Hubs: the first content designer

What can be done in 3 months

Background

Hubs is an online platform where mechanical engineers can order 3D printed and CNC machined parts.

I was the first content designer and inherited years of inconsistent terminology, short-term fixes that weren't thought through and a lack of applying usability to content.

Approach

1. Do a complete content audit to identify issues

2. Simplify the mental modal of the product by focusing on using consistent terminology

3. Fix the usability of high impact screens

A quote by any other name

The main object that customers interact with
to place an order was called different things:

- Quote

- Quote request

- Order

This made the interface confusing and
unintuitive.

Simplifying the narrative

I turned the customer journey into prose to nail down the vocabulary, made sure I had stakeholder buy in and then went to work updating the interface.

All of the bolded terms had multiple names in the interface, and customer interviews showed the terminology was unclear.

The customer journey

You start with a **draft**.

For it to become a **quote**, you can **lock** the price or place order.

If Hubs can't price it instantly, it's a **quote request.**

Need to explore different options? Create a **version** of either a **quote** or **draft**.

Going from jargon to clear messaging

When instant pricing for a quote is unavailable, we used to change the CTA of "Place order" to "RFQ". While most engineers are familiar with this term, it still offered little explanation of what was happening.

Instead, I took this approach:

Instant quoting is unavailable
Our team needs to review this quote before you can place an order

Making text more scanable

Before

Send your quote to purchasing

Download shareable PDF quote with a secure payment link, or email the necessary information to your purchasing department deirectly from this page.

✉ **Email quote**   ⬇ **Download PDF**
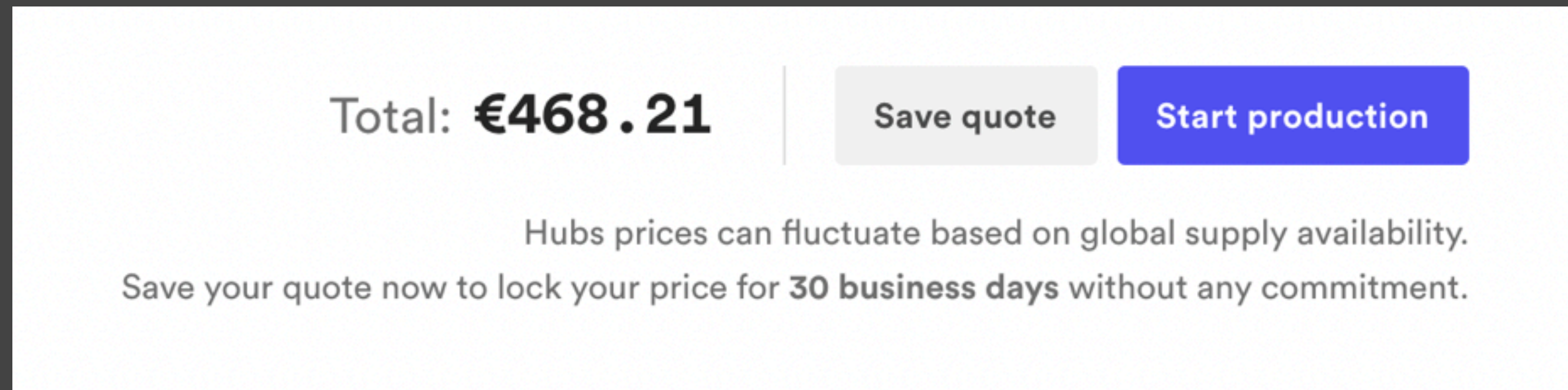
After

Share a secure payment link

Email this quote or download it as a PDF so that anyone on your team can complete the payment.

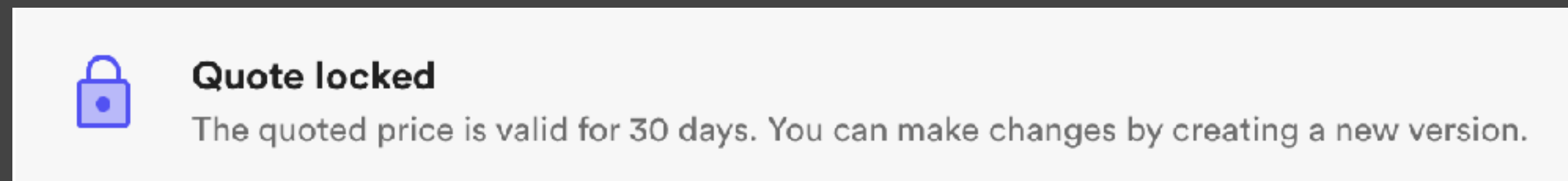⬇ **Download PDF**   ✉ **Email quote**

Progressive disclosure

Important screen real-estate was devoted to explaining how features work:

Instead, I communicated this information in a more targeted manner when it's needed:

Total: **€468.21** | Save quote | **Start production**

Hubs prices can fluctuate based on global supply availability. Save your quote now to lock your price for **30 business days** without any commitment.
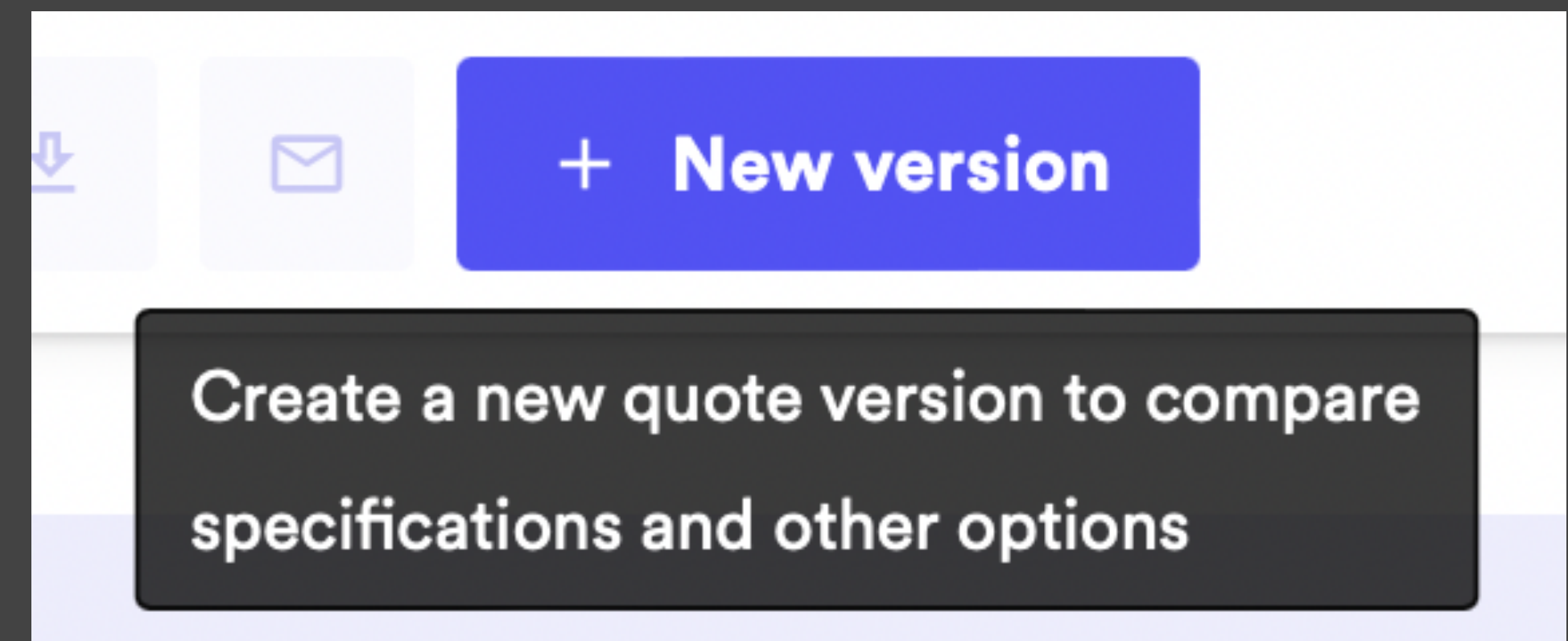

🔒 **Quote locked**
The quoted price is valid for 30 days. You can make changes by creating a new version.

Progressive disclosure: hover states

Customers didn't understand what quote versions were or why to use them.

Extra static text in the interface didn't help, so I experimented with using tooltips to communicate precisely when a customer showed the intent to explore versions.

Progressive disclosure and removing text

The original version of the Hubs platform had over a dozen clickable actions visible to customers. This created information overload and left customers confused about their next step.

I improved clarity by removing extraneous information and moving less important information to hover states.

Quote request C-6786786

Version 1   + Create new version

Quote version

Version 1

Total: **$502.24**   Save quote   **Start production**

+ Create new version   ✉ Email quote   ⬇ Download PDF

Hubs prices can fluctuate based on global supply availability. Save your quote now to lock your price for **30 days** without any commitment.

Quote details

🔷 Technology	CNC machining	**3 options available** >
🏭 Lead time	**Produced by October 8th, 2021** - Standard (18 business days)	**2 options available** >
🚚 Shipping incl. customs costs	**Estimated delivery October 13th, 2021** - Standard (5 business days)	View >
⭐ Quality documentation	Not required	**2 options available** >
🏠 Shipping address	+ Enter address	
💳 Billing address	+ Enter address	

Parts & specifications   ☐ Select all

✎ Change specifications   🗑 Delete parts   🗑 Download files

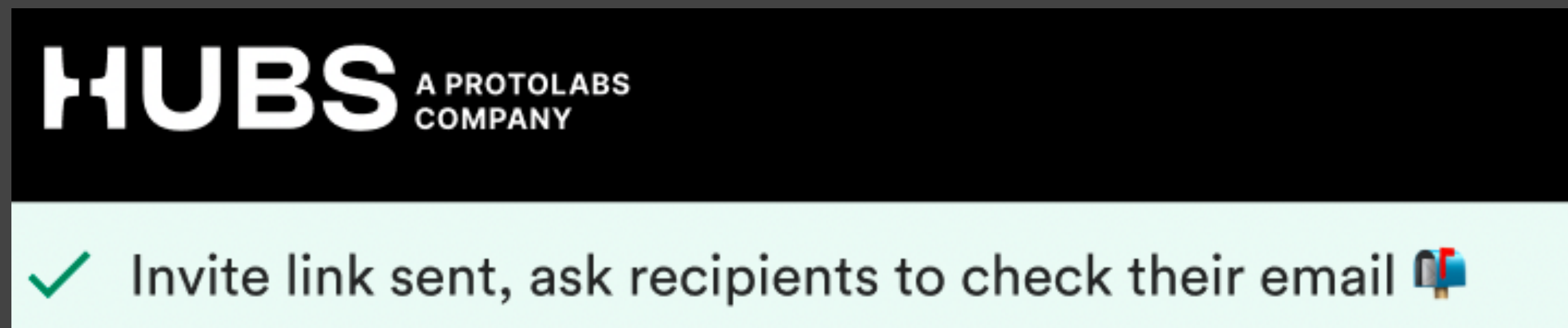| Description	Material	Details	Price p/part	Qty	Price
Part_1.sld 14.5 × 52.5 × 52.5 mm ~100g **Manufacturable with CNC**	CNC machining Aluminum 6061 As machined (Ra 3.2μm, 126μin)	General tolerance: ISO 2768 Fine Tighter tolerances: Not required Doesn't contain threads No additional comments No technical drawing	$126.05	1	$126.05

✎ Change specifications

Before

After

Adding a bit of voice

Before

After

The results after 3 months

- Unified terminology made the platform easier to navigate, understand and use for customers

- The content of key screens was improved to make them more understandable

- Progressive disclosure prioritized important information and actions