

## Introduction:

The 2015 Front End of Innovation Conference, held at the Boston World Trade Center & Seaport from May 18-20, 2015, featured innovators and practitioners from around the world. The yearly conference brings together innovation leaders and corporate executives from global companies, thinkers and theorists, practitioners, and authors and academics.

The innovation software company, Batterii, hosted a panel discussion featuring leaders from some of the most innovative companies in the world: Anthony Lambrou of Pfizer, Inc.; John Gleason of A Better View; and Daniel J. Sims of Procter & Gamble.

The panel, moderated by Batterii CEO Kevin Cummins, had key takeaways that included:

- Key implementation tactics for global innovation companies to utilize as they roll-out enterprise-wide innovation programs.
- How large, global brands are innovating using design thinking to create more viable and feasible solutions for their increasingly diverse stakeholders and consumers.
- How, and why, both P&G and Pfizer view design thinking as a tool set that helps individuals and companies problem-solve.
- What “buy in” from leadership looks like for sustainable innovation programs

## Background/Problem:

The Front End of Innovation Conference looked to challenge the way companies are currently approaching—and implementing—innovation programs. The panel discussion titled “The Evolution of Design Thinking from Small Teams to Enterprise-Wide Adoption” discussed how often, organizations never seem to get to a point where there is an intentional process that helps deliver game-changing solutions beyond small teams.

Innovation is a messy process, so how do organizations operate in a way to allow unstructured thinking, but organize it in a way that is useful at scale? What are the right tools to support and inspire change agents within an enterprise?

## Solution:

Anthony Lambrou of Pfizer, Inc.; John Gleason of A Better View; and Daniel J. Sims of Procter & Gamble, asserted that using design thinking, many organizations have found a way to transform their culture and find the right processes, tools and techniques to scale.

Based on their experiences, the three thought leaders shared 3 common insights on how they have helped shape sustainable, growth-oriented, innovative companies.

### 1. Focus on Culture

When looking to harness a culture that could support sustainable innovation, leaders at Pfizer

asked themselves the seemingly simple question: “What would a corporate innovation function across the company look like?”

The answer would be in design thinking capabilities, but the real insight in implementation was the not just the tools or the training. “We’re really focusing on the mindset and cultural shift,” explained Lambrou, who heads up Worldwide Innovation at Pfizer.

Pfizer looks at a number of factors. First, they evaluate how they signal and communicate innovation successes within the organization. Pfizer wants to be able to tell stories that prove out their model. Lambrou explained they see these intentional activities as part of a process to build out success, and build the right culture.

Changing culture is most effective when you build-in what Lambrou called “experimentation learning loops,” something that’s very clear when working at Pfizer.

Part of the design thinking framework, this approach allows you to balance risk while enabling short and long- term evaluation of the return on your innovation and capability-building efforts. “There are ways and steps along the way [to] experiment, and you learn, and you quickly adapt,” Lambrou said. If a form of a “reward structure” is built into the framework of your innovation program, critical learning can quickly occur.

While Pfizer’s innovation model may be driven centrally, it’s distributed and signaled to the organization through a large network—another component that’s crucial to scaling the human-centered principles dependably and in an effective manner. Currently Pfizer has more than 400 design thinking champions found around the world, all utilized to help support the right mindset.

## **2. Look Outside the Design Function**

Gleason, Founder and CEO of A Better View, has worked on design thinking projects with hundreds of corporate clients. Gleason shared that often the first thing that leadership wants to do is focus solely on the word “design” when it comes to design thinking programs. He looks to ensure leaders see that design thinking is a tool set that is best when used across the company, and across disciplines. “As inept as [design thinking] may be named, is actually a problem solving tool. It’s seeing the world differently, and solving, in many cases, very complex business challenges.”

Both P&G and Pfizer think of design thinking as a problem solving tool and a capability set, one that’s not limited to—or necessary led—by designers in all cases.

“Design thinking is a way of coming up with solutions you would have never predicted you could have reached,” said Sims, Principle Designer at Procter & Gamble. “I see designthinking as not a specifically ‘design process,’ where you follow steps, but it’s more a point of view where you look at first starting with a very human-centric approach.”

Within P&G, the design function has historically been the key sponsor for design thinking, but design thinking is in no way constrained or limited to that function. "We have trained multi-functional leaders, so we have people who facilitate and run design thinking sessions who are not in the design group," Sims explained.

### 3. Leaders Must Steer the Ship

At P&G and Pfizer, support for innovation is a combination of people, resources, technology and a "do-it-yourself" approach modeled by leaders.

Sims said the role of leadership is a crucial one in implementation of human-centered innovation at P&G. "The role of leadership particularly in design thinking is to be a clear support and sponsor," he said.

With CEO A.G. Lafley internally and outwardly supporting design thinking as a core component of P&G's innovation strategy, the company has alignment between the leadership team and the team investing their time on-the-ground in innovation activities.

Buy-in from leadership is something Pfizer also advocates in its pursuit of breakthrough ideas. "It's really important for leaders to clearly signal that [support for risk-taking] in the organization," said Lambrou. "They steer the ship in terms of how people are thinking."

If people are hesitant to take risks, it's tough to drive innovation. "The first thing they can do, is take risks themselves and invest in opportunities that may not pan out right away."

Lambrou had one more argument, bringing the panel to a conclusion with proven advice on how to best scale design thinking: "Get out there and do it. Try it out within your organization, and see what works, and what doesn't. You'll find gaps and then you'll learn more," he said. "It will be a great signal for people to get into that mindset."

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Batterii provides enterprise software designed to help companies scale innovation using these principles. Global 2000 companies rely on Batterii to support the innovation process from research through product validation.

Accessible at any time via desktop or mobile app, colleagues across departments, divisions, cities or countries can utilize the platform for research, insights, synthesis, and prototyping enabling a sustainable pipeline of breakthrough ideas. Read more about how Batterii can be tailored to your innovation process, and used for research, trend spotting, business model development, product service and design, and concept development at [batterii.com](https://www.batterii.com).