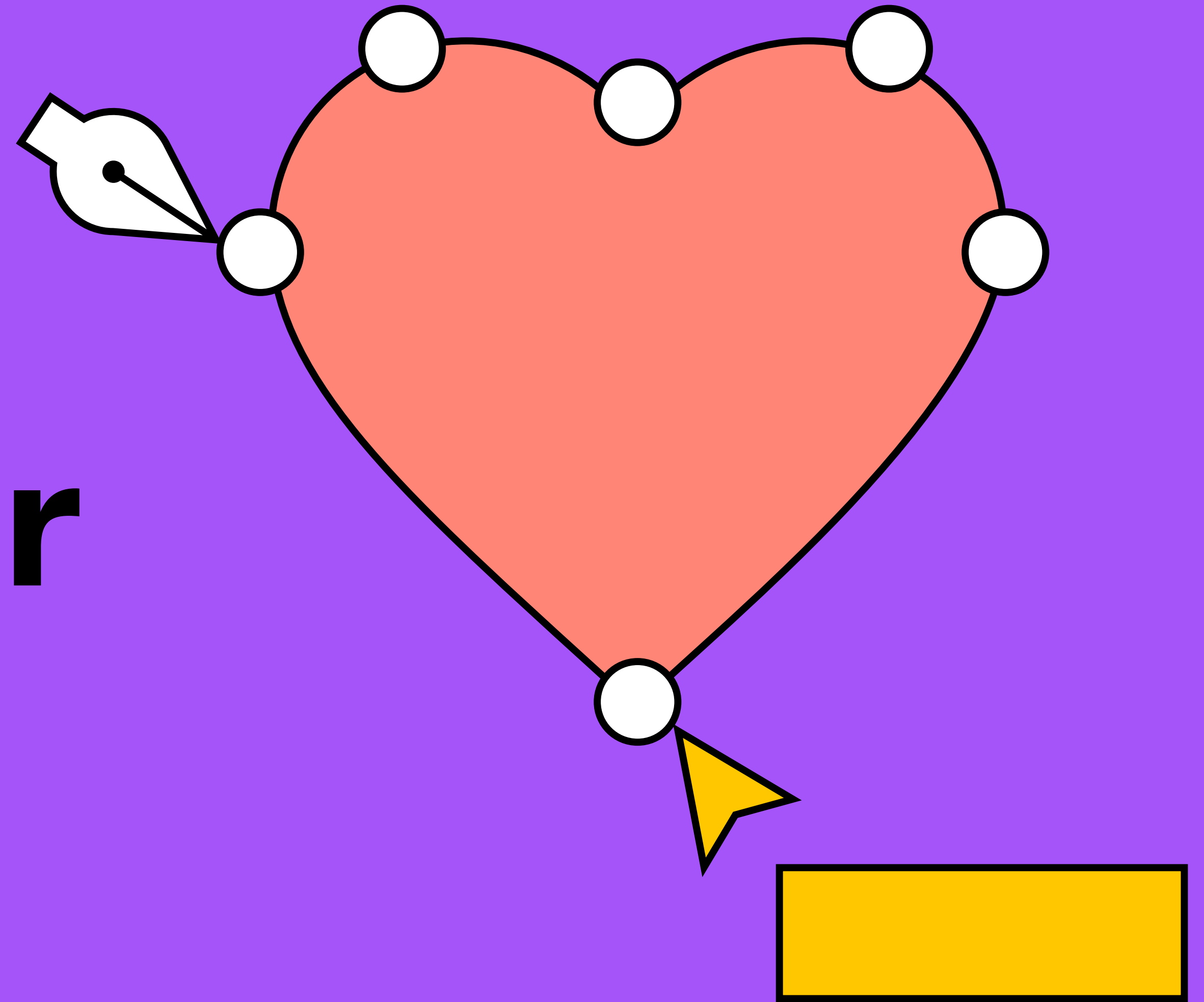
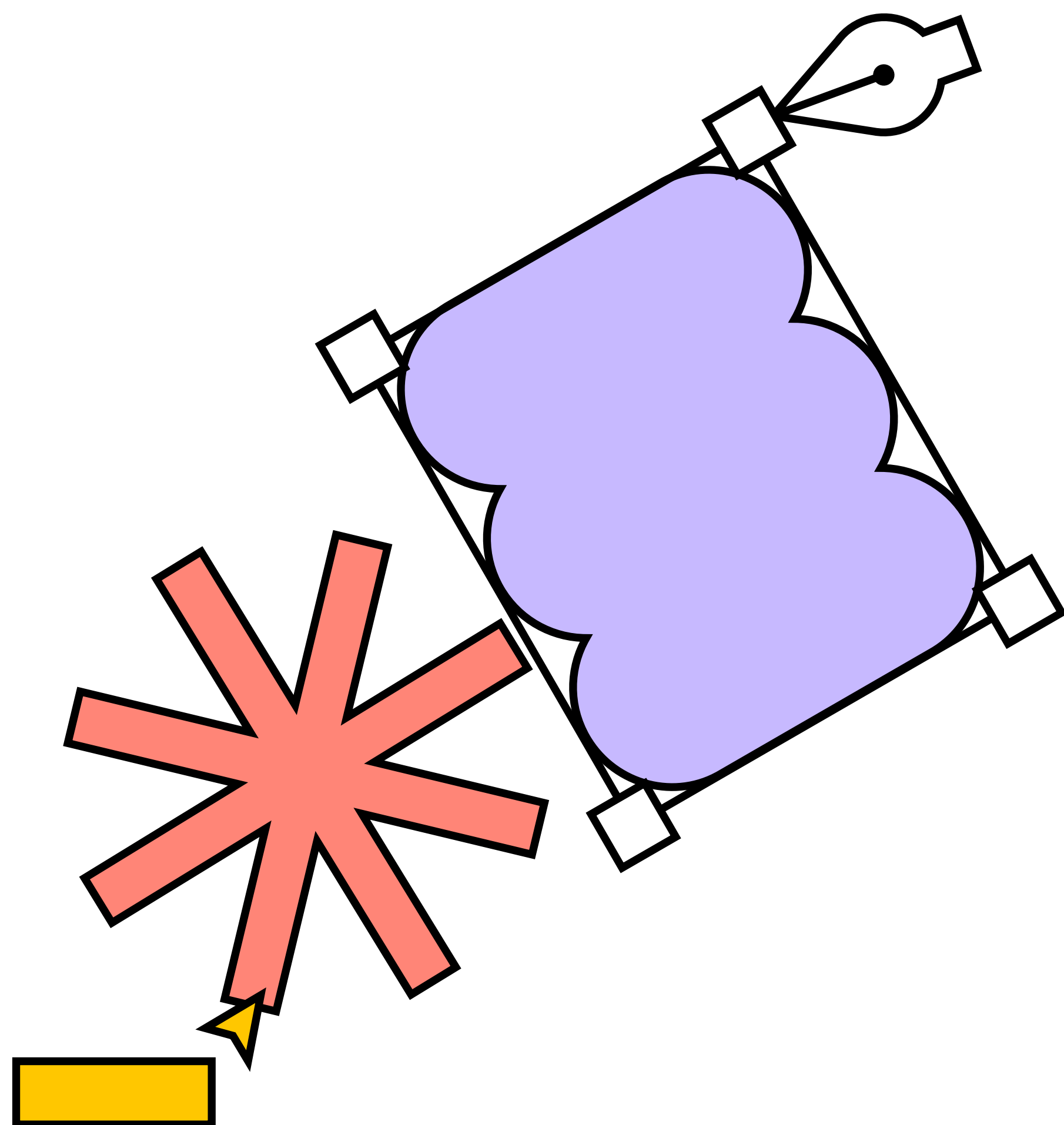


Figma

Decode the developer

A look behind the screen at how designers
and developers can reach project perfection





The designer/developer relationship just might be the most important partnership in business today.

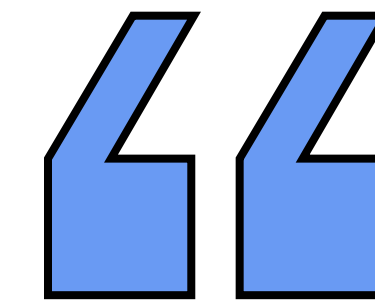
It's where ideas meet execution. Where innovation starts to morph into impact.



Both teams want to bring quality designs to production faster. But actually doing that is really hard.

We wanted to know why developers think that is, so we commissioned some research. We asked 200 front-end developers about the dynamics of their relationship with designers.

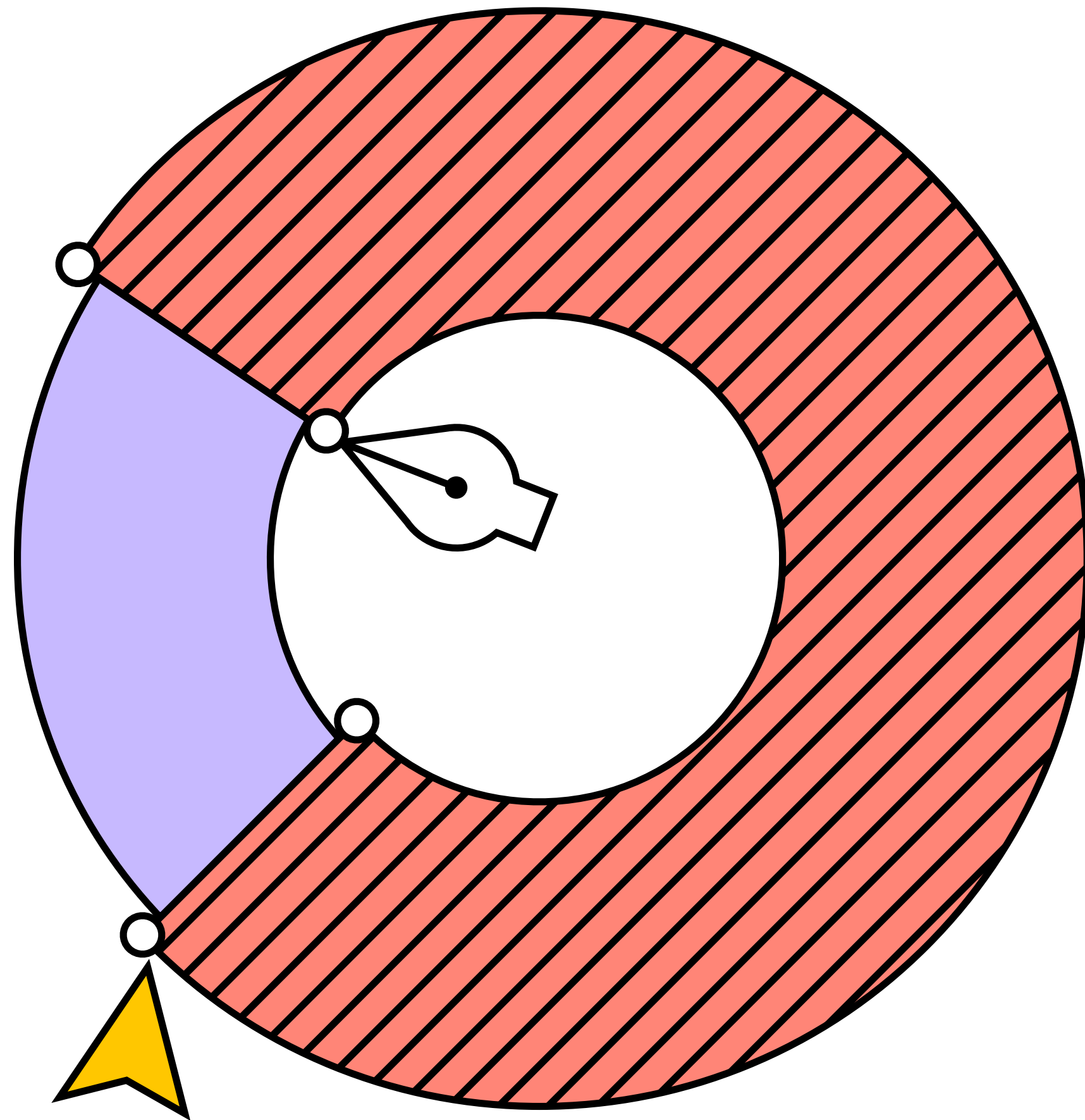
Here's what we learned.



There's always a healthy tension. I think we do want the same things, we just want them on different timescales.

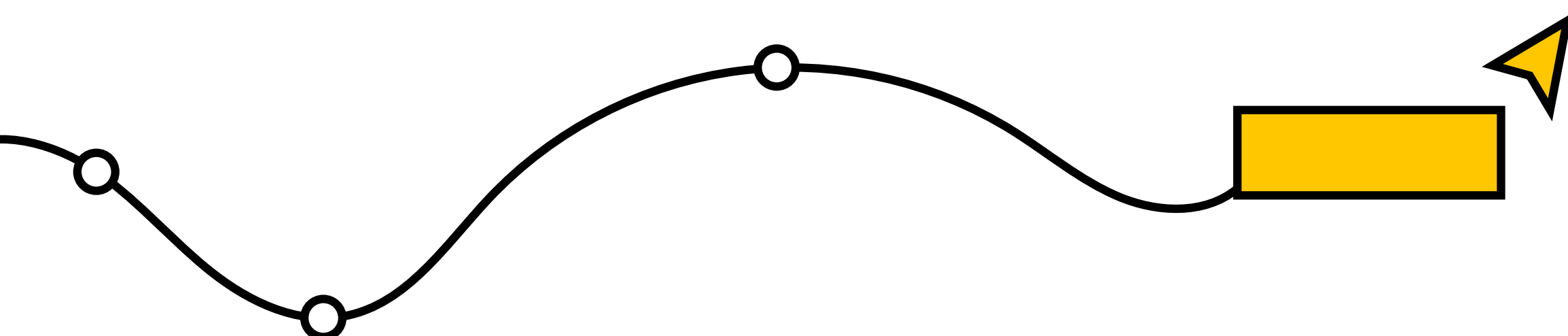
Tom Foley,
Executive Creative Director,
Monotype



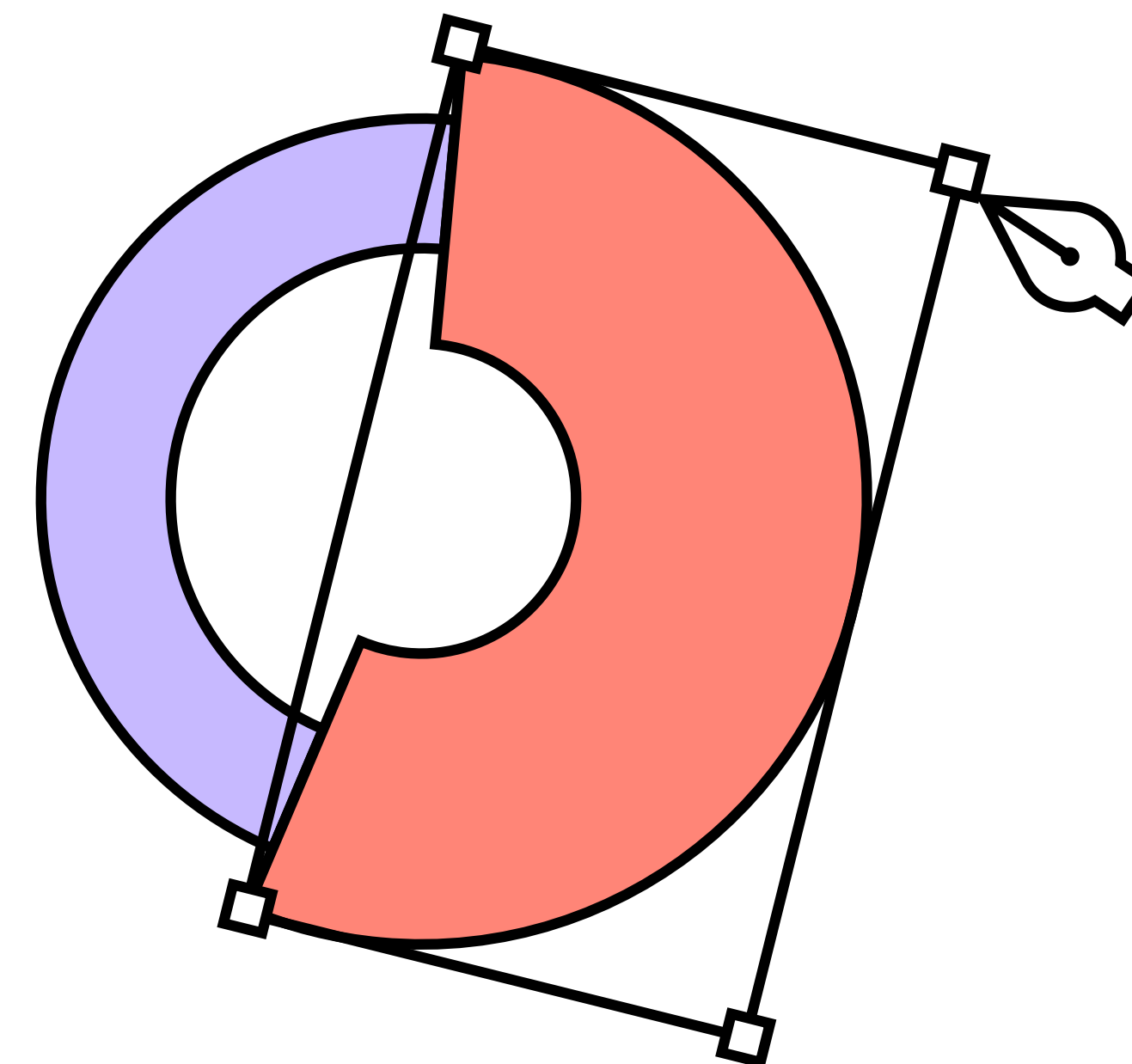


80% of developers think
their business would
benefit from designers
and developers working
more closely together.

This is no surprise when our customers have told us that miscommunication leads to months-long project delays. And this leaves them yearning for something different.



55% of front-end developers would like to be brought into the design process earlier.



Makes sense. But **24%** feel this would be too hard to do in their organisation.

Especially when time is tight to do the work, let alone discuss it.

And the bigger the organisation, the bigger the problem—as teams grow, it's easy to lose control of quality.



Fewer than half of developers (43%) work with product designers on a daily basis.

And **33%** say that designers make assumptions about how other teams work.

So communication is an issue here too. During periods of high intensity, a daily dose of contact is worth more than a big debate further down the line.

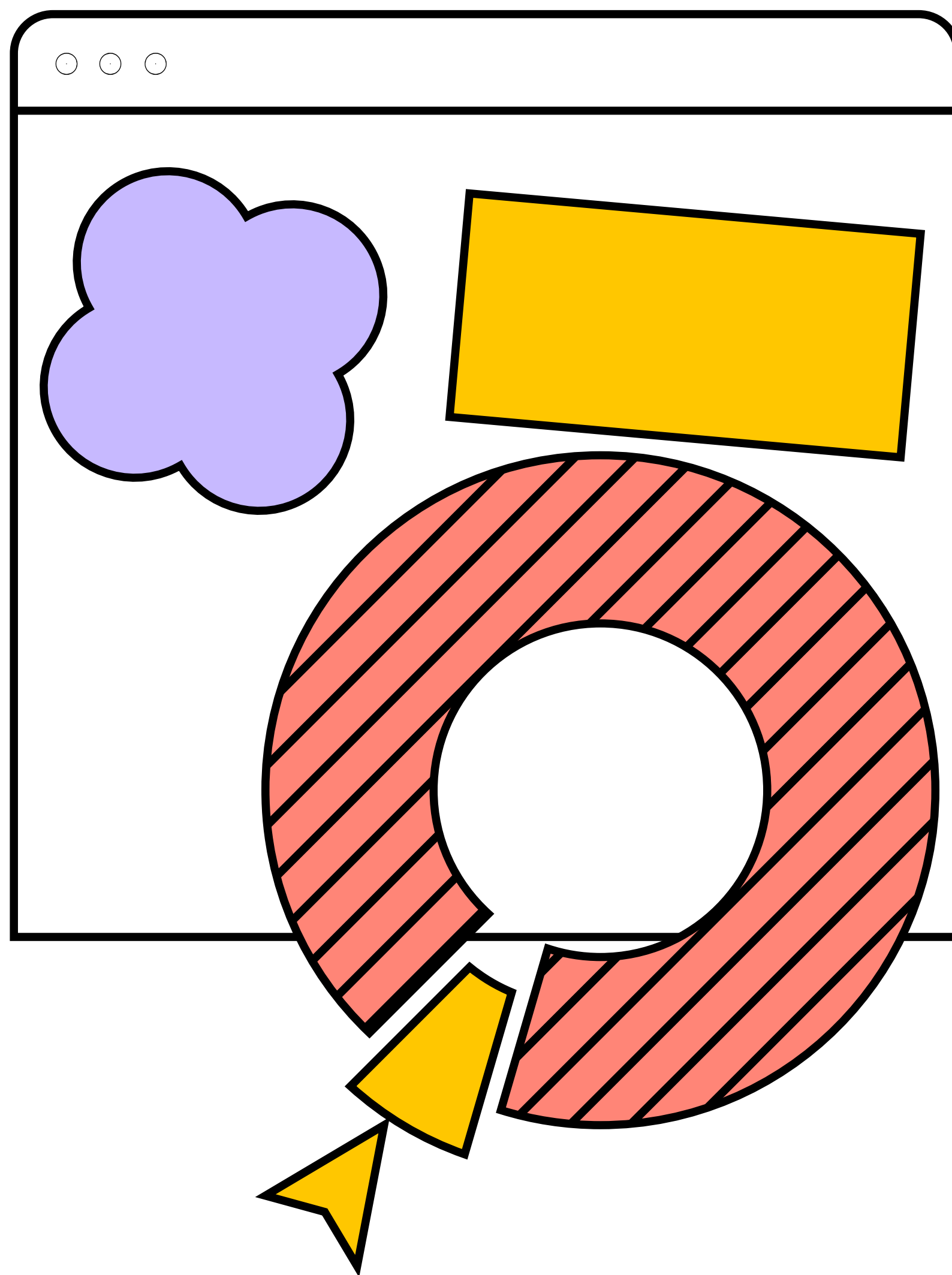
“

Presenting incomplete work tends to be a blocker in a lot of people's minds... They might think, 'It's not complete yet,' or 'I'm not happy enough with it yet.'

Nouman Tariq,
IKEA Engineering Manager

Source: Power up your
designer-developer handoff →





92% of developers
would like designers to
know more about the
development process.

To most of the organisation, product development is a black box.

But developers want designers to lean in and learn more about what's inside that box—to save time, help with communication and get everyone soaring towards clearer skies.



**The majority of developers
(91%) think designers
should know how to code.**

It's good to talk. But only developers tend to speak code.

38% find different communication styles with designers a challenge. And **40%** struggle with designers using different tools or communication methods.

It all feels a little bit lost in translation.

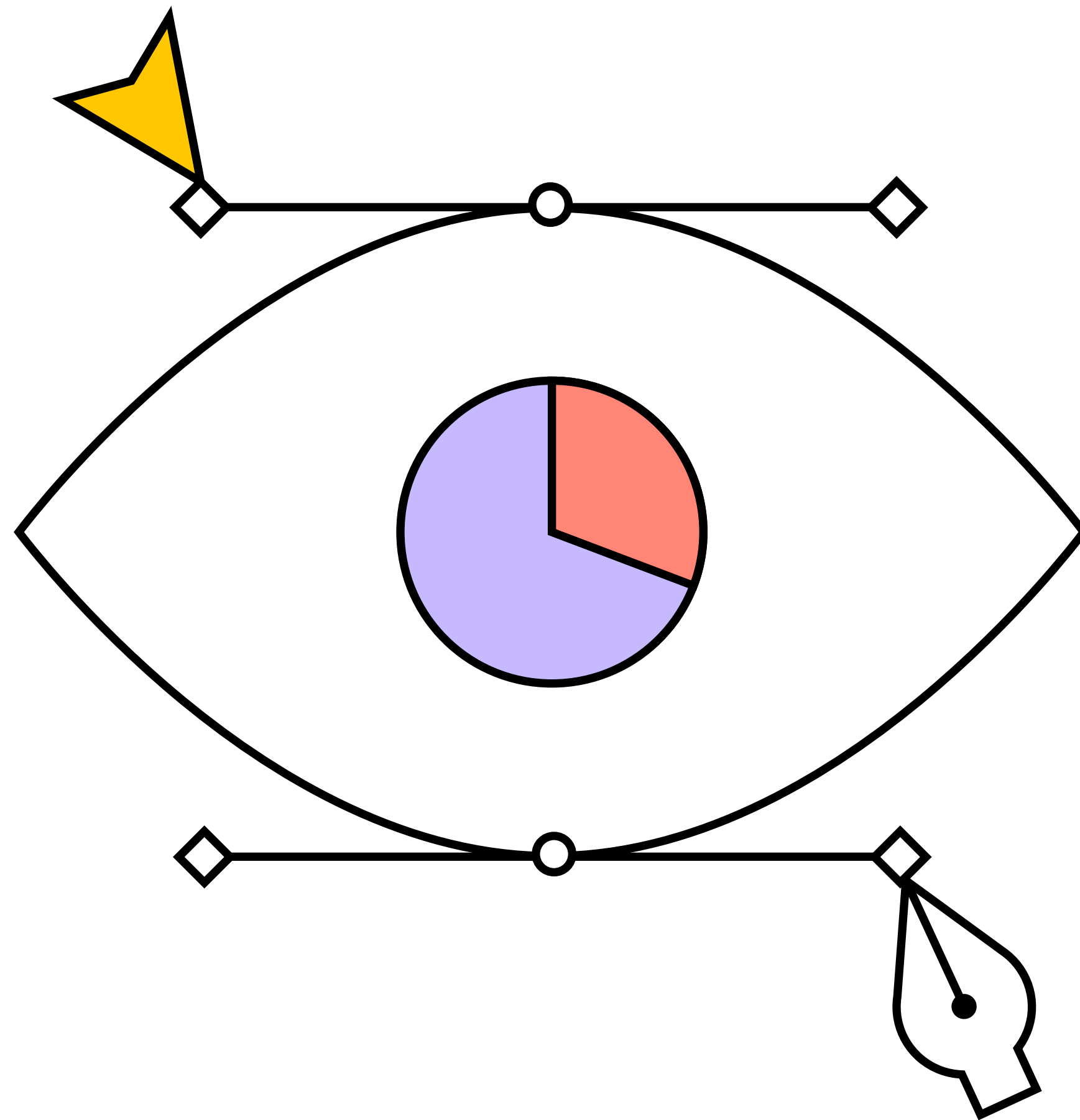
“

Often developers have this context of ‘designers want this pretty thing but we know that we have old code,’ for example. There are all these hurdles in implementation, and sometimes it feels like there isn't time to explain the ‘why’.

Jake Albaugh,
Developer Advocate, Figma

Source: Office hours: Developer and
designer collaboration in Dev Mode →





31% of developers say that designers have an expert understanding of the development process.

Take a look at that again. Expert understanding. That's no small thing.

Something's working—and it works both ways. Most developers also claim to have a good understanding of UX design.

**So, developers want to
get closer to the design
process—earlier, more
often and more deeply.**

And they want designers to return the favour.
Is this just two sides swapping perspectives?
Or creating something completely new together?

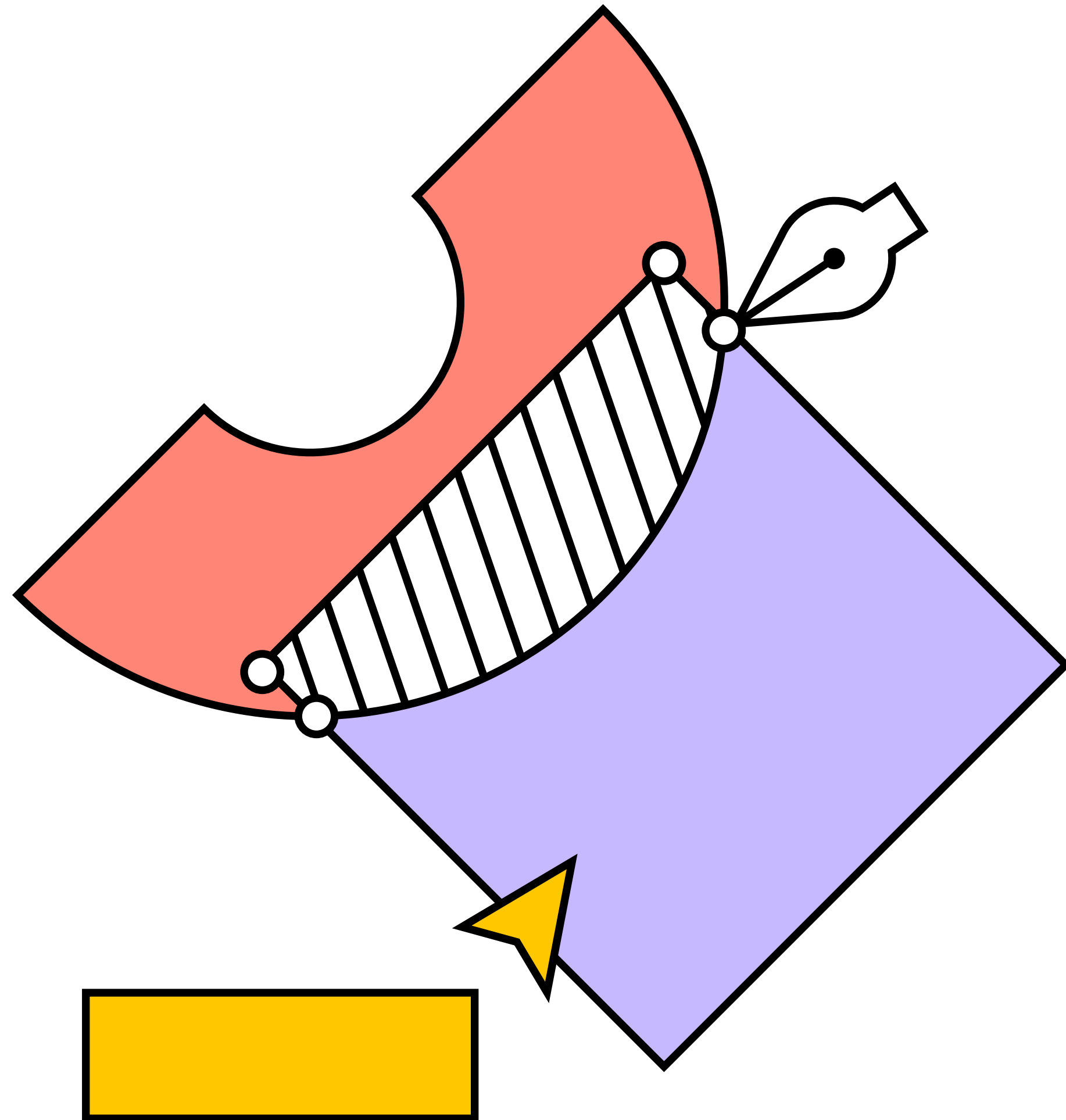
“

Often there are constraints that stop you doing what you wanted to design. You shouldn't be married to ideas, but some things you don't want to compromise on. It's about figuring out the middle space, between what you can compromise on and what won't break the idea.

Jonas Downey, Manager,
Product Design, Figma

Source: Office hours: Developer and
designer collaboration in Dev Mode →





The borders between development and design are blurring.

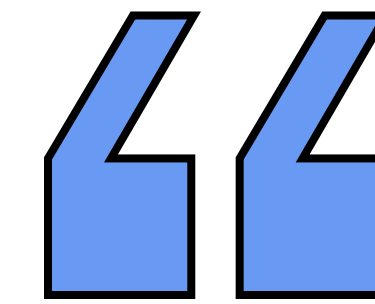
And there's a whole new space in the overlap to make exceptional digital products.

A space where better collaboration means better relationships—but it also means a whole lot of other tasty results too.

55% think improving the relationship between developers and design would achieve a faster time to market.

And it doesn't stop there. 47% think it would achieve higher quality products, and 46% that it would even improve the culture in their organisation.

So how can you turn this relationship totally stellar?



Communication is always kind of the big part, getting people on the same page about what we are trying to do. And how are we gonna do it.

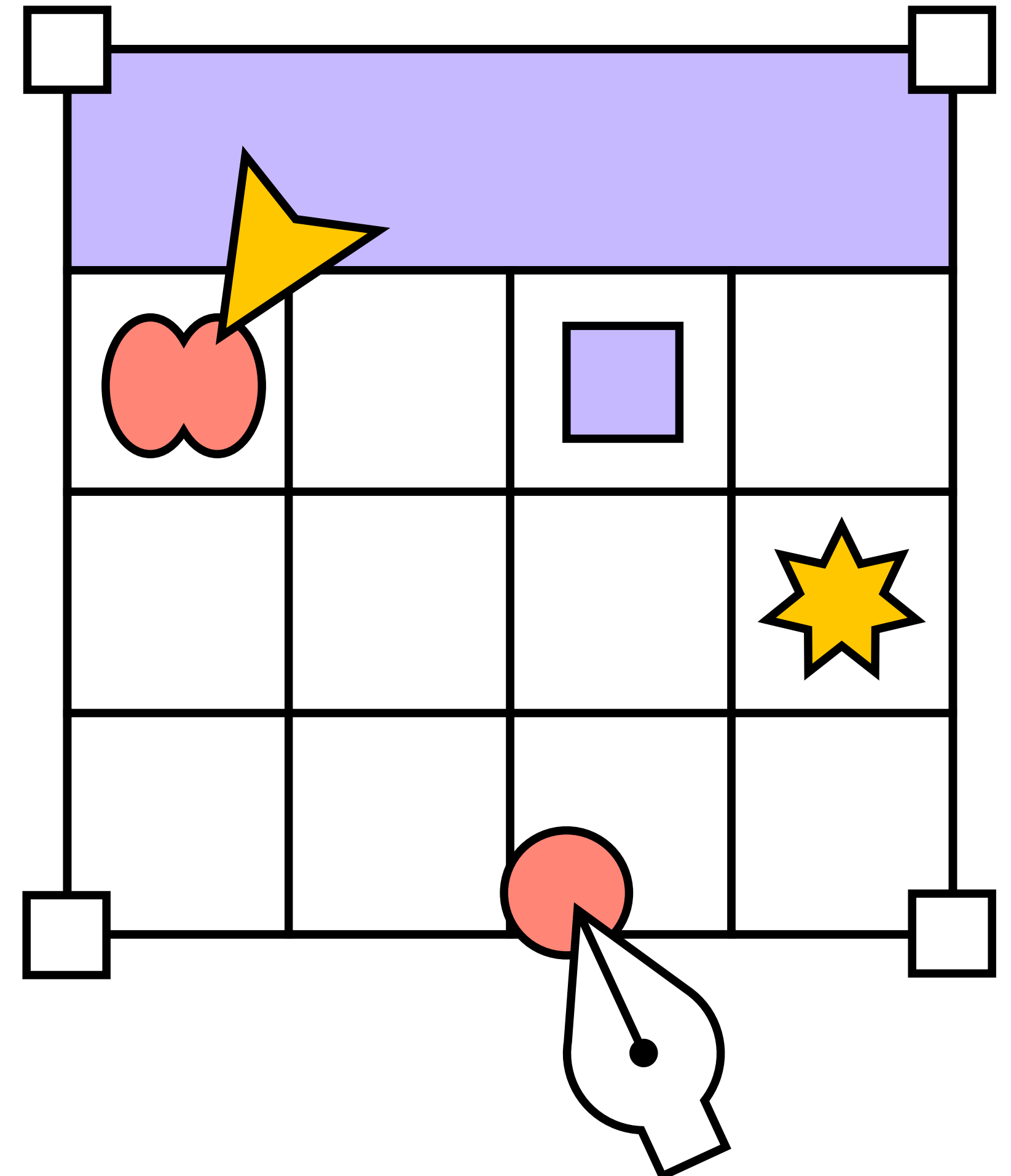
Jori Lallo,
Co-founder of Linear

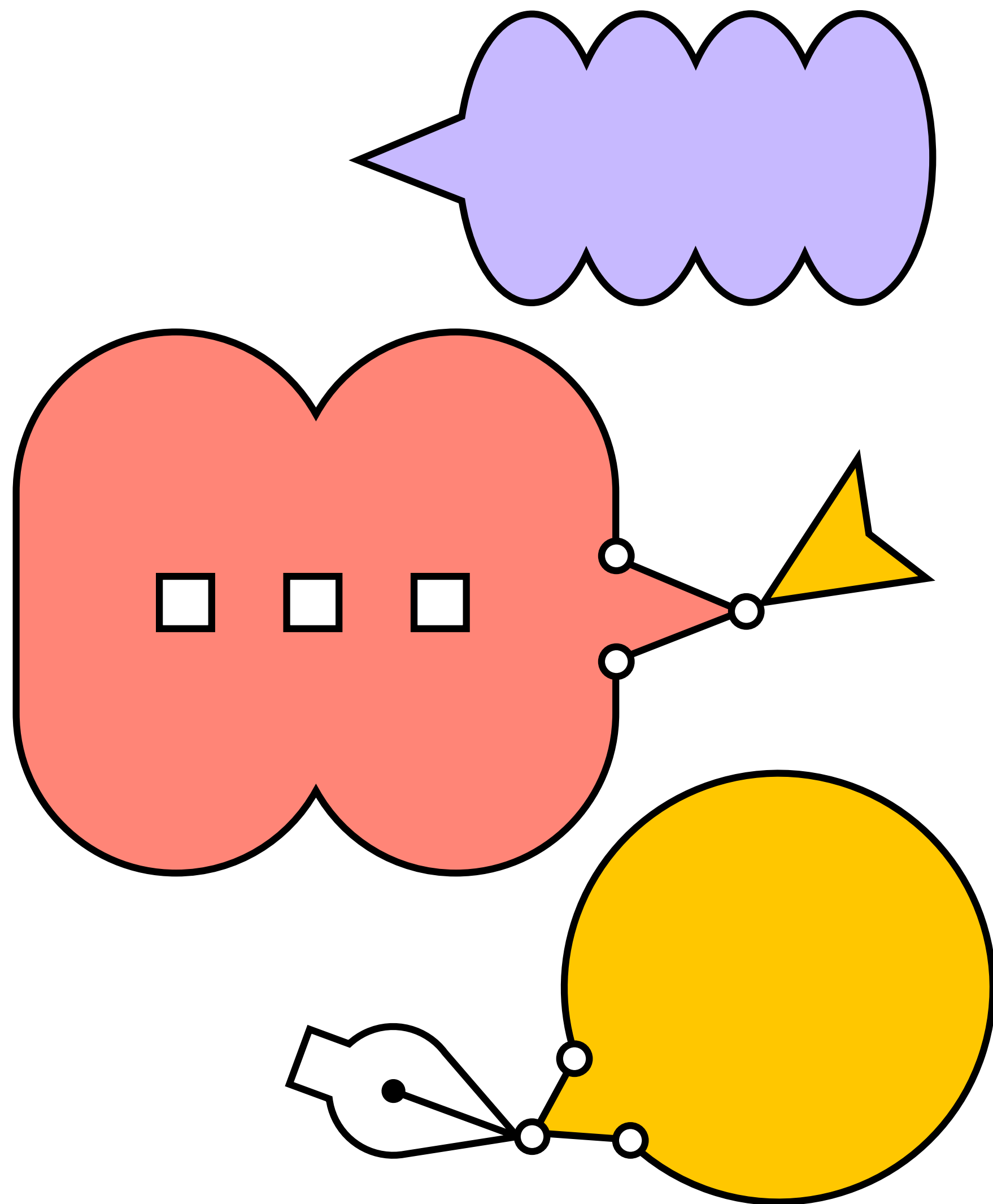
[Source: Linear customer story →](#)



Developers who collaborate with designers **daily are more likely to rate the partnership as “very effective” than those who collaborate less frequently.**

A daily discussion is just what the doctor ordered.





**Developers who say
designers are “always”
open to feedback
see more effective
collaboration than those
who believe designers
are open to feedback
“most of the time”.**

Forget always on. The best way to work is always open.



Developers working with designers that produce “excellent” quality visuals, rather than ones that are “too detailed”, are more effective collaborators.

Developers want designers to open up a little and embrace their world.

Where technical constraints are real, and workflows are different.

Likewise, developers need to get cosy with the world of design and understand what might ‘break’ a creative idea.

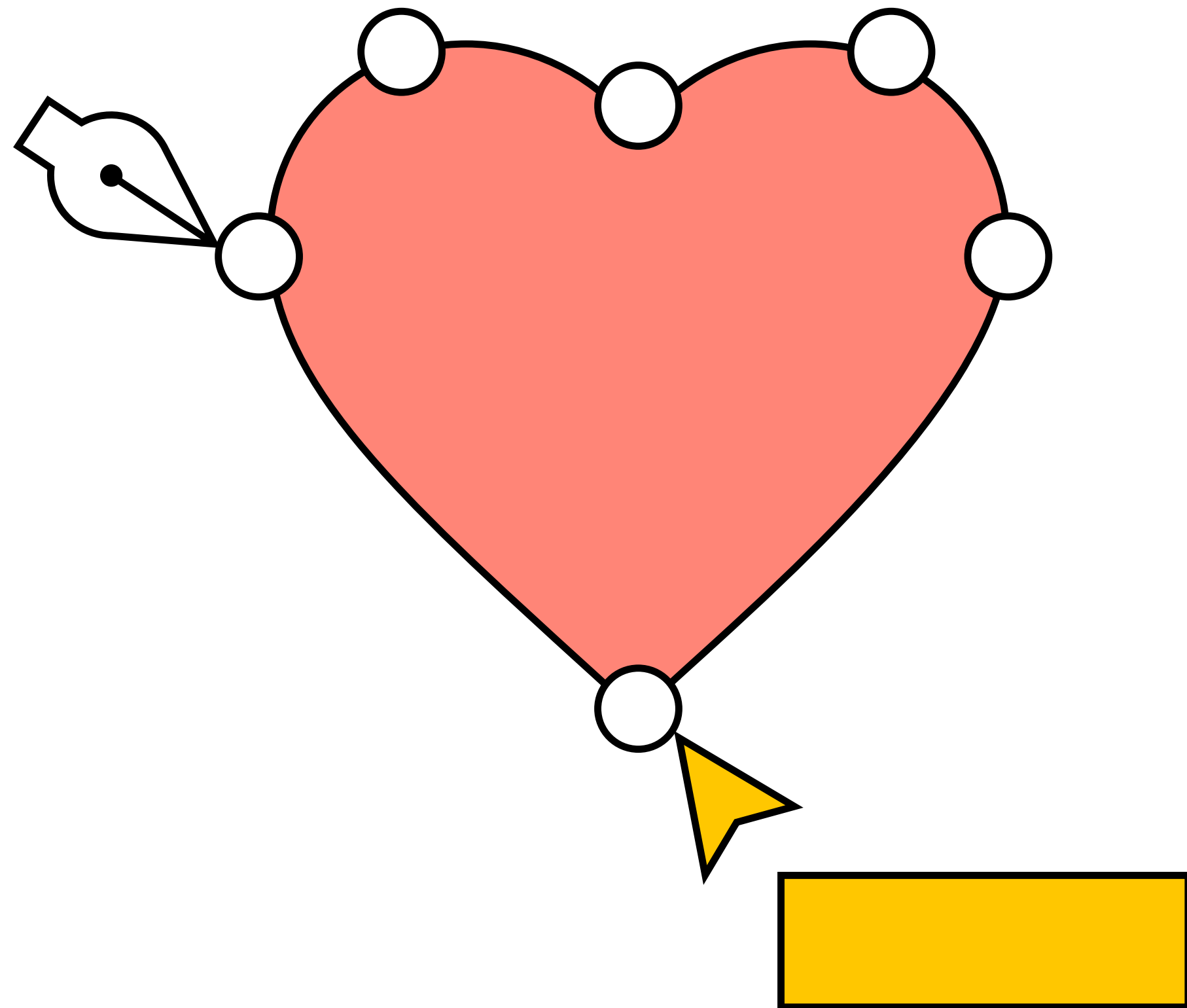
It’s a back-and-forth, not a solo expedition.

“

Great collaboration isn’t throwing designs over the wall. It’s designers, developers, and the rest of the team collaborating together.

Diana Mounter,
Head of Design, GitHub





So there you have it.

Like all good pairings, designers and developers just want to understand each other better.

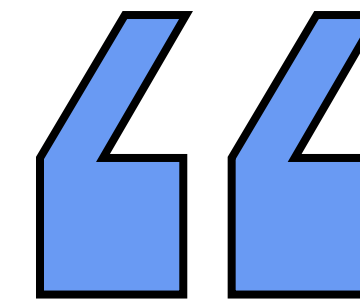
A lot of good stuff is already happening. We just need a little push to make this partnership great.

**Want to make product development
a more effective partnership?
Bring quality designs to production
faster, with Dev Mode.**



Dev Mode is a new space in Figma for teams to:

1. Communicate more clearly with developers.
2. Leverage design systems more effectively.
3. Implement designs faster and more accurately.



**Dev Mode has significantly improved
our product development process
by serving as a vital link between
the design and engineering teams.**

Matt Holmes,
Team Lead, Design Systems, Kayak



About Figma's Front End Developer Research

Inbox Insight conducted our survey in October 2023. It was completed by 200 respondents. There was an equal split between countries and regions, with APAC consisting of India, Australia and Singapore, and EMEA consisting of France, Germany, and the UK. Companies surveyed ranged from 250 to 25,000+ employees.



