

Launch Pad

People. Positivity. Purpose-driven. At first glance, these words may not seem so scintillating, but when melded together as one they hold enormous power. The power of uniting these words has been embraced by [Launch](#), a consulting group that serves as “navigators in the age of transformation.” The proof is reflected in the companies that Launch has worked with: Intel, Google, Disney and Microsoft.

People, positivity and purpose-driven are the principles of Launch and the ground upon which it has built success for so many companies. So what exactly does it do?

“We focus on helping organizations inspire people to act, educate people on how to act successfully, and connect people together so they can act in concert,” says Lisa Thee, the Lead of Data for Good Practice at Launch. The work she and her colleagues do is to “help people go from a vision to having a journey



Lisa Thee of Launch

man impact of the work that we do,” Thee says.

To help companies navigate through the complexities of everyday human life and the usage of their products and services, as well as unexpected interruptions like the pandemic, Launch created a methodology it calls Experience De-

“Navigating in the age of transformation.”

map of how to get there.” Companies do not have a shortage of visions, but oftentimes there is a shortage of knowing *how to get there*. “We connect the A to Z to help companies make those significant big moves going forward,” Thee says.

The growth of companies, coupled with the advancement of technology happening at such a rapid pace, has made it difficult to predict and even see the effects that these elements have on humans. At Launch, that is one of its main focuses. “We are obsessed with the hu-

sign Engineering (XDE).

XDE helps individuals fundamentally change the way consumers engage, experience, and interact with brands across every touchpoint in the connected ecosystem -- physical, digital, in-store, online, mobile, wearable and Internet of Things -- across the entire lifecycle.

Remember the Magic Bands that Disney created that gave it a way to collect data about various elements in the park? “We designed and developed the system that made the data from

Overcoming Challenges Beyond Covid-19

MagicBand actionable,” Thee says. “It is examples like that where we go in and help companies create so that they can build a better future for themselves and their customers.”

New systems and ideas are particularly important in this pandemic because the manner in which companies do business has been completely restructured. On top of that, the way that consumers consume has changed as well.

“Customers are expecting more from companies than they have historically,” Thee says. “Companies used to focus on profit, but we have landed in a place where it’s not a zero-sum game anymore. People are expecting companies to innovate at the speed of their customers -- lightning fast. This presents more of a challenge to companies, who now have to balance profit while keeping customers happy and engaged.”

That’s where Launch comes in: “We help companies find wisdom in the oceans of data and leverage everyone’s unique talents,” Thee says.

According to a Forbes article that Thee points out, the pandemic has had a significant effect on the way women look at their careers: “Women are emerging from these unprecedented times with a career shift on their minds. One in four are setting up their own business going forward.”

“It’s exciting to see how many mission-based companies will transform the tech landscape over the next decade as more voices are represented in leadership,” Thee says.

Thee herself is no stranger to female leadership. She founded a safety-focused AI software start-up that helped scale a cybersecurity AI company to a \$40M valuation. Shortly thereafter, she made a decision that forever changed her life.

“As a working mother and technology company executive, I was on the fast track to burn-out,” she says. So she shifted her priorities and

changed the focus of her career from “success to significance” and joined the Launch team.

Her background as an entrepreneur -- along with many of her colleagues who have also been founders with successful exits -- provide experience that enables Launch to help companies “focus in immediate and incremental value, learning and adapting, and the right people and partners to drive innovation.”

Launch helps the world’s most innovative healthcare and technology companies accomplish ambitious goals such as improving digital safety, increasing representation for diversity in STEM leadership and demystifying AI/machine learning.

To be more specific, Thee is working with a medical research institute to “define a protocol roadmap to spin it out into a startup to accelerate decision support tools for doctors in clinical settings to improve care.” Part of this includes reducing bias in models to “ensure they perform as well on a middle-aged man in India as they do for an elderly woman in India.”

Thee says “AI ethics is one of the large challenges of the next decade as machines expand their footprints in daily life.” Though AI will undoubtedly simplify lives and make it more convenient, it is important that we, as Thee shares, “accelerate diversity in all areas of product development.”

To guide people and companies -- and provide insight into where the future takes us -- Launch has unveiled an innovative 2021 podcast series that (1) focuses on making smarter choices in a rapidly changing world, (2) investigating the challenges of being at societal and business crossroads and (3) finding opportunities that arise out of disruption such as elevating the human experience, the evolution of business and technologies that power the age of digital transformation. — By Leslie K. Hughes, California Business Journal.

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