

DRIVING INNOVATION THROUGH DIVERSITY

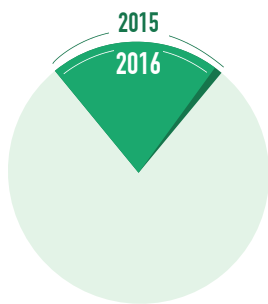
presented by HutZero & WISDOM

The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.

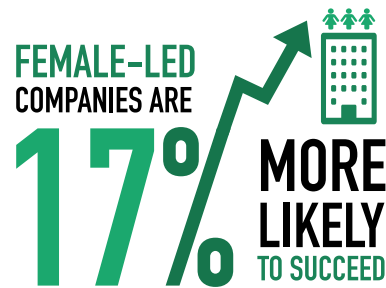
Albert Einstein



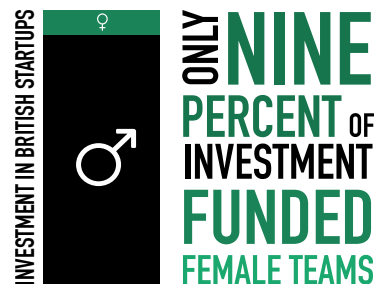
[BUT]



**PROPORTION
OF WOMEN
IN WORKFORCE
DECREASED**



[BUT]



Considering the continued debate around diversity and Women in Technology, highlighted even more so by the stats above, [HutZero](#) and [WISDOM](#) (Women in the Security Domain and/or Maths) co-hosted a '*Driving Innovation Through Diversity*' event at Winton Group, London (25th May 2017) discussion revolved around the key challenges for women in tech and specifically within the security sector. Over 30 men and women from Academia, Government and Industry (large corporates and start-ups) took part in breakout sessions that tackled 4 key questions:

1. What are the most effective strategies that have been implemented to promote and encourage diversity within the security sector?
2. Why do we see far fewer women entrepreneurs and how can the entrepreneur lifestyle be promoted as a viable option to women?
3. How can organisations (large and small) help support talent development and encourage women to consider a career in the technology/security sector?
4. Education: how can females be encouraged to consider careers in technology at an earlier stage?

BREAKOUT SESSION FEEDBACK

DIVERSITY STRATEGIES

The recurring message within this topic was the need for female role models and structured programmes, supported by the entire organisation, to facilitate and encourage more diversity.

Key points made by delegates included:

- Role models are key in all sectors but especially so in sectors that are highly dominated by men. “How can you promote the career of a security engineer to a 16 year old girl by inviting a 40 year old male security engineer to talk about how great it is working in deep tech?” Not entirely relatable. Girls need role models that they can see themselves in.
- Louise Maynard, Futures Team at BAE Applied Intelligence, discussed the challenges she has faced with people’s misplaced preconceptions of how the way she looks should relate to the type of job she works in. This led to the conclusion that perhaps what is needed is more women that break the mould to breakdown the ‘tech geek’ stereotypes.
- Organisational support is required to enable and encourage those females in technical roles to spend time evangelising to the next generation of female security professionals, as well as, where appropriate and feasible provide mentoring and guidance.
- It could be argued, of course, that the role models should not just be female if the culture of the sector as a whole is to change, as the support and buy in of males is essential, particularly at board, C-suite and senior management level. This will promote a top down approach to introducing the culture change and make the sector more appealing to women.

FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The entrepreneurial lifestyle in general was discussed and what image this portrayed to a potential founder: long days, no sleep, coding all day, lack of job and financial security. It was agreed that this was not particularly appealing to a female who may already have or be planning for a family. The conclusion was that the entrepreneurial lifestyle needed to be redefined in a positive light.

Key points made by delegates included:

- Lu Li, Founder of Blooming Founders said ‘The idea of working 20 hour days with little sleep and coding all day long, doesn’t exactly appeal to a mum with 2 kids having to juggle home life with work life’.
- However the reality is that the entrepreneur lifestyle allows more flexibility with working hours, as well as allowing someone to be their own boss and therefore work around other family responsibilities.

- Job security is no longer a given! Whether employed by an academic institution, government organisation or large corporate, given the nature of the economy today, everyone has the potential to be given a redundancy notice.
- In employment, promotion can be one step away but likewise redundancy could be just as impending. Thus, making the journey of an entrepreneur no less risky than any other career within a much bigger organisation.
- Working with government, incubators and accelerators to change the image of an entrepreneur, will in turn help attract more women.

entrepreneur

,ɒntreɒprəˈnɔː/

noun

(current definition)

- *a person who sets up a business or businesses, taking on financial risks in the hope of profit*

(proposed definition)

- a person who has the ability to work flexible hours around their business and has control over the direction of their organisation and career.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT

The encouragement of talented women to choose a technology focused career is vital to the rebalance of the percentage of females employed in the sector. Consensus amongst the breakout sessions was that the development of formal schemes was needed in large and small organisations, to facilitate the “return-to-work” of females.

Key points made by delegates included:

- Where possible, female mentors should be available to provide guidance and support
- Government should consider making “return-to-work” schemes within the tech sector a requirement

EDUCATION

Given that career paths can be dictated by subject choices made at the age of 13 or 14 the promotion of STEM subjects and technical job roles to girls is key to the growth of females employed in the sector as well as female founded start-ups.

Key points made by delegates included:

- More technical and hands on coding courses delivered to girls in a suitable environment
- Given that 1 in 3 security engineering positions are currently vacant within the UK, coding should be made a compulsory subject (just like maths).
- Teachers as well as parents play a vital role in promoting industries that have high potential for employment and may indeed be considered male-oriented. This will require a certain level of education for the parents and the teachers to enable this message to filter down to the next generation.

HutZero was highlighted as an ideal opportunity for females to enter the cyber security sector and the event closed with a call to action for all the females in attendance to submit applications for the HutZero programme and start their journey into the tech and start up world.

HutZero is an early stage accelerator programme, funded by the Department of Culture Media and Sport which supports individuals at the very start of their entrepreneurial journey. Delivered by Cyber London (CyLon) and the Centre for Secure Information Technologies (CSIT), HutZero's FREE two-stage programme connects 20 budding UK entrepreneurs with potential co-founders and a broad network of cyber innovation experts. As the UK's leading bootcamp, HutZero is designed to transform early stage ideas into workable proposals and potential new businesses.

Applications are open until 30th July 2017 and further information can be found at www.hutzero.co.uk.