

Design Muscle: Building collective strength through T-shaped skills

Jeff Steffgen
Senior Director,
Product Design

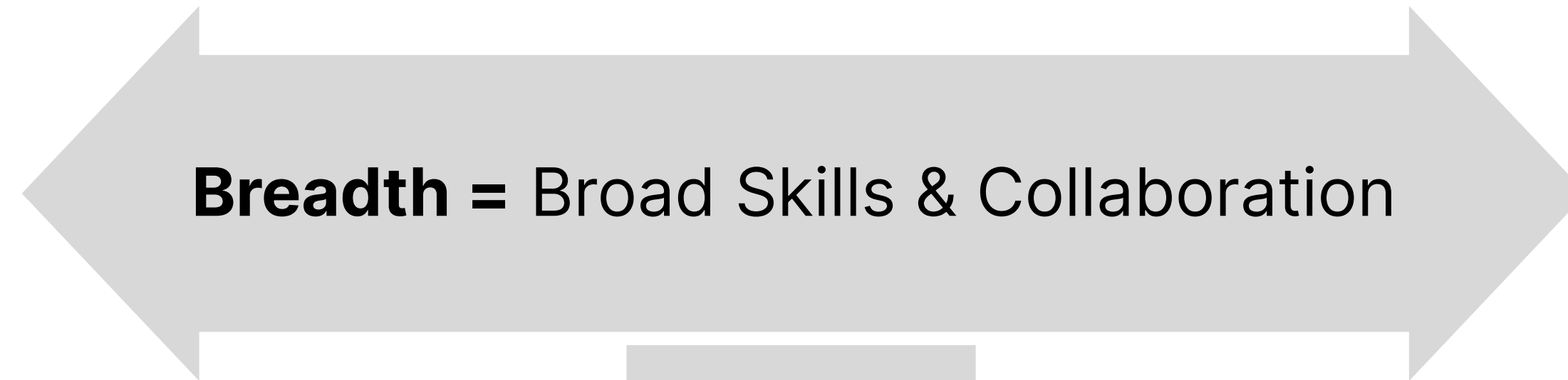
Nikki McConnell
Product Designer

Nolan Felicidadario
Product Designer

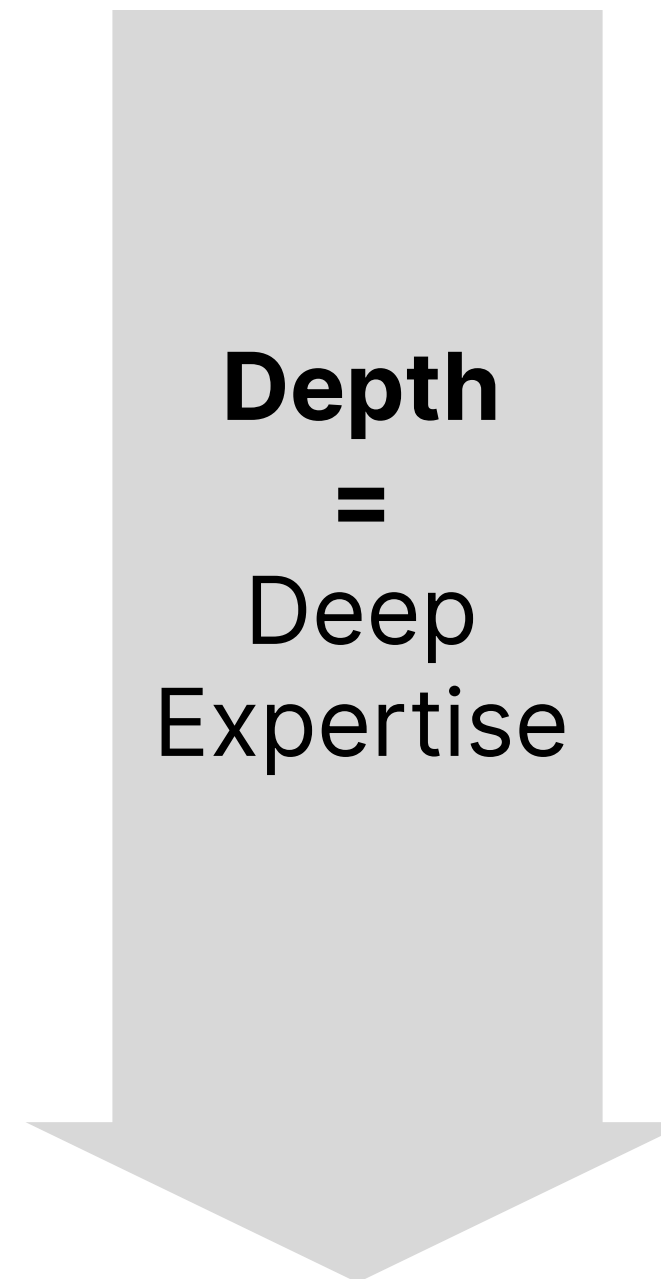
T-Shaped Skills

Great design teams aren't made of identical skill sets, they're built from different depths of expertise that connect in powerful ways.

Growth through experience & collaboration



Enables cross-functional work & empathy

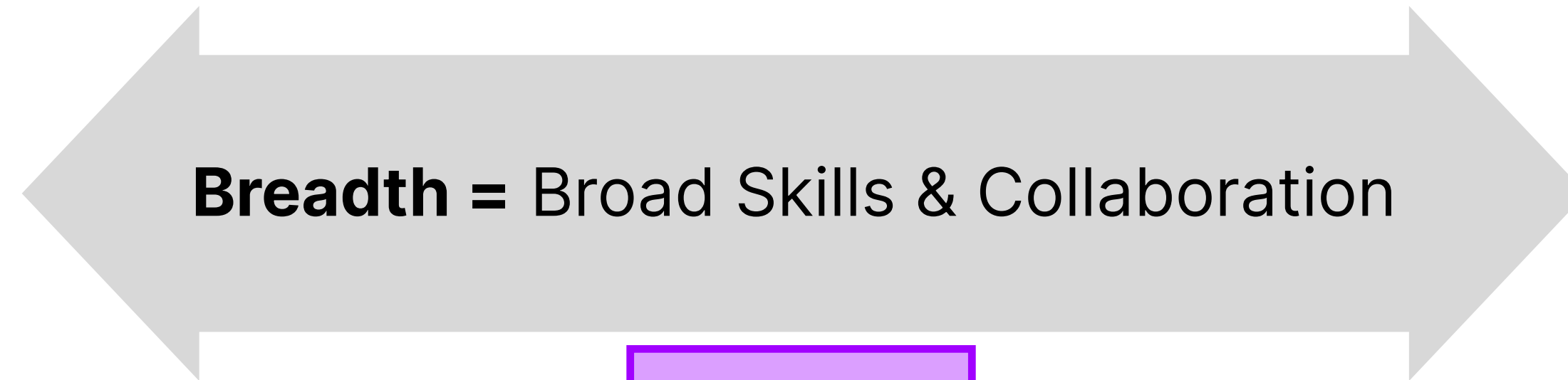


Your core specialty

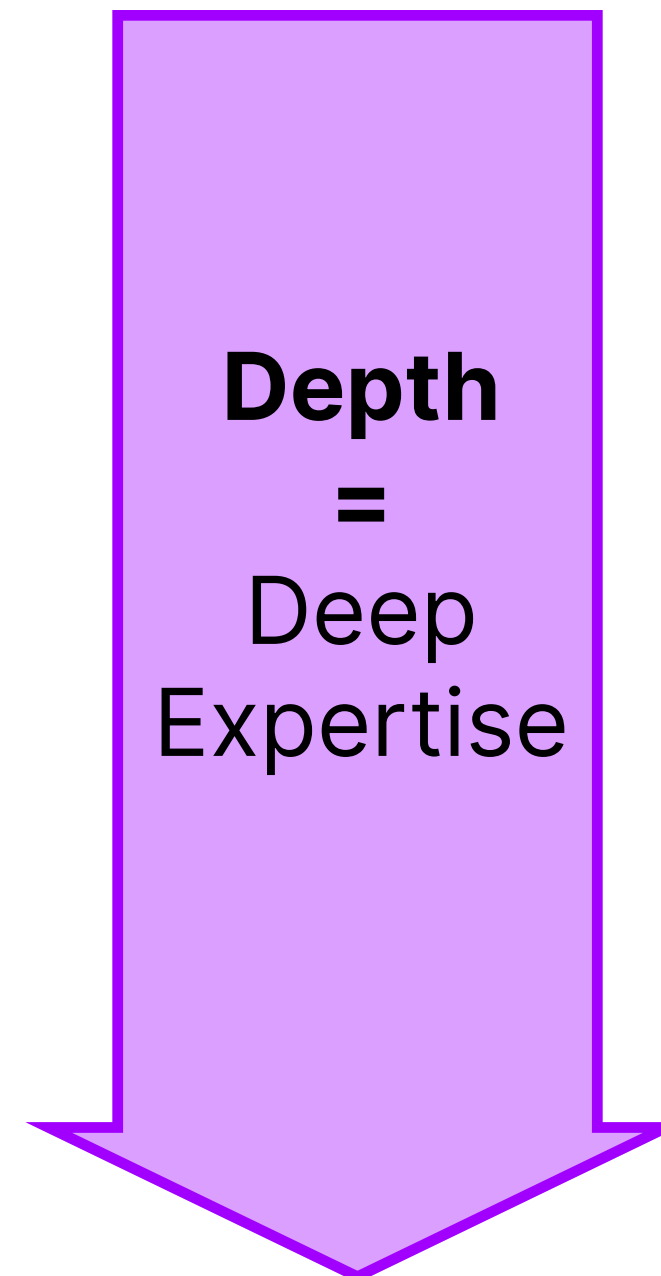
T-Shaped Skills

Great design teams aren't made of identical skill sets, they're built from different depths of expertise that connect in powerful ways.

Growth through experience & collaboration



Enables cross-functional work & empathy



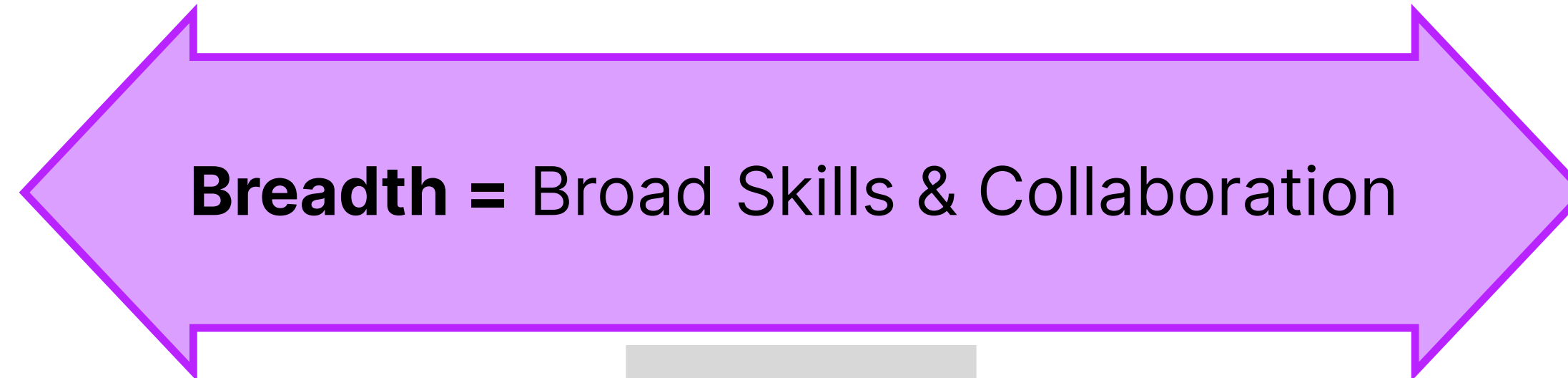
Your core specialty

T-Shaped Skills

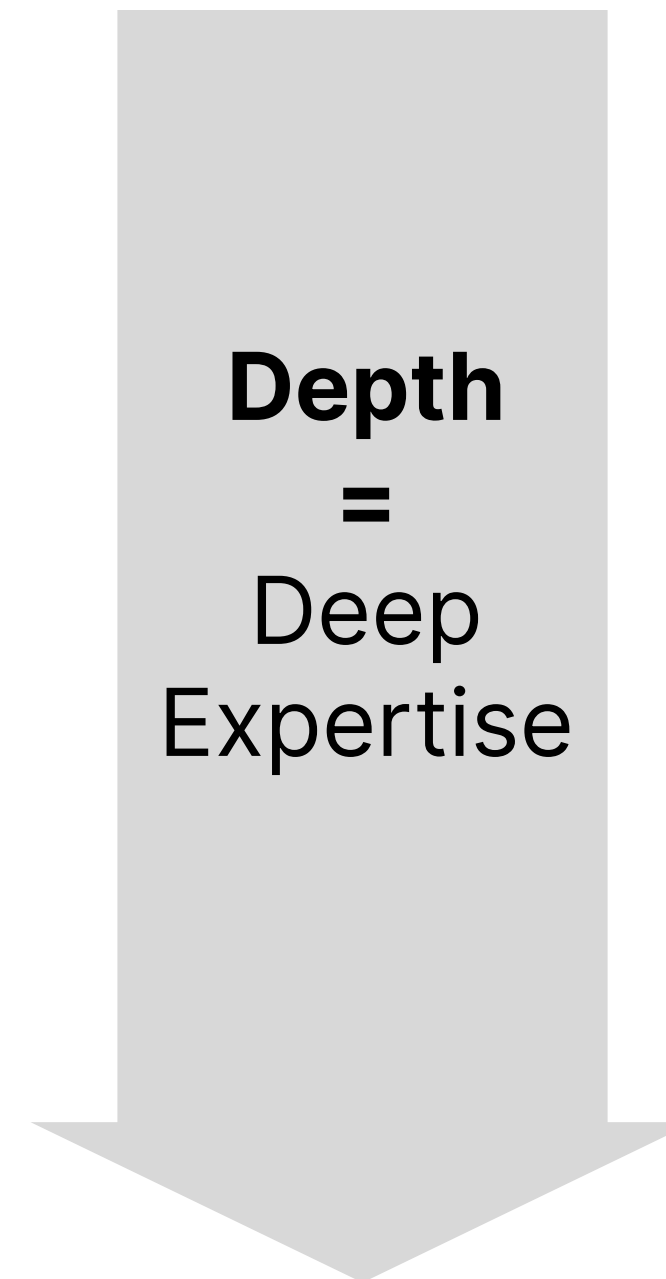
Great design teams aren't made of identical skill sets, they're built from different depths of expertise that connect in powerful ways.

FE/UI Dev *Visual Design* *UX Design* *Content Strategy* *User Research*

Growth through experience & collaboration



Enables cross-functional work & empathy



Your core specialty

Your T-Shape

Raise your hand if your background or deepest area of expertise is in...

- Visual or graphic design
- Content, writing, or UX writing
- User research
- Engineering or front-end development
- Something else entirely — product management, psychology, fine arts, something we haven't named?

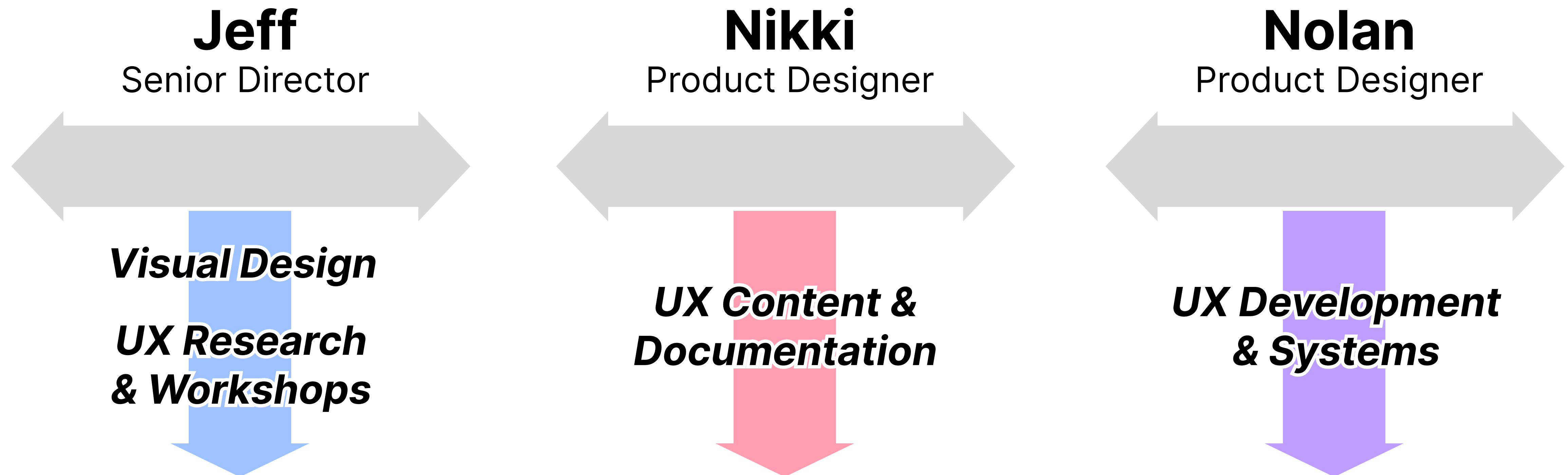
Your T-Shape

Now raise your hand if you've had to stretch significantly outside that specialty.

That stretch is exactly what we're here to talk about – where teams get stronger.

Our Team's T-Shapes

Real life examples of how our different backgrounds actually shape how we design, collaborate, and make decisions together every day.

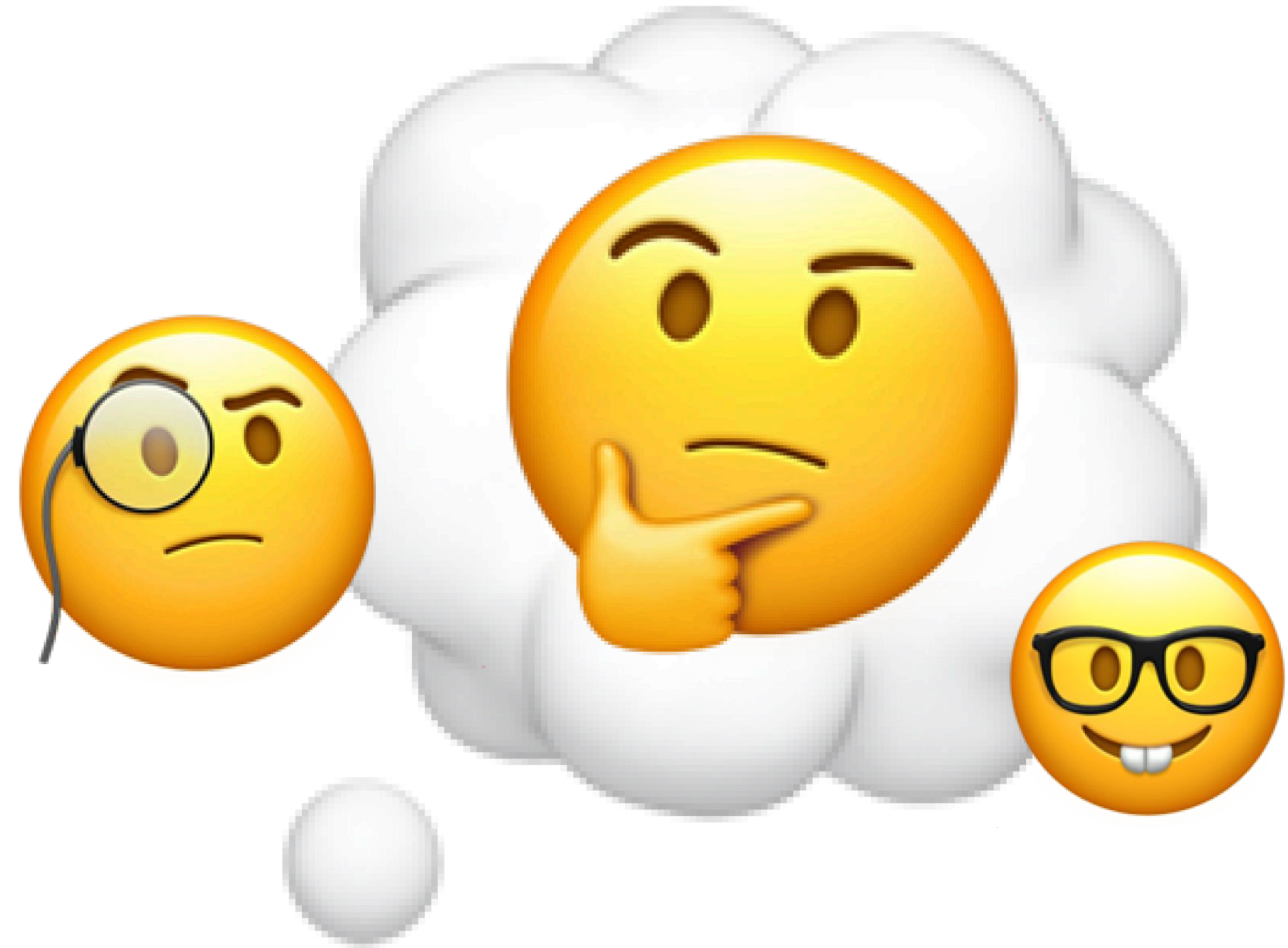


Individual T-Shapes: Going Deeper

Tradeoffs + Decision Making

Diverse Design Thinking

Contrast in thinking styles builds our collective expertise and perspective in many areas.



Turn + Talk

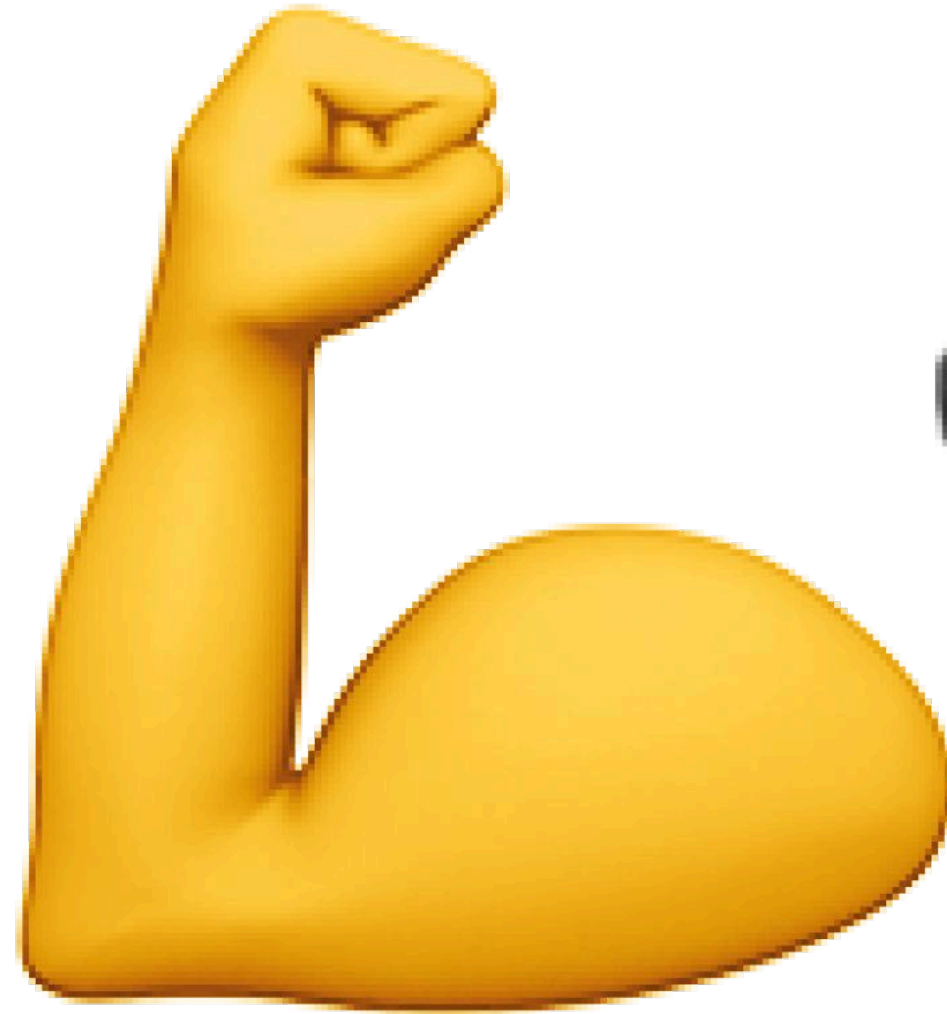
Turn to the person next to you and take a minute:

- Share your T-shape
- Which of our instincts matched yours?
- What surprised you?

Cross-Training

Ways to build collective strength & learning opportunities:

- Pairing across disciplines
- Design critiques with mixed perspectives
- Rotating responsibilities
- Learning through real work vs. theory.



Always Be Learning

The real impact happens when our strengths connect and we learn from each other and build something stronger together.

Learn a new tool

Pair with someone from another discipline

Join a critique outside your speciality

Try a different role in a project

Q&A

Final Thoughts

Jeff Steffgen
Senior Director

Nikki McConnell
Product Designer

Nolan Felicidadario
Product Designer