

# GLOBAL Leaders TODAY

Issue 7 | Volume 1


July 2021

## THE JOURNEY OF A SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR


Leading The Charge To  
Empower Others



[www.globalleaderstoday.online](http://www.globalleaderstoday.online)

 [global-leaders-today-magazine](#)

 [globalleaderstoday\\_](#)

 [Global Leaders Today](#)



## From the Editor

Dear Readers,

I am delighted to bring you the July issue with thought-provoking articles and a Cover Story that truly inspired all of us at Global Leaders Today.

Bejay Mulenga is a young entrepreneur with a vision to help everyone succeed. At an early age, he has already celebrated a decade of establishing business globally. His tremendous hard work and success is truly remarkable and serves as a guiding point to all of us.

The issue also features several articles ranging from vaccinating your workforce to inclusion in your workplace. It gives a unique insight into promoting inclusion from the grassroots at all organizations, not just with policies but also by changing each employee's mindset and creating an inclusive culture.

Lastly, I would like to thank my team that has worked whole-heartedly to give our readers an insightful and inspiring issue.

Warm Regards,

**Sherlyn Gomes**

Editor at Global Leaders Today

Cover Image Credit: GlobalHapiness.Org

global-leaders-today-magazine

globalleaderstoday\_

Global Leaders Today

# GLOBAL Leaders TODAY

### EDITORIAL TEAM

**Sherlyn Gomes**  
Editor

**Alexis Miller**  
**Brianna Da Cruz**  
**Justin Roberts**  
**Kyle Goldberg**  
**Siya Mehta**  
Writers

**Mustafa Kanchwalla**  
Art & Design Director

**Franco Collins**  
Co-Designer

**Stacey Morrison**  
Research Analyst

**Mia Allen**  
Sales & Marketing

**Liam Cooper**  
Digital Media Consultant

**T: +1 (913) - 276-0963**

**E: editor@globalleaderstoday.online**

**Registered Address:**  
935 Eldridge Rd, Suite 113, Sugar Land, TX 77478, USA

*The views expressed in the articles within Global Leaders Today are the contributors own, nothing within the announcements or articles should be construed as a profit forecast. All rights reserved. Material contained within this publication is not to be reproduced in whole or part without the prior permission of Global Leaders Today.*

**If you would like to get involved or have any news you would like to share, please contact us on (913) 380-9528 or email us at editor@globalleaderstoday.online**



GLOBAL Leaders TODAY

www.globalleaderstoday.online

Your monthly guide to inspirational leaders from around the world

GET YOUR DIGITAL EDITION TODAY!

# Contents

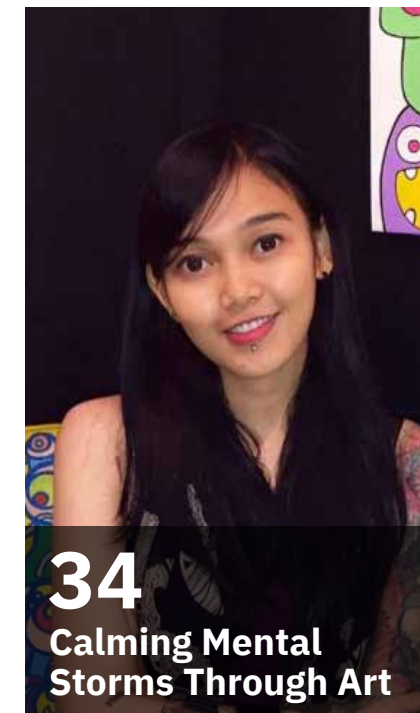


04

**COVER STORY:**  
**The Journey Of A Social Entrepreneur**



14  
**The Man With The Extraordinary Vision**



34  
**Calming Mental Storms Through Art**

The Journey Of A Social Entrepreneur .....04

The Fashion Brand That Pivoted To Help The Homeless...08

News .....10

The Man With The Extraordinary Vision .....14

Newsmakers .....16

A Guide To Vaccinate Your Workforce.....18

Leveraging The Power Of Kindness.....19

The Avant-Garde Of The Marketing World .....20

Leading The Charge Against Inoculation.....22

Augmenting The Gender Spectrum At The Workplace.....24

Four Series Every Entrepreneur Must Watch On Netflix.....25

The Gangsta Gardener Changing The Narrative.....26

The Incredible Life Of Nick.....28

Trending Apps: Navigating Through Clubhouse ..30

Enjoying The Spectacle Of Failure As An Entrepreneur .....31

The Musical Prodigy.....32

Calming Mental Storms Through Art .....34

Why Working Moms Make Great Entrepreneurs.....36

4 Unexpected Items You Need In Your WFH Office So You're Prepared For The Future Of Work .....37

The Commendable Doctor Aiding The Nations .....38

# The Journey Of A Social Entrepreneur

COVER STORY



Image Credit: YouTube Bejay Mulenga

Bejay Mulenga is a 26-year-old serial entrepreneur who has already celebrated a decade of establishing businesses across industries. His venture Supa Network has provided its services to some of the world's most influential brands, including Facebook and Apple and offered them essential advice on effective ways to connect, recruit and understand the next generation of young people.

*Written by Sherlyn Gomes*



Image Credit: Twitter Supa Network

**B**ejay Mulenga's entrepreneurial journey began in secondary school when he was 12; he organized a talent show single-handedly. As a young boy, Mulenga nurtured a valuable skill: the ability to utilize whatever resources he had available to pull a project together. Mulenga managed various tasks such as recruiting talented performers, finding and booking the ideal venue at the right price, marketing the event in his school and working out the finances to make the event a hit as well as profitable. Mulenga's talent for event management meant that the talent show was sold-out and was a great success. It was the first step in his entrepreneurial journey that continues to flourish till date. Mulenga said, "The whole process gave me a buzz to run more events and projects. Still aged 13, I fundraised £35,000 from the local council to rebuild a derelict studio and rehearsal space at the youth centre."

Mulenga soon moved on to his next venture that involved opening and running a small tuck shop whilst at secondary school, which soon generated a decent profit. Mulenga recalled, "Whilst at school aged 14,

I managed to set up and run my school's first tuck shop, which turned over £15,000 by the end of that academic year. My bug for business continued to grow over the forthcoming years."

Due to his fascination with business, Mulenga soon enrolled himself as a business student but considered the course highly theoretical and not practical. He found that he was acquiring more practical business knowledge through his entrepreneurial efforts that helped give him an insight into how businesses functioned.

"My first company, Supa Tuck, was set up when I was 16; the company goal was to have trading tuck shops in all schools across the UK within five years. I knew my tuck shop model worked and had proven its success repeatedly."



Image Credit: Bejay Mulenga

Image Credit: www.bejaymulenga.com



Around the same time, he familiarised himself with the concept of franchising. Mulenga was fascinated with the potential for his business to grow by opening his brand of tuck shop across many schools in the vicinity. In addition, he also wanted to offer students like himself a practical education of the fundamentals of business. He registered his company under the name 'Supa Tuck' in 2012. He said, "My first company, Supa Tuck, was set up when I was 16; the company goal was to have trading tuck shops in all schools across the UK within five years. I knew my tuck shop model worked and had proven its success repeatedly."

By the time he finished presenting his idea, many schools were eager to set up a shop for their students. Within just four years, Mulenga had worked with more than 5,000 students and received an invitation to Downing Street to meet the Enterprise Advisor to the former Prime Minister David Cameron, Lord Young.

Mulenga recalled, "As a young black boy from London, I never envisioned being invited to Downing Street." Chasing his business idea as a young boy with perseverance and hard work had brought his vision to life. Downing Street was soon followed by a speech delivered at the Conservative Party

conference, at just 19 years to discuss enterprise for the youth.

At the time, Mulenga's peers who had studied with him at university or recently left school to pursue their passion were struggling to find good jobs. This made him reflect on the skills he had developed while he ran his tuck shop business and figured that he could share his expertise on the topic with others. He set up the 'Supa Market' to fulfil this objective, and in 2015 he arranged a pop-up market operated by teens at the Truman Brewery in Shoreditch, East London. The pop-up functioned as a mini department store, where several young entrepreneurs pitched and sold various products. The pop-up soon had more than 10,000 customers, and in 2016 his efforts were recognized by the Queen of England when, at 21, he was the youngest recipient of the Queen's Award for Enterprise.

Fueled by these wins, Mulenga established The Supa Academy pop-up that focused on retail products and helped young entrepreneurs sell their products. During 2016, the influencer industry was flourishing. Many of the influencers were either teenagers or in their early 20s, and Mulenga noticed that some influencers could not obtain fair payment terms due to their weak negotiation skills. He saw

this as an opportunity to share his skills since he was well equipped to negotiate with established brands and relate to influencers in a similar age group. Thus, Mulenga soon embarked on a new venture called Filli Studios. The company has now worked and managed some of the best-known influencers in the United Kingdom. His desire to help young people gain business experience did not stop there; he soon established his next business, the Supa Network.

Supa Network brings all of his business endeavours under one roof, ranging across creative content production, event production, Gen-Z marketing, influencer marketing and recruitment for large companies. Supa Network has worked with global powerhouses, including Facebook, The Office Group, and the Cabinet Office. A highlight of this was training 3,000 people in the last twelve months on digital skills in partnership with Facebook.

While talking about the future of business, he says, "Social entrepreneurship is the future for my generation of businessmen and women, a lot of my peers and myself personally actually have passion behind what they do, as working for money solely simply isn't enough to keep us going when times get tough."

# The Fashion Brand That Pivoted To Help The Homeless



Image Credit: Laundrytruckla

Jodie Dolan is a Fashion Designer that pivoted to find a solution for the homeless. She is the Founder of The Laundry Truck LA that provides many homeless families and individuals in the greater LA and downtown area with clean clothes. The Non-Profit aims to restore a bit of dignity and hope to the local homeless communities through free laundry service.

*Written by Alexis Miller*

“I don’t want to say I’m doing like a victory lap. Who knows what will happen tomorrow. But I do feel, at least, inspired by all the things that we’ve learned over the past year.”

Jodie Dolan started her career in fashion after a brief stint with interior designing. She founded the brand DOLAN in 2004, out of her garage in Los Angeles. It began as a fun project for the Art History major; however, the brand quickly grew from a t-shirt line into an entire clothing brand with her perseverance and zeal to keep improving.

Talking about the early stages of the brand, she said, “In a serendipitous moment, my tees fell into the hands of a buyer at Saks, this was the moment it felt like it went from an art project in my garage to a real company. From hand-painted tees to a full-fledged design and production house with partners all over the world – it’s been incredibly exciting.”

Her career in fashion was fulfilling until she came across a problem that she couldn’t get out of her mind. Every time she stepped out, she saw homeless people. Every day she noticed more tents were going up around Los Angeles, and the number of homeless people on the street was increasing.

Dolan decided she needed to step up and do something to deal with what she called a humanitarian crisis. She started by volunteering at Skid Row, a neighbourhood in Los Angeles with the highest reported numbers of homeless people. She began by preparing food for the homeless in the evenings and even started befriending people to connect with them at a deeper level to understand the issues they faced. “I kept asking, what could be our contribution to this? I knew that I wanted to do something, but I didn’t know what it was,” Dolan said.

“And then when I got involved with the Shower Of Hope, I saw people taking showers and having this amazing, transformative, clean experience only to put their dirty clothes back on. It was sort of like the ‘AHA’ moment of the power of clothing and what that can do to improve your self esteem and dignity.”

Dolan had an epiphany, and in 2017, she bought a ‘laundry truck’ – a trailer with five washers and dryers inside that she intended to use to wash the clothes of the homeless. She named it ‘The Laundry Truck LA.’



Image Credit: thelaundrytruckla.com

Dolan said, “It’s expensive to do laundry and do it regularly. It’s definitely something that is needed that we do not think about. But it’s probably not the first place you would use your money if you had limited resources.”

She then began driving the Laundry Truck LA’ around the city to areas where homeless people resided and began offering her free services to them. The truck has two shifts – day and night– all seven days of the week.

“We go to the same spot. So every Monday, we’ll be at MacArthur Park. ... We do have the consistency of a location so that people ... can count on us,” she says. “And we can also show up with additional services like outreach workers, and caseworkers, and showers, and all the additional auxiliary services are usually surrounding the laundry.”

One of the beneficiaries of this initiative has been Nakai, a homeless person, living in LA. He reiterates that having limited money meant that we would rather use it for food and transportation instead of laundry. But looking presentable is important to him, especially if he is attempting to crack a job interview.

He said, “I want to look presentable enough to get a job. I don’t want to walk into a place with my hair messed up with dirty clothes. I want to look as clean as possible.” The Laundry Truck LA has helped him achieve this.

“I couldn’t see not doing something. It just feels imperative that we all do our part, whatever that is, and for me, that turned out to be laundry trucks,” Dolan said. “It’s too much to bear, to see it every day and not want to help find a solution.”

It’s her desire to be a part of the solution that became a turning point even during the pandemic. At the beginning of the pandemic, the brand was severely hit, and Dolan was forced to shut shop and even lay off employees. However, in a few days of closing, the city asked her if she would be willing to make masks and donate them to frontline workers. Dolan immediately agreed to help.

Dolan called her staff back and started working on making these masks. She donated about 100,000 masks and got more requests from the healthcare sector, including doctors, nurses and ER units.

She realized her company could do their part and offer more to the healthcare sector. The brand instantly decided to start designing more protective gear – including scrubs, hospital gowns, hats, masks, booties, and gloves and donating them.

In conclusion, Dolan said, “I don’t want to say I’m doing like a victory lap. Who knows what will happen tomorrow. But I do feel, at least, inspired by all the things that we’ve learned over the past year.”

# NEWS

## Pfizer, AstraZeneca Covid Vaccines Prove Effective Against Delta Variant



The vaccines produced by Pfizer Inc. and AstraZeneca have proven to be highly effective at preventing the hospitalization of those infected with the new delta variant. This underscores the urgency of getting people fully protected, according to health authorities in England.

The Pfizer and BioNTech SE shot has an efficacy rate of 96% against hospitalization after two doses. In comparison, the AstraZeneca and University of Oxford Covid inoculation have an efficacy rate of 92%, according to an analysis announced on June 14th by Public Health England. These results are comparable with the protection offered against the alpha variant, which first emerged in Britain, the data revealed.

“The vaccines are the most important tool we have against COVID-19,” Mary Ramsay, Public Health England’s Head of Immunization, said in a statement. “It is absolutely vital to get both doses as soon as they are offered to you, to gain maximum protection against all existing and emerging variants.”

## Poland Makes Plans To Close Europe’s Most Polluting Power Plant By The End Of 2036

Poland has made plans to close Europe’s most polluting power plant by the end of 2036; the local authorities published a draft document on Tuesday, June 8th, after energy group PGE (Polska Grupa Energetyczna) scrapped plans to develop an open-pit coal mine.

PGE has abandoned a plan to develop an open-pit lignite coal mine in the Zloczew region that would fuel the Belchatow plant after concluding that the project would be a loss, the document stated.

“Scheduling the dates of shutting down the power units of the Belchatow Power Plant... (and) abandoning the plan to exploit the Zloczew deposit are of fundamental importance for planning



the future of the Belchatow Complex, its employees and the inhabitants of this region,” Chief Executive Wojciech Dabrowski said in a statement. “They are also symbolic, because the success of this project will largely determine the success of the Polish energy transformation.”

## Prof Heymans To Be The First Woman Appointed As Scotland’s Astronomer Royal

An astrophysicist from the University of Edinburgh is the first woman to be named as Astronomer Royal for Scotland. Prof Catherine Heymans was recommended by an international panel convened by the Royal Society of Edinburgh to the Queen of Scotland. Prof Heymans, in a statement, said that she wanted to use the 200-year-old title to encourage people to develop a passion for science.

One of her first targets includes the installation of telescopes at all remote outdoor learning centres located in Scotland, which are visited by most of the country’s school pupils. Prof Heymans said: “I don’t think anyone forgets the first time they saw the rings of Saturn through a telescope, but too many people never have the chance,” and she would like to change that.



“My hope is that once that spark and connection with the universe is made, children will carry that excitement home with them and develop a life-long passion for astronomy or, even better, science as a whole,” said the Professor.

## Victoria’s Secret Rebrands With New Ambassadors



Victoria’s Secret is replacing its Angels. On Wednesday, June 16th, the lingerie company announced the ‘Victoria’s Secret Collective,’ which is a group of new ambassadors for the brand, in a New York Times article.

The Victoria’s Secret Collective’s seven members include model and body positivity advocate Paloma Elsesser, soccer player Megan Rapinoe, freeskier World Champion Eileen Gu, journalist and Girl Gaze founder Amanda de Cadenet, transgender model and activist Valentina Sampaio, actress and entrepreneur Priyanka Chopra Jonas, and mental health advocate and model Adut Akech. To commemorate the relaunch, the VS Collective will sit down and share their personal stories on a podcast hosted by de Cadenet.

This rebrand follows decades of criticism over the lingerie brand’s old beauty standards and lack of body and gender inclusivity and racial diversity. “I’ve known that we needed to change this brand for a long time, we just haven’t had the control of the company to be able to do it,” the brand’s CEO Martin Waters said.

## El Salvador Becomes The First Country In The World To Make Bitcoin Legal Tender

El Salvador became the first country in the world to adopt bitcoin as legal tender after Congress approved President Nayib Bukele’s proposal to embrace the cryptocurrency, a move that delighted the currency’s supporters on Wednesday, June 9th.

With 62 out of 84 votes, lawmakers have voted in favour of the move to create a law to adopt the use of bitcoin, despite concerns about the potential impact on El Salvador’s program with the International Monetary Fund. Bukele has lauded the use of bitcoin for showing potential to help Salvadorans living abroad to send remittances back home while mentioning that the U.S. dollar will also continue as legal tender. In practice, El Salvador does not have its currency.



“It will bring financial inclusion, investment, tourism, innovation and economic development for our country,” Bukele said in a tweet shortly before the vote in Congress, which is controlled by his party and allies.

## New Sustainable Roofing Material Created Can Naturally Keep Buildings Cool Without A/C



Yi Zheng, the Associate Professor at Northeastern University in Boston, has created a sustainable material that can be used to build houses or other objects and keep cool without depending on any conventional cooling systems.

Zheng envisioned this material, dubbed ‘cooling paper,’ covering the roofs of houses, warehouses, and office buildings. The light-coloured material reflects hot solar rays away from the building. It can also suck the heat

out of the interior, heat emitted from electronics, cooking, and human bodies. The material can be exposed to solar radiation, different weather conditions, and varying temperatures. Results showed that the recycled cooling paper performed just as well as the original.

Zheng aims to reduce utility bills through his research and hopes that his work will help combat climate change. “The starting point is to reduce the use of carbon-based materials and also to reduce global warming,” Zheng says.

## Ghana Planted 5 Million Trees In A Day To Combat Deforestation



Ghana planted at least 5 million trees in a single day on Friday, June 11th, to help regrow and replenish the country's lost forests and curb the impact of climate change; the President, Nana Akufo-Addo, said.

The expansion of farming and a lesser degree of mining and logging have led to high levels of deforestation in Ghana, environmentalists say. According to Forestry Commission figures, forest cover in the West African gold miner has declined to less than a fifth of what it was compared to the 1990s.

"The exploitation of forest resources for national development has not been sustainable over the years," Akufo-Addo said in a speech that marked the country's inaugural Green Ghana Day. He continued, "We don't have tomorrow or the day after tomorrow to do this. We have to act now."

## Indian High Court Bans 'Cure' Of Sexual Orientation, Issues Guidelines To Police To Handle LGBTQ Cases

The Madras High Court in India has suggested a slew of measures, including legislation and changes in the curriculum of educational institutions, to remove prejudices against the LGBTQIA+ community, Bar and Bench reported on Monday.

A single-judge bench of Justice Anand Venkatesh ordered strict action against those found to be indulging in attempts to 'cure or change' the sexual orientation by mental health professionals. Justice Venkatesh was hearing a petition filed by a lesbian couple seeking protection from police harassment and their families who were against the relationship.

"I strongly feel that the change must take place at a societal level and when it is complemented by a law, there will



be a remarkable change in society's outlook by recognising same-sex relationships," Justice Venkatesh said in his judgment. He observed that legislative changes were needed to eradicate social discrimination against the LGBTQIA+ community to ensure their life and dignity.

## President Biden Signed The Juneteenth Bill, Creating A New Federal Holiday That Commemorates The End Of Slavery In The U.S.

On Thursday, June 17, President Joe Biden signed a bill that established Juneteenth, the date that commemorates the end of slavery in the United States, as a federal holiday. In what he called 'one of the greatest honors' of his presidency, Biden signed the bill two days before Juneteenth, celebrated on June 19 each year.

Juneteenth National Independence Day will become the 12th legal public holiday in the U.S., including Inauguration Day. The day celebrates the emancipation of the last enslaved African Americans in the country. On this day in 1865, Gen. Gordon Granger led the union soldiers who arrived in the coastal city of Galveston, Texas, to deliver General



Order No. 3, which officially ended slavery in the state.

"We have come far, and we have far to go. But today is a day of celebration," said Vice President Kamala Harris, who spoke before the President at the signing event in the White House. "In short, this day doesn't just celebrate the past. It calls for action today," Biden said.

## U.K. Ends Restriction On Bisexual And Gay Men Donating Blood



For the first time after several years, healthy people of any sexual orientation or gender who have had the same sexual partner for a period of three months are eligible to donate plasma, blood and platelets in most of the United Kingdom as of Monday, June 14th, under the new guidelines issued by National Health Service.

This marks a significant change for people who identify as male and have male-identifying sexual partners, who in many countries, including the United States, are barred from or subject to strict rules on giving blood, in what critics say are policies that discriminate against LGBTQ people.

"The changes mean that a donor's eligibility to donate will be based on a more individualised assessment rather than on a risk assigned to a group or population, marking a historic move to make blood donation more inclusive without affecting safety," the NHS wrote last month on its website.

## Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook CEO, Envisions Peloton-Like Fitness Subscriptions For VR

Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook CEO, sees potential for Peloton-like fitness subscriptions in virtual reality in the future. Zuckerberg spoke about augmented and virtual reality efforts at the French tech conference VivaTech on Thursday, June 17th, with Publicis Groupe Chairman Maurice Levy. He said gaming is the primary use case for VR today but there's growth potential in social experiences or the fitness sector.

The company announced that it would begin testing advertisements that will appear within its Oculus virtual reality headsets. Facebook's Oculus Quest proved to be popular during the coronavirus pandemic, as people sought more entertainment options at home.

"Think about it like Peloton, where you have a subscription, but instead the device is VR and you put on your headset, and you're in this amazing environment and you're doing a boxing class with an



instructor, or a dance class," he said. "It's quickly expanding beyond games into a bunch of other use cases, and we think that this is eventually going to be a big part of the next major computing platform after phones and after PCs."

## Pictet, Swiss Wealth Manager Appoints First Female Partner In 200-Year History

On Monday, June 21st, the Pictet Group, Swiss Wealth and Asset Manager appointed Elif Aktug as their Managing Partner, the first woman to ever hold that position in the private bank's 216-year history.

Francois Pictet will also be given the position of Managing Partner from September pending regulatory approval for the two, which would bring the number of partners to nine, Geneva-based Pictet said in a statement.

The Pictet Group is a partnership of owner-managers, with principles of succession and transfer of ownership that have not changed since its foundation in 1805. It had 609 billion Swiss francs (\$661.09 billion) under management or custody at the end of 2020.



"We're delighted to welcome Elif and François to the Board of Partners, a step we've been planning since the end of 2020 to help manage the increased demands resulting from the strong growth of the firm," Senior Managing Partner Renaud de Planta said.

# The Man With The Extraordinary Vision

Gui Perdrix is a Coliving Expert, Community Building Consultant and Author on the subjects of coliving, community and connection. Gui currently stirs the coliving industry by being the Director of Co-Liv, the global association of coliving professionals, which represents and empowers coliving players through events, membership services and educational content. Gui is also the founder of Art of Co, an educational platform dedicated to creating transformative coliving experiences. It is his passion for human dynamics that lead him to constantly ask the question of how to create better frameworks for human flourishing, which constantly drives him to accomplish more every day.

*Written by Sherlyn Gomes*



**G**ui Perdrix is of French descent but was born and raised in Germany, next to Frankfurt. Gui recalled, “I grew up in a small town of 30,000 people.”

His life-altering moment happened when he was relatively young. Talking about the incident, he says, “When I was 14, I went to Peru and South America for an exchange program. And, that really shaped me in many ways, especially because there was a huge cultural difference between Latin American culture, which is very open and friendly and German culture, which is usually pretty close, especially in the area where I was born. And since then, I knew I wanted to leave Germany as soon as I finished high school.”

After completing high school, Gui shifted to France and continued his education at Sciences Po, and also earned a Bachelor’s Degree at the University of Southern California. His first job was at a startup, in a marketing role based in London. He then worked at several other startups before co-founding an innovation/co-working space in Paris.

Shortly after, Gui had a breakdown that changed the course of his life for the better. He quit his job and decided to go to Barcelona for a one-month personal growth program. Unfortunately, he did not have the financial means to go for it, so confided in his friend who was accompanying him. His friend encouraged and motivated him to do it, and Gui was convinced. When they got to the place, they realized that several others also faced a similar predicament and did not have any accommodation. So in approximately two weeks, they gathered 15 people who wanted to live together, collected the payments, and found a big apartment that could accommodate all of them comfortably. They named the place a lifestyle engineering house.

That was the first Co-living space that Gui created. This incident greatly impacted Gui since it was the first time he succeeded in an entrepreneurial project. It also gave him a chance to acquire more knowledge and wisdom regarding personal understanding and self-discovery. This experience made him want to create more of these spaces across the globe.

Gui then gradually moved into the Co-living sector. When discussing what drew him to become a nomad, he said, “The Nomad culture comes from a friend of mine, who was also one of the Co-Founders of my first Co-living space. He is an independent person with no restrictions on location. He is a nomad, and I truly wanted to experience that level of freedom.” that led him on this path.

Gui reminisces fondly; he says, “In the first two years of Co-living, I didn’t do it for profit; it was a fun project. And personally, it was me having a great life and living to the fullest.”

According to him, the concept of Co-living is when there are more than two people who do not belong to the same family and share a place with common amenities. He goes on to further explain, he says, “I think there are different forms of Co-living for example, student housing and senior housing can also be included in this category. And different markets as well, when you look at Europe, the Co-living offerings are very different than in India. The experience in the latter is flexible, offering ease and affordability. While in Europe, it caters to a mid size income population that is going through a phase in their life where they want to stay in a Co-living space for about 12 to 18 months.”

Co-living as a concept goes beyond just a fun experience. Gui explains, “it creates interaction with people that you usually would not interact with that means there will be more instances where people will get uncomfortable and triggered. And the question is how to get over them. So it is going to create experiences and memories, but also challenges.”

He further says, “for instance, if I meet somebody in the bar, then I may see them again maybe once, and then I might text them. And we will probably see each other once a month. And that’s it. However, if I live with somebody for about four months, I will see them every day. So the amount of interaction and the amount of alignment that gets created is much more substantial. So it puts you in new situations that you haven’t been in before and teaches you how to deal with people you wouldn’t deal with usually, and teaches you to be more empathetic.”

To explain the concept of Co-living to the masses, Gui is currently working on his new book, *The Art Of Co-living*, which will be published soon. Talking about the book, he said, “It’s two years of research and talking to more than 200 organizations around how to create great Co-living spaces. And to me great means spaces that are meaningful to people, and that enhance lives.”

The book has different categories ranging from how to create Co-living spaces to business models. However, the book’s primary emphasis is on building communities, finding the right residents, creating a culture within the space, giving residents autonomy, and developing independent communities.

As a master of ambiguity, Gui’s advice to the entrepreneurs entering uncharted waters is, “The number one question you should be asking yourself is why do you want to do that? What is the change that you want to bring into the world? And then explore, talk to people and figure out your alignment with the opportunity that you seek.”

**“In the first two years of Co-living, I didn’t do it for profit; it was a fun project. And personally, it was me having a great life and living to the fullest.”**





## NEWSMAKERS



## Brandon Amoroso

Founder of electrIQ marketing

Brandon Amoroso founded electrIQ marketing in March 2018 while he was still studying at the University of Southern California. Brandon has spearheaded the company's growth from a one-person shop to a team of over 20 in just two years, each specializing in enabling e-commerce brands online and driving measurable KPIs for B2B businesses.

A Gen-Z focused digital agency, electrIQ helps brands expand their digital footprint via data segmentation and hyper-personalized content, guiding the entire customer journey to increase their revenue and market share. Brandon has taken a different approach to the agency-client relationship by setting up crystal clear KPI dashboards that compare monthly results to show how electrIQ is growing your business. Ultimately, revenue increase is what matters and how electrIQ judges success.

Notable clients include Health-Ade, Wine Insiders, Biz 2 Credit, Ludo Lefebvre, LACOSTA, Martha Stewart Wine Co, ATAQ Fuel, and more.

## Connie Stacey

Founder of Growing Greener Innovations

Connie founded Growing Greener Innovations (GGI) in 2014 to create a better generator that is silent with no fumes and carbon emissions. She developed the patented GRENGINE™ that is rechargeable and a stackable battery generator, an eco-friendly option with optimum results. GGI has grown into one of Canada's top battery manufacturers and BESS design companies in six years. Connie is on the steering committee of NAIT's Centre for Grid Innovation and named to the Globe and Mail's 50 Top Changemakers list of 2021. She has received the Global Woman of Vision and World-Changing Women awards. She also won The Forum's Odium Brown 2020/2021 Award and is a frequent speaker at clean technology, energy and women in tech events.



GGI has recently been awarded a U.S. Defense Innovation Award, CGLCC Business of the Year award, and a CANIEs Product Innovation Award. "We're a social enterprise," said Connie on managing a company aimed at doing good while maintaining profits.

**"And for us, that really comes down to basically a triple bottom line. It can't be just profit; it also has to be with people and the planet in mind."**



## Philip Kafka

President of Prince Concepts

Philip Kafka has been exploring Detroit since 2012. Before purchasing property in Detroit, Kafka visited the city ten times over the span of a year. He spent his visits driving each and every inch of the city, working to understand it, and quickly realized that Detroit is not like other places.

After recognizing the creative opportunity in Detroit, Kafka founded Prince Concept, a real estate development and property management company with the objective to create inspired spaces of work. He soon purchased Prince Concept's first building - 2520 Michigan Ave at 17th Street; the building was run-down and off the beaten path but Kafka knew it could be something special. Today, the building is home to Kato, which was rated one of America's top 12 restaurant openings in 2016 by Thrillist. Prince Concepts has designed and developed the project, and Kafka is a partner in the operation.

Today, Prince Concepts is the owner of approximately 50,000 SF of buildings and 150,000 SF of land - all contiguous - in the Downtown Detroit area. In addition, Kafka is the developer behind True North Detroit, which has been featured by the Detroit Free Press, USA TODAY, the Detroit News, and was called the fourth most notable residential development in Detroit by Curbed.

## NEWSMAKERS



## Stephanie Coradin

Founder & CEO of DEMBO Inc

At the age of seventeen, Stephanie began working in hotels and restaurants and had essentially worked in all departments that allowed her to gain acumen in the mental health and wellbeing aspect of employees. With her vast experience, she believed that when employees feel valued by their leaders and trusted with their abilities, they are motivated to perform their best. With her keen insights, Stephanie founded DEMBO Inc, a leadership training and coaching agency that equips leaders with the personal and professional skills they need to lead in the hospitality industry as it continues to disrupt. She has a unique mix of knowledge and experience in business and mental health, allowing her to fill the gap between both these important aspects.

With Stephanie's drive and determination, DEMBO Inc. has won leadership and training awards three years in a row, while she has been acknowledged for her expertise as a Mental Health advocate.

## Rhys Powell

Founder of Red Rabbit

Former Wall Street trader, Rhys Powell founded Red Rabbit in 2005. The company initially planned to offer an online platform where NYC parents who wanted healthy and nutritious meals for their kids while they were at school could place an order. However, the company soon shifted its focus to catering to pre-kindergarten, local daycares, public schools, charter schools, camps and after-school programs and private schools. Lunch box home deliveries were also made available.

Today, the company delivers more than 27,000 fresh meals every day. Red Rabbit also strives to promote sustainability and offers community education about wellness and healthy eating. It has rapidly grown into a multimillion-dollar enterprise that employs nearly 100 people.



## Sue Falcone

Founder and CEO of Remarkable!

Sue has decades of experience as a Corporate Executive; she juggles various roles, including a Professional Speaker and Best-Selling Author, an Event Planner, and a Global Talent 'Booker'. This depth of firsthand knowledge gave her unequalled insights into the challenges of facilitating an event - and how to meet those challenges.

Sue is passionate about her work and dedicated to bringing customized, personalized and highly detailed event services to Remarkable! Clients. She is an award-winning visionary who brings both strength, solutions and a smile to the table when she partners with her clients to ensure their audience enjoys a first-class event. The exclamation point in her company's logo isn't a typo or an embellishment. It signals the genuine excitement clients and audiences will experience when booking a speaker, celebrity, entertainer or music artist from the eclectic roster of talent at Remarkable! A Speakers Bureau.

"Having been mentored by some of the best and still a mentee allows me to keep sharpening my skills. It is a gift that has helped me all my life! Now I give back and mentor others so that I can help them be the best they can be too!" shares Sue as the key to her successful long career.

# A Guide To Vaccinate Your Workforce

- Sherlyn Gomes



Israel's success with inoculating its population has given hope to the entire world to follow suit. On May 22nd, 2021, the country reported just 12 new virus cases, down from a daily peak of more than 10,000 in January. Recent statistics show that 20.7% of the world population has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. 2.4 billion doses have been administered globally, and 33.1 million are now distributed each day.

With the world slowly advancing towards normalcy, how can companies keep their sights focused on profits and public health and safety of their employees? What steps can be taken to ensure the safety of the employees returning to the office?

## 1. Address Concerns About Taking The Vaccine

A recent NPR/Marist poll found that one in four Americans said they would refuse a coronavirus vaccine outright if offered. Concerns about receiving the vaccine remain one of the most significant barriers to return to offices around the globe.

While most companies globally have the legal right to lay off an employee if they choose not to take the vaccine, most employers choose not to take a path with such far-fetching implications.

Kroger, the supermarket chain, came out with a brilliant initiative to tackle

this problem. They have announced that they will offer employees a \$100 bonus once they can show proof of vaccination. Employees who cannot get the COVID-19 vaccination for medical or religious reasons are encouraged to stay up to date with educational courses on protecting against the vaccine and will be entitled to the \$100 bonus.

## 2. Hybrid Models Are The Way Forward

New research conducted by global tech giant Accenture, 'The Future of Work: Productive Anywhere' found that 83% of employees said that a hybrid work model in which they can work remotely between 25% and 75% of the time is optimal.

Many companies such as Facebook, Google and Apple have adopted hybrid models. Yet, they don't always have the right impact.

For instance, in a letter sent to all Apple employees by CEO Tim Cook, the company indicated its plans to have team members back in the office on set days. Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays will become the in-office workdays, and so long as employees receive manager approval, they can work remotely on Wednesdays and Fridays. Some teams will also require in-person days four to five days a week, dependent on the role.

In response to this, Apple employees

wrote a letter highlighting a growing concern that the company's remote/location-flexible work policy and its communication have already forced some of their colleagues to quit. The letter also stated, "Over the last year, we often felt not just unheard but at times actively ignored. It feels like there is a disconnect between how the executive team thinks about remote / location-flexible work and the lived experiences of many of Apple's employees."

Therefore, it is crucial to listen to your employees and consider everyone's opinions to draft a hybrid model that works well for your company.

## 3. Lead The Way For Your Employees

Top Management getting vaccinated and talking about their experience can be a powerful tool that can positively impact employees. Recently, AT&T hosted an internal webcast with Dr Sanjay Gupta and AT&T's CEO to talk about the vaccine. In it, they emphasised that they would give the vaccine to their families, and AT&T's CEO said he was going to get vaccinated, as well.

"I know it's not always easy to get your CEO, another C-suite leader, or a key player in a business unit to go tell the story," Jackson, Assistant Vice President of Human Resources at AT&T, said. "But we've done that, and it's been a huge leap forward in just making people feel comfortable entertaining the idea of getting the vaccine."

## In Conclusion:

While the world continues to fight for normalcy, as Socrates said, "The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new." The world can never go back to what it was before, but the hope lies in discovering new opportunities and building a better world ahead.

# Leveraging The Power Of Kindness

- Justin Roberts

Have you ever got stuck in a traffic jam on your way to work that created a domino effect of logging in late to missing an important meeting? Till your colleague comes over with a warm smile and a hot cup of coffee that instantly makes your terrible day better. That is the power of kindness, a component that companies generally overlook on the quest to find their unicorn to boost productivity rates.

According to Dr David R. Hamilton, acts of kindness create emotional warmth, which releases a hormone known as oxytocin. While perpetually kind people have 23% less cortisol (the stress hormone) reported by the Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science.

However, with these simple pleasures of interaction taken away from us, how can we leverage the power of kindness while companies continue to work from home?

## 1. Take Time Out For Kindness Rounds

Leaders can take time out of their busy weeks to schedule a round of kindness. While most people find it difficult to compliment others due to psychological barriers that make most people rethink before appreciating or complimenting someone, remote working has made that task a hundred times tougher. By doing this, employees will appreciate the good things their colleagues did during the week and will open them up to being more appreciative to their team members. A recent study observed that giving compliments can make us even happier than receiving them.

## 2. Mark Important Dates And Create A Kindness Calendar

As cliché as it sounds, it's the thought that counts. Research finds that people appreciate small acts of kindness as much as large ones. Employers and leaders can mark special dates on their calendars so that the special moments in



their employee's lives don't pass away without a celebration. This calendar can schedule reminders to all workplace employees to remind them of these special moments. These can then be celebrated with an automated e-card or even cakes and flowers delivered to their homes on birthdays or anniversary with a special zoom meeting to commemorate the occasion. Using special tools like Kudo Board can help with this.

## 3. Build A Habit Of Gratitude In The Workplace

Research at the University of Pennsylvania (UP) concluded that when leaders are grateful to their employees, they are 50% more successful. As a leader, you can start thanking your employees and lead by example. Make it a habit to thank everyone for the smallest task they perform. Wins are wins, and wins are good, no matter how big or small they may be.

## 4. Have A Happy Hour Or Cool Down Session Every Week

Brett Downes, the Founder of Haro Helpers, relates his idea of spreading kindness at the workplace. He said, "All our staff are working remotely. There are 11 of us, so I bought 4 full

Netflix accounts so they could all be entertained during their off time. Each day, one of us picks a comedy series. We all sit down to watch it at the same time while messaging on Whatsapp groups on our phones. It costs me less than \$50 a month, but it keeps all the staff in touch with each other and we muddle through this crisis together, keeping morale levels up."

This is a great way to celebrate happy hour and relax with your employees with a fun round to keep everyone engaged. It also goes above and beyond to show your employees that you genuinely care about them beyond work. Such personal gestures are essential to make your team feel loved and heard.

## In Conclusion:

The power of kindness can help us navigate effectively through the online social world. It has become the need of the hour to inculcate the practice into workplaces for healthier and happier teams. As Scott Adams, American Artist, said, "Remember there's no such thing as a small act of kindness. Every act creates a ripple with no logical end."

# The Avant-Garde Of The Marketing World



Eric Frankel is an innovative business leader with a proven track record in traditional media and emerging technologies. He is the CEO & Founder of AdGreetz, the industry's leading video personalization tech platform disrupting the \$628b advertising marketplace by empowering brands worldwide. Before AdGreetz, Frankel spent several decades at Warner Bros. as President of Warner Bros. Domestic Cable Distribution.

*Written by Sherlyn Gomes*

**“It is improving customer journey and experience. The pandemic has already made brands realize that they need to communicate more effectively and less than one size fits all. And we are definitely heading in that direction.”**

Frankel was born and raised in a family of four in the New York metropolitan area. As a young boy, he was always interested in business and finding new ways to make money. That led him to start working at an early age. From delivering newspapers to shovelling snow to working as a busboy in the restaurant, he developed his hustle mindset early in life, which has served him well to date.

However, his real entrepreneurship journey began when Frankel joined college and he began promoting concerts as his side hustle. His venture was a massive success, with his team organizing around 37 concerts in nine different facilities. Due to their imminent rise in the industry, they soon became the primary source of entertainment in the city of Syracuse, where his college was located. His organization consisted of over 150 people that he recruited over the period to organize top-notch events. Together the team did television commercials, hosted contests, promotions, and sold out every event consistently that instantly put the organization on the radar, making them a big hit!

When Frankel graduated from college, he had job offers lined up for him due to his prior success. One of the job offers he received was from Warner Brothers, the entertainment conglomerate, at a time when cable television was a relatively new business filled with ambiguity. The proposition, however, amused Frankel, who loved watching a good movie, “The idea that you could put a cassette in your VCR, and you could instantly watch a movie was genius. And there were all these new channels, rather than the six channels that I grew up watching. So I went to work there for 28 years, and I worked there straight till I became President.”

While working at Warner Brothers, Frankel created a long list of achievements. From advancements in new technologies such as Video On Demand (VOD) and High Definition (HD) to making numerous record-breaking sales and ground-breaking deals at Warner Bros, that helped him climb the ladder to reach the post of President in record time. While working at Warner Brothers, Frankel envisioned the disruption of the cable industry in the near future, moving from a

medium that scheduled with a set menu to streaming any show that you want at any given point in time. Frankel recalled, “And so I spent 12 years at Warner Brothers convincing the television industry to embrace that. And for 12 years, every chairman of every cable satellite and internet company said that’s the stupidest idea they’ve ever heard.”

Soon the industry was transformed overnight, and there was a significant shift to streaming giants such as Netflix and Hulu. Frankel decided it was the time to call quits.

“I thought to myself, what do I want to do next? One day I came up with an idea. I saw a need in the marketplace. And after all those years and success. I decided to become an entrepreneur,” said Frankel

He saw a gap in the way brands were conversing with their customers. Frankel went on to explain, “When I was dropping off my son at college, the largest retailer in the US was telling me that diapers were on sale. He is an 18-year old and doesn’t need diapers. Unfortunately, I wasn’t old enough either. And I decided that most brands never welcomed me in a meaningful way.” He realized there was an enormous gap in advertising; brands were not customizing their advertisements based on their customer’s likes and preferences, leading to ineffective marketing with huge costs.

Thus Frankel embarked on his journey and founded the company, AdGreetz to cater to this cause. They started by creating a platform called Ad Chef that comes up with a strategy. A team of highly-skilled, creative executives then take a generic ad given by Ad Chef and turn it into a personalized version based on that strategy that might appeal to the customer based on the city, clothing, stores near them, and the opportunity to click and buy. The memo is then created and sent to the client. Once the client signs off, AdGreetz fully automates the whole process by adding 100 or 1000 different cities, towns or villages.

Frankel continued, “And then we have what we call an API integration. We have integrated with Facebook, Google, Snapchat, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Tiktok. These messages automatically get pushed out into those platforms that are built to

know who you are, the city you’re in and other information about you and display the messages that are relevant to each individual customer. And then as these messages play, over time, we are able to see which ones are working the best.”

Recently they did an ad for OLED, the latest range of premium televisions by the brand LG in India. The team devised creatives to appeal to several groups based on their likes and preferences. To cater to families, they displayed an ad that showed a family sitting on a couch watching family-oriented movies together. However, another set of creatives was displayed with people playing video games with high-definition quality to appeal to a person who likes video games. Similarly, each category had a different set of creatives that would be shown to them based on their interests. By doing this, they increased their clicks on the ad by 11 times. Additionally, they also reduced their cost per click by 89%.

However, the pandemic has significantly changed the marketing game yet again. Frankel says, “Before, brands didn’t care what message they were displaying to their customers. They felt that customers would come to their store or their website regardless. But now they have realised that they need to build a deep relationship with their customers.”

This had led to some brands reeling in considerable profits while others were going bankrupt. Frankel recalled a hamburger chain whose business went up by 25% since they pivoted quickly and changed strategies to keep the customer as their primary focus. They oriented themselves towards online ordering, delivery, curbside pickup and made it easy for consumers to buy their product with minimum risk of the deadly virus. The virus has disrupted marketing and has forced marketers and entrepreneurs to discover new avenues to connect with their customers and keep them at the centre.

In conclusion, talking about the future of marketing, Frankel says, “It is improving customer journey and experience. The pandemic has already made brands realize that they need to communicate more effectively and less than one size fits all. And we are definitely heading in that direction.”

# Leading The Charge Against Inoculation

Kathrin U. Jansen, PhD, is the Senior Vice President and Head of Vaccine Research and Development (VRD) at Pfizer Inc and Pfizer's Worldwide Research, Development and Medical leadership team. She has 28 years of pharmaceutical experience in Vaccine R&D. She has recently been celebrated for her efforts in developing the COVID-19 vaccine.

Written by Kyle Goldberg

Jansen was born in Erfurt, a city located in East Germany. As a child, she was frequently unwell and often suffered from throat infections. Her father, a chemical engineer by profession, would always have a treatment that worked like a charm — an antibiotic and a codeine suppository. “You’re a small person and you have this violent cough and you feel sick as a dog,” she remembered. That incident inspired her to pursue a career in drug development.



Image Credit: Pfizer.com

She went on to study biology at the University of Marburg with the hope of working in the pharmaceutical industry one day. After finishing her PhD thesis at Philipps-University in Marburg, she was confident that she had discovered a new chemical pathway in bacteria. However, a final experiment revealed that it wasn't true, teaching her an important lesson in failure.

Dejected, she informed her thesis adviser and mentor about the grim news and was met with a smile. Her advisor told her that it was a lesson: science is not predictable, and often 'eureka' moments fall apart in the face of new data and testing. It was an essential lesson for Jansen, who would eventually work in drug development, where most drug trials fail on the first few attempts.

Jansen's first job was at Cornell and Massachusetts General Hospital before she moved to the Glaxo Institute for Molecular Biology in Geneva, focusing on drug development. When she finally decided to move back to the U.S. in 1992, Alan Shaw, a friend from Glaxo, listed a job opening in the company's vaccine division. The standard inoculations against hepatitis B, measles and mumps, were created.

Shaw, at the time, was looking for a way to transition his scientists toward developing other types of drugs apart from the standard inoculations the company already produced. He wanted Jansen to work on a project in diabetes. He hired her, and she recalled that she quickly got the project killed. “We couldn't reproduce a single thing that was described,” she said.

However, Jansen soon fell in love with making vaccines. Her first target was the human papillomavirus, which at the time was shown to be the cause of cervical cancer back in the 1980s.

Although confident that she could develop a vaccine to treat the virus, she was faced with unrelenting scepticism from others. Along the way, Jansen rose through the ranks from research scientist to senior director to ultimately becoming the executive director and department head of Microbial Vaccine Research at Merck.

After a tense debate at one meeting regarding the trial, Jansen said a senior medical researcher cornered her. “All of a sudden, he started yelling at me at the top of his lungs.” She let him blow off steam and then sternly informed her superiors that she would not let anyone treat her in this manner. By this time, Jansen and her team had developed a vaccine named Gardasil; however, everyone was apprehensive about its efficacy.

In 2002, a trial published in the New England Journal of Medicine showed a vaccine against one strain of HPV that prevented infection with that strain with an efficacy rate of 100%, providing a proof of concept. Gardasil was approved in 2006. Before that happened, Jansen left Merck, confident the product would succeed.

“If you have a scientific intuition and you're careful with your experimentation, at the end, you have to follow your gut and not let naysayers derail you,” Jansen said.

She then took a job as the Chief Scientific Officer of a company called VaxGen but did not have much success. She was soon approached by Emilio Emini, an old boss from Merck, who had taken the top vaccine job at Wyeth, a company with a long history of making childhood vaccinations. He needed Jansen's help with a vaccine called Prevnar. Prevnar 7 was a brilliant vaccine; however, it only gave kids immunity to seven strains of pneumococcus. Other previously rare strains, including a virulent one called 19a, were starting to fill the gap. So Wyeth developed a newer vaccine, Prevnar 13, that would protect kids against 13 strains and needed Jansen's help with it.

Pfizer acquired Wyeth for \$68 billion in 2009 after Prevnar 13 was identified to be a huge success. After the acquisition, her role at Pfizer was to come up with the next lucrative iteration of Prevnar and press forward on new vaccines.

Her next big challenge appeared with the spread of SARS-CoV-2 in February 2020— potentially airborne, contagious, but more deadly than influenza. Dr Sahin, CEO of BioNTech, approached

her, “Would Pfizer want to work on a vaccine with BioNTech? “Of course,” Jansen said. She soon convinced her superior and headed the project.

Pfizer and BioNTech decided to test four potential mRNA vaccines that used different chemically prepared mRNA methods so the body doesn't destroy them. Like all the COVID-19 vaccines in clinical development, all four were based around the spike protein, which the virus used to hijack its way into human cells.

In the early trials, Jansen noted that the Pfizer-BioNTech shot also seemed to rev up two types of white blood cells: those that detect the virus of the immune system and those that kill cells once they are infected. If the virus is 'wimpy,' she said, the antibodies could be enough. But those extra lines of defence are nice to have.

She says that the scepticism reminded her of the doubt about Gardasil all those years ago. “There were many people who thought this couldn't work, and of course, they were wrong,” she recalled.

Celebrating the success of the Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine that was developed in record time to tackle the ongoing pandemic, Jansen said, “We can call it a miracle. But a miracle always has a sense of it 'just happened'. It didn't just happen. Right? It was something that was deliberate. It was with passion, done with passion. It was urgent. It was always in your sight that devastating disease.” With her determination and passion, she is focused on developing more vaccines and leading the world to an age of curable diseases with inoculations.

“If you have a scientific intuition and you're careful with your experimentation, at the end, you have to follow your gut and not let naysayers derail you.”

Jansen said

# Augmenting The Gender Spectrum At The Workplace

- Brianna Da Cruz



Companies have come a long way since labelling gender as male or female. However, there has been a growing recognition for people who fall outside traditional gender roles; these include non-binary genders. 'Non-binary' is an umbrella term for people who do not consider themselves either male or female but fall under the category of gender-fluid or another gender entirely. The estimated proportion of gender-diverse individuals varies between 0.1 and 2% of the population.

The trend of putting up pronouns on social media served as an excellent way for many individuals to come out and own up to themselves. With several celebrities such as Demi Lovato identifying herself as they/them has got the conversation started to support and find more inclusive ways for them to show up at work without hiding their true selves.

A survey published by Beyond the Binary in March 2017 revealed that only 1% of the 225 non-binary people surveyed felt 'completely protected' by current equality policies at work, and 42% had a negative experience related to their gender identity in the workplace. Despite the growing awareness of non-binary genders — 50% of millennials believe gender is a spectrum according to a 2015 Fusion poll — however, it's still common for openly non-binary people to feel uncomfortable at work. How can companies work towards changing this conundrum? Listed below are several

areas where companies can look into to make a difference:

## 1. Gender-Neutral Language

Lera Boroditsky, a professor of Cognitive Science at UCSD, writes, "Even what might be deemed frivolous aspects of language can have far-reaching subconscious effects on how we see the world." Before addressing a person as he or she, always be sure to ask them their preferred pronoun so that everyone is at ease. Employees should also be given the ability to self-identify on HR platforms and systems.

"The gender-neutral 'Mx' can be used as a title for individuals who do not identify as a particular gender," according to Merriam-Webster.

## 2. Gender Expression

Office dress codes shouldn't restrain individuals from expressing their authentic gender. There is a need to modify dress code statements to avoid bolstering any gender stereotypes. A great example of a gender-neutral dress code is when CEO Mary Barra held the position of Vice President of Global Human Resources; she replaced their 10-page dress code with two words: 'Dress Appropriately.' The move empowered employees and positively impacted the company, strengthening their stance on inclusivity.

## 3. Sensitivity Training

It is vital to implement comprehensive sensitivity and anti-harassment training—from senior management to junior employees. Try creating a culture of inclusivity where all employees become allies and advocates for non-binary inclusion, both within the office and outside the world. These initiatives can be a part of the pre-existing diversity training or may be implemented separately to spread awareness about non-binary individuals. Inviting non-binary community advocates or representatives to address management and employees is a

great option. GLAAD is an excellent organization with great tools to help train and educate employees to understand LGBTQ employees' issues better.

A non-binary employee, Filar suggested, "Make significant, repeated training and education a part of working and offer trans employees and freelancers a clear grievance process that won't backfire on them for using it."

## 4. Company Documentation

Most documentation is precise when it comes to gender. For nonbinary individuals, this puts them in a very uncomfortable position that does not correspond to their authentic gender. Look through company documentation, and if they haven't been changed yet, this would be a crucial step for empowering non-binary individuals in the company. As part of the documentation, take a look at places that actively exclude (or exclude by omission) LGBTQ employees, including health policies, and plan to make adjustments.

## 5. Bathroom And Locker Rooms

One of the most critical discussions in non-binary inclusion centres around binary washrooms. Recently, the expectation that trans employees should have access to bathrooms that correspond with their presentation regardless of the transition stage is increasingly expected. However, for non-binary individuals, gendered bathrooms are still problematic. An excellent option for overcoming this hurdle is switching to gender-neutral washrooms.

## In Conclusion:

As Pat Wadors, Chief People Officer Procore at LinkedIn, said, "When we listen and celebrate what is both common and different, we become a wiser, more inclusive, and better organization."

# Four Series Every Entrepreneur Must Watch On Netflix

- Justin Roberts

Building a company and bringing your A-game every day can be a daunting task. The need to relax and recharge occasionally is a must for every entrepreneur! But what if you can gain knowledge and get yourself into a creative flow? Binge-watching some docuseries and TV shows on Netflix is the perfect solution.

The list below is a collection of documentaries and TV shows that evoke the entrepreneur spirit that will either help you on your entrepreneur journey or serve as a cautionary tale.

## 1. Dirty Money

Dirty Money is a Netflix Original Series produced by Jigsaw Productions and directed by Ciara Boniface.

**Plot:** There's a cliché that says 'the rich get richer.' While that may be true, it's not always done through legal or moral methods. This docu series explores stories of scandal and corruption in business, exposing acts of corporate greed and corruption. The episodes feature firsthand accounts of the unscrupulous activities from the perspectives of both the perpetrators and their victims.

**Key Takeaway:** Every episode covers a different aspect of greed and corruption in the corporate world, starting with shattering payday loans to car manufacturers faking their carbon emissions; the series takes you on an enthralling journey with keen insights into corporate malfeasance.

## 2. Mad Men

Mad Men is a TV series produced by Lionsgate Television and directed by Matthew Weiner.

**Plot:** The show chronicles the lives of advertising executives working in Madison Avenue in the 1960s - self-coined as 'Mad Men.' The protagonist of the show is Donald Draper, the creative genius. The creative brilliance underlies a troubled childhood, one that he would rather forget but one that shaped him as an adult to sell

products and himself creatively. His outward confidence also masks many insecurities through his numerous vices, such as excessive drinking, smoking and womanizing - despite being a family man - and how he deals with the aftermath of the negative aspects of his life.

**Key Takeaway:** With consumerism on the rise, this series offers excellent insights on how to pair marketing strategies while also focusing intently on customer happiness. The trick holds the answer to customer retention and loyalty in the long run.

## 3. Fyre: The Greatest Party That Never Happened

Fyre is a Netflix Documentary produced by Mick Purzycki and directed by Chris Smith.

**Plot:** The cautionary tale of a luxurious party turned into one of the biggest entrepreneurial disasters in millennial history. One of the most thrilling and scandalous business shows on Netflix; the documentary sheds light on the power of influencer marketing while also showcasing its cons. Four hundred influencers were called to sell 5000 tickets that cost up to USD 100,000, only to fly the guests to a scene of unorganized chaos with muddy beaches and collapsed disaster-relief tents. It documented the trail that landed the man behind it all in jail for wire fraud.

**Key Takeaway:** A cautionary tale that serves as a reminder for all investors and customers to beware and always check credentials before investing based on the image or popularity of the event.

## 4. Breaking Bad

Breaking Bad is a crime drama television series produced by Vince Gilligan.

**Plot:** Walter White, a high school teacher, builds a powerful entrepreneurial empire as alias Heisenberg and starts delivering a



peculiar product that disrupts the drug market. Walter's drug empire rises with his increasingly ambitious drive and creativity in removing competition, forming alliances to stay ahead, and protecting his partners. However, this show also teaches us that entrepreneurs should calculate their losses and know when to shut shop, ultimately leading to Walter's downfall.

**Key Takeaway:** The show gives good insights on creating and establishing a business while effectively beating the competition and selling a good quality product. The main lesson the series depicts is always doing your research and trying to cut losses at the earliest.

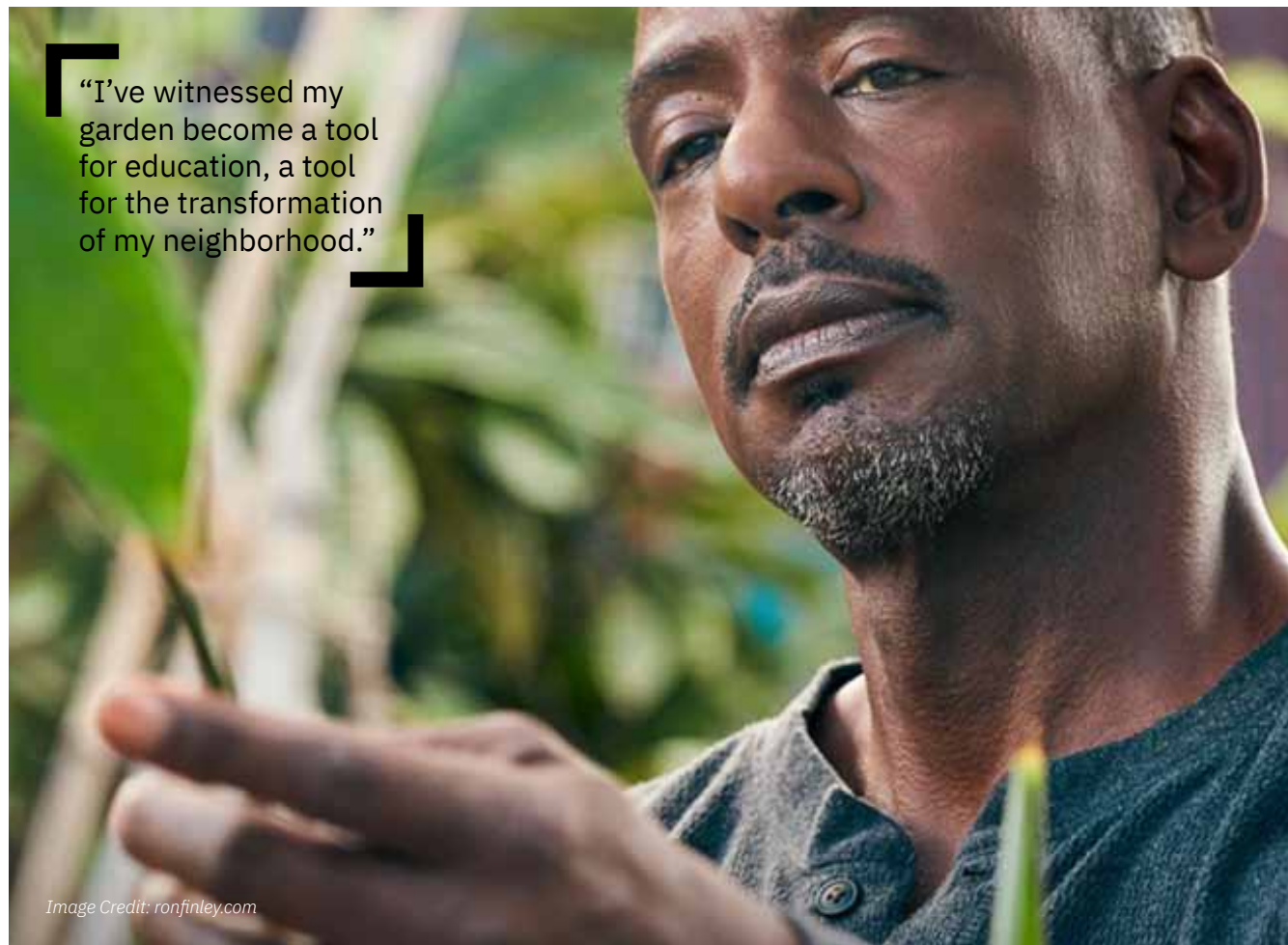
## In Conclusion:

These series and documentaries can be used as a vital tool on your entrepreneurial journey, both as mistakes to learn from and as guiding tools. Like Betty Draper, in Mad Men, says, "You're painting a masterpiece, make sure to hide the brushstrokes." Let the beauty of your masterpiece enthrall your customers.

# The Gangsta Gardener Changing The Narrative

Ron Finley is a Los Angeles-based former fashion designer, and fitness trainer turned Urban Gardener. Finley has taught a MasterClass series on this subject, and his Ted Talk on guerrilla gardening—where he’s grown gardens in abandoned alleyways and more—has almost 4 million views. Finley has now emerged as the ‘Gangsta Gardener’ of South Los Angeles.

Written by Alexis Miller



“I’ve witnessed my garden become a tool for education, a tool for the transformation of my neighborhood.”

Image Credit: ronfinley.com

Ron Finley was born and raised in South Central and grew up six miles from where he currently lives. His father passed away when he was young, and he was raised by his mother and her partner, whom he described as abusive and a ‘hustler.’

As a young boy, he used to mow his neighbours’ grass for extra cash; however, he started enjoying the art of gardening only once he was an adult. “A lot of what I’ve learnt I’ve learnt on my own. It’s taken longer, but the process is beautiful,” he says.

Prior to his success in gardening, Finley was a successful Fashion Designer and Fitness Trainer. However, his career trajectory changed in 2010 when he noticed a problem in his neighbourhood; the rising obesity rates in his community coupled with those often neglected dirt patches next to the streets.

South-Central L.A. had recorded higher obesity rates than more affluent neighbouring communities like Beverly Hills, Glendale, and Pasadena, which are only a few miles to its north, according to a 2011 study conducted by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. This health pandemic was fueled by the high consumption of junk food and the city’s lack of fresh fruits and vegetables. He wanted to add to the city’s beauty while also aiding the health of his community. To combat this, Finley decided to plant some vegetables in these dirt patches. He was soon cited for gardening without a permit by the apparent owners of those dirt patches: the City of Los Angeles. That eventually led to the horticulture revolution in the city!

Finley fought back and succeeded. He started a petition with fellow green activists and demanded the right to garden and grow food in his neighbourhood. The petition gained momentum, and ever since, Finley has embarked on his mission to grow fresh produce and educate others to do so. His masterclass explains the art of gardening with a fresh perspective that allows you to engage with every step of the process and find beauty and freedom in gardening.

Ten years down the line, Finley has created dozens of community gardens in



Image Credit: ronfinley.com

dirt patches and unused spaces around the city. Finley has travelled widely talking about his work, including a Ted Talk watched by 3.5 million people.

“Gardening is the most therapeutic and defiant act you can do, especially in the inner city,” Finley says. “I’ve witnessed my garden become a tool for education, a tool for the transformation of my neighborhood.”

Finley believes that home gardens have the opportunity to transform more than just his block in South LA. An increase in self-sufficiency amongst individuals can also positively influence the social and political systems that fuel these self-defeating cycles of obesity in low-income neighbourhoods.

“Just think about even one percent of us starting to grow our own food,” Finley says. “Think how much money that would take out of the system, from healthcare to grocery stores. People growing their own food is dangerous [to the status quo].”

His number one tip to novice gardeners is indicative of his straight-talk approach: “Plant what you like to eat. Don’t plant no shit you don’t like.”

According to him, feeding yourself shouldn’t be special or celebrated; it’s a basic necessity that should be a requisite. Finley explains, “So what I want people to realize is that I’m not telling you to grow all your food. But imagine if you did it collectively. Your neighbor and the guy across the street and you got together and decided what to grow. You have the orange and pomegranate trees, and I’ve got the kale and rhubarb, and Sally has the lettuce and passion fruit or whatever.” It’s a simple strategy that could feed the entire

planet without mass plantations and corporations making billions over fresh produce.

He recalled people passing off his passion for gardening as just a hobby. “People looked at my garden like ‘your little hobby’ or something, now people realize this is no damn hobby, this is life and death. This is our revolution,” said Finley.

The pandemic has shed some light on this issue and made people rethink their choices. People across the globe have realized that their health should be their main priority that can be safeguarded only by eating fresh fruits and vegetables and living a healthy lifestyle. Finley says, “With the pandemic, our values have shifted immensely. You can’t eat diamonds. I tell kids, ‘Nothing you buy gives you value. You have an intrinsic value just by being here. There’s Nothing more special than you are.’ That’s why we’ve got to make [gardening] sexy. We gotta get gangsta’ for Mother Nature. If you heal your mother, you heal yourself.”

He added, “governments must invest more in encouraging people to be self-sustaining. I don’t like to use ‘hope’, I like to use the word ‘opportunity’. To hell with hope. It’s not for hope to change it. It’s the opportunity to make shit happen. A lot of the governments and municipalities need to put money into this.”

In conclusion, Finley thinks we need to change our perspective and treasure our resources. He says, “We have to start looking at things as resources, not trash. When I look at a leaf I think money. I think I can make compost and sell or use that compost.” Food systems around the world are collapsing; being self-sufficient is the only solution to this dilemma that the world will soon have to tackle.

# The Incredible Life Of Nick

Nick Vujicic is an Australian-American world-renowned speaker, New York Times best-selling Author, Coach, and Entrepreneur born without arms or legs. Nick persevered through life's challenges and discovered fundamental principles that enabled him to find his life's purpose and turn all obstacles into opportunities. That has made him one of the most sought-after keynote speakers in the world! Millions of people have found hope, purpose and the strength to overcome their challenges through Nick's inspirational speeches and powerful coaching.

Written by Sherlyn Gomes

**N**ick Vujicic was born without limbs and legs, with no medical explanation or prior warning. He was born with Tetra-Amelia Syndrome; a rare disorder called Phocomelia characterized by the absence of arms and legs. Even his mother declined to see or hold him when he was born but accepted him later as a part of God's plan. Nick said, "It took my mum about four months before she came to terms with [my condition]. My dad took the initiative to hold me first."

While growing up, Nick's parents had difficulties even getting him admitted to a good school despite his good IQ; however, they kept trying and finally succeeded. Nick had previously revealed that he had suffered from depression and loneliness in his early life. Being so different from other kids made him question his self-esteem; that soon became the reason why he cut off all conversation with people.

At the age of ten, Nick hit rock bottom where he simply couldn't envision a future for himself. Nick recalled, "At age 8, I told my mom I wanted to commit suicide. At age 10, I actually tried. I went into a bathtub, and I tried to drown myself. And I turned over 3 times in the bathtub. The first two times I rolled over in the bathtub I thought I was doing a good thing"

After a couple of attempts, he realized he couldn't leave his loving family, he said, "When I was 10 years old, the 3rd time I rolled over in my bathtub, there was only one thought that saved me. And it was

the thought of seeing my mom and my dad crying at my grave." He didn't want to leave them with the burden and guilt of his death.

When Nick decided to hold on to life, amazing things started to happen to him. He found himself reading the bible one day and had an epiphany. He recalled the incident, "I gave my life to Jesus Christ at fifteen when I read John chapter 9—the story about a man who was born blind and no one knew why, but Jesus said it happened so that the works of God may be revealed through him."

He later came across a newspaper article as well that described the achievements of a disabled person. Reading how a fellow disabled man had faced challenges and eventually overcame them gave him the much-needed confidence that completely changed his mindset towards life.

And Nick realized that he can lead an everyday life and can achieve something significant. He eventually came to terms with his disability and worked on adopting a positive attitude.

At the age of thirteen, Nick had a life-changing incident. He recalled, "I played soccer with my little foot. I love my little foot. I can type 43 words a minute on a normal computer. And I've done a double degree in accounting and financial planning, so that's how I did my work. But I sprained my foot one day at 13 years old, and I couldn't use it for three weeks. Let me ask you. How much do you use your arms and legs? A lot, right?"

That's how much I use this. Imagine not using your arms and legs for three weeks. That's how I felt. I felt disabled for the very first time. And so, you got to understand that you got to be thankful for what you have." And he lost sight of his disabilities and realized how blessed he was.

Arnold, an old janitor at his school, was the first person who motivated Nick to become a speaker. But Nick opposed this thought as he believed that he wasn't equipped to be a speaker. But the janitor did not give up and continued to persuade Nick to share his life story relentlessly.

Nick finally gave his first speech when he was 19, and he never turned back. After giving several speeches, he found that his purpose in life is to motivate people and inspire them to reach their full potential. Nick says, "So my goal is to reach as many people as possible, with a message of hope, but at the same time, I really believe that there is a greater cause that we can all do in giving back to society. I think, if we all did our part, this world would be a very different place."

Sharing an incident that stayed with him, Nick said, "I was giving a speech to 300 sophomore public high school students. And after three minutes of my speech, half of the girls in the hall started crying, and one girl in the room began to weep, and she interrupted my speech and came to me and hugged me. She wept on my shoulder and whispered in my ear that I was beautiful the way I am. And these words transformed my life."

In 2005, Nick took a step to help specially-abled people like him; he established an international non-profit organization and ministry named Life Without Limbs. And in 2007, he founded a motivational company by name; Attitude is Altitude. Now, Nick is one of the most outstanding motivational speakers of our times. His understanding of life has positively affected the lives of millions of people across the world.

He married Kanae Miyahara on February 12, 2012, and the couple is blessed with four children. They currently reside in Southern California and are happier than ever.

"I believe that if God doesn't give you a miracle, you are a miracle of God."



Image Credit: Wikipedia

# Trending Apps: Navigating Through Clubhouse

- Kyle Goldberg



With a million apps flooding the AppStore and PlayStore every day, how do brands know which platform is the right one to showcase their product? From Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat, most brands have a presence on all the trending social media sites. Recently a new app named Clubhouse has dominated social media with its exclusivity. Should your brand be considering driving marketing efforts in this app? Let's find out!

## App Statistics

Clubhouse currently has 10 million users, according to a town hall meeting hosted by CEO Paul Davidson. A promising start for marketers since the platform had 2 million users in January 2021 from 1,500 in May 2020.

## What Is Clubhouse?

An exclusive app that allows participants to enter only with an invite. It lets people gather in audio chat rooms to discuss various topics, ranging from trivia to business discussions. Each room is divided into two groups: those talking and those listening (participants can see a list of everyone in a conversation). Clubhouse is a closed, hierarchical platform as opposed to open-ended platforms such as Twitter. A moderator oversees discussions and can let someone chime in or kick out the disorderly. In addition

to the 'clubs' sorted by topic, two or more users can join together and start their chat room.

However, most Clubhouse content is highly experimental, with brands trying to figure out what works best for them. A striking feature of the users depicts that they crave authentic information and engaging discussions with authentic people rather than promotional opinions.

However, while building brand awareness on an ultra-personal app like Clubhouse, it takes time, energy, and lots of community management, we're already starting to see brands begin to connect with the channel's growing audience.

### 1. Influencer Marketing

A great way to promote your brand on the site is with the help of an influencer. Start a room that taps into your niche industry where everyone can add to the topic and gain value from the discussion. Several brands have used this strategically to their advantage.

Pernod Ricard teamed up with digital media marketing strategist Karen Civil to celebrate the occasion of February's Black History Month and commended the work of Black female entrepreneurs. The campaign promoted Pernod Ricard's Martell Cognac brand and saw Civil host weekly conversations with beauty mogul Supa Cent, branding expert and Girl CEO founder Ronne Brown, and fashion designer PreMadonna amongst others; and was a great success!

### 2. Sponsor A Room

Brands can also leverage this app by sponsoring a room and crafting their own story in a way that resonates with their customers and leaves an impact.

Many brands like Bite Toothpaste have already implemented this. The brand, a subscription-based service that claims to have 'reinvented' Toothpaste, recently sponsored a room in which its Founders told the

participants the founding story of Bite Toothpaste. In a unique approach to narrating their story, they discovered potential customers and even signed up 30 new subscribers.

### 3. Identify New Marketing Ideas

Clubhouse promotes discussions that lead to brilliant ideas from various insightful individuals from across the globe—these range from Influencers, artists, poets, to even business moguls. Venture Capitalist Bilal Zuberi, a partner at Lux Capital, said that he spends nearly half an hour a day on the app.

If you take time out to listen to conversations, you are likely to come across something that will give you your 'Aha Moment' or help you improve your strategies and create a better plan of action.

### 4. Join Rooms And Start Conversations

Be active and join rooms relevant to your industry, engage with other leaders in the industry, and drive insightful conversations.

As James Nord, Founder of Fohr, advises: "Make sure you have something interesting to say and something to add to the conversation — the rest is just noise."

Join panel discussions, raise your hand and actively contribute to the conversation. The app is also great for social networking to find potential clients as well as partners and connections to help your business grow and prosper.

### In Conclusion:

Using Clubhouse for marketing can allow you to connect with your audience on a deeper, more personal level and go beyond just promotional content. Now would be the perfect time to get on the app and leverage it to create a strong brand image that connects with the customer.

# Enjoying The Spectacle Of Failure As An Entrepreneur

- Siya Mehta

Entrepreneurs are often scared of numbers and statistics. Specifically, the statistic that states, "90% of start-ups fail." While the massive number seems frightening, it does not mean that experiencing it is the end of the road. 9 out of 10 small businesses fail, but even the 1 did not succeed without some failure.

The secret to entrepreneurial success is nothing except embracing and celebrating failure and facing it head-on even when the world mocks it. Fearing failure and not trying is the top reason for permanent failure. Even Elon Musk, CEO of SpaceX & Tesla Motors said, "If something's important enough you should try. Even if you know the probable outcome is failure."

## 5 Joys And Benefits Of Failure

It is a given that one will encounter failure in some way throughout their entrepreneurial dream, finding the silver-lining in these failures and relishing in the learning experiences gained is key.

### 1. Failure Creates Innovation:

Failure always presents a chance for reinvention, innovation and creativity. It encourages entrepreneurs to take non-traditional routes or truly pushes them to think unconventionally or engage in out of the box thinking. This creativity also helps start-ups develop their USP.

World's wealthiest person, Jeff Bezos, has embraced the unique combination of failure and invention as well. In 2014, Bezos launched the Amazon Fire smartphone which created a loss of \$170 million. He then went on to create Fire TV which is largely successful and now a household staple. Even in 2015, Jeff Bezos wrote, "Failure comes part and parcel with invention. It's not optional. We understand that and believe in failing early and iterating until we get it right."

### 2. Failure Helps Understand Value:

Failure helps reassess the value of a business plan. It allows entrepreneurs to analyse and repair core issues that could have been more harmful in the future. From

packaging to the product itself, failure enables restoration. Some ideas seem revolutionary at first glance but revisiting them displays a critical flaw, failure helps identify and filter this critical flaw early. It helps ease into damage control mode before a greater negative impact is created.

Elon Musk's SpaceX had multiple explosions before being awarded the \$2.9 billion contract from NASA to take astronauts to the surface of the moon. Throughout this process, Musk continuously worked to learn from previous critical failures and mistakes.

**3. Failure Highlights Allies:** Failure shows entrepreneurs whom they can truly trust. The thin and fragile line of trust can be blurred when working with friends and family day and night. Failure quickly highlights raw emotions and intentions. It can also help analyse if there is a specific individual behind failure. Further, it helps entrepreneurs understand whom they can rely on and trust in the future.

Walt Disney, the legendary entrepreneur, originally created Oswald the Lucky Rabbit. However, Disney failed to win a legal battle and lost the rights of his creations. During this, the majority of his animator colleagues left the studio. However, Disney stayed determined and created the iconic Mickey Mouse cartoon.

### 4. Failure Creates Resilience:

An entrepreneur's life is subject to dynamic shocks and changes daily. From changes in markets and demand to changes in work-life balance, failure helps create a stronger personality that is ready to fearlessly face challenges. It also creates confidence and self-trust in that stronger personality. As an entrepreneur, failure is extremely common and each time, it makes the next experience easy.

J.K Rowling, the world's first billionaire author, was rejected by 12 major publishing firms over Harry Potter. She continued to be optimistic and kept submitting her book to publishers.



Eventually, it was picked up by Bloomsbury and she is accredited with starting a literary revolution.

### 5. Failure Is A Humbling And Learning Experience:

When a start-up is doing well, it is easy to get completely carried away and feel on top of the world. Failure is a great and important reminder that an entrepreneur is just a human, completely capable of rightfully making mistakes. Moreover, it ensures humility even in the business atmosphere and enables goodwill. Further, the humbling experience can help connect more with customers and sincerely understand their needs.

PopSockets inventor, David Barnett, was convinced that his innovative idea of glueing buttons at the back of cellphones would prevent headphones from getting tangled. However, he realised that cell phones are constantly changing and that consumer needs differ. He restarted his project and came up with PopSockets that is now worth over \$500 million.

### In Conclusion:

At the end of the day, it is important to remember that failure is actually an asset. The learning experience and insight it provides into start-ups is unparalleled and cannot be competed with by any market research or extensive survey. Failure is a unique customized competitive advantage that every company receives as an opportunity to improve and it is critical to seize that opportunity. The good news when encountering failure is that a business is on its way to success.



Image Credit: azariahtan.com

# The Musical Prodigy

Dr Azariah Tan is a well-known pianist and pedagogue in Singapore with a hearing disability. As an educator, he conducts lecture-recitals at local and international conferences as a guest artist. Dr Tan has also taught on the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp piano faculty in Muskegon, Michigan and holds master classes at various music institutions. He has also served as an adjudicator for competitions such as the Hong Kong Asia Piano Open Competition and students preparing for the O level Music Examinations. He has also worked along with Randall Faber as a Faber Method Piano Clinician.

Written by Siya Mehta

“It had a big impact on my music development.”

Dr Azariah Tan was born in Singapore, the only child of a former sound engineer and a university lecturer. His parents suspected he had a hearing disability at the early age of 2.

“My mother said I would respond to words like Batman but not to my name Aza,” he said. “She thought it was selective hearing but it turned out I could hear certain frequencies better. The word Batman has a higher frequency; Aza, a lower one.”

The repetition of similar episodes confirmed their suspicions. When she put on an audiotape in the car one day and asked Dr Tan what story he was listening to, he did not answer. “She turned up the volume, and I still couldn’t hear. So she pulled over to the side, and turned on the volume full blast. I still couldn’t tell her,” said Dr Tan.

When he was four years old, a trip to a specialist revealed that he had bilateral sensorineural hearing loss, which resulted from damage to the tiny hair cells in his inner ear. Their doctor advised his parents to attend a summer programme at the John Tracy Clinic in Los Angeles. This non-profit organization provided services for families with children diagnosed with hearing impairment.

His parents did not just develop methods to help their son’s listening, language and speech abilities, but they also picked up strategies to better deal with teachers and help him communicate with his peers.

His father, Leslie Tan, said: “Having a disability set him back because a lot of matters had to be handled by his parents. We were almost like his advocates.”

For instance, his kindergarten teachers were informed that he needed to sit in the front row to see their faces and read their lips to understand what they were saying. “But often we found him with his back turned towards the teacher, enjoying everybody else’s expressions. When they laughed, he laughed. He didn’t understand what was going on in class. He went through a lot of his younger years like that,” he said.

When he was five, Dr Tan was enrolled

in a Yamaha keyboard class as an extracurricular activity. After observing him enjoying playing the instrument, his parents decided to start private lessons.

“My mum would sit in on the lessons so that she knew what I worked on and what I needed to follow up on,” he said, adding that his music teachers assured his mother his hearing impairment wouldn’t be an impediment. He had perfect pitch coupled with the rare ability to identify and play musical notes without using any reference pitch as a guide.

When he was 13, his parents decided to homeschool him. They thought that the mainstream education system was not ideal, given his passion for music and his hearing disability.

Dr Tan was then enrolled in a long-distance learning programme at Calvert Education located in the US. He aced the course with six straight A’s. His parents did their best to support him, and his father even quit his job to help him with his studies.

“It had a big impact on my music development,” said Dr Tan. “It was life-changing. I read books on music theory, harmony and history and was fascinated by how music works. I realized it was a language which had its special grammar and vocabulary. It helped me progress faster,” continued Dr Tan.

At fifteen, he won second place in the IX International Piano Competition at Nis, Serbia. After that, his parents sat down with him and asked him if he wanted to pursue a career in music, and his answer was an enthusiastic yes. His parents decided to support him the best that they could.

His mother wrote to every music teacher in the country and asked them if it was wise to take this ahead given her son’s hearing disability. Their replies differed; some told her it would be a difficult journey, but they would make it through, while others said it was a worthless cause. One even suggested not to make life more difficult for her son.

However, Professor Thomas Hecht, the Head of Piano Studies at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory, asked to see the boy and interview him. His father recalled: “He told us that while my son’s hearing

was still there (we should) give him the best because he had the talent and the auditory memory. There was no turning back.”

Dr Tan soon received a full scholarship from the National Arts Council and got into Yong Siew Toh before he even sat for his O levels in 2008. In Yong Siew Toh, he made the Dean’s List, bagged a Student Achievement Award and graduated with first-class honours.

He then went on to the University of Michigan to complete two Master’s degrees in Piano Performance and Chamber Music. Dr Tan proceeded to earn a doctorate of Musical Arts in Piano Performance from the Racham Graduate School.

After completing his doctorate and enduring all odds, Dr Tan devoted himself to academia and teaching private students. He says that teaching is delightful for him. Aside from that, Dr Tan also performs regularly in recitals and hosts Master Classes around the globe, inspiring people with his music. He has also recorded a CD - Azariah Tan Plays Chopin: A State Of Wonder - which was sold at a charity gala organized by The Ad Planet Group to celebrate 50 years of bilateral and business relations between Singapore and Japan. The track has left people mesmerized across the globe, appreciating Dr Tan’s raw talent.

Although Dr Tan tries to be nonchalant about his hearing loss - which deteriorates at a rate of 5 per cent every year - it does infuriate the musician. “Knowing that the music I hear is only a fraction of what it really sounds like, not being able to hear all the subtleties that are happening, is frustrating.”

Despite his circumstances, Dr Tan has bagged several international awards and has also played at countless outreach programmes, and charity shows to raise funds and support the differently-abled community.

In conclusion, Dr Tan, who has fought all his battles, boldly says, “Don’t be too concerned with what-ifs. It might come or it may not come, but I do what I can now, so that when it comes... I’ll be okay.”

# Calming Mental Storms Through Art

Hana Alfikih is a famous artist battling Bipolar Disorder that turned to art as therapy to soothe her nerves. Her illustrations highlight various characters named after medications and mental illness, such as Medico, Skizo and Bipo, designed to amuse and raise awareness. Hana says her mission is to reduce the stigma around mental health in Indonesia.

Written by Brianna Da Cruz

“I have billions of emotional turmoils that I can never understand until now. The artworks that I have made are interpretations of my mental condition and they describe every conflict inside me that I turn into something beautiful and colorful.”

**H**ana Alfikih, who goes by the moniker ‘Hana Madness’ because of her obsession with the UK Ska band Madness, grew up in a traditional and relatively conservative family in Jakarta, Indonesia. As a kid, she was bullied at school, and her life at home was equally challenging. She knew she was ‘different’ but did not know what set her apart from the others. She frequently fought with her parents, who did not understand what caused her to act out. During her high school years, she found that art can be cathartic and helped her maintain sanity amidst a psychological crisis.

Through various sketches and doodles, she articulated her complex emotions. “Most of my work then was black and white, and grey,” Hana says. “It reflected the struggles I was going through at the time”, the artist added, sharing that her sketch pad has become her place of solace- the one thing she could pour herself into.

When Hana was older and studying at the university level, she was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder. The years that followed the diagnosis were difficult as she dealt with her dwindling mental health issues along with the adverse reactions of her family, who failed to understand or support her.

In 2012 Hana took her first step in voicing the mental health issues across various media sites in Indonesia. Relying on her personal experiences, she started using her art to increase public awareness of mental health problems. She began expressing her own mental health conditions and the range of complex emotions through her art to facilitate understanding from a larger audience.

With every brushstroke, Hana kept breaking down the unbearable stigmas attached to mental health concerns and attacked the discrimination that often accompanied the diagnosis of a mental health disorder. She didn’t realise it at the time, but her quest to normalise the conversation around mental health disorders also catalysed her own healing process. Her art and her vision soon took her to international territories in 2016 when she was invited to be a part of the British Council programme that focussed on leveraging art to initiate conversations on disabilities with the goal of creating awareness among a larger audience.

The following year, she collaborated with James, known as ‘the vacuum cleaner’ in a video project titled ‘In Chains’. She travelled to London to meet James, who, like her, had a spate of mental health problems, and began the project where she met with those who have battled mental health issues along with artists and art practitioners to further the cause.

The film, In Chains, focused on Istana KSJ (or informally known as The Palace), a radical and autonomous mental health community that is rebuilding lives in West Java located in Indonesia. Many of those living at KSJ had previously been subjected to a practice of shackling, chaining or confinement (known as Pasung) because of their disability, some for even decades. The film portrays the community and its residents and how it works to humanise those who have been denied their humanity. This video raised awareness about the barbaric practice and helped start the conversation about mental health locally and internationally. The



Image Credit: Hana Madness

team has also held several workshops worldwide, helping people identify mental health issues and offered them support and guidance in their journey to wellness.

With the project now showcased online, Hana has come a long way in her journey, especially through the creative arts.

“Even though I am still struggling, through art and the appreciation of it, I feel more in tune with myself mentally

and physically. I am more self-aware and appreciate myself no longer fighting the natural rhythm of my life,” said Hana.

Her works have led her to be listed as one of the ‘Top 10 Most Shining Young Indonesian Artists’ in 2017, as ‘1 of 90 Young Indonesians with Inspiring Works and Thoughts’ in 2018, and as a ‘Millennial Hero for Arts and Culture’ in 2019. Her World Magazine named her in the list of ‘10 Women of the Year’

in 2019. She was also named ‘1 of 11 Inspiring Figures’ by Tatler Asia.

In conclusion, she says, “I have billions of emotional turmoils that I can never understand until now. The artworks that I have made are interpretations of my mental condition and they describe every conflict inside me that I turn into something beautiful and colorful.” With a combination of art and therapy, Hana believes that she has found peace.

# Why Working Moms Make Great Entrepreneurs

- Siya Mehta .....



**W**hile the pandemic has left working mothers fatigued and even jobless, it has inspired many to start their own business. Since salaried employment has been difficult to obtain for working mothers due to the lack of childcare available during the pandemic, working women have found that starting their own business offers great flexibility, independence and a higher standard of living. However, many mothers have been under confident and have doubted if they have any relevant skills and experience to take on the challenge of entrepreneurship. Luckily, being a working mom qualifies one to become an even more successful entrepreneur.

## Skills That Working Mothers Have That Help Them Become Better Entrepreneurs

1. **Multitasking:** Every working mother has the incredible skill of multitasking. Not only do mothers juggle and play different roles in life as a mother, wife, daughter and friend, they are also dedicated employees. Helping children with homework while preparing for an upcoming meeting or even aligning schedules, working mothers have been trained to juggle responsibilities efficiently. Moreover, mothers with multiple children can improve their multitasking skills even further. Planning meals for one child while creating a daily schedule for another, is only one example out of various more than working mothers observe in daily life. Through these holistic and various responsibilities, mothers have gained the valuable

skill of multitasking. When starting a new business, this vital skill allows mothers to thrive across departments and projects, from finance to communication. It is especially important to utilise this skill when embarking on an entrepreneurial journey since it can prove to be crucial when managing various tasks including creating social media profiles, building a consumer base and financing your goals.

For example, famous actor turned entrepreneur, Jessica Alba started to research family-friendly detergents after having two kids. Alba launched The Honest Company after a generic household detergent problem and has now led the company to an astonishing revenue of over 300 million.

2. **Flexibility:** With experiences such as handling a shouting child during an important meeting or a babysitter cancelling at the last minute, working mothers exactly understand how common it is for plans to not work out. Combating challenges and adapting to circumstances is key for any working mother. This is an important skill in any business environment, especially with constantly changing business scenarios. Flexibility allows entrepreneurs to quickly respond to changes in demand or act upon feedback easily. Flexibility further allows mothers to easily grab every opportunity available and work towards success. Sticking with a rigid plan often leaves space for regrets and by maintaining a flexible attitude, mothers can navigate through options and choose one that is most beneficial.
3. **Dedication:** Working mothers already understand priorities and commitments when they have caregiving and financial responsibilities. A commitment to maintain a healthy work-life balance and satisfy both responsibilities already shows tremendous dedication. Working mothers always go the extra

mile to provide the best life for their children. This dedication further helps fuel their commitment towards being successful entrepreneurs, even if there are obstacles along the journey. Working mothers also experience the challenges that accompany parenting, such as an angsty teenager. Despite these phases in parenthoods, working mothers continue to have tremendous persistence and work towards turning things around. The entrepreneurial journey also inevitably experiences challenges and roadblocks but with commitment and dedication, the journey is bound to be successful. Moreover, this dedication can not only inspire your employees and family, but it is also sure to impress investors as well.

4. **Inventive:** Working moms know exactly what is at stake when taking up a job and managing children, despite any statistics and obstacles, working moms fearlessly work towards their goals. This fearless attitude also helps working mothers boldly innovate and stand out when starting their own business. The innovative spirit, whether observed when negotiating with a toddler using new tactics or entering a new market, helps working mothers create a distinguished USP.

Naomi Simson, the famous blogger and entrepreneur was inspired to create her online gift company Red Balloon after leaving the corporate tech world and giving birth to her first child. Naomi is now one of Australia's most renowned, respected and successful entrepreneurs.

## In Conclusion:

Parenthood is equivalent to attending a life-long leadership and entrepreneurial seminar. While raising families, working mothers learn key business concepts and develop critical skills. A dedicated working mother can seamlessly translate into a successful entrepreneur.

# 4 Unexpected Items You Need In Your WFH Office So You're Prepared For The Future Of Work

- Justin Roberts.....

**D**espite the economy reopening and employees returning to their offices, many employees have chosen to work from home permanently or have opted for a hybrid work model. However, employees realise that they struggle to maintain productivity and replicate their office setups at home. With WFH continuing, upgrading home offices is significantly important to make sure that work performance continues to improve and career opportunities are not missed.

## Essential Items To Make Your WFH Setup Perfect

1. Height Adjustable Desk

The WFH culture has decreased the time available for fitness routines as employees have been stuck to screens for hours continuously without any movement. Adjustable and flexible sit and stand desks enable users to remain fit and beat obesity and have, therefore, become immensely useful in work from home offices. These adjustable standing desks allow employees to work more healthily and are used in offices of Fortune 500 companies and top educational organizations such as MIT. Sit and stand desks have proved to enable greater blood circulation as they help eliminate back and leg pain from sitting for hours as well. Moreover, it also helps keep muscles aligned. Often known as electric sit to stand desks, they help burn calories and increase productivity as well. The United States Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also reported that the use of a sit-stand desk reduced upper back and neck pain by 54% after just four weeks.

The desk can be bought on Amazon.

2. No Spill Utensils

While working from home, employees

often tend to grab quick meals and beverages during their meetings or rush through them to attend calls and meetings on time. This is a dangerous activity to pursue with expensive hardware and documents nearby. However, with countless experiences of damaged keyboards or confidential and irreplaceable documents created after days of hard work due to split beverages or food, the need for 'no spill' utensils is through the roof. To minimise the risk of damaging laptops and documents, 'no spill' products like water tumblers and cups have become a crucial addition.

A no-spill tumbler can be found via Amazon here.

3. Memory Foam Pillow

A memory foam lumbar pillow allows you to strap it on any chair and gain extreme comfort. The pillow, known to help reduce back pain and posture, has become vital when working from home. With hours spent sitting on chairs uncomfortably, the pillow is generally ergonomically designed and the memory foam allows it to meet individual needs. The lumbar pillow supports the spinal curvature to maximise comfort and allow employees to work more efficiently by reducing fatigue on muscles. The pillow is commonly covered using a mesh cover too that helps eliminate back sweats and bacteria. A study also confirmed that the lumbar support pillow improved comfort in healthy individuals and patients with low back pain. With its ability to increase comfort and health, it is essential to increase productivity and efficiency while working from home.

The pillow is available on Amazon.

4. Whiteboard

While highly contrasting to the idea of



a "virtual" environment, a whiteboard can be a catalyst for innovation and creativity. By indulging in analogue creativity, the daily monotony of using keyboards and monitors can be broken. Everything from ideas to goals and quotes can also be freely plotted by incorporating a whiteboard as a creative alternative to monitors. Whiteboards enable users to brainstorm and conceptualise. In a virtual environment with information overload and online fatigue becoming common, making notes that stand out are key to gaining focus. An old-fashioned visual connection with the whiteboard can prove to be invaluable and ground-breaking.

IKEA has a magnetic memo board available here.

## In Conclusion:

The future of work might be slightly unpredictable but these items can help employees make the most out of their experience. To make work from home truly effective and productive, it is vital to make sure the convenience and comfort of homes are combined with a traditional office experience to make the best out of the situation.

# The Commendable Doctor Aiding The Nations



Dr Raj Panjabi is a renowned Physician, Social Entrepreneur and Professor. He is the Co-Founder and CEO of Last Mile Health which tackles the ‘last mile’ — the final, critical step of delivering products or services to consumers — a conundrum for businesses in health care, where last-mile problems hit poor regions especially hard, according to the organization’s website. Dr Panjabi is also an Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Division of Global Health Equity at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Harvard Medical School. President Joe Biden appointed Dr Raj Panjabi as the U.S. Global Malaria Coordinator for the President’s Malaria Initiative in February 2021.

*Written by Brianna Da Cruz*

the roots of extremism. I also read Paul Farmer’s book, ‘Pathologies of Power,’ which made me realize that medicine could be a way to bridge inequality, one cause of extremism. Soon I was rethinking my future. I wanted to go back to West Africa and find a way to serve those I’d left behind.”

He started working towards his goal and researched programs that had brought health care to the rural poor. While in medical school, he had the opportunity to travel to Alaska, where the Community Health Aide Program had achieved great success and enabled access to the most remote places. The goal was accomplished by training locals to become health aide providers.

In 2005, Dr Panjabi took his fiancée, Amisha Raja — his now-wife — to see the place he grew up in - Liberia. They visited the country in the wake of the civil war when there were only 51 doctors available in the entire country. They soon volunteered themselves.

Dr Panjabi recalled, “The first patient I saw, a newborn, died of pneumonia in my arms. I’d never seen anything like that before. The mother had lived too far from the clinic to get prenatal care.”

When the couple returned to the United States, Dr Panjabi instantly got back to finding solutions to the dilemma they had experienced in Liberia. He wrote a proposal to start a clinic based on what he had observed in the state of Alaska.

Dr Panjabi said, “Amisha and I raised the funds for Last Mile Health at our wedding. Instead of a gift registry, we asked people to donate cash. We got \$6,000, enough to hire and train 30 community health workers. As of today, we have over 500 working directly for us.”

The minister of health in Liberia greatly supported their cause. Liberia was then headed by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa’s first elected woman president, who was open to new ideas and solutions.

In Liberia, Panjabi and Last Mile Health teamed up with the Ministry of Health, working alongside its partners, including PMI, USAID, CDC, and the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, among others, to train and support the nation’s community health workforce

to increase access to malaria testing and treatment in rural and remote communities. According to Dr Panjabi, smartphones can connect supervising nurses at clinics to lay workers who can follow instructions accordingly.

Dr Panjabi and the Last Mile Health team also played a crucial role in the West Africa Ebola epidemic in 2013-2016; he helped train over a thousand health workers and supported the Government of Liberia to lead its national Ebola Operations Center. Dr Panjabi delivered his testimony on the Ebola epidemic at the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee.

Dr Panjabi faced some resistance amongst peers; he said, “However, the general rhetoric among local professionals was that it was not possible to provide health care in the rural areas — so why try? What these critics didn’t recognize was how new technologies had changed things.”

Among his many accomplishments, Dr Panjabi has authored and co-authored over 50 publications. He is a Gavi Champion and a member of the International Advisory Group for Frontlines First at the Global Financing Facility and has served on the External Review Group for the WHO’s guidelines on community health worker programs. Dr Panjabi was named by TIME as one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World and one of the 50 Most Influential People in Healthcare. He has been listed as one of the World’s 50 Greatest Leaders by Fortune.

The U.S. President, Joe Biden, has newly appointed Dr Panjabi as the Malaria Coordinator for the country. Speaking on the subject, Dr Panjabi wrote, “I’m privileged to serve with and learn from the teams at PMI, USAID, CDC and our partners. Together, we will fight malaria. We will save lives. We will build health systems.” The country is confident that his efforts will succeed and get rid of the parasite permanently.

In conclusion, Dr Panjabi says, “I believe we are not defined by the crises we face, but by how we respond. Ending malaria, one of history’s deadliest pandemics, within our generation will inspire hope. And hope is worth fighting for.”

“I believe we are not defined by the crises we face, but by how we respond. Ending malaria, one of history’s deadliest pandemics, within our generation will inspire hope. And hope is worth fighting for.”

**B**orn in Monrovia (the capital of Liberia), Dr Panjabi continues to have his roots in India. Dr Panjabi recalled, “When I was 9, the civil war broke out. Charles Taylor’s rebel army marched on Monrovia. Some foreign embassies organized evacuation flights. My mother told me to pack one bag.”

He continued, “At the airport, foreign nationals were separated from Liberians and allowed to board outgoing flights. Liberians were not. My family and I were stuffed into the cargo section of this old military airplane. The hatch was left open, and I could see other Liberians, including soldiers, trying to escape. Leaving those people on the tarmac was something I never forgot.”

The family first shifted to Sierra Leone, a country in West Africa, and eventually found their way to the United States. Dr Panjabi went to the University of North Carolina and had a plan to go to medical school and practice at High Point.

However, Dr Panjabi recalled, “Then came Sept. 11. It brought back memories of Liberia and got me thinking about



# IRECMS CONFERENCE & AWARDS DUBAI

7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Stay connected

[www.irecms.com](http://www.irecms.com)

For sponsorship opportunities, speaking slots  
and delegate registrations kindly contact:

**Harsha Agrawal**  
Event Director, Plan3Media  
[harsha@plan3media.com](mailto:harsha@plan3media.com)  
+91 98673 47073

**Jatin Deepchandani**  
CEO, Plan3Media  
[jatin@plan3media.com](mailto:jatin@plan3media.com)  
+971 55 529 8305

To stay updated with the latest development on IRECMS and  
access its cutting-edge content, follow us on



IRECMS