

iGIANT® Design Summit
November 21, 2019
10 am-1:30 pm
Hosted by Google's Product Inclusion Team
1 Market Street, Spear Tower
San Francisco, CA

* iGIANT® Design Summit participants (ambassadors) shared their professional and personal experiences in which design elements such as products, programs, policies and protocols had a challenging or negative impact on the quality of work performance or personal safety and satisfaction. From sports equipment that does not meet the needs of the athlete, breast implants in women with breast cancer causing discomfort in cold climates, protective equipment such as lab jackets, gloves and boots that do not fit appropriately, to electronic devices that do not register the touch of female users, there is a need for a sex/gendered-inclusive design approach. To accelerate and reward this process, iGIANT is launching in 2020, the iGIANT Seal of Approval for design processes which can be used as a tool for marketing/branding and can also enhance the ROI.

*Innovation often requires investment from the VC/PE communities. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of female venture capitalists and the number of female-led or female-focused initiatives. Diverse representation on teams is associated with awareness of the need for inclusion in design. For example, in 2018, VC funding totaled \$130 billion, but only 2.2% of that amount went to female-led businesses. Additionally, VC firms with female partners are 3x more likely to invest in companies with a female CEO than VC firms with no female partners. A “one-size-fits-all” approach does not work in any environment and it is important for designers and engineers to be made aware of issues at the start. It is often expensive or difficult to alter designs once products are developed. Although women may be more cognizant of these issues, it is critical to educate all members of the team.

*iGIANT implements a non-binary approach to its initiatives and encourages all its ambassadors to do so as well. A discussion on how to classify one's gender highlighted the issues surrounding designations and its impact on design including for the AI community. Mitigating bias and fostering inclusivity requires an understanding of why this important. Organizations are trying to address these issues through Inclusion and Diversity teams, but this may not be enough to fully transform the organization's culture. iGIANT hosts internal roundtables with companies which include representation from many or all divisions to provide a safe and confidential space to educate and raise awareness of this need throughout companies.

*The impact of story telling and sharing of personal narratives was emphasized by all ambassadors. Media including films and television to personal blogs and articles can significantly impact innovation. Helping the world to see through a sex/gender lens requires everyone to share their experiences. Acknowledging that one is not alone can foster not only camaraderie but also progress. Book clubs, roundtables and summits and even informal gatherings can stimulate partnerships across sectors and within organizations.

*Gender equity requires that everyone has the tools, resources and opportunities to live and do their jobs well and safely. Inclusive design plays a critical role. One cannot achieve leadership roles and career development and promotion without this. People often accommodate to meet the needs of their environment, but this can have a detrimental impact on physical and emotion well-being. For example, female physicians may experience greater burn-out from using the electronic medical record and surgical equipment which is developed by and for men. Other social determinants of health play a role as well and need to be considered for design elements to meet the needs of all users.

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