Growth through New Product Strategies and Implementation



Design Decides Value and Cost

Customer Centric forum #2, hosted by FBXperts

4 September 2026, Maschinenraum, Berlin

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A short version of my keynote at Customer Centric forum #2 in Berlin on 4 September 2026.
Thirteen slides, each with a two-line note – about two minutes to read.

Design Decides
Value and Cost

One early design decision sets both sides of the P&L

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The thesis: one early design decision sets both sides of the P&L – what a product can sell for, and what it costs to make.

+56

pp shareholder returns

+32

pp revenue growth

What these companies do differently

1. Analytical leadership
2. Cross-functional talent
3. Continuous iteration
4. User experience

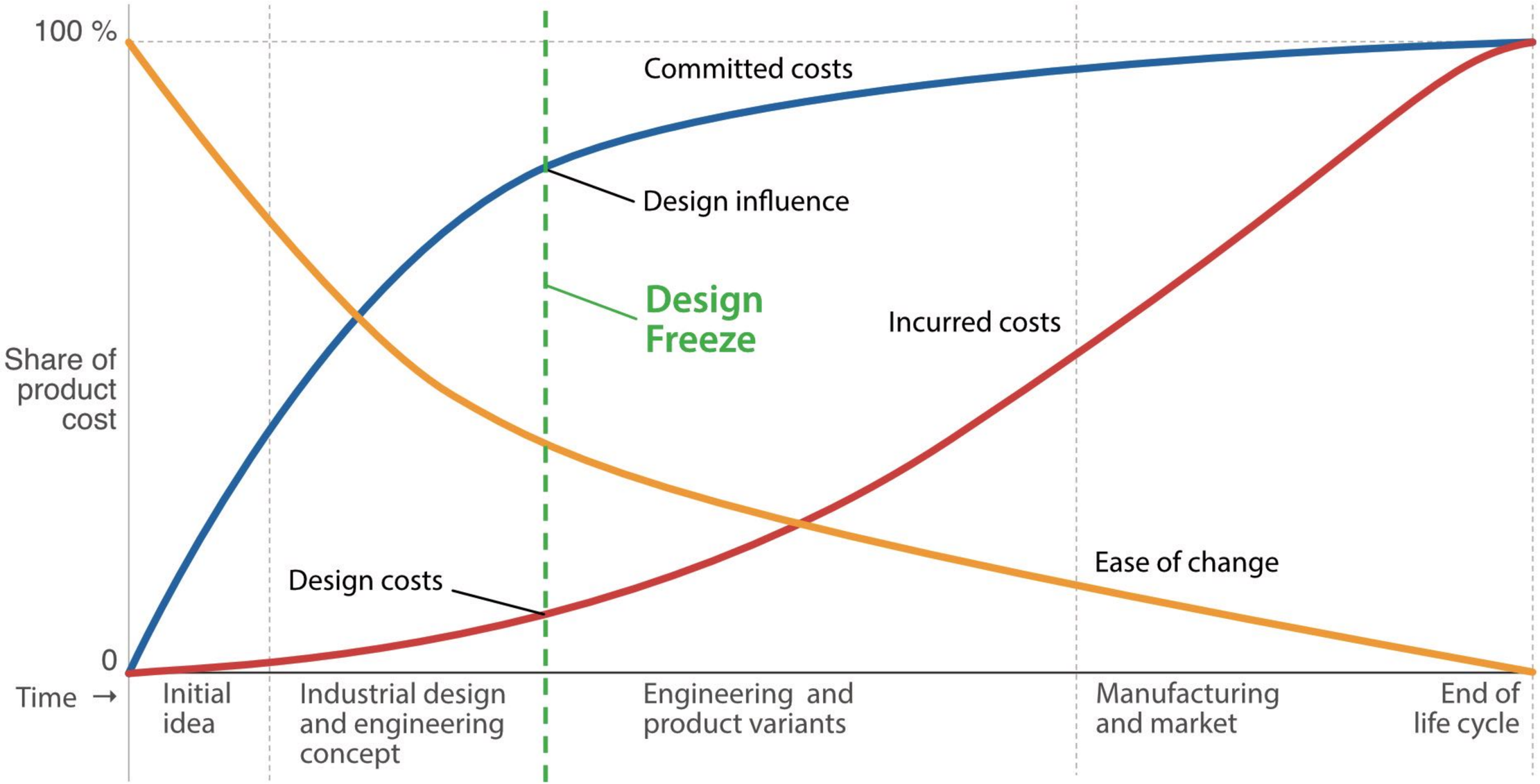
300 listed companies · five years · medical technology, consumer goods, retail banking.
Source: McKinsey & Company, The Business Value of Design, 2018

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Over five years, the top quartile of McKinsey's Design Index clearly outperformed its industry benchmarks: 32 points more revenue growth, 56 points more shareholder return. There, design is a leadership task.

Design Decides Value and Cost

Evolution of Product Costs and Ease of Change

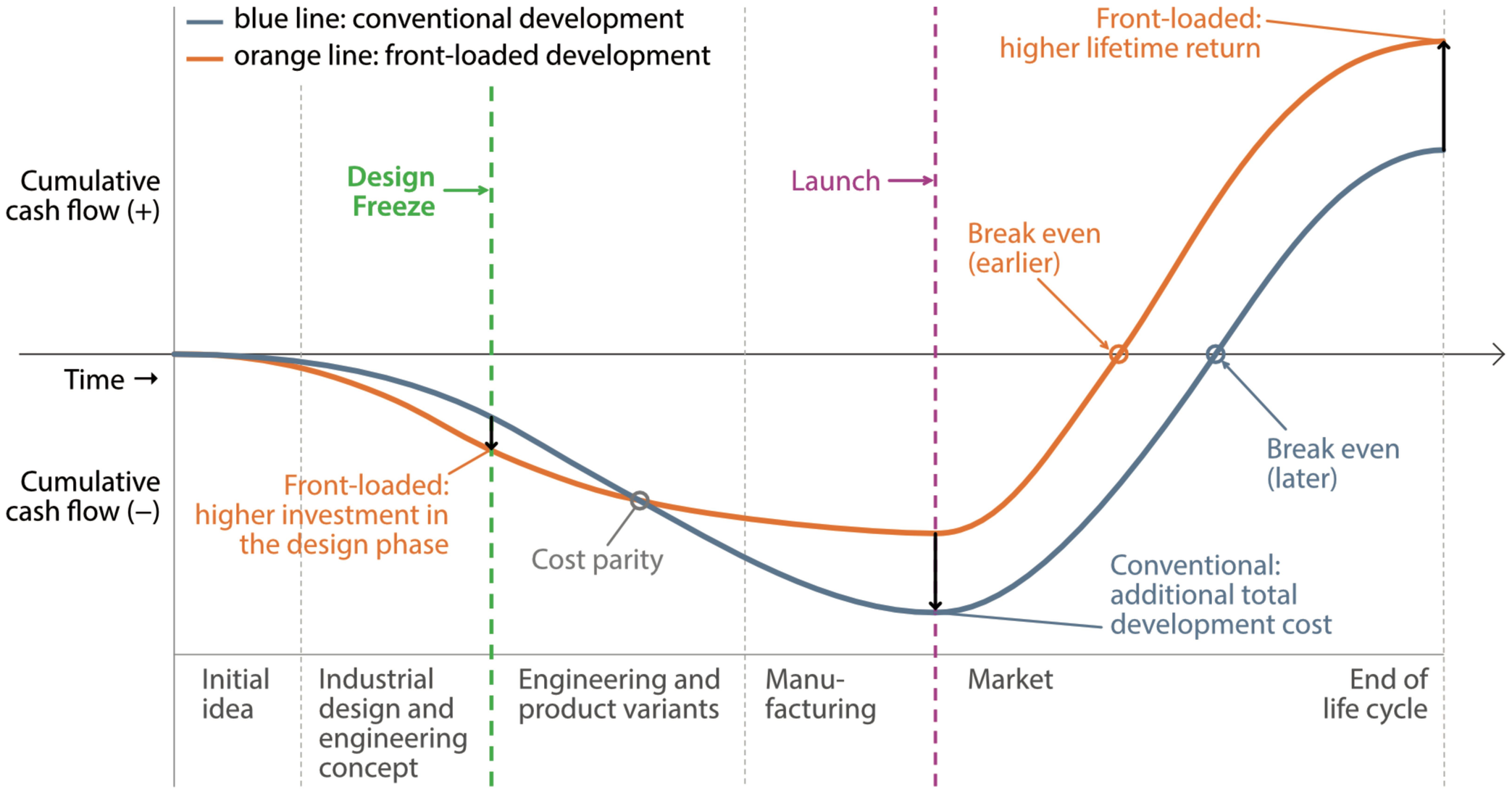


Own illustration based on Sols (2014), as adapted by Vanebo and Kjørstad (2020), courtesy of Alberto Sols

Why timing matters: by design freeze, little money has been spent, yet most of the product cost is fixed.
Design is a small item in the budget – with the greatest leverage on everything that follows.

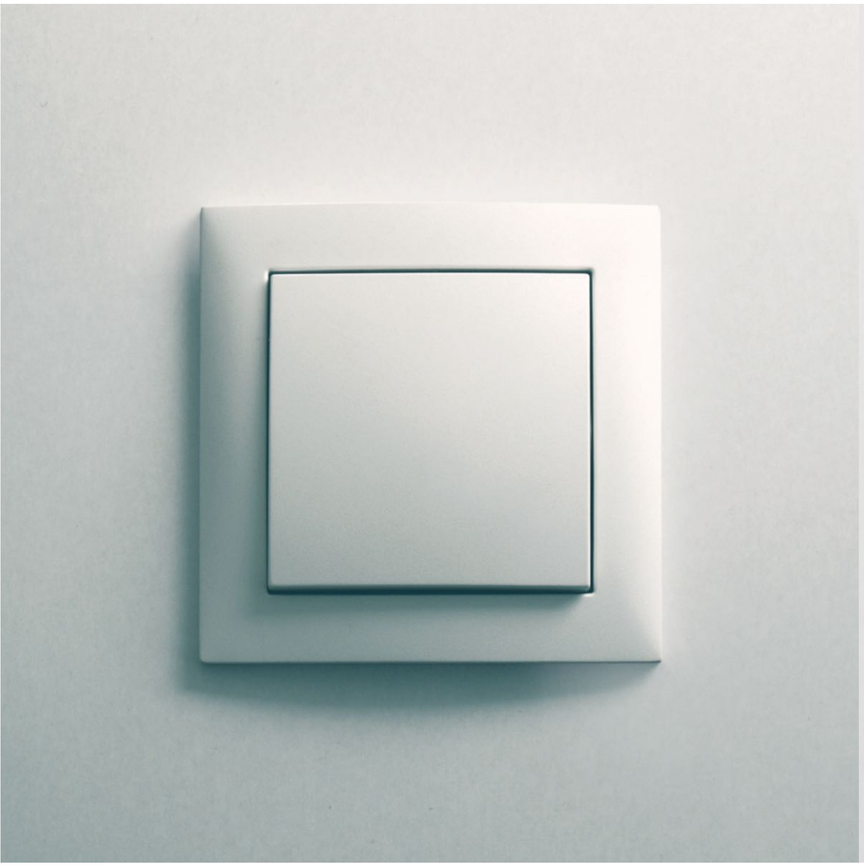
Design Decides Value and Cost

Front-loading Effect: Cost and Revenue Curves Compared



Own illustration based on the concept by Thomke and Fujimoto (2000); the cost side draws on Belay, Welo and Helo (2014).
Launch shown at the same date for simplicity – with the shorter lead time, break-even would come even earlier.

Why it pays: problems fixed before design freeze cost little – after tooling, the same fix costs many times more.
In a simulation by Belay et al. (2014), front-loading almost halved development cost and cut lead time by about 20 %.



S.1



B.1



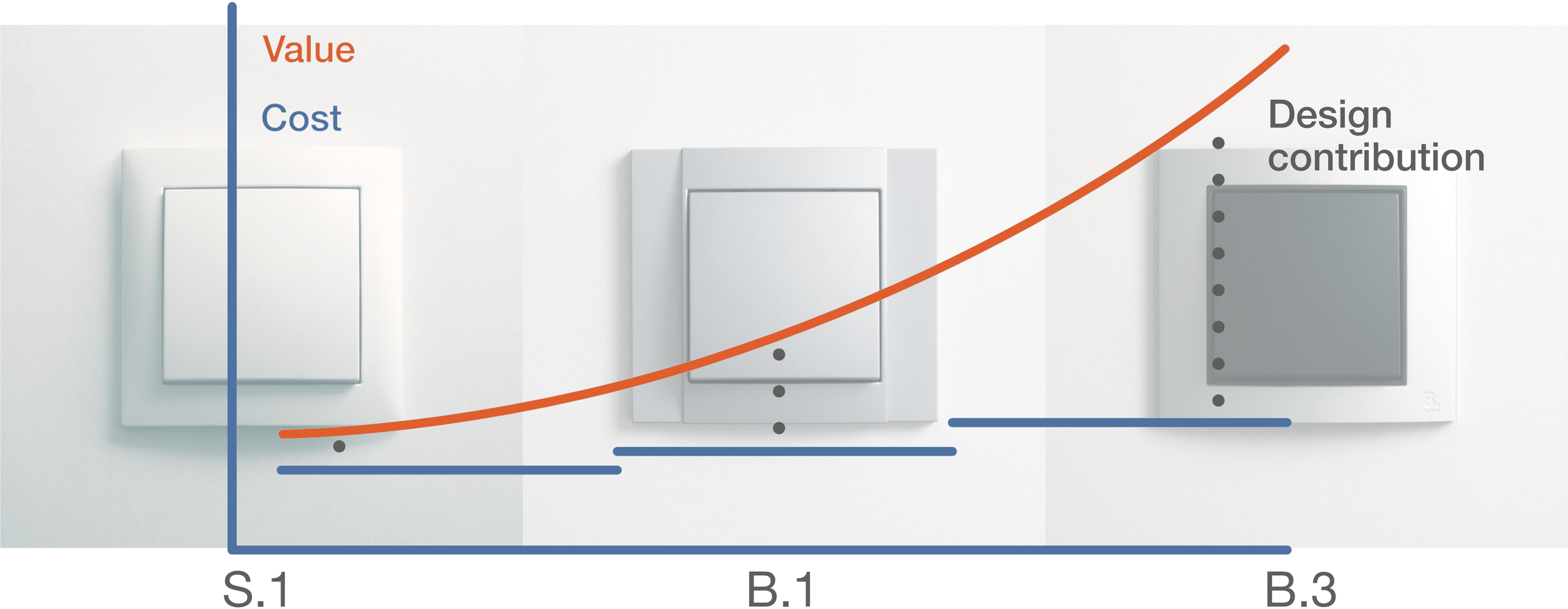
B.3

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Example 1: three Berker switch ranges, S.1, B.1 and B.3 – the same function at three levels of design.
What does each step cost to make, and what is it worth to the customer?

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Berker | Hager S.1, B.1, B.3



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From S.1 to B.1 to B.3, manufacturing cost rises only moderately, while achievable value rises steeply.
The widening gap between the two lines is the contribution of design.



Mauser Sitzkultur m360 series “Formvlies”

with seat shells made of moulded PET felt

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Example 2: Mauser Sitzkultur, m360 series. The seat shell is pressed from PET felt –
a single part from one press mould, providing shape, surface and textile character at once.

The family



Armchair with moulded arms



Chair with tubular steel arms



Café chair



Bar stool

© Mauser Sitzkultur

One press mould, four models: every seat contour is water-jet cut from the same moulded shell.
Armchair, chair, café chair and bar stool – four products from a single mould, one design language.

Mauser Sitzkultur – m360 series “Formvlies”

The same frame with legs of steel or wood



Steel legs, welded on



Wooden legs, bolted underneath

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More variety from the same parts: the upper frame is identical for both leg versions – steel legs are welded on, wooden legs bolted on from underneath.

Design Decides
Value and Cost

Stronger in the market.
Leaner in production.

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Back to the opening thesis: brought in early, industrial design makes products stronger in the market and leaner in production – both sides of the P&L.

In your last NPI, how early did you involve industrial design?

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A question to take away – NPI stands for new product introduction.
I'd be glad to hear how early industrial design was involved in yours.

Let’s stay in touch

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Thank you for reading. If this raised questions about your own products, let’s talk.