

CDS Earth Compatible by Katie Morgenroth from Google

Key Learnings

Footprint is Determined in the Design Phase

Design shapes around 80% of a product's impact, making it one of the most powerful levers for circularity. Consider the entire lifecycle impact, including production yield losses and the interconnected effects that design choices have on the overall system. Use data and analysis early to identify where the biggest impact reductions can be made, and focus design efforts where they matter most.



Design Influences Behaviour

Materials that look too clean or processed can confuse users about recyclability. Make sustainable choices visible and intuitive by using recognisably recyclable, natural-feeling materials that cue the right behaviour without relying solely on education or marketing efforts.

Repairability Enables Circular Business Models

Repair is not just a compliance requirement but an enabler for circular business models. Products should be designed to last, with durability and reliability as core priorities. Planning for repairability from the start, including ease of disassembly, availability of spare parts, and extended software support, helps keep products in use longer and supports systems for reuse, trade-in, and refurbishment.

Collaboration Drives Circularity

Circular design needs diverse and cross-functional expertise. Use workshops and open guidelines to share knowledge and gather critical feedback. Cooperation with industry peers and even competitors is also crucial for expanding perspectives and driving innovation forward.

Embrace a “Progress Over Perfection” Mindset

Designing for circularity is complex, often messy, and rarely perfectly structured. Waiting for ideal solutions can delay real progress. Adopting a mindset of progress over perfection allows for experimentation, learning, and flexibility, ensuring that circular design can adapt and deliver lasting change over time.

Listen to the full episode here:

<https://circularity.fm/earth-compatible-by-katie-morgenroth-from-google-circular-design-summit-2025/>