
On Leading Design

Carola Fellenz Thompson

Chief Experience Officer
Splunk Inc.
San Francisco, CA 94107, USA
cthompson@splunk.com

Janice A. Rohn

VP User Experience
OpenX Technologies, Inc.
Pasadena, CA 91101, USA
janicerohn@yahoo.com

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Abstract

This SIG will serve two purposes: to share the results of previous CHI leadership and management panels, workshops, and to provide forum for the management community to discuss topics of interest.

Author Keywords

User Experience; Management; Organizations; Design; Research; Practice; Method; Technique; Agile; Innovation.

ACM Classification Keywords

A.0; D.2.9; D.2.10; H1.2; H.5.0; I.3.6

Introduction

The CHI Leadership Community represents an interesting and important intersection of industry and academia, hiring and managing teams comprised of the students of the CHI community. The goal of this SIG has two purposes: to share the results of previous CHI leadership workshops and panels, and to provide a forum to discuss additional topics of interest to the CHI Leadership Community.

To facilitate this process, the workshop will be led by the Leadership Community Chairs (Thompson and Rohn).

The workshop will begin with participants voting on their top 3 topics of interest, which will be a list gathered from previous management discussions at CHI and the organizers' research of the top trends over the past year, plus any additional topics volunteered by the participants. These topics of interest will then be discussed in order based on the votes from the participants. The goals of this approach are to communicate insights from the design leaders in the CHI community, and to gather and discuss a set of questions and topics of interest from the broader CHI community.

The intended audience of this SIG are members of the CHI leadership community, along with anyone interested in learning more about the latest achievements in UX leadership, including strategies, successes, and challenges.

Design Leadership

User Experience leaders and teams have made strides in attaining credibility, influence, and strategic relevance in organizations, and in helping to instill user-centered design thinking within companies. For example, the past ten years have seen a significant increase in the number of executives, including vice presidents and directors, leading UX departments.

Despite these successes, design organizations still do not typically have the level of influence, resources, budgetary allocation, and positioning within organizations as compared to other disciplines such as marketing and engineering. Although UX has become more recognized as critical to the success of products and services, many companies have taken the

approach that all employees are working on UX, rather than ensuring that the design teams are properly staffed, funded, and empowered.

This CHI SIG explores both the successes and the challenges faced by CHI leadership, and provides the contextual background for these discussions so that others can learn from the strategies and tactics employed.

The goals of the CHI Leadership SIG are to:

- provide a venue for leaders and those interested in leadership to come together to focus on HCI- related issues of interest and concern to them
- share our leadership experiences as a base for grounding our discussions
- understand issues, including leadership, resourcing, ownership, preserving vision, the processes of integrating HCI in product innovation, definition and development
- explore solutions and difficulties with solutions, novel ideas, plans and strategies
- share how these issues vary across levels of business, types of institutions and cultures of the world
- discuss principles and foundations of management in the HCI context

Participants and Process

The SIG will be open to anyone. It will be most relevant to design leaders, and practitioners who aspire to UX leadership. It will also be of interest to designers and researchers who are seeking a broader and deeper

understanding of user experience leadership. The SIG also will be of interest to “consumers” of user experience work, including: business decision makers, development managers, and those interested in user experience in the context of business.

The organization and facilitation are designed to encourage maximum participation. Participants of the workshop will be organized into teams by the size of the organization they work in. In their groups, participants will identify and vote on the top 3 topics of interest for discussion, which will be a list gathered from previous management discussions at CHI and the organizers’ research of the top trends over the past year, plus any additional topics volunteered by the participants.

These topics of interest will then be discussed in order based on the votes from the participants. This approach provides an opportunity to gather a broad set of questions from the audience and to focus the conversation on those topics that are of most interest. Results of the teams will be shared with the broader audience.

Leadership Topics

While the topics discussed will depend on the interests of the audience, the SIG leaders will be prepared to lead discussions on the following topics:

- What is the top set of leadership challenges that are preventing design teams from being more effective?
- Under what circumstances have teams been most and least effective?

- Are design teams empowered to drive important product decisions? How have teams achieved this, or are working to achieve this?
- How are team leaders hired and developed?
- How do design teams compare to other applied disciplines--such as engineering, marketing, or business management--in terms of their knowledge base, position in companies, impact and influence, and prospects?
- Are design teams involved in addressing larger business questions, such as branding, ROI, driving innovation, capturing market share, or maintaining customer loyalty? Why or why not?
- Are there common sets of future challenges to the design teams? If so, what are they?

Summary

The results of the SIG will be shared with the broader community via the CHI Leadership LinkedIn group, and will be used to inform future CHI leadership workshops and SIGs.

Acknowledgments

We thank the participants in the previous management workshops and SIGs, and the CHI Leadership and CHI Management communities who have inspired us over the years.