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Everyone is a Designer, even Executives!

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Abstract: This panel includes designers, product managers, and executives from various industries. The discussion focuses on how designers can collaborate effectively with product drivers and executives within their organizations to create a design-driven strategy from concept to implementation.

Keywords: Collaboration, collaboration with executives, partners, culture, vision, design, executives, product managers, designers, hands-on design, CEO, enterprise software, consumer products, start-ups, cloud computing, consultants, design influence, design leadership, design-as-a-strategy (DaaS), design process, best practices, recommendations, compelling design.

1 Introduction

Design is no longer an afterthought at any successful company. As more companies make design a strategic focus, designers influence business directions and executive decisions.

This panel will discuss how designers and executives partner and strategize on how to create a strong design culture within their company. Panelists and audience will explore best practices on topics such as understanding the design and executive roles, collaborating on iterative designs, and executing on the product vision. The panelists represent a spectrum of enterprise and startups experience ranging from design to product development teams.

With our recommendations and suggestions, we hope to help the audience build bridges within their organizations and help executives and product teams understand each other's strengths and perspectives. Following are a few questions that we hope will encourage discussion.

1. When is the best time to engage with the executive team to get their feedback on the product design?

We have worked hands-on with CEOs (Chief Executive Officers) and SVPs (Senior Vice Presidents) in both fast-growing startups and big corporations, and have experimented with different strategies over the years. Oh, the stories we can share...

2. How do you conduct product reviews with the executive team?

Come listen to our past experiences to prevent any shock or confusion for the product review attendees.

3. Who should be invited to an executive review meeting?

We will share suggestions to ensure effective meetings with fewer abstract or drifting conversations and more clarifying ones.

4. How do you arrive at decisions during “big stakeholders” reviews?

We'll review the symptoms of a “big stakeholders” meeting gone wrong and share a couple tips on how to make these reviews go more smoothly.

5. How much detail do you include when sharing designs with your executive team?

Learn various tactics to tell compelling stories and help everyone at the table speak the same design language

1.1 Panelists

Selected panelists include a range of roles from product executives to designers in both enterprise and smaller shops.

Jannie Lai, Director of Product Design
Citrix Systems

Chris Maliwat, Vice President, Products
Gilt Groupe

Iram Mirza, Lead Product Designer
Citrix Systems

Nida Zada, Director, Products
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