

Building Toward What's Next

UX leadership for the AI era

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AI is changing how software gets built, and the role of User Experience has to grow with it.

The leaders who get this right will author the next role, not inherit it.

This deck covers the foundation I built, the four investments that followed, and where the role goes next.

The leaders that are ready for what's next have been doing the work the whole time.

At CHG I built a UX design and research function from a single hire, scaled it, and rebuilt it as conditions shifted underneath. I invested in foundations like a design system before AI made them essential infrastructure.

Through all of it, I kept the **user at the center of the products we build**.

That arc shaped the posture I am taking into the next chapter.

Part 2: Building a foundation

The foundation that prepared us for the future

CHG Healthcare, December 2017 to today. First UX hire to a 21-person organization. User Experience went from absent to integrated across our digital organization.

Nine years at CHG: a foundation first, then four investments

●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2017 First UX hire, building CHG's first digital product. Shifted quickly to grow UX team to meet organizational needs. Foundation	2019 Team grows to 8 designers. UX Research established as a distinct practice. Foundation	2022 Design system launched against organizational resistance, with no cross-functional resourcing. Continue to mature UX functions. Foundation Design System	2025 - Q3 Created the year-long AI curriculum for 20 designers and researchers: AI fluency, designing for AI, foresight practice. AI Curriculum	2025 - Q3/Q4 AI-forward squad piloted: one UX Designer, one Product Manager, one Engineer. Rolling out across digital organization now. AI-Enabled Development	2026 - Q1 Organization at 21 people and NN/g Level 5. Design system modeled at \$19M annual value across 7 products. Design System	2026 - Q2-Q4 Authored Experience Architect role, spanning discovery to front-end deployment. AI-enabled development adopted by 75% of product teams. Experience Architect

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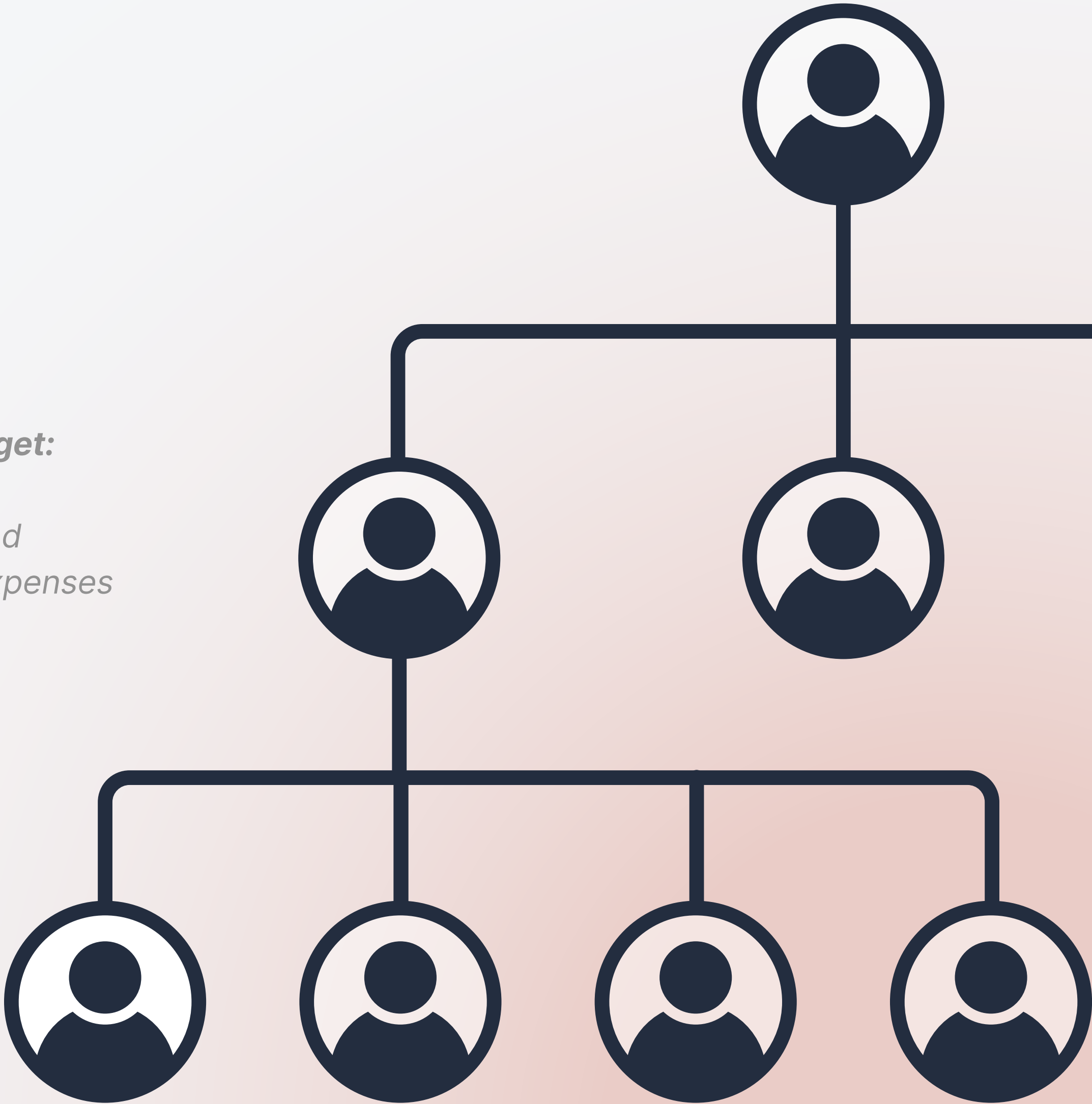
\$3.5M

Annual budget:
headcount,
software, and
operating expenses

Building the function took four steps. I taught product, engineering, and executive audiences what UX does and where it fits in the software development lifecycle. I made the case for placing the user at the center of the products we build. I established User Research as its own function. And I grew people into their full potential.

HIRING PHILOSOPHY

I hire for growth mindset over raw talent. Talent without the right mindset erodes culture. Growth mindset, coached well, becomes the talent you actually want.



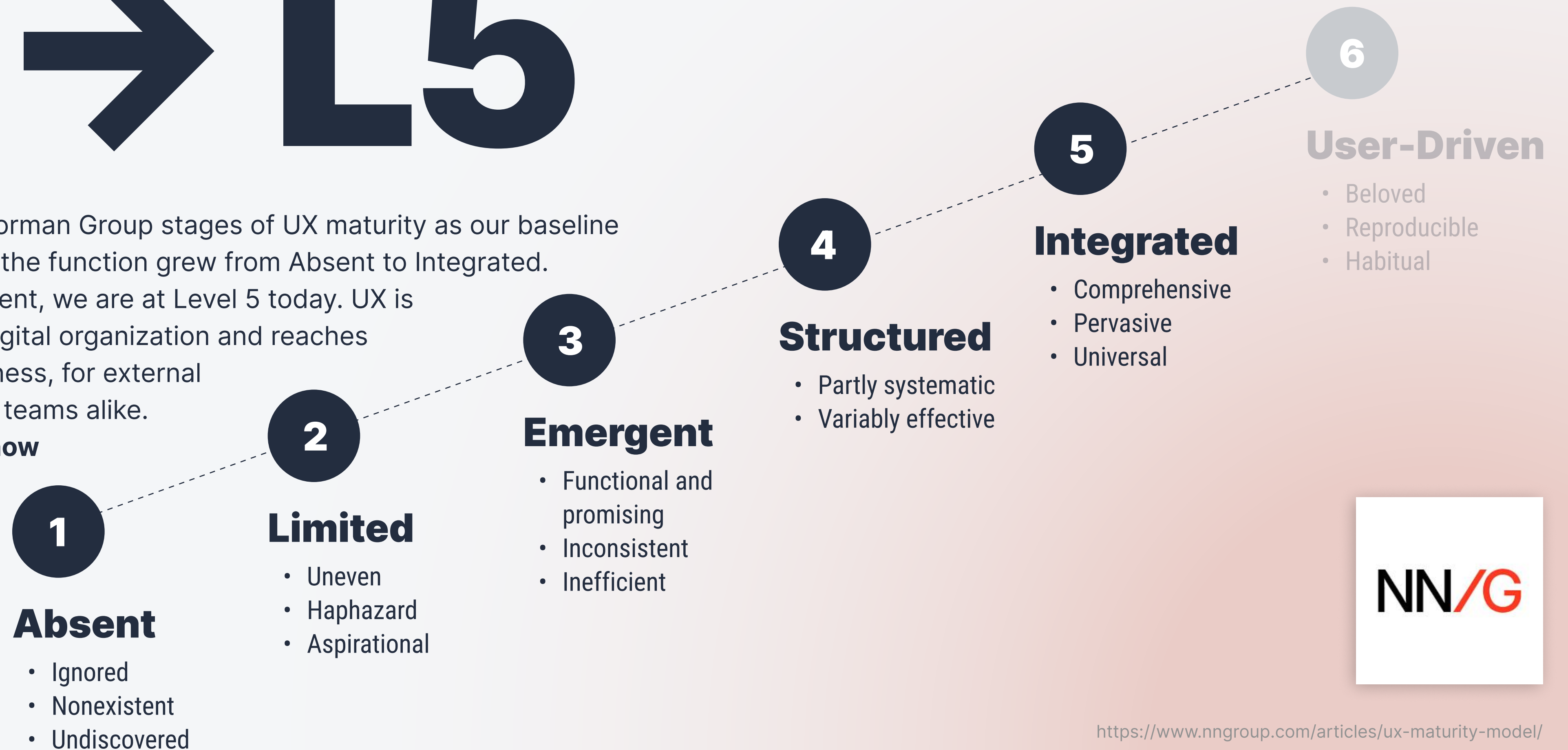
Nielsen Norman Group Stages of UX Maturity

L1 → L5

We used the Nielsen Norman Group stages of UX maturity as our baseline rubric for tracking how the function grew from Absent to Integrated.

After a recent assessment, we are at Level 5 today. UX is pervasive across our digital organization and reaches other parts of the business, for external customers and internal teams alike.

UX values are part of how the company makes decisions.



NN/G

<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-maturity-model/>



Part 3: Four investments for what's next

Four investments, each building on the one before

One long-arc investment in a UX function that compounds: people, then tools, process, and adaptability. Together they form one equation for being ready for what's next.

AI Curriculum

Year-long internal AI curriculum for 20 designers and researchers. I created it and I lead it.

The skills designers and researchers need are shifting as fast as AI advances. I chose to grow the skills, knowledge, and capabilities of the team we have, ahead of the need, so every team member could thrive in a fast-evolving technology space.

The first rule of how I build is to start with a capable team.

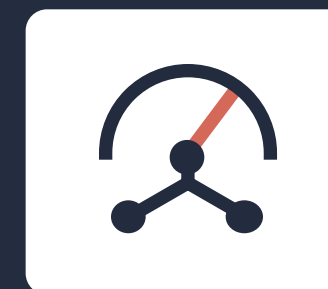
STEP 1: PEOPLE

A capable team is what every later investment depends on.



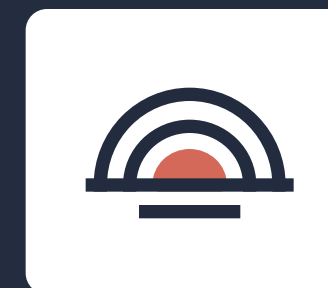
Chapter 1: AI Fluency

AI fluency. Command line, prompting, agentic literacy.



Chapter 2: Building for AI

Designing for AI. Systems thinking, trust calibration, behavior specification.



Chapter 3: Build for Future

Ongoing foresight practice. Focus on systems and behavior, not just screens.

Foundational infrastructure to build with quality at speed

Design System

Built to increase velocity and consistency.
Now required infrastructure for AI-enabled development.

I directed the build of our Unified Design System to increase velocity and consistency across our products. AI made it required infrastructure. AI tools build from the context they are given and invent the rest, so the system now supplies that context.

STEP 2: TOOLS AND SYSTEMS

Tools work when capable teams wield them, so I invest in the system and the people who use it together.

90+
components with usage
guidance.

Multi-brand
one component set, seven
different brands.

4 Adoption Levels
from tokens to advanced
components.

250+
design-language documents
written for AI tools.

AI Enabled Development

Smaller teams, spec-driven development, and Product Design and Research in the room for the speed.

Work now starts from a specification, and a first working version can exist within hours. I made sure Product Design and Research are active partners from that first specification. With product and engineering, we are building a practice that holds quality and user-centered design as the pace rises.

STEP 3: PROCESS

Speed holds when the process is designed before the volume arrives.



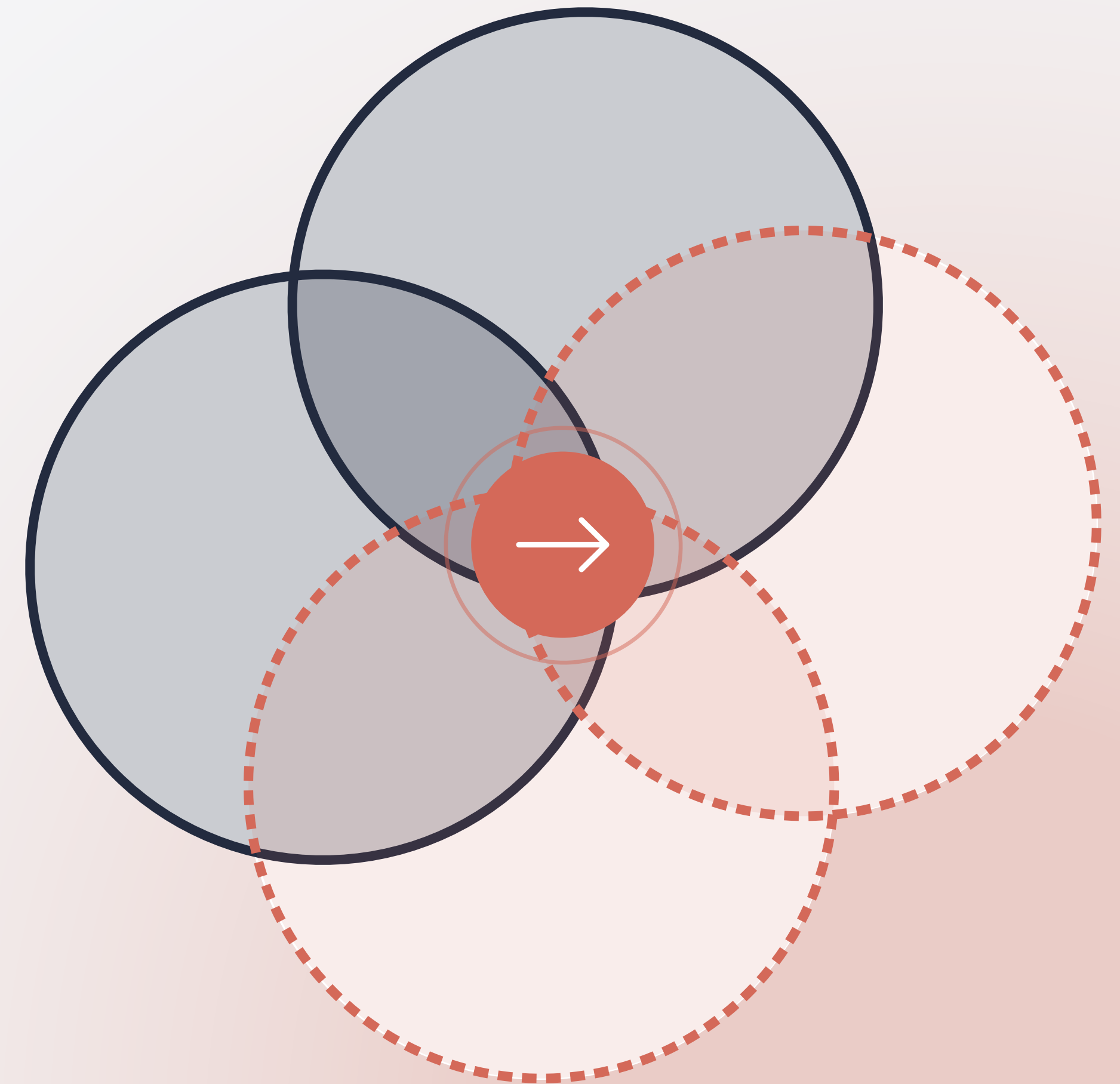
Experience Architect

A new role for where product management, design, research, and engineering have blurred.

I create roles for people with broad capability who adapt as the work changes. The Experience Architect has deep knowledge in Product Design and User Research and working capability in product management and front-end development, so one person can hold a journey together. Product managers keep the roadmap and backlog. The Experience Architect is accountable for the experience.

STEP 4: ADAPTABILITY

When the work changes shape, I build the role it needs and grow the team into it.



Real Impact

What this work has delivered, and what it should deliver next.

People

AI Curriculum

20 AI fluent designers and researchers in a year-long curriculum

Next:
Advanced AI use that keeps growing

Measured

Tools

Design System

\$19M annual value across 7 products from faster, standardized front-end

Next:
Required infrastructure for AI-forward work

Modeled

Process

AI-Enabled Dev

Adopted by 75% of teams. Timelines drop from weeks to hours.

Next:
Full impact measurement under way

Measured

Adaptability

Experience Architect

Four disciplines in one role that adapts as the work and technology changes.

Next:
Fewer rework cycles, coherent journeys

Expected



Part 4: What Becomes Possible

What twenty years tells me about the next ten

How the investments compound, the principles underneath,
and where I see the role of User Experience going.

What I am building toward

Four investments that compound, built in order.

Each case added something the next one needed. A capable team can use good tools well. Good tools are what make a faster process safe. A designed process shows where an organization needs a role that does not exist yet. Together they position the team and the organization to adapt to whatever changes next.

01 People: AI Curriculum. A team equipped to thrive in a fast-evolving field.

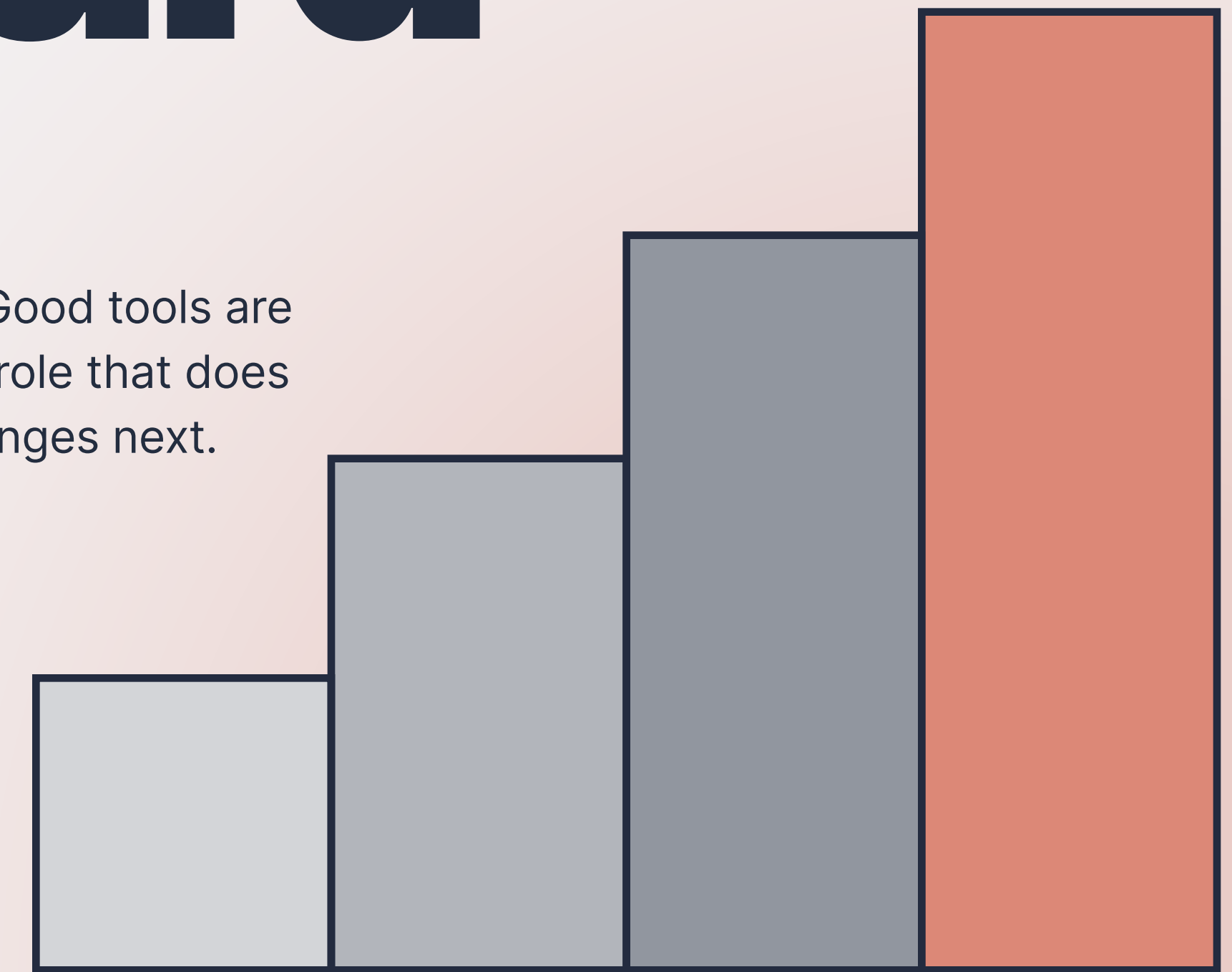
02 Tools and systems: Design System. Infrastructure that carries quality at speed.

03 Process: AI-Enabled Development. A practice that keeps users central as time compresses.

04 Adaptability: Experience Architect. A role built for what the work needs next.

READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT

Whatever the technology does next, the team, the infrastructure, the process, and the role are in place to adapt.



User Experience will own judgment, taste, and quality as AI takes on more of the production.

Quality at speed, for users who may be **human or agentic**.

As AI takes on more of the production work, the Product Design role concentrates on three things. **Judgment:** deciding what is worth building, and whether a result is coherent, usable, and correct. **Taste:** knowing what good looks like and encoding it in standards that people and AI tools both build from. **Quality:** holding the bar as the volume of work grows. **The user, human or agentic, stays at the center of what we create.**

BUILT TO KEEP ADAPTING

The tools will keep changing. A capable team, sound infrastructure, a designed process, and room to pioneer new roles let the function change with them.



Thank You.

Let's connect.

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