-demand flexibility

To resource low priority projects based on readiness **reduces the uncertainty and time spent on managing turnaround**

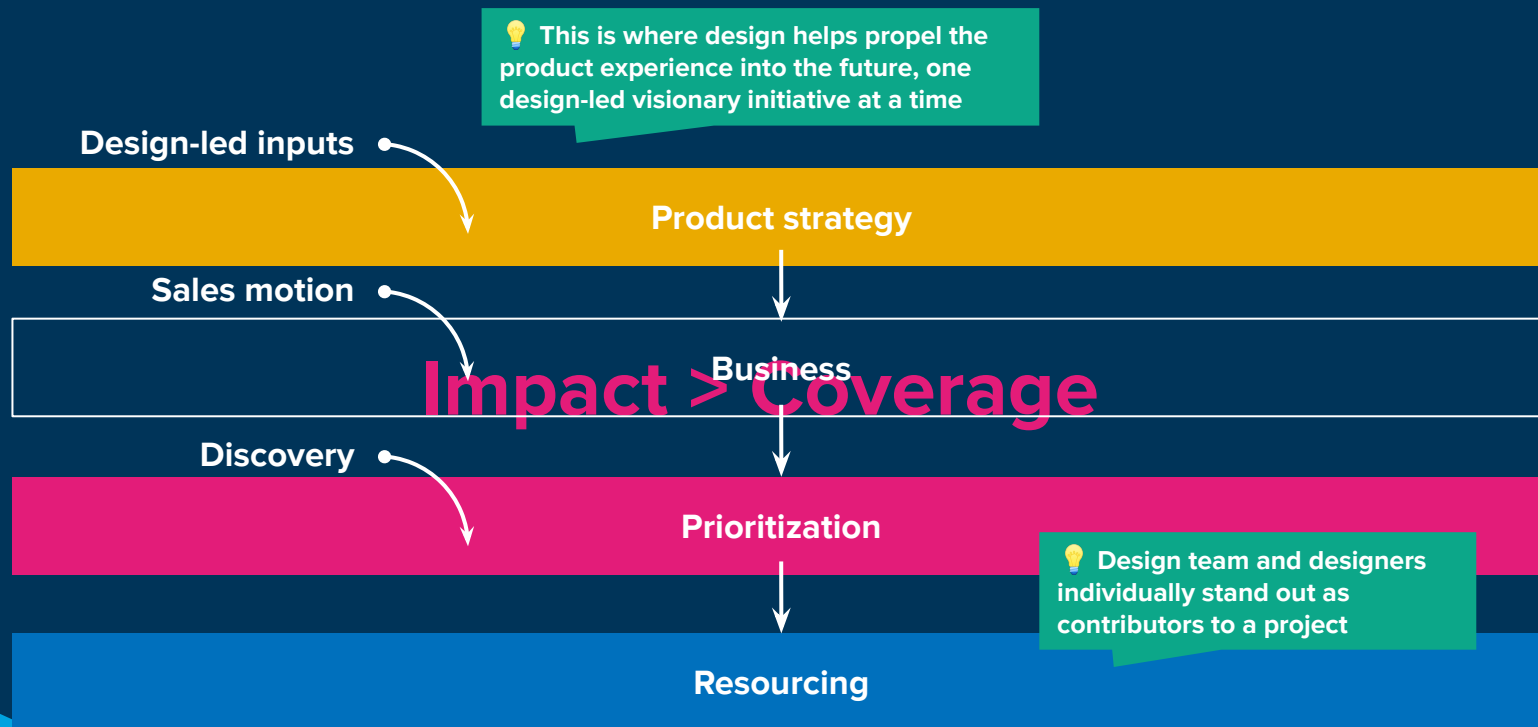




**2022 a new process kicks off**  
triggered by an engineering  
reorg and new definition of agile

An opportunity for the Product  
team to reimagine our roles to  
focus on deep thinking

# V3 Centralized product prioritization



# In the pursuit of velocity, will the centralized product prioritization model work?

## What we hope to achieve with the new org

- **Focus on the why and what**
- Break silos and double down on consistency
- Emphasize outcomes and metrics to track these
- Elevate quality of design artifacts
- **Become truly customer-first**





# How to prepare for transformation



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

# Set a foundation & boost a transformation mindset

1. Define org design principles and align to a higher purpose
2. Choose models of working to increase **impact** and **agility**
3. Break silos and build bridges obsessively
4. Nurture trust through communication and delivery... it's an antidote to resistance!
5. Stay humble. Transformation often starts with an idea, not with answers.





Thanks for listening!

Continue the conversation on chat