

**OBI FELTEN**

Technologist, entrepreneur, board member, speaker, mother

Co-founder of a mental health startup. Fmr head of moonshot projects at Google X.

Fmr Director of Consumer Marketing, Google EMEA. Board member Springer Nature

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Photo: Rainer Hosch for Vogue

Obi Felten is a technologist and entrepreneur who has turned some of the most transformative technologies of our time into products that improve people's lives. Obi moved from Europe to Silicon Valley in 2012 to join the nascent Google X, Alphabet's innovation lab. Obi built out X's non-engineering functions and helped to turn the seemingly impossible into reality: [Waymo](#) self-driving cars, [Wing](#) drone delivery, internet access from balloons, and energy storage using molten salt. Obi has worked on practical applications of AI for 15 years, developing expertise in AI strategy, governance, and risk oversight - most recently navigating deployment in healthcare, one of the most complex regulatory environments. At Google X, she worked on healthcare projects that became [Verily](#), and led [Amber](#), a project using brain-based biomarkers and machine learning to measure anxiety and depression. Obi co-founded and served as CEO of Flourish Labs, a mental healthcare company on a mission to scale peer support with telehealth and AI to address the youth mental health crisis. Peers.net is now part of WellSpace Health, a community health system in California. She is also a venture partner with Vitruvian Partners, a private equity and growth investment firm.

As Director of Consumer Marketing for Google in Europe, Middle East and Africa, she was responsible for launching and growing Google Maps, Chrome and Android from zero to a billion users. She oversaw an annual budget of \$500M and was named #4 on the UK Marketing Power 100. Obi began her career in the early days of online banking and e-commerce during the first dot-com era, so she is no stranger to downturns as well as good times. She worked on the launch of the UK's first online bank, took online retailer eToys.com to Europe, set up and ran the e-commerce business of UK jewellery retailer H. Samuel (Signet Group, SIG), and advised large retailers on their multichannel strategy.

Obi is an independent director of [Springer Nature](#), a global academic and educational publisher ([SPG.DE](#)), where she championed the company's AI strategy from their first use case in plagiarism detection five years ago, to over 50 AI tools in production by their 2024 IPO. She is an advisor to [WellSpace Health](#), a community health system in California, and to the Chelsea & Westminster NHS Trust in the UK. She previously served on the board of [Marathon Health](#), a leading primary healthcare provider for employers, where she was a comp committee member, on the board of [CreativeX](#), a venture-backed creative analytics startup, and [BfBLabs](#), a digital therapeutics startup.

Throughout her career, she navigated competitive environments and tough regulatory landscapes in consumer internet, retail, financial services, telecoms, transportation, energy and healthcare. Known for her sound judgement around business and technology risk - including privacy, AI governance and ethics - Obi has started dozens of ventures but is not afraid to shut down failing ones. Harvard Business School turned one of her failed X projects, [Foghorn](#), into a [case study](#) of radical innovation culture. Her experience of managing through a crisis dates back to 2001 when she wound down eToys Europe at age 28.

Obi has spoken at Fortune's Most Powerful Women Next Gen Summit, Chautauqua Institution, Wired UK, Milken Institute's Global Conference and Health Summit, Skoll World Forum, Falling Walls, London Tech Week. She was on the cover of [Vogue](#) Germany's business edition and has been featured in [The Financial Times](#), [Fortune](#), [The New York Times](#), [The Atlantic](#), [Bloomberg](#), [Handelsblatt](#), [Wirtschaftswoche](#), [Fast Company](#), [Wired](#), [MIT Technology Review](#), the [BBC](#), [NBC](#) News and on Steve Levitt's [Freakonomics](#) podcast. She was honoured for her innovation work with the [German Innovation Prize](#) "Future Thinker" award. She was named a [Financial Times Woman Changemaker](#), and [Top 100 most influential German woman in business](#).

Obi grew up in Berlin and saw the wall come down, has a BA in Philosophy and Psychology from Oxford University and lives in California with her family.