



Date: 16-31/08/2021
Volume 136, August 141

World SME Update

(A Global Update On SME News, Events, Policies & Programs)





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General News

Here is how to make big data work for SME marketing

Big data is not the answer to all ills but a means to get better results. Quality of data and its analysis is equally important, if not more, and can help marketers increase customer equity and revenue

For the last few years, the so-called big data has been creating a lot of buzz, so much so that is being seen as the panacea for all the failures of marketing and branding. For all its possibilities, most companies and brand managers are miles away from realising the full potential of big data analytics.

Most marketing managers and executives do not have the right data in India, add to it the poor analysis they do of the data and you get the picture of how marketers are poorly equipped to drive big data analytics. They are struggling to create a unique strategy for customers in all channels in a fluid manner.

People talk of personalised customer experiences and to create it, they need to have good data on customers, their behaviour, channels and so on. Numerous studies have pointed out the number one priority is improving the quality of data.

Tool it right

There is no doubt that big data will be very useful for marketers. However, most companies do not dive deeper into it for various reasons. Most small and medium enterprises (SMEs) still pay lip service to big data analytics.

SME marketing in startup mode

They mostly analyse to evaluate campaigns, media channels and results but do not spend many resources on predictive analysis before a campaign is even rolled out or to design a campaign based on that.

Today, we have enough tools to analyse digital media and website-related details. Google Analytics, for instance, is a commonly used tool. There are many software solutions too. From webinars, live videos, events to mail campaigns and chats, we can measure the results of everything digital. We can also measure the engagements with our customers online.

As I have written in many previous columns, it is a common practice by leading marketers to analyse the sales cycle from the time a potential customer first interacts with your website or a social media site to the time they purchase your product or service.

Statistical tools allow us to find the right fit of our campaign positioning to that of the desired buyer persona. We can also reach the customer directly with almost precise personalised mailing.

Business intelligence tools can help identify the right buyers constantly and help convert them into business. Big data analysis of this kind helps in driving real-time connect with customers and also in identifying potential new opportunities for increasing results.

Marketers can indeed show better return on marketing investments (ROMI) from improved alignment with sales, better customer experiences in the digital world and real world, and of course a better eco-system.

Making the data work for you

However, most marketers have not gone deeper in this area for various misconceptions on big data.

For instance, many marketers think simply collecting data is all they need to do. Collecting the right data is important but that is only the first step. Working on the data to improve your customer reach and engagement, converting it into leads and making them buy is more critical.

What the analytics should do is assess all other related data together and give you the performance of all media activities. It should also help in studying the behaviour of customers and assist you in making corrections in messaging or offering in real-time.

Many marketers believe that all they need is technology to make big data work for them but human intervention is critical. We all use multiple technologies today for marketing plans but the ability and the skills to use these well is more important.

Your team must have the capability to understand the different outputs of these software tools. The latest updates of the tools should be implemented and coded right with your website for correct measurements, etc. All these are done to ensure the integration of multiple data to get the larger picture.

Multiple types of data help to know which areas you are doing well and which need more attention. Also, ensure that there is a good technology person in the team who can do the analytics and is familiar with the setting up and real-time testing. More than marketing expertise, this resource must have strategic thinking ability, technology knowledge and analytical mindset.

Many marketers also mistakenly think that they need to do analytics only once and use those findings forever. This doesn't work. We need to have a system for dynamic quality data analysis that captures the real-time changes and improves predictability. The scores change very rapidly and if we don't capture this, we will be off the mark in planning.

And finally, marketers are wrong in thinking that the more data they analyse, the better the value derived. Isn't this contradicting big data? Not at all.

Too much data is not useful. More important is the quality. Too many data points will eventually show least connections to reality. For instance, if you get to see that people with names starting with P buy more frequently from your store, but will not provide any predictions to drive sales. The idea is to find the right balance between your business and the data points.

For a company that has several hundreds of leads in the pipeline, about 10-12 data points will work well. However, do a reality check by counter-checking with sales and after-sales people. By making use of big data analytics properly, marketers can increase customer equity and revenues.

Source: <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/here-is-how-to-make-big-data-work-for-sme-marketing-7268871.html>

ITU Digital World 2021 to focus on digital transformation in a changing world

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is set to open the latest edition of its flagship ITU Telecom World conference and exhibition series with a new series of online discussions and events starting on Wednesday, 1 September.

ITU Digital World 2021 spans an insightful three-month programme of high-level debates, networking, and a virtual exhibition, culminating in the event's annual ITU Digital World 2021 SME Awards.

It also marks the 50th anniversary of the first ITU Telecom event in 1971.

Co-hosted with the Government of Viet Nam, this latest edition brings together leaders of government and industry under a timely theme: "Building the digital world. Together."

Highlights include:

Forum Sessions

The ITU Digital World Forum will convene experts from industry, governments and organizations from around the world, all focused on digital technologies, for online sessions between 01 September and 01 December.

September webinars focus on

- Infrastructure, the building block of connectivity
- What the next generation of networks looks like
- What 5G enables and how its ecosystem can be equitably developed
- The unique vision and value proposition of the satellite industry
- Best practices to promote greater spectrum harmonization.

Partner sessions will explore the expectations and challenges of future networks and standardization beyond the 5G era.

Subsequent webinars consider the emerging technologies and new skills driving the transformation; key challenges of the digital world; addressing our sector's environmental footprint; and protecting privacy.

Networking

Each debate will be followed by an informal online networking session, open to all.

Expert Insights

Speakers from across government and industry include:

- Christopher Calabrese, Senior Director, Privacy and Data Policy, Microsoft Corporation
- Erik Ekudden, Chief Technology Officer, Ericsson
- Fábio Faría, Minister of Communication, Brazil
- Dorothy Gordon, Chair, Information for All Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- Jocelyn Karakula, Chief Technology Innovation Officer, Orange Middle East and Africa
- Christopher Patnoe, Head of Accessibility and Disability Inclusion, Google
- Ruy Pinto, Chief Technology Officer, SES
- Jessica Rosenworcel, Acting Chairwoman, U.S. Federal Communications Commission

- Mikael Rylander, Technology Leadership Officer, Nokia Networks
- Irene Kaggwa Sewankambo, Acting Executive Director, Uganda Communications Commission
- Victor D. Sparrow, Director, Spectrum Policy and Planning, U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

Ministerial Roundtables

Join ministers from around the world, regulators, and top-level industry representatives between 12 and 15 October to explore how digital transformation can be facilitated and funded, the services and content that will drive it, and what roles governments themselves can play.

Virtual Exhibition

Organized by event co-host the Government of Viet Nam and due to open from 12 October, the exhibition will showcase companies, countries, projects and products through a virtual exhibition hall, business booths and a conference space, all accessible online.

SME Awards

The ITU Digital World Awards recognize the best and most innovative tech solutions changing the world for the better. See shortlisted small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) pitching throughout November, with the Awards Ceremony marking the close of this year's conference and exhibition on 01 December.

- When it happens: 01 September - 01 December 2021.
- How to join: Registration is free of charge and open to all.
- Where: Virtually. After registering on the event web page, participants receive links to sessions by e-mail.
- Why: ITU Digital World 2021 offers a unique opportunity to connect with industry and government leaders, explore the latest trends in technology and policy, understand what's driving digital transformation, network, share knowledge, best practice and ideas.

Expert speakers include information and communication technology (ICT) industry leaders and influencers, ICT ministers, regulators and tech experts. The virtual exhibition showcases innovations from key players and world regions, as well as high-growth Vietnamese SMEs.

Source: <https://www.itu.int/en/mediacentre/Pages/MA03-2021-Digital-World-digital-transformation-Register.aspx>

World Bank Approves \$500 Million Program to Strengthen Performance of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in India

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors today approved a \$500 million program to support the Government of India's nationwide initiative to revitalize the MSME sector, which has been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. The program targets improvements in the performance of 555,000 MSMEs and is expected to mobilize financing of \$15.5 billion, as part of the government's \$3.4 billion MSME Competitiveness - A Post-COVID Resilience and Recovery Programme (MCRRP).

The \$500 million Raising and Accelerating Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME)

Performance (RAMP) Program is the World Bank's second intervention in this sector, the first being the \$750 million MSME Emergency Response Program, approved in July 2020 to address the immediate liquidity and credit needs of millions of viable MSMEs severely impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. To date, 5 million firms have accessed finance from the government program. With the program approved today, the World Bank's financing towards improving the productivity and financial viability of the MSME sector amounts to \$1.25 billion over the past year.

Having supported the immediate liquidity and credit needs of viable MSMEs in the first phase, the RAMP Program will support the Government of India's efforts to increase MSME productivity and financing in the economic recovery phase, crowd in private sector financing in the medium term, and tackle long-standing financial sector issues that are holding back the growth of the MSME sector.

The MSME sector is the backbone of the country's economy, contributing 30 percent of India's GDP and 40 percent of exports. Out of some 58 million MSMEs in India, more than 40 percent lack access to formal sources of finance.

"The MSME sector, a critical backbone of India's economy, has been hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic," said Junaid Ahmad, World Bank Country Director in India. "The RAMP program will intensify efforts to support firms to return to pre-crisis production and employment levels, while laying the foundations for longer-term productivity-driven growth and generation of much-needed jobs in the MSME sector."

The World Bank Group, including its private sector arm the International Finance Corporation (IFC), will support the MSME sector by:

- Strengthening institutional capacity and coordination At the national level, MSME policies and programs are implemented across ministries and departments, including key players such as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Small Industries and Development Bank of India (SIDBI). There are also myriad state-level initiatives with limited coordination amongst them. There is a need for "convergence" of policies, programs, and schemes at all levels.
- To bring about this fundamental shift, the program will help setup a high-level MSME Council to enable better coordination between national and state-level programs. State level Strategic Investment Plans (SIPs) will provide a roadmap and measurable metrics; enhance the capacity of the MSME ministry to design, implement and assess policies and programs through innovative digital platforms data systems; support integrated portals to deliver online cost-effective MSME services at scale; and create a more decentralized, flexible and cohesive program that responds to the local context and challenges to MSME growth.
- Supporting firm capabilities and access to markets and finance The RAMP program will provide better access to finance and working capital for MSMEs by strengthening the receivable financing markets; and scale-up online dispute resolution mechanisms to address the problem of delayed payments. Such efforts are expected to improve the cost-effectiveness, quality, accessibility, impact, and outreach of such schemes.

Source: <https://www.itu.int/en/mediacentre/Pages/MA03-2021-Digital-World-digital-transformation-Register.aspx>

Start up

How startup ecosystem can help India become powerhouse of global economy

Byju Raveendran writes: It must focus on developing solutions that allow businesses in key sectors to meet goals of national importance, viewing India's economic and social challenges as opportunities for growth.

In 2021 alone, Indian startups have so far raised upward of \$20 billion in funding, achieved unicorn statuses, and more.

India holds a unique position in the world for several reasons, and having one of the youngest populations is perhaps the most pivotal. With 62 per cent of the population in the working age group and 54 per cent below the age of 25, we have the advantage of leveraging the skill and ability of our youth to drive the nation forward through productive output and innovation.

While India has historically and culturally been an entrepreneurially-driven nation, the last decade-and-a-half has witnessed a significant change in the landscape - from the founding of new startups, to global investor interest, to the advances made in infrastructure and policies. In 2021 alone, Indian startups have so far raised upward of \$20 billion in funding, achieved unicorn statuses, and more.

The proliferation of this startup economy has brought with it new business opportunities, innovation, tech-centric approaches and job creation across sectors. While the flow of investments from traditional industries into tech-focused sectors has been instrumental for entrepreneurs, India's own growing tech prowess has had an inspirational journey in the last few decades.

From 2011, when India's first private company achieved unicorn status, to being on track to have a 50-plus strong "Unicorn club" in 2021 according to Nasscom, the country now finds itself at the epicentre of entrepreneurship.

A mature startup ecosystem, with seasoned entrepreneurs and technology-led solutions, paves the way for innovation and expanding its global footprint. And if we look back at the seven-and-a-half decades since India's independence, the economy has rapidly diversified and grown beyond agriculture to become a potential technology powerhouse, where entrepreneurs are creating world-class products and services to solve real-time challenges.

While value creation lies at the centre of entrepreneurship, Indian startups are also taking big strides in building synergies and partnerships with global entities, further demonstrating the evolution of the startup ecosystem and its appetite for innovation, collaboration and disruption.

Even amid the Covid-19 pandemic, Indian startups have rapidly innovated to provide indigenous, tech-enabled solutions to combat challenges from testing kits and ventilators to remote monitoring, and preventive technologies, as well as innovations in supply chain management, logistics, and education. In fact, one of the paradigm shifts brought about through technology during the pandemic has been systemic shift to online education and

remote learning at scale. Solutions built by Indian startups saw widespread adoption not just domestically but also on a global scale, firmly establishing the country as a cornerstone of tech and innovation in the world.

The steady rise of Indian IT companies in the 2000s, a large talent pool of a skilled workforce, increased expendable income, and rising capital inflows have collectively contributed in large part. Today, India is home to more than 40,000 startups and is building a robust tech and internet infrastructure.

Moreover, the ability of the young generation to take risks, move fast, and disrupt things without fear, has become our biggest asset today. The fact that Indian startups are becoming global entities by creating products and solutions for world markets is a testament to this approach.

From industrial conglomerates, banks, automobile giants, software pioneers to tech startups, India has been steadily scripting its growth story. Global investors too are realising the potential upside in India's huge, under-penetrated market as the country steadily makes a place for itself as a leading R&D hub for many Silicon Valley companies.

However, in order to transition beyond the current capabilities and achieve the demographic dividend, education, and reskilling, and upskilling of our workforce is crucial. We must also recognise and acknowledge that apart from the domestic policy environment, the global environment and technological advances are also changing, and it is imperative that India is prepared for this revolution. And so, apart from policy-level decisions that promote entrepreneurship, the onus is also on India's corporate sector to foster entrepreneurialism, and create synergies to build impactful technology solutions, sustainable and resource-efficient growth.

With Indians set to make up one-fifth of the world's working-age population in the next five years and likely to have an estimated 850 million internet users by 2030, the country stands at the cusp of unprecedented economic growth, and the opportunity to be a global game-changer. Speed, inclusion, and sustainability are key elements in this mission, as is the youth of the country. Coupled with the nation's focus on strengthening digital infrastructure in healthcare and education, and boosting employment in manufacturing, there is little doubt that India@100 will be a powerhouse of the global economy.

The collective future efforts of the public and private sectors to improve physical and digital connectivity will also help unlock the untapped potential of rural and semi-urban India to truly lead Industry 4.0 and beyond.

In view of achieving this transformation at scale, the Indian startup ecosystem must focus on developing solutions that allow businesses in key sectors to meet goals of national importance. It also must view India's economic and social challenges as opportunities for growth and leverage new technologies. While India@75 is on the precipice of change, I hope for a golden era of global entrepreneurship, technology, and innovation for India@100.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/how-startup-ecosystem-can-help-india-become-powerhouse-of-global-economy-7457018/>

More Fuel For Indian Technology Startups As Global Capital Shifts From China

Indian technology startups, which are mopping up record inflows of venture capital this year, is set to gain further as the global capital moves away from Chinese tech companies that are weathering a regulatory onslaught, according to multiple founders as well as investors.

The Xi Jinping-led government's continued crackdown on Big Tech firms could also trigger long-term changes in the way large internet companies are regulated globally, they told ET.

"China gets more venture capital than India. Now, if the Chinese funnel is getting choked, it will go somewhere and with so much liquidity, emerging markets like India will get that allocation," said Ashwin Damera, cofounder and chief executive officer of online executive education platform Eruditus. The startup saw its valuation jump four-fold to \$3.2 billion after raising \$650 million from SoftBank, Accel US and others, earlier this month.

India is the third biggest startup market-after the US and China-for investors to park their capital in, at a time when there is increased liquidity in the market.

So far this year, the country has already seen 25 new unicorns-startups valued over \$1 billion-and nearly \$20.76 billion has been raised across 583 deals as of August 20, according to data provided by industry tracker Venture Intelligence. In comparison, \$11.1 billion was invested in Indian startups in 2020, with 12 companies turning unicorns.

Source: <https://www.consultantsreview.com/news/more-fuel-for-indian-technology-startups-as-global-capital-shifts-from-china-nwid-2425.html>

Startups playing key role in boosting India-US partnership, says Ambassador Taranjit Sandhu



Sandhu was delivering a keynote address at a webinar on Opportunities in the Indian Startup Ecosystem and the deepening of India-US partnership

File image of the current Indian ambassador to the United States Taranjit Singh Sandhu. Twitter/ @SandhuTaranjitS

Washington: India has a unique startup ecosystem and there has been a significant push from the current government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi to encourage entrepreneurship through initiatives like Startup India and Digital India, the country's ambassador to the United States Taranjit Singh Sandhu has said.

He said startups are playing an important role in enhancing the India-US partnership.

Sandhu was delivering a keynote address to a webinar on Opportunities in the Indian Startup Ecosystem and the deepening of India-US partnership.

Power of over a billion minds! Sandhu said in a tweet after the webinar that was attended by more than 3,000 participants including angel investors, venture capitalists from both the

countries.

The event was organised in partnership with many business chambers, Indian Consulate in Houston, US India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF) and department for promotion of industry and internal trade.

Sandhu said, from healthcare companies, who are discovering vaccines, to renewable energy firms, who are trying to scale up and bring down average cost of power, to education startups, that are bringing online education to students, to startups using new technology, such as drones, to all those million others in the digital tech space you are pushing the envelope, every day and creating enormous economic opportunities, in both our countries, and for both countries.

He said it is equally interesting to see that some of the startups have been active in traditional sectors of the economy, such as agriculture.

Providing an overview of the India-US partnership in the technology segment, USISPF president Mukesh Aghi said Indian and American startups are sharing dual headquarters approach and hiring inter-country talents.

Today, India has 63 unicorns with a total combined valuation of approximately USD 218 billion. It took us 10 years to create 37 unicorns and just 8 months to create the next 26,"said Anil Agrawal, Additional Secretary, DPIIT.

Sandhu said India is now the third largest startup ecosystem in the world and is home to 100 unicorns, valued at USD 90 billion.

These unicorns are not limited to one industry but are highly diverse and span many technology and tech-enabled sectors. Startups are also mushrooming, in industries such as Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) and gaming, he said.

Just over the last year, it is estimated that Indian startups have raised USD 16.9 billion, in venture capital funding, the second highest in the world. The year 2021 could be India's year of the initial public offering (IPO). Three Indian unicorns have already made their debut offerings this year, the Ambassador said.

I can think of several factors, which have made India unique, as a startup ecosystem. The Indian IT boom, a large talent pool, increased income of the Indian middle class, availability of capital, increased usage of smartphones and access to the internet etc. could be some of them. There has been a significant push, from the Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, through initiatives like Startup India and Digital India, he said.

Behind this enabling framework, also lies the sheer grit, and genius of our young entrepreneurs, the true representatives of India's aspirational youth. Not averse to taking risks, and not easily deterred by challenges, they devise innovative and cost-effective solutions, through cutting edge technologies, Sandhu said.

Many Indian startups have close linkages to the US as entrepreneurs from India have travelled or studied in the US or have been inspired from the US India-US relationship is

both an enabler and a beneficiary and the Indian Embassy has been keen to promote the startup ecosystem by hosting a series of events. There are startups in all five identified key areas of cooperation, he said.

Source: <https://www.firstpost.com/world/startups-playing-key-role-in-boosting-india-us-partnership-says-ambassador-taranjit-sandhu-9928541.html>

Women Wing

Europe's female startup leaders to follow on LinkedIn

Which European women tech leaders should you follow, and learn from, on LinkedIn?

Knowledge Tracker

We all know there are a whole lot more men than women in the European tech world, and that it's often the men talking the loudest on social media platforms.

But there are a growing number of powerful female voices making themselves heard.

With the help of LinkedIn's UK team, we've tracked down female tech leaders in Europe who regularly share thought-provoking, useful and smart posts on LinkedIn.

Who are they -- and how did their entrepreneurial journey begin?

If you want to suggest someone, please email us at rankings@sifted.eu.

Alice Zagury



Alice Zagury -- CEO of startup community The Family
What's her story? Zagury has been supporting startup founders since she graduated back in 2008. She spent three years at Silicon Sentier, a startup community in Paris, mentoring international entrepreneurs raising funding and gaining visibility.

In 2012, she cofounded The Family with Lebanese entrepreneur and business angel Oussama Ammar, to create an accelerator that would make entrepreneurship more accessible. Since then, they've built a network of 800+ founders and are now enrolling startups from around the world.

What about her LinkedIn posts? Startup news and tips, events and content about entrepreneurship (in English and French).

LinkedIn network: 45k

Mette Lykke -- Cofounder and CEO of Too Good To Go

What's her story? Lykke built her first business out of her love for fitness: Endomondo, a social fitness app that was acquired by US apparel company Under Armour in January 2015. She worked there for two years as VP international and left to start her second venture: food-waste app Too Good To Go.

Since 2017, the app has grown to a team of 750+ people, works with 500+ retail partners

and is active in 15+ western countries. It recently launched in Canada.

What about her LinkedIn posts? Food waste, the global food supply chain and building a sustainable business.

LinkedIn network: 31k+

Anna Alex -- Cofounder and CCO of Planetly and cofounder of Outfittery

What's her story? With a background in product management, Alex started her first company Outfittery, a personal shopping service, with Julia Bösh in 2012. She oversaw product, management and operations as co-CEO.

She left in 2019 to launch Planetly, a platform that tracks, measures and reduces companies' carbon footprints. Last April, it raised €5.2m and is backed by European VCs Speedinvest and Cavalry Ventures.

What about her LinkedIn posts? She covers climate tech and sustainability in business and posts a positive climate news recap every Friday (in English and German).

LinkedIn network: 20k

Janneke Niessen -- Cofounder of seed-stage VC CapitalT



What's her story? Niessen started and exited two marketing businesses: Improve Digital and DQ&A Media Group. Drawing from her experience building companies, she joined the other side of the table in 2018 and cofounded VC firm CapitalT, which has invested in team collaboration platform CodeGem and Vaayu, a carbon emission software for online retailers.

She's an advocate for women in tech: she initiated InspiringFifty, which aims to increase diversity in tech by making female role models more visible; and published a book about girls in tech, The New Girl Code. She was nominated as Harper's Bazaar Woman of the Year in 2019.

What about her LinkedIn posts? Diversity in tech, startup news and tips (in English and Dutch).

LinkedIn network: 17k

Maud Caillaux -- Cofounder of green neobank Green-Got

What's her story? Only two years after graduating with a master's degree in entrepreneurship, Caillaux launched her startup.

Green Got is part of the new wave of 'sustainable banks' that are building a banking service that doesn't contribute to harming the planet -- for instance, by not funding the fossil fuel industry. The app is still in beta mode. Caillaux is in the Forbes Europe 30 under 30 this year.

What about her LinkedIn posts? Startup-building, sustainable finance and climate change (in English and French).

LinkedIn network: 12.4k

Marija Butkovic -- Founder and CEO at femtech community Women of Wearables

What's her story? The former lawyer has turned her passion for championing women into a global organisation, Women of Wearables, which has 20k members who work in and are interested in women-focused wearable tech, IoTs and healthtech.

Butkovic is a marketing mentor as part of the STARTS and We In Social Tech programmes -- and a contributor to Forbes Women.

What about her LinkedIn posts? Femtech, diversity in tech and tech news.

LinkedIn network: 13k

Lubomila Jordanova -- Cofounder and CEO of Plan A and cofounder of Greentech Alliance

What's her story? A trip to a plastic-covered beach in Morocco inspired Jordanova's mission to reduce our impact on the planet. In 2017 she started Plan A, one of Europe's carbon software platforms helping businesses track their carbon emissions. The Berlin-based startup is backed by French private equity firm Demeter and Japan's SoftBank.



She is also the cofounder of Greentech Alliance, a community for companies, VCs, media and experts interested in greentech. She's mentoring several founders via programmes from Goldup, Founder Institute and The Global Hack.

What about her LinkedIn posts? Climate tech and sustainability in business -- she just started a LinkedIn newsletter that covers corporate sustainability, ESG and climate change.

LinkedIn network: 14k

Georgie Smallwood -- Chief product officer at Tier and founder of women founder network Auxilia

What's her story? Smallwood learned the ropes at digital marketplace Scout24 Group, accounting startup Xero and Germany's most valuable fintech N26. In October last year, she was appointed chief product officer at micromobility company Tier.

She's part of Accel's angel investing programme and has only invested in female-led startups, including remote culture building platform Remi.so and HeyFina, a financial well-being platform targeting women.

What about her LinkedIn posts? Female founders, product management and women tech leaders.

LinkedIn network: 8.7k

Sasha Lipman -- Founder of impact digital hub tech2impact

What's her story? Before launching tech2impact in May 2020, Lipman worked at Vienna-based Hackabu, a growth hacking accelerator for social impact startups, and TwoNext, an organisation that helps nonprofits create social impact using tech.

The tech2impact community now includes 400+ impact-driven tech startups, investors and accelerators, and it offers several virtual startup mentorship programmes.

What about her LinkedIn posts? Impact investment and startup tips, the intersection of tech and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

LinkedIn network: 5.4k

Other women to follow:

Nora Bavey -- General partner at Nordic micro VC Unconventional Ventures.

Talks about: Diversity, venture capital, entrepreneurship | Followers: 4.6k

Dafne Sartorio -- Lead venture builder at oneUp, a service building tech for big corporates.

Talks about: Startups, innovation, personal development | Followers: 5.5k

Monika Jiang -- Head of curation and community at global business platform House of Beautiful Business.

Talks about: Sustainability, future of work, personal development | Followers: 2.2k

Marija Rucevska -- Cofounder and GP of consulting firm Helve and chair of the board at tech event TechChill.

Talks about: Innovation, Latvian startups news, sustainability | Followers: 2.1k

Claudia Winkler -- Cofounder of impact incubator good network and author.

Talks about: Tech for good, sustainable business, climate action | Followers: 3.5k

Ruth von Heusinger -- Founder and CEO of carbon offsetting solution platform ForTomorrow.

Talks about: Feminism, climate action and sustainability | Followers: 2k

Martina Zammit -- Director of V Square media, a film production service.

Talks about: Maltese business news, innovation, personal growth | Followers: 2.2k

Source: <https://sifted.eu/articles/europe-female-startup-linkedin/>

Startups are on the rise and so are the companies helping them

It may not look it, but Charleston, South Carolina, could be the next tech capital of the world. Just ask Jake Hare.

I thought tech was Silicon Valley, what everybody thinks Silicon Valley is. Being in the South, which is where the Army relocated me, I didn't realize there was so much opportunity in tech outside of Silicon Valley," said Hare.

Hare lives in Charleston and it's the headquarters for the company he founded, Launchpeer.

Launchpeer is a startup incubator. The company helps people who want to start new companies and connect them to resources.

"We really primarily focus on non-technical founders. So, these are founders who want to build a tech startup, think of like Facebook, Uber, things like that, but they don't have the technical skills to actually do it," he said.

Putting it even more simply, they're people with great ideas who don't know how to build an app or website to execute that idea.

Hare says his desire to help is built on his life perspective.

"It was just me and my dad and my little sister. U-Haul truck pulled up and he said, 'Hey we're leaving,'" he said, "We had to pack up all of our stuff really quick and move it into the back of a truck,"

After driving around for a few hours, Hare's dad showed them where they would be staying that night, the family's car, a 1992 Ford Contour parked at the warehouse where his dad worked.

"For the next eight months, it was just leaving the warehouse early, like out of the car after we slept all night in the car. The reason we went to the warehouse was because there was a sink where we could wash ourselves. There was no one there, so we could kind of park the car there instead of parking on a street somewhere," he said.

It wasn't an easy way to grow up for a 15-year-old, but he says that experience helped shape his approach to taking startups to the next level.

"We're working with founders that are very early. I mean, napkin sketch, they just have an idea. What we look at is the founder, are they scrappy?" he said. "I want a founder who is, no matter what happens, is going to have the grit and determination to push through any roadblocks or barriers that they end up running into."

His choices should be expanding.

New startups in February of 2021 were up 40% from the previous year, the last full month before the pandemic had set in.

"A lot of those are being formed by women," said Caren Merrick, a self-described serial entrepreneur and co-founder of webMethods, an enterprise software company she later sold.

Now, Merrick spends much of her time investing in startups, particularly female-founded ones and she says the field is changing.

"It was very dominated by men and I'm seeing that change and I think we need to change it even more quickly than we are," said Merrick.

According to a February report from Kauffman Indicators of Entrepreneurship, the rate of women entrepreneurs increased by 30% in 2020. Rates also increased for Black, Asian and Latino entrepreneurs.

"Anyone, anywhere can become an entrepreneur," said Merrick.

Hare says his business of helping people start their business is a dream come true.

"As an entrepreneur, there are risks and there are a lot of insecurities with it. But you have 100% total control over everything that happens every single day. And I think for me, the reason why I was drawn to entrepreneurship and helping other entrepreneurs is because I want to give them that control that I didn't have when I was a kid growing up," said Hare.

Source: <https://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/national/startups-are-on-the-rise-and-so-are-the-companies-helping-them>

Want To See More Women In The Startup World? A Female Founder Shares Her Top 4 Asks

There are too few female founders, and if you don't know why, I'll fathom a guess.

In May, I authored an op-ed describing why there is a lack of women heading up startups. Cliff Notes on that piece: The entrepreneurship community must pick up the pace of innovation, add more jobs and hit delete on the issues plaguing society-and that includes bolstering female founders when they need the support most: when they give birth.

With that said, I must confess that despite my "loud and proud" rant about the need for change to increase female founders, I did not take parental leave, nor did my partner. Indeed, I was back to work two days after my second child was born. Why? Because I felt I couldn't.



SimpliFed founder Andrea Ippolito

As a pre-seed company, I know we need to hit our milestones this year in order to raise our next round. Sure, we had incredible help from grandparents and the semi-luxury of working remotely. But I am also aware that I am insanely

lucky to have this support and flexibility while many others do not.

But seriously, how feasible is paid parental leave to get implemented within the startup community? What does this look like in practice?

Now we all network differently, but men (I know, here I'm stereotyping) in my network will confidently ask for things-for that new role, the raise, the introduction.

Fine. So in taking a page from them, I have four "asks" for the entrepreneurship community. Some may not prompt answers, but they should inspire us to think about how we could redesign within the ecosystem.

1. Let's normalize paid parental leave for all founders, not just women.

Mom, dad, step-parent, foster parent-if you're a parent and you're a founder or you're an employee of a startup, you deserve a paid leave when your child arrives. Recently, a study was published saying that unless everyone takes paid parental leave (both mothers and fathers), women will get left behind.

2. Work-life balance is more than a dated buzzword. We must normalize not working 100-hour work weeks.

If the pandemic taught us anything, it's that mom is how the house stays together. Working moms aren't going to sign up to be founders if they can't have the flexibility they need and thought they were signing up for by leading the charge both in business and at home.

My response-this is the exact mindset that has kept women and BIPOC founders out of the game. It's incredibly short-sighted because we know that diverse organizations are associated with quicker exits, improved decision-making, higher revenue per dollar invested, and improved financial returns.

3. Allow for remote work in your startup or accelerator programs.

There are some jobs that need to be in-person, no doubt, but we now have the infrastructure to support many jobs online.

Being postpartum in the fourth and fifth trimester is a thousand times easier when you're working remotely. I cannot express this enough. Breast pumping and feeding is an all-encompassing activity, and having to go to find a place in an office or co-working space is a pain in the arse.

Also, sometimes I need to sit on my couch and work because a human exited my body not so long ago. Other times, I need access to the million-jillion products to support me after having a baby, such as my iron supplements because I am now anemic, my special seat cushion to help with my pelvic floor recovery, a change of clothes from having to change constantly due to sweating from hormones being out of whack, or my ice packs to help reduce inflammation in my breasts after having mastitis.

4. Support more flexible structures for startup team members.

On our team, we call this the "guinea pig."

SimpliFed COO Erin Hunt has four boys, and one of them had a presentation in the middle of the day at school where he was presenting on a guinea pig.

She shared that she was going to attend and we chatted about how much in past jobs we wished we could have attended guinea pig-like moments, but it never felt "safe" to ask. These guinea pig moments, as trivial as they might sound, are not trivial at all-they are super memorable moments and they are fleeting.

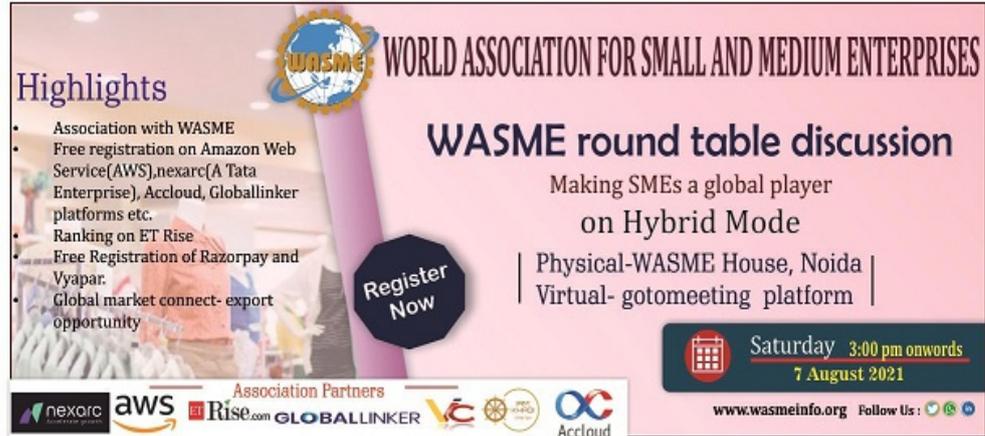
Because many organizations don't give their workers the flexibility to be part of their children's lives during the day (or God forbid they get sick), they suffer massive attrition by women, especially to more flexible jobs. The organizations that figure this out will thrive and be better able to retain their employees and the pipeline of leadership in their company.

Source: <https://news.crunchbase.com/news/want-to-see-more-women-in-the-startup-world-a-female-founder-shares-her-top-4-asks/>

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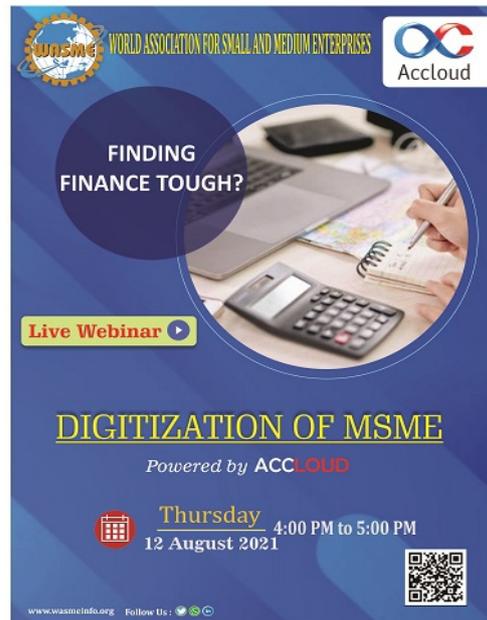
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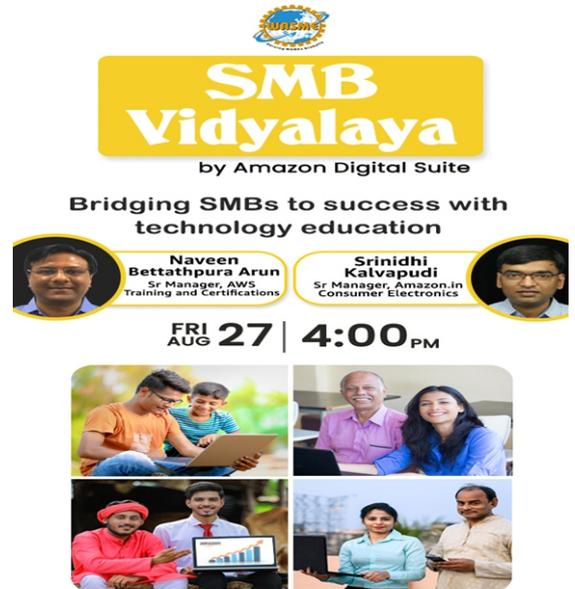
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Editor, World SME Update

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