

Conversations with Dr. Scott Kaiser

Suiting Up for the Silver Tsunami:

Opportunities for Product Developers to Reimagine Aging

At Karten Design's latest Conversations, guest speaker Dr. Scott Kaiser, a Harvard-trained geriatrician with nine years of practice, shared insights about the growing elderly population in America. Despite concerns that this aging cohort will burden our already strained healthcare system, Dr. Kaiser believes the "Silver Tsunami" is a golden opportunity for product innovators to positively redefine what it means to "go gray." Here are four major opportunity spaces where Dr. Kaiser believes we can make the greatest impact now:



CAREGIVERS

The Undiscovered Users

65 million Americans spend an average of 20 hours a week providing care for a chronically ill, disabled, or aged family member. Product developers should remember that there is often an "undiscovered user" in the picture: Grandpa may not be savvy enough to use a particular product or technology, but his granddaughter may be.

"There are a lot of times when the sink is running, and we're just mopping up the floor. Well, the person who's standing right there with their hand on the tap—that proximal, connected person—is the caregiver."



DEMENTIA & ALZHEIMERS

The Gray Plague

There are currently 5 million people living with Alzheimers in the United States. This number is going to skyrocket as people live longer and get older. 38-50% of Americans who reach age 85 will develop dementia.

"Rather than 'warehousing' and discarding people with dementia, we need to bring out the life in them—help them have vitality, good places to live, and be cared for."



AGING IN PLACE

Service Ecosystems to Empower Aging at Home

Unlike the "silent generation" before them, Baby Boomers refuse to accept that getting old means living in a nursing home. Innovators are challenged to create service ecosystems that empower people to age how they want, where they want.

"Today's grandpa isn't your grandpa's grandpa. Baby Boomers are rocking the boat, questioning the status quo. 90% want to age in their homes."



BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Creating and Sustaining Healthy Habits

Chronic diseases account for 75% of all healthcare costs. They are also almost completely preventable. Product developers can help eliminate these costly, unnecessary conditions by tapping into human motives, emotions, and desires to create products that drive lasting behavior change.

"We spend a lot of money on healthcare. Really, it's all about the fingers, the forks, and the feet—that's the smoking, the diet, and our exercise."