00:00

If we want to be the best supporter of design, lead entrepreneurship, we know that there's got to be at least 50% women.

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I mean, I think the most important thing for me is to live it, you know, to actually each day and pay women fairly you give them opportunities within the company that bring that sense of inclusion.

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In 2019, a report by HM Treasury shed light on the challenges confronting women and entrepreneurship, revealing that only 1/3 of UK entrepreneurs were women. The report spurred the government to announce an ambitious goal in increasing the number of female entrepreneurs by half by 2030, equating to nearly 600,000 additional women led businesses. A 2023 review of that report identified that although there has been progress, there's still a way to go and underscored the pressing needs to improve opportunities for women to access investment and support initiatives. On the Royal College of Art Podcast, we bring you insights into the philosophy behind the programmes and the teaching and learning which takes place at the college by talking to staff students and the wider RCA community about what we do here. Today in a special episode for International Women's Day, we're focusing on InnovationRCA, the RCA’s centre for enterprise entrepreneurship, incubation and business support, where Director Dr. Nadia Danhash, has been leading the way in championing diversity amongst a cohort of startup businesses. In the last five years, companies supported through the InnovationRCA’s incubator programme have been valued at more than 305 million pounds, with 52% of the 116 founders being female, and 34% of founders from ethnic minority backgrounds. As well as leading InnovationRCA and being responsible for the direction of its startup accelerators. Dr. Danhash is an investor and business developer, who spent over 10 years at the RCA, developing enterprise and entrepreneurship programmes and supporting graduate entrepreneurs. With a commercial background in the biotechnology sector. Dr. Danhash has a cross sectoral focus on innovation. she invests in and supports the creation and growth of new design led ventures, and she trains and mentors more mature non design businesses internationally to help them grow and innovate. In the first part of this episode, Dr Danhash speaks to Dr Melanie Flory.

Dr Melanie Flory is Associate Director of Research at the RCA’s Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design. Dr Flory is a psychologist and neuroscientist whose research enquiry is at the intersection of inclusive design, systems thinking, and cognitive neuroscience.

Dr Flory plays a pivotal role in steering the growth and development of the Centre’s inclusive design research and knowledge exchange portfolios. Her visionary leadership has been instrumental in co-developing and launching the Centre’s inaugural Doctoral programme.

Together, the women discuss the ways InnovationRCA is actively fostering inclusion, driving diversity, and empowering individuals within its ecosystem, and how InnovationRCA’s new Design & Impact S/EIS Fund is supporting female founders.

We’ll also hear from some of those extraordinary RCA graduates who have journeyed through InnovationRCA's incubator themselves. In a conversation led by Annetta Snider, InnovationRCA’s Entrepreneur in Residence, we’ll hear from Eleanor Nadimi, Tashia Tucker, and Urshita Gautam, whose businesses span homeware, agricultural technology and MedTech. Join us to hear how they’ve navigated the entrepreneurial ecosystem and the ways they’re driving change in their companies.

03:37

Hi, Nadia, what a privilege to be asked to interview you. I was absolutely thrilled. So let's kick off with telling our audience a little bit about InnovationRCA.

03:48

Well, thank you very much for having me. And it's an honour to be interviewed by the research director of the Helen Hamlyn Centre for design. InnovationRCA is the entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship hub of the RCA, we have two key activities. One is that we look after intellectual property for the college. So we make sure that we try and file patents for inventions before they are publicly disclosed. And then the second key activity that we do is we run an incubator where we incubate and accelerate startups and spin outs founded by either graduates of the RCA or staff of the RCA.

04:25

But wow, given that in the last five years alone, 52% of your founders have been women. That sounds to me like a groundbreaking statistic. And in light of the fact that this year's International Women's Day theme, inspire inclusion. How does the InnovationRCA actively foster inclusion, drive a diversity agenda and empower women within the ecosystem? And

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you're right it's exceptionally high percentage of women founders. I think it reflects the nature of the RCA and the history of the RCA, which has been that it's always accepted women in the days in the 1800s, when women, for example, didn't go to other universities. So it is a very RCA thing that we're quite gender balanced. And within InnovationRCA, we always back the best founders with the best ideas. But fortunately, when you have a great pool to fish from, you end up with a good percentage of women founders. What we do to try and encourage more women not to be shy or afraid of being entrepreneurs, is to remind them that they are just as skilled and capable of running a great company as men, and just really creating an environment where they feel comfortable. But beyond that, I would be lying. If I said, we have all these great initiatives to stimulate more women into entrepreneurship. We don't. We try and promote entrepreneurship across the university and across the RCA community. We attract everyone, and then we pick the best, but we pick the best without any bias against women or against minority groups that perhaps may be unconscious biases that some other investors or sectors, you know, inadvertently practice and we just try and shy away from that, rather than us doing anything proactive.

06:22

I think that's a completely new podcast on how to avoid unconscious bias, maybe maybe another one. But let me get on to my next question. What do you think are some of the key challenges that female identifying entrepreneurs and founders encounter in today's world of entrepreneurship and innovation,

06:43

Well, the biggest challenge is funding, and it's a sad fact that women founders in the UK, raise less investment and they raise that investment at lower valuations, which means that they have to give away more of their company for the investment that they raise compared to male founders, which is why there's been a lot of pressure from Angel groups from investment bodies from Government to try and stimulate a more balanced ecosystem. And the Treasury launched an investing in women code a few years ago, which I'm happy to say we've totally signed up to, to try and address that balance. That's probably the biggest challenge. And then there are the other challenges the the fact that as a woman, you may well have a young family, particularly if you're a start up and you're a younger woman, you may be juggling the responsibilities of being a parent alongside running your business. And inevitably, more of the care responsibilities tend to fall to the to the mother than the man in most cases. So there is still a certain amount of juggling to be done.

07:54

Wow, despite that, I was looking at your portfolio performance is just multifaceted. You've got multifaceted startups, a portfolio that is par excellence. And somehow when I look at your figures in which you attract financial investment, there's something there that leads me to think that the relationship of trust that you have developed with investors and with that whole body of investors, is something that can't have been easy to establish. And how does this now feed into the intake of greater number of women entrepreneurs?

08:36

You're absolutely right. When we started our incubator, nobody had heard of us. Nobody thought we would know what we were doing. And so people stood by and watched waiting to see how we got on. But over the years, what they've seen is that we’ve built really exciting companies. And in fact, if you think about venture capital funds, most of the leading venture capital firms have gone on to invest in companies that we were the first investor in. So I think over time, we've just quietly worked away with talented founders at building exciting companies.

09:12

So innovation, RCA has probably got a lot on his plate in terms of supporting these women, but also getting the message out that women, you know, operate in all of these areas. Can you tell us a little bit about InnovationRCA’s Design and Impact SEIS fund and how it supports women?

09:33

Yeah, sure. So we realised after we didn't been investing in an RCA founders for 12 years that actually as well as building an exciting portfolio of companies with good diversity in our founders. We'd actually made some really good investment decisions. So we achieved 4.7 times our invested capital as a multiple which is a pretty good figure. So We decided that because we're an academic institution with a set only a certain amount of funding that we have available to invest in our founders, why not go out to the investment community, and offer them the opportunity to invest in the Fund alongside us. So we have built this so called S EIS fund. That means it allows professional certified investors to benefit from certain tax incentives when they invest in early-stage companies. And our idea with this fund, which we have just begun to make investments from, although we continue to fundraise is that we'll invest in companies building exciting companies, founded by the RCA community, which obviously will be, we expect to be quite diverse, as it always has been. And addressing, again, multisector, basically, designed led businesses, so led by creative people, largely involving a lot of technology, typically, around 40% of our companies to date have been based on patented inventions. And we expect that sort of percentage to be reflected as we continue, we've tended to invest in a lot of companies that have quite a high social impact. So they are for profit companies, but they are, for example, addressing clean tech, so developing sustainable solutions to the world's problems, or health and well-being. And the idea is that this fund will continue to invest in a diverse range of companies, founded by right talented, RCA connected people, whether they're graduates or staff, and hopefully addressing more of these really important problems with creative solutions.

11:52

Okay, you know, given your own background in commerce, as well, do you think that fact at InnovationRCA, that are women entrepreneurs have the kind of, you know, a double challenge, one being women entrepreneurs, but also they're not scientists there are and design students with humanity backgrounds, and all of that. Is that also disadvantage? Do they have to work even harder than to compete against women? Who are scientists, for example, or engineers are?

12:25

No, I think the designer has a real advantage in that they have this ability to look at things and translate them and see through to the heart of the problem. So I think they're quite adept at coming up with what is the real cause of the problem here? And how can we use design to come up with a design and technology to come up with a solution. And so then what it comes down to is their leadership abilities and their skills of persuasion, to persuade other talented people to work with them if they need to bring in a material scientist, or they need to bring in a software developer? So yes, it's a challenge. But I think that's the challenge that by virtue of the fact that they very often show people a solution. And experts in that field, have not thought of that solution is already a door opener in a way. So people are quite, you know, for example, our agri tech company, which is founded by an architect actually had she has persuaded leading agricultural and insect research institutions to work with her on developing the solution. Because they didn't come up with that idea. And that solution. She did. And that goes the same for we have a textile PhD, who is developing a solution for recovery from stroke, designing something into a wearable. And again, she's got leading neuroscientists working with her to test and develop the solution. So the challenges I think that they face are more around, you know, us helping them be more confident that yes, you don't come from a commercial background. But you know, we can help you develop those commercial skills. And, yes, it is going to be hard to raise money, but at least we can get you started and if you can build more, hopefully the other investors will follow. And I think the biggest service we can provide them with is around confidence and treating them fairly, basically.

14:29

Actually, as somebody who oversees the research portfolio at the Helen Hamlyn Centre, I just think we're so indebted to the InnovationRCA for our good ideas and good students to be able to change turn their ideas into enterprise. How long has InnovationRCA been going and over the years that it has been and the years you've been? What are some of the changes you've seen that have led up to where we are today. So

14:59

I mean, it was founded in, Gosh, 2004. But with a different purpose, the purpose was more about bringing businesses to the RCA to collaborate with the RCA, and to protect intellectual property. And in 2009, we started our incubator and bought the first companies in all the first founders into start building businesses. And I mean, I guess the changes that have happened is that we've realised that there are other parts of the RCA that can interact directly with big business or small business, or all the various external types of organisations that our researchers and educators can collaborate with. So our role has become more narrow in that we focus on intellectual property, commercialization, and start up and spin out formation, we do offer some additional services in that we are now often approached by overseas governments and institutions to help them set up and stimulate an entrepreneurial culture and help them with Innovation Development. So we run acceleration programmes overseas for various parties, which is hugely enjoyable and actually quite interesting, because, you know, we recently did something in the Middle East for 10 women founders. And the difference between their women founders and our founders in general is that they love the sale, they love the negotiation. Whereas our founders are always much more interested in talking about the product, and less keen to ask the customer if the customer wants to buy and that's, that's a general British thing, or we don't talk about money. So it's quite, it's quite interesting to see those cultural differences. But what else has happened at the RCA, you know, we add innovation on ca, you know, we've grown, we've backed more companies. So, you know, 2009, we backed three companies now we're backing, and we have about 25 companies in the incubator. We run a creative brands accelerator for SMEs, who just want to build small to medium sized enterprises to help them put them on a strong financial footing alongside our high growth incubation programme, which is where we look to build global brands. And then we run a small Angel Network, we've just worked this last year to raise our S/EIS Fund, which we continue to hope to, hopefully to grow and invest from. And then the vision is a bigger fund. And the vision is, you know, more specialised accelerators. So perhaps a design consultancy accelerator for the graduates of the RCA that go on to set up design consultancies to give them more business knowledge and acumen to build more successful and bigger businesses, perhaps a gaming accelerator, so the world's our oyster, we just need to do it one step at a time. And you know, but the vision is to keep doing more and more things.

18:03

I think the work that you've done, speaks for itself, that has been, you know, over the years, gradually progressing and raising the profile of the college itself. I recently visited a small new design, college and India, they're just about 15 years. So they consider themselves very new. And they are an undergraduate, design college. And there I met students who talked about InnovationRCA, who can I come to the RCA we will wander out, you know, those with ambition to be entrepreneurs. So it's yes, so your reputation goes before you.

18:43

We want to be the best supporter of design led entrepreneurship, or Createch entrepreneurship. In the UK, backing the best ventures, regardless of who the founders are, we know that there's got to be at least 50% women because design is a subject that attracts as many women as men. And we know women are just as good as men. And I think our ambition is just to be the best to do more. And to be able to support more great businesses as those businesses are creating jobs in the UK. They're creating exports for the UK, they're creating returns for their investors and solving some really big unimportant challenges.

19:33

So I'm gonna put you on the spot a bit here. If you had to choose one challenge and one opportunity that lies ahead of you. What will those be?

19:47

Oh, gosh. I think the challenge is about helping people see how by Putting creativity and design with science and technology, we can really create magical results. I don't think everyone's really realised that and there is still quite a lot of silo working in this country and around the world. And I think we've been pretty pioneering at the RCA by bringing more research, for example, and research centres that combine science with design. And we're certainly seeing that in Innovation RCA and the nature of the companies that were backing that are results of both this research culture at the RCA and the interdisciplinary teaching at the RCA. So I think that's really still a big challenge, because we need more people thinking in that way, because you can't solve the challenges that face the world today, if you're working in silos. So I think that's a really big challenge. And your other half of your question was?

21:02

the biggest opportunity you see ahead of you.

21:07

I think the opportunity is to invest in women, because they’re half the world. And if we invest in them, we are for sure. Going to accelerate the route to success.

21:23

And behind you all the way on both because I'm passionate about the STEM to STEAN agenda. And of course, investing in women. Nadia, it's been an absolute pleasure talking with you, and I’m sure we will take this conversation offline as well. Thank you so much.

21:39

thank you very much for having me

21:40

. Now that we've heard from those shaping the entrepreneurial landscape at the RCA, it's time to shift our focus to our start-up founders.

For some of these women, it’s been years since they walked the halls of the RCA. We were thrilled to invite them back to chat with Annetta Snider about how their businesses have developed and grown since graduating, the impact of their InnovationRCA support, and how they’re navigating the challenging world of business as female founders.

In the intimate setting of the RCA’s Sound Studio, Annetta Snider, Entrepreneur in Residence at InnovationRCA, gathered the women around the table to chat. With over 35 years of entrepreneurial expertise, Annetta has founded, run, and sold several businesses, including Punch B2B Ltd, a successful full-service marketing agency.

Now, I’ll let Tashia, Eleanor, and Urshita introduce themselves…

22:24

With that we're being recorded. So

22:27

let's start. So first of all, what I want to ask you is some few to introduce yourselves, who you are your names. And then the programme that you started, and a little bit about your company, Tashia

22:47

My name is Tasha Tucker. I'm the CEO and founder of Olombria. We are an agricultural tech company based in London. I previously studied in the MRes Architecture programme here at the Royal College of Art. The creation of the company was created off of the demand of pollination and the fact that we have such severe insect decline. We knew that the next largest subset of pollinators underneath bees are flies, and they are incredible. So we created a closed loop system that uses AI and machine learning to identify insects along the field. We rear our own native species of flies that we then deploy on farm fields. And then we created a natural chemical law that attracts them. So this the precision pollination project that we do hoverflies are also amazing bio pest control. So it's nice that they have that total benefit.

23:36

It's amazing. And actually, well, while you're talking, are you happy to share with us how you came about finding the InnovationRCA programme and getting on the programme?

23:48

Yeah, so when I started at, in the MRes programme, you know, I think that really opened my eyes into this interdisciplinary kind of approach. And I was always really interested in bio design and this sort of connection between science and engineering. Midway through the Royal College of Art programme, there was a competition called the bio design challenge. As we participated in that programme, and towards the end of the year, InnovationRCA was doing a great job of reaching out to students for IP protection and for the LaunchPad programme that they have, which we thought was really interesting. And our project had some legs to actually become something. So we participated in the launchpad programme, and we're successful in that and then push forward to make it a company.

24:28

Actually, how long have you been in business now? How long have you been going

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six years now? Six years now? Yeah, we turned seven in August.

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It's amazing. So Urshita

24:39

so I'm Urshita Gautam. I'm the co founder of Revive Innovations + Ltd. Revive Innovations is a med tech startup. We are developing a single use auto injector for intramuscular injection of a fixed dose of adrenaline. It is to treat severe allergic reactions or anaphylaxis, which can possibly be fatal. And adrenaline auto injectors currently basically have very limited options available, and they're based on a very old design and we kind of start sort of started the project at the RCA with this intention of or if this was a healthcare product, which was coming out today, what would it be like and it was a very open ended kind of design project at that point. And then me and my co-founder, Abhisheik Kamal, we collaborated on it as a final project before we graduated, and that was selected by InnovationRCA for patent support, which we then further extended and joined Launchpad programme got selected in that, and then finally incorporated and decided to continue it as an actual business. I graduated from the critical writing in art and design programme, which has changed since then. But it was an interesting space to kind of do a product design project and kind of centre this idea of healthcare design in it from a more updated perspective than what it has been previously.

26:08

Thank you very much. And Eleanor.

26:10

Hello. I'm Eleanor Nadimi. I'm an entrepreneur, artist and mentor. I studied printed textiles at the RCA graduating 2010. And then after that, I did the Creative Brands Accelerator programme in the RCA Innovation department in 2019. I founded my company in 2016. My business is called 1985. And it is a British Home wear and soft furnishing brands supporting UK manufacturing. I was inspired to start my business after working in the fast fashion industry was sustainability. Its core 1985 is a celebration of colour, comfort and the Joy of Home. Each piece is carefully designed and created in my studio and manufactured by British craftsmen in the UK, produced with a no waste ethos.

26:56

Thank you very much. Thanks. And well, we're here today because it's International Women's Day. And in celebrations that I've got inspiring entrepreneurs around me. So talking of which the hashtag for International Women's Day this year is inspire inclusion. And I just thought, you know, what, what do we understand by that, Eleanor? You know, how do you see that was?

27:28

I think inspiring inclusion depends on almost where you are within your journey as being an entrepreneur. For me, my business is still quite small. So I don't really have to think about things like hiring and that type of inclusion. But as a mentor, I really feel that that is a place for me to step forward and be able to pass on some of the knowledge that I've been lucky enough to have. I've been through mentorship programmes myself, and I found them super inspiring, just speaking to a real person who has a business and learning from their mistakes. And being able to share that and pass it on to other people is a great way to know that these things are achievable. No matter how small or big your company is, you can still sort of make those steps forward to create your own path.

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And Urshita, I think you've got a massive role in inspiring women with yours.

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So something which was important to us, even when we were founding the company was that it was going to be an auto injector for adrenaline, and they've been very existing auto injectors around and they were only originally designed for the military. So the profile was automatically dominantly extremely fit young men. And even for better or for worse in med tech innovators contribute very heavily to what shapes the direction of future technology changes. So inclusion in med tech startups especially is not as simple as a social impact metric in terms of number of employees you have or just that kind of an inclusive ideology. Having a diverse set of opinions and ideas on the table is almost crucial to innovation in the medtech space, especially if you're going for a mass consumer product, where you don't actually control whose hand it ends up in. But it needs to work as well for everyone who's being profiled. And so for that, ultimately, I feel like in the medtech space, it actually limits the potential of the innovation itself if you don't hear opinions from other people who will also be using the product. If you only hear a narrow group of people, then the final product that goes to market is also ultimately for a very small slice of the population and then you end up in this never ending product improvement cycle, which is not good for the users. It's not good for A company which is making the product, it's not good for investors, and it just kind of limits the scope of the innovation itself.

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So, yeah,so you've had a responsibility with creating a product that works with women, not just with men. Yes,

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definitely. And it was kind of why we even started doing the company because boys were complaining first, because they don't like the size because they have to carry it in their pocket for like the epi pen or M Red or one of our competitors. But there were a few medical inquisitions around the actual medical efficacy as to whether it is suited for people over a certain weight, or for women who maybe have anatomical differences in muscle depth. So it kind of started off there. And there's just a general need now to just be more diverse, if you're going to say that something improves the health outcome.

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So sets Thank you. So as women what's what challenges are you having in the workplace as women entrepreneurs? What are your challenges, Eleanor,

31:08

Mine kind of falls into more of a personal sort of situation or thought, where I'm in my mid 30s, I would love to have a family. So to be able to have the confidence to be able to continue my business, I know that I can maintain that growth, as well as creating enough time to be able to have a family and settle down. It's just the balance really, for me that is, I guess, sometimes the unknown is quite scary. So until you actually move forward with those things, it's hard to really know practically how that's gonna work. But that is something that does pop into my head every now and then. And is a challenge that I'm definitely going to have to work out because I'm sure everyone else on this panel will agree running your own business is so time consuming, and there's no on off button. It's not like you're working nine to five, and then you go home, we're so invested, because it's such a personal thing for us that to bring in another huge element into your life is definitely a challenge that I'm looking forward to overcoming

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quite a challenge. And Tasha, I think you, you know, how do you feel as a woman? I mean, in the future? Yeah,

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I mean, I think, yeah, that the challenges, it's nice to see those start to change. Some of the challenges that we've faced is just in even gender stereotypes. You know, I'm in agriculture, which isn't a kind of expected field for me to be in. I think the assumption is that I'm in beauty or and something for underrepresented communities. So it's interesting to take a challenge that really reaches out to multiple different people throughout the world, but different backgrounds, and really conveying that across that we can do anything as women, not just in kind of roles in which we're used to seeing them.

32:59

And so, funding, I'd like to talk a little bit about funding, because I know it's close to two of your hearts at the moment. And as a woman, what what challenges are you finding with funding, I mean, I know Urshita. You go in as a as a pair with your business partner. But is there any special prep that you feel that you need to do as a woman when you're presenting,

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not maybe on the external front. So we have two co founders, I'm female, my co founder is male, he's CTO, I'm CEO. So I'm in charge a lot of fundraising and operations. But he leads all technical innovation that is happening or any development that we're doing. So we do like to separate our division of labour actually, and make sure that he's not talking over me or on or speaking on things that come under technically my responsibilities or I'm not speaking over his, which is actually very easy for us to do because we're a startup and everyone is very actively involved in everything, despite the clear division of labour. But that is a lot to communicate in by the venue or invest, like pitching to an investor in like a 15 minute interaction or if I'm stepping into r&d meeting where I'm actually stepping in to that meeting every one month to basically decide if the budget was appropriate or not, which is anyway a bad cop job. So in that moment, at least, it's better if we are very clearly communicating with each other beforehand and we are on clear sides because the chances are something weird happening or weird interaction taking place where someone speaks over me, is just more likely than so we ended up being like more prepared for it, in case that happens, rather than for it to happen and then for it to get weird. So we do We'll do that bit of like preparation as to, you're gonna say this, I'm going to say this. And if there are any questions, we will answer them according to what that division of labour was originally.

35:09

And Tash. How have you found navigating the funding area? Yeah,

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definitely. I mean, I think we've heard the stats now, what is it less than 3% of VC funding go to female entrepreneurs. And then you take the economic climate of right now, on top of all that, it's just a really difficult time, I think, for any founder to kind of close out funding, we've been really fortunate. So far, we've raised over 2 million pounds, we've been able to build and scale the team and to continue to push forward, we've been especially lucky because we have an incredible group of investors. So the majority of the investors that I engage with are women themselves. So we have an incredible group of female investors kind of backing and they have other partners who are male. So this is really nice kind of dynamic that we have within there. But we know that we're the exception to this.

36:02

amazing, that's fantastic. So a big question here, in in business, and in your experience, how are we different to men?

36:16

That's really interesting. You know, I think one example that I can think of is, as you're starting to work through your financial models and with investors, is there's this this trend that men sometimes will over promise and under achieve, whereas women will do the opposite, we under promise and over achieve from there. So we take a much more modest approach of how we're looking at revenue projections and how we're looking at the kind of work that we're doing, it seems to be a bit more grounded. And I don't know, you know, whether that's out of our own insecurities, or whether that's just being a bit more straightforward, and how we're thinking in that. So it's good on one hand, that you can be frugal, and like, you really start to map out projections and that side, but it can also be looked at as a downside, as if you don't understand how to scale a company where you're not thinking big enough. It's out there. So it's a difficult challenge to show that you know, what you're talking about, you understand the growth and projection your company can do. But you're also realistic within that.

37:12

And that extends to authority as well, especially in meetings. And as such, this is the like, if I'm conducting a meeting, this is the volume, I will conduct the meeting at and my subcontractors are dominantly male. If they all start speaking, especially on a zoom call altogether, I have raised my volume, which often comes across as yelling, maybe, but what I'm trying to do is just be heard over someone whose decibel is higher, even I know they aren't exactly trying to speak over me. But it's very soft things that sometimes happen in the room, even with authority where I'm like, Oh, I don't want to come across as yelling. But I also need to take control of the meeting. But my decibel just doesn't allow that. So how do I do this? And it's just, you don't want it to look like you're incompetent, and you can't get hold of the team and I can, but I would like to be able to do it without yelling, or tend

38:11

to make yourself bigger. Yeah.

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I think for me, personally, I I've seen myself doing it, sometimes I will definitely think the business isn't as big as it is and under value what I've achieved, whereas definitely experienced the opposite when talking to certain men within business, and predominantly my manufacturers are men. And so I'm purposefully going in there overselling to be able to get them to take my business seriously and bring me on so that they can become a supplier. So it's that whole way of navigating how men interpret women and vice versa to be able to give your business the best foot forward for growth.

38:56

Thank you very much. And let's just go back to that hashtag a minute. How as a as an female entrepreneur, can you inspire inclusion? Yeah,

39:11

I mean, I think the most important thing for me is to live it, you know, to actually each day and you pay women fairly, you give them opportunities within the company that bring that sense of inclusion and I think inclusion can take on all types of ways to be able to manage that and I think at the core of it is really just empathy towards your the people that you're hiring and the people that you start to, to work around. But I think it takes a bit of, you know, the discussion around it is great, and I think we need to be able to have it, but also just being able to live it each day I think is the most powerful thing we can do. So International Women's Day. It's great that we have this and we can highlight it, but also it's you know, something that we want to do each day.

39:54

I didn't know you talked about mentoring. Tell us a little bit about that in the context of InnovationRCA, what what have you been involved in with inspiring inclusion?

40:06

For me having been through the Creative Brands Accelerator programme, and now being on the other side of it, it's been so wonderful to see, because I appreciate it more than I guess, someone who hasn't had the experience of both, I understand the value of knowledge and to be able to share that, as I mentioned earlier, has been wonderful. And it also being recognised by the RCA to be invited to come back is a huge compliment, and a confidence boost. Because as a business owner, sometimes, you know, you do get the odd impostor syndrome and things like that. So to be able to overcome those things, and come back into a space where I'm surrounded by other sort of young creatives with all these ideas, and I do workshops that are all to do with branding, how to market yourself, how to take an idea and develop that from an idea through production to a viable product and looking at costing is across the board that I'm sort of interacting with the new generation of entrepreneurs. And whilst that maybe doesn't inspire inclusion, specifically, it definitely inspires that generation to know that there is that space for them to be able to step forward and, and follow their dream as cheesy as that sounds. Because we're living it and we're doing something that we really believe in for whatever reason. And I think a lot of that drive and belief comes from personal experience, and just to be able to instil that confidence in others and share maybe mistakes or situations where in hindsight, like Oh, I could have done that better, you know, to be able to pass that on. And really give them the footing, they need to take those steps forward is so rewarding for myself, as well as, as the people that I'm working with.

42:06

That is inspirational. And Urshita as you're in the incubator at the moment. You're experiencing mentoring around you, and the sort of the, let's call it The Sisterhood of other female entrepreneurs in the incubator currently, how how do you find that?

42:29

I find that incredible, because all the med tech startups currently are I think dominantly 99% of them are female founded. So we're having like, we're very dominantly in in the incubator, at least, it's a very female dominated industry. And that in and of itself is just a communication is a bit easier, because I don't have to convince them of a problem or prove that it exists to begin with, and then have build a conversation on top of that, if I say I'm struggling with this, they'll just believe me. So it that just makes it very easier. And just even in what Eleanor was saying about kind of finding that personal growth metric while doing entrepreneurship, because it's so all consuming can be hard. And when you have that many women around you who are also just doing the same thing, in the same industry, we bump into each other at events outside of the incubator, so it just somehow, like, aligns that personal growth metric a bit more with entrepreneurship itself, because you kind of feel as a part of a cohort. And then you don't feel as displaced because they're kind of doing the same things. Or if they're making different choices, I just have a more personal understanding of what those choices are. It just takes the pressure off a little bit to just have a class to be a part of.

43:59

And actually, I'd like to wrap up there, but I'm gonna throw you all with a question that we haven't discussed before. But I want one tip from each of you to that person that is thinking about starting their business, that young woman who's just perhaps, finished her course, and has an idea and wants to start a business. One tip for her.

44:24

Yeah, I mean, maybe less so than a tip than a than a personality thing. Resiliency, I think is the most important skill that you can have. It's difficult work as an entrepreneur and as a female entrepreneur, and just having the stamina and the resiliency each day, to keep being able to push forward to keep being able to meet these challenges and all types of crazy things that can happen in a startup each day. Just being able to navigate that with strength and steam and and being able to look after yourself and while you're looking after a company I think is critical.

44:57

It's okay to say you don't know something As long as you're not lying about it, it's it really is, as long as you're able to be there be like, I know this much, I can hire out the rest. I think that is more important. I think sometimes a female entrepreneur especially get a bit overwhelmed as to what the idea of a startup founder is, or that it requires an exceptional sense of talent or hard work, it really does not, it is a very real possibility for anyone to do it and what you can do, you can collaborate over, there are people who will help there are other women who have technical prowess in something you don't have, who will be willing to give time and release to just say you don't know it admit it , don't lie about it, and hire it out and move forward with it. It's really not as hard as it looks and deserves.

45:51

For me, what I would say is to embrace failure and mistakes early on, and almost make as many mistakes as you can early on, because the further down the line in the business you are in, the more costly those mistakes are, and the harder they are to fix them because you've got a bigger foundation, a bigger infrastructure, bigger cashflow, inventory, whatever industry you're in. And, you know, failure is really sort of frowned upon. And just generally in life, you know, to fail, it's generally seen as a bad thing. And actually, I think it's something that should be embraced, because it's the only way you're going to learn and move forward, getting knowledge and making those areas yourself. Wonderful.

46:36

Thank you very much. This has been fascinating and inspiring. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

46:48

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