

CENTRAL CASTING: THE “TYPICAL” ENTREPRENEUR

Leading Question

What effects does stereotyping entrepreneurs have?

Watch the video

<https://youtu.be/PuveGEIp1Ik>

Some ideas are better than others, but very few ideas ever become working enterprises. For women, it's even worse: only 2% of venture funding went to women founders in 2017. Imagine what the world would be like if the people who changed the world with inventions like electricity or anesthesia or water filtration were shut down before they even got started.

1. Describe your idea of the “typical” tech startup founder. What is this person’s sex, race, age, family and educational background, career field?
 2. If your typical tech startup founder conforms to the stereotype described by Heidi Roizen, how do you think that affects your thinking about the abilities of people who don’t fit that mold?
 3. Silicon Valley is legendary for reinventing itself and coming up with “the next big thing.” Has pattern matching contributed to that success? Why or why not?
 4. Does having more women venture capitalists guarantee that more women entrepreneurs will be funded? Why or why not?
 5. Do you think that media reports of sexism and discrimination in tech will improve or harm women entrepreneurs’ chances of getting funding or mentoring from male venture capitalists and founders?
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START SOMETHING

What can people do to combat stereotypes about entrepreneurs? What actions can you take the next time you hear or see someone promoting a stereotype?

BIOGRAPHIES

Heidi Roizen

Heidi Roizen graduated from Stanford University with what she calls the “coveted creative writing major” before getting her MBA, also at Stanford. From 1983 to 1996 she was the CEO of the company T/Maker which she cofounded with her brother. After leaving T/Maker, Roizen worked as Vice President of Worldwide Developer Relations for Apple before becoming a venture capitalist with Draper, Fisher, Jurvetson (DFJ) where she is operating partner today.

Debra Sterling

Stanford engineering graduate Debra Sterling is on a mission to disrupt the “pink aisle” in toy stores globally. Her award-winning children’s multimedia company, GoldieBlox, challenges gender stereotypes with the world’s first girl engineer character and construction toys for girls. Sterling was recently added to Fortune magazine’s 40 Under 40 list and has received a number of other awards.

RESOURCES

Watch all nine videos of Women’s Work:

Perspectives on Gender in Tech

<http://www.computerhistory.org/exponential/women-work/>

Pioneers of the Possible:

Women Entrepreneurs on Innovation and Impact

<https://youtu.be/4xE2rRBb9FI>

Wonder Women:

Entrepreneurship, Education, and New Frontiers

<https://youtu.be/UC99u7NJh14>

Female Founders Got 2% of VC Dollars in 2017

<http://for.tn/2FyFOhX>

Gender and Venture Capital Decision-Making

<http://stanford.io/2olewim>

About

This discussion guide is part of the series Women’s Work: Perspectives on Gender in Tech, nine videos produced by the Exponential Center at the Computer History Museum. The center is dedicated to capturing the legacy and advancing the future of entrepreneurship and innovation in Silicon Valley and around the world.

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