

A photograph of Nanxi Liu, a young woman with dark hair, wearing a black and white patterned dress, speaking into a microphone. The background is dark with some blurred lights.

Nanxi Liu, Enplug

Inspirational young entrepreneur puts bold ambition on display
Because technology innovation and entrepreneurship is global, we invited one of the USA's rising stars, Nanxi Liu, as keynote speaker for the Deloitte Fast 50 awards in 2014. The founder of two start-ups, 24-year-old Nanxi is CEO of Enplug, winner of the 2015 CES (Consumer Electronics Show) start-up competition. Nanxi kindly took some time to answer our questions about her new company and her success.

What does Enplug do?

Nanxi Liu: Enplug's goal is to be the software that powers content on every public display, enabling them to show intelligent and meaningful content. We're already used in schools, offices, shopping malls, and sports stadiums to show sales dashboards, social media walls, and entertainment. We want to bring our software everywhere! The idea began because we, the five co-founders, realised there was a huge market opportunity in digital displays. We saw that the displays around us were filled with static content. We're converting displays into an engaging public computing platform.

You seem to have hit the bulls-eye with Enplug. What tools do young people need to start their own companies?

Confidence in yourself, belief that you have the drive and skills to make it happen. What made me different from my friends who've gone into regular jobs is that I was silly enough to think that I could start my own business.

This attitude began when I was young. An immigrant into the US at age five, my parents bought a tired piano for \$100 for me. I worked hard and began winning competitions. In college, I started organisations and developed products. These experiences showed me that we can make a lot happen with very little.

The other key tools are to surround yourself with people smarter than you are and find ways to connect with new people. After you decide to start a business, all the other success rests on having the best teammates.

You said that working at Enplug is more than a job, it's a lifestyle. Should the next generation of professionals adopt this approach?

I live together in the same house as my co-founders. We eat breakfast together, go to the office together, and play sports on the weekend together. We're constantly generating ideas during random activities together.

The model worked for us because it's what we did right when we started Enplug. It's in our DNA. Today, with 30 teammates, we've outgrown the house and moved to the office. A third of us still live together. We regularly bring the team together at our home for barbecues.

What are the future plans for Enplug?

We're expanding Enplug's App Market, with 20 new apps due this year. We recently released our SDK so anyone can build an app for our App Market. Right now, 800 firms use our software, from local cafés to Fortune 500 companies, and by the end of 2015, we'll have 1,500.

As a young, inspirational entrepreneur, what's your advice for Deloitte Technology Fast 50 participants?

Always do 10% more than anyone else, because you set the tone for your business. Don't settle for good—you must strive to be the best product in your market. Perseverance is absolutely necessary. Even when you may not feel that it's going well, keep going.

A final word of advice—always sit in the middle seat in an aeroplane because you never know who you might meet!