

FEATURING MILENA MOSER & ALESSANDRA LOSITO

Das Businessmagazin für LADIES mit DRIVE

LADIES DRIVE

Seit 2007

NEUE WEBSITE
WWW.
LADIESDRIVE.
WORLD

No 58

Selbstoptimierung

DAS (NOCH) BESSERE ICH?

Schweiz CHF 15.00 Europa 11,00 €



WE LOVE SLOW READING:
VIERTELJÄHRliche ERSCHEINUNGSWEISE
FÜR IHRE QUALITY-ME-TIME

SOMMERAUSGABE 2022, 15. JAHRGANG
SCHWEIZ, DEUTSCHLAND, ÖSTERREICH

#BusinessSisterhood



SOMMERAUSGABE 2022

Carole Ackermann
interviews
Zina Singer,
Head of Innovation
Pole at EHL



Follow Your Gut Feeling



FOTO: THOMAS ALJOSCHA

Winnaretta Zina Singer has been EHL's Head of Innovation Pole since 2018. She grew up in Monaco, her father is of Anglo-Saxon/American descent and her mother of Iranian descent. She introduced the concept of Key Account Management at EPFL and EPFL Innovation Park, where she was responsible for strategic partnerships for over five years. She has also gained experience in management and account management, sales and marketing, alternating between start-ups and large companies. She is a graduate of EHL Hospitality Business School (founded in 1893 as Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne) and IMD.

Ladies Drive: Zina Singer, do you remember your first experience with entrepreneurship?

Zina Singer: My first experience with entrepreneurship is a piece of my family history that has inspired me since my childhood: my great great-grandfather, Isaac Singer, was passionate about acting but his skills lay in mechanical engineering. He would repeatedly invent machines for cash until he came up with the double needle sewing machine. This was the foundation of the Singer Manufacturing Company that impacted households worldwide and "magic wanded" Isaac Singer from penniless actor to millionaire – a great idea transformed into an empire.

You initially worked in marketing & sales in health and security risk management companies. What attracted you to this industry, and does this knowledge still help you today?

I spent the first 10 years of my career working for companies active in medical and security services for international travelers. I was proud to work for companies that provide life changing solutions to their customers. This experience gave me the taste for win-win partnerships that has remained my focus throughout my career.

As the Vice President of Innovation and Technology Transfer at EPFL, you negotiated with many stakeholders' strategic partnerships. What advice do you have, especially for female founders who have a profound idea but are not well connected in the industry?

First, believe in yourself and the value what you can create. You are in the driver's seat. Then reach out to relevant stakeholders from our dynamic Swiss Innovation Ecosystem but stay focused, as it can be time consuming. And last, identify your growth strategy and targets, then take steps by validating increasingly ambitious hypotheses through innovation loops (experiment & evaluate).

You recently said in an interview that you see an "awakening in the hospitality industry." Hoteliers are more open to looking into startups and collaborating with other partners. Can you give us some examples?

The hospitality industry is human-centric, traditional with challenging operational costs, it does not naturally focus on innovation to drive its success. These past few years some of the start-ups present in EHL's incubator have been booming: Privatedeal (room-pricing by bidding), Smeetz (digitalization and dynamic pricing), Arve, Capsule Hotels, NewCo (start-up incorporations) and Blent (data-driven solutions) all profited enormously from collaboration with others.

Which topics are currently most interesting for the hospitality industry, and do they match what startups now pick up a business idea?

In my opinion, hot entrepreneurial topics match key interests from the industry: CSR, Social Impact & Sustainability in line with customer values and AI/Data driven solutions to reduce costs, optimize operations and increase revenue. Hygiene and contactless have led to new habits and standards over the past couple of years.

A well-known startup on the Swiss startups scene is Arve, one of the 31 members of the Innovation Village. What attracted them to join you?

Arve offers air quality indications to hoteliers for maintenance and customer satisfaction purposes. The founders, who have technological

profiles, joined the Innovation Village in 2019. They value our niche entrepreneurial community connected to EHL and its network of students, faculty, and industry.

Can you briefly describe your day-to-day work at EHL and how do startups collaborate with EHL?

My daily activities range from advising students, coaching entrepreneurs, engaging in innovation consortiums, connecting EHL and the local innovation ecosystem, valorizing our members to the press or at events, organizing events, reporting and managing a small power team of women who make things happen at EHL's Innovation Village and much more.

What is crucial for you to recommend an investment or collaboration to any of your partners?

I believe timing is essential. Be prepared, have your hypothesis validated and identify the appropriate timing to meet the right partners.

The theme of this issue is self-optimization – the better I. To what extent does this play a role for startups and to what extent are entrepreneurs allowed to present themselves better than they are?

Entrepreneurship is an intensive endeavor that requires at least a balanced life hygiene and perhaps some self-optimization. Entrepreneurs must be enduring and capable of convincing, and selling "dreams", to onboard the right amount of support. Personally, I value positive and genuine human being attitudes and believe trust is instinctive and can identify the difference.

The venture industry is a very male-dominated environment. Also, in top management in hospitality, women are still rare. Do you see enough female students interested in startups in hospitality?

I have the feeling that our education makes women more risk averse. We are sometimes still dominated by paternalistic mentalities, but I believe that this tendency will flatten out with the rise of our children's generation, educated with stronger gender neutrality.

They say your network is your net worth. Is that true for you as well?

I couldn't agree more. Network is essential! Switzerland is a powerful innovation ecosystem ranked n°1 (GII) since 2011 with top universities, research, start-ups, corporate and government support. My personal network helps create value by connecting opportunities to or from our entrepreneurial community.

What do you do when you're on your own?

I enjoy spending time with my children: go-karting, tennis, SUP, skiing, travelling, cooking, spending time with friends. On my own, I like to sing, read and swim in the lake in winter. A couple of weeks ago I completed an MIT course on Strategies for Leveraging Innovation Ecosystems. You see, I do not get bored.

Finally, what advice would you give to a young student who wants to launch a new startup?

Evaluate the potential impact of your idea then follow your guts and brace yourself as this may be the most exciting experience of your life!

DR. CAROLE ACKERMANN (51)

is CEO and co-founder of the private equity company Diamondscull AG, which invests in startup companies. She is President of EHL Group (Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne), the global reference in hospitality education, a member of the Board of Directors of Allianz Switzerland, BKW, BNP Paribas Suisse, and BVZ Holding, is involved in the Board of the Bernese innovation agency be-advanced and is a Senior Lecturer at the HSG and other universities.

FOTO: TOBIAS SUTTER



FEMALE INNOVATION FORUM 2022

MAKE IDEAS

BIGGER BETTER FASTER TOGETHER

INNOVATIONS-KEYNOTE-SPEAKER

KEYNOTE AWARD NIGHT



LARA AMINI

Head of Business Development und Co-Founder LOXO
„Autonome Warenlieferung ist die flexible Transportlösung für die Zukunft“



SIMONE RIEDEL RILEY

Leiterin Geschäftsstelle Technologiefonds, Emerald Technology Ventures
„Climate-tech spielt eine zentrale Rolle bei der nachhaltigen Reduktion von CO2-Emissionen“



STEPHANIE SIEVERS

Head of Marketing Europe Philips
“We need to jointly shape our healthcare for the future”



CLAUDIA NERGER

Leiterin Personal-, Führungskräfteentwicklung & Nachwuchssicherung BMW Group
„Innovation wird von Menschen gemacht: Warum es gerade jetzt auf Führung, Zusammenarbeit und neue Kompetenzen ankommt“

GRÜNDERINNEN & START-UPS



DIPL.-ING. ANNE RICHTER

Founder & Chief Excitement Officer (CEO) Knecker
„Für mich ist pflanzliches Protein die Zukunft.“



CLAIRE MEUWLY und LARINA LAUBE

Founder NOW Care
„Wir haben eine Lösung entwickelt gegen die Umweltbelastung durch unsere Pflegeprodukte.“



DR. FRANCINE LORENZ

CEO & Co-Founder Symply Health
„Von den Symptomen zur Therapie: Mit unseren intelligenten e-Tons befähigen wir zur unabhängigen Selbstmedikation.“



HALLA SIGURTHORSOTTIR

Founder Aiving
“Foster success and motivation with wearable technology in figure skating while minimising the risk of injuries.”



DR. FAJER MUSHTAQ

CEO & Co-Founder Oxyle
“Protecting the health of our precious bodies of water by removing highly persistent and toxic pollutants with our sustainable and efficient water treatment technology.”

WWW.FEMALEINNOVATIONFORUM.CH

PRESENTING SPONSORS



CO-SPONSORS



walderwyss rechtsanwälte

oppenheim & partner

emedately



MEDIAPARTNER



EqualVoice