



Making a difference with MakerGirl

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Brent Bachus:

Today I have the pleasure of talking to Julia Haried about her dual career as an entrepreneur and a consultant and auditor for Deloitte, an interesting combination, and her passion for encouraging girls to pursue careers in technology.

Brent Bachus:

Julia, welcome. Why don't we start today with just talking a little bit about you and your background. Let's learn a little bit about Julia and then kind of get into where we're at today.

Julia Haried:

Yes. I currently work in Deloitte Consulting in their Finance and Enterprise Performance group. And then I've been here about three years. And before consulting, I was in Audit & Assurance. And a little bit more about my background is, I'm from Chicago and I went to the University of Illinois and now I'm here, which is great. And I'm also the co-founder of MakerGirl and we do 3D printing education with girls ages seven to 10.

Brent Bachus:

So that to me is the, whoa, let's pause and dive into that a little bit. Talk a little bit about how MakerGirl came to be? What was the spark that said, "I've got a void to fill?"

Julia Haried:

Totally. So it actually started at Deloitte. So, during one of my internships at Deloitte I was with the CFO marketing program, so they create internal content for CFOs. And part of one of my tasks was to actually research CFOs. So I did all the research and I looked up who these Fortune 500 CFOs were. And I unfortunately saw how few women there were. So, currently there's about three and a half percent women in C-suite positions, which is pretty low.

Julia Haried:

So, being a woman who potentially wants to be a CFO and or leading companies, that doesn't look too great for me. So I wanted to actually do something about that. So I started doing more research at Deloitte, outside of Deloitte in school, which led me to MakerGirl where I can actually do something about it. So not just reading the materials, which is critical and having the conversations, but actually doing something about it. And we start with the younger age group because without the younger people, we can't have the whole pipeline of women to lead.

Brent Bachus:

Wonderful. Wonderful. So, I'm trying to envision how this comes about. You're sitting around a table and saying, "All right, we need more CFOs." How does that translate? What does that-

Julia Haried:

For sure.

Brent Bachus:

... look like? Who's involved in it? Talk a little bit about that maybe.

Julia Haried:

Definitely. So, MakerGirl started in the fall of 2014, so I was sitting in an entrepreneurship class at university. So we were sitting around kind of brainstorming ideas of social work that you could do or social projects with a social focus. And my co-founder, who is Elizabeth Engele, she actually had the idea because she saw how being at a tier one research institution, sometimes women weren't talking about the most interesting things, and we want to do something about that.

Julia Haried:

So we are in class, we kind of brainstorm the idea of MakerGirl and we have an amazing 3D printing lab at the university. It's one of the first 3D printing labs at a business school, so we really fortunate to have these amazing resources. So we kind of paired her idea of lacking amount of women and interesting topics that they're talking about, with this amazing resource at the university and came up with MakerGirl.

Brent Bachus:

And it's not lost on me, the very specific focus of that seven to 10 year old age group.

Julia Haried:

Definitely.

Brent Bachus:

Talk a little bit about why that is so critically important.

Julia Haried:

Yes. So the age group, seven to 10 year olds is really critical because that's when girls and young people start forming their identities of who they are. So we did a bunch of research at the university and we just saw that that really is the critical time, especially for girls, to define who they are. And if they don't at that age see that it's even remotely interesting, then you don't get them in high school and you don't get them in college, and then you don't get them starting off in these amazing careers like at Deloitte.

Brent Bachus:

All right. Wonderful. So let's go back in time. Where were you at age 10 and what were you thinking about, and what were some of the influences on you at that point?

Julia Haried:

Definitely. So, I had a lot of different influences, both artistic and more STEM-focused. So my dad's actually a nuclear engineer from the University of Illinois. So he was always doing science projects and teaching us how things worked and teaching us about just the environment, he does environmental health and safety. So I had that definitely all the time from him. And then kind of more from my mother, she was having us take languages. So I take Spanish and French and Latin, and then we always did art classes. So I definitely had a wide variety.

Brent Bachus:

Yeah, you had this in your blood growing up like-

Julia Haried:

Definitely.

Brent Bachus:

Oh, that is awesome. That is awesome.

Julia Haried:

Yeah.

Brent Bachus:

So, I understand the influence of wanting to get STEM at the young age. Why 3D printing?

Julia Haried:

So 3D printing is an emerging technology. So there's so much that's going on with 3D printing, it's really revolutionizing how companies work and function, particularly in the R and D process. So it's happening in aerospace and defense, it's happening in jewelry design. And actually during our sessions we teach the girls about different industries. So the girls really like that because, particularly women, they're interested to see how they can actually make a difference.

Brent Bachus:

And tangible application too, of what it is that they're doing.

Julia Haried:

Yeah. Exactly. So that's kind of why 3D printing, both ... We had this amazing resource and they can do really cool things with it.

Brent Bachus:

Awesome. So, does this occurred ... I know University of Illinois is where you get started, but I think you've expanded to some other schools in that too?

Julia Haried:

Definitely. So our goal is actually to educate 10,000 girls by 2023. So in order to do that, we unfortunately can't just stay at the University of Illinois. So we've created academies, what we call academies, and it's a group of university students who brought our programming. So we have academies currently at the University of Illinois, at Northwestern and at Harvard. And actually, one of our Harvard students is actually enjoying it, she just

emailed me today. So that was pretty fun.

Brent Bachus:

Oh, that's outstanding. Pretty cool.

Julia Haried: Yeah, so I hadn't realized that. And then we're also going to expand to a few other schools starting this fall with a few partnerships that we've created.

Brent Bachus:

And so at those schools, it's the college students that are actually taking the bull by the horns, if you will, and running the programming and that.

Julia Haried:

Yeah.

Brent Bachus:

So what a great way to get them involved in paying it forward as well.

Julia Haried:

Yeah, exactly. So they kind of have their own entrepreneurial spirit and they're creating their own academies. So MakerGirl really does have a dual purpose. So we do focus on the young girls, seven to 10, but we're also really educating and providing opportunities for the university students, men and women.

Brent Bachus:

Yeah, that's great dual purpose. I love it. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention MakerGirl Goes Mobile.

Julia Haried:

Yes.

Brent Bachus:

Can you talk a little bit about MakerGirl Goes Mobile?

Julia Haried:

Definitely. So we saw that we couldn't just stay at the university, so we expanded to the other universities across the nation. And then we had this super cool idea. One day me and my co-founder were just chatting and I ran up to her and I was like, "Hey, I have this really cool idea, and it's called MakerGirl Goes Mobile." And it's where we have a truck with 3D printers and we go across the country and we teach our sessions to girls in mostly rural areas, partially because they don't have as many resources.

Brent Bachus:

Okay.

Julia Haried:

So we go to rural areas and we're trying to focus on diverse community.

Brent Bachus:

And when you do that, do you work directly with the schools or the park districts or how does that work?

Julia Haried:

Yeah, really just depending on demand. So whoever says they're interested, we try to make it work for them, independent of money. We are a non-for-profit, filed as a 501(3)(c). So if they have money to give, then that's great and they can support us and if not, we do really want to provide the education to those young people, and then we rely on personal and private donations from individuals and companies. So that's kind of what we do.

Brent Bachus:

Okay. Very, very good.

Julia Haried:

Yeah.

Brent Bachus:

So you said you got started in 2014, so about five years. How would you assess where you're at today? Are you where you want to be, and to maybe talk a little bit about the impact that you've had?

Julia Haried:

Totally. So about a year ago, both me and my co-founder, we knew that we really wanted to keep our full-time jobs because we like what we do. And with that we knew that we had to make a business decision of keeping MakerGirl going. So we actually hired a full-time person. So, we actually have full-time people running MakerGirl, which is amazing. Currently we've educated over 3000 girls in about 18 states. And then this summer with MakerGirl Goes Mobile, we're going to nine different states and we're going to educate over 600 girls this summer.

Brent Bachus:

Okay. All right, fascinating. So the million dollar question, part of my role at the firm is working around employee engagement, which incorporates things like well-being and diversity and inclusion. And one of the things that we continually hear here is the importance of somebody's personal sense of well-being. Everything that you just talked about seems like so much. And on top of that you have a day job at Deloitte, which is no easy task in and of itself. Talk a little bit about that balance and how you help make it all work.

Julia Haried:

Totally. So I think if something's important to you, you'll make it work, independent of the circumstances. So for me, obviously I'm at Deloitte and it is a great career and it is really demanding. So that is my number one priority. And then after work, at whatever time that is, normally it's my MakerGirl time.

Brent Bachus:

Okay.

Julia Haried:

And luckily we have full-time people now, so that time is shrinking a bit.

Brent Bachus:

And takes a little bit-

Julia Haried:

Yeah.

Brent Bachus:

Ease of the burden on you a little bit.

Julia Haried:

Yeah. But it really matters to me, it matters to me to make an impact for young people and for the women and for diversity and inclusion, independent of your gender. So it really just matters to me. And since I say that, that's what I do. I'm in line with that.

Brent Bachus:

It's amazing that, in my experience, people are just so much more apt. You pour your discretionary time into those things that you're passionate about, and it sounds like this isn't just a classic case of that multiplied by a factor of hundreds in terms of the impact that you're making. Congratulations to you in that.

Julia Haried:

Thanks.

Brent Bachus:

I think that's absolutely amazing. Talk a little bit about, so how has Deloitte received this, or your project managers and what have you? It's not every day that somebody comes in and says, "Yeah, I'm doing this, but you know what, I'm an entrepreneur and I've started my own company as well." How has that been received and what's been Deloitte's role in this?

Julia Haried:

For sure. So I mean the idea really was born out of part of my research at Deloitte, so it's definitely ... it's been here for a while and Deloitte is super supportive. So I think something special about Deloitte is we have Impact Day, so it's our national day of service and actually I've run Impact Day sites with MakerGirl. So this year we had about 45 Deloitte professionals, cross-functional professionals, join us and we educated 87 girls from the city of Chicago, from three main public schools.

Brent Bachus:

Okay.

Julia Haried:

And actually the Chief Innovation Officer of the City of Chicago joined us, which was super exciting for us. So Deloitte's been super supportive and we have opportunities to actually make a difference and bring it into the threads of our work. And then also, yeah, the partners are really supportive, and luckily they also invest in startups and not-for-profits sometimes-

Brent Bachus:

Really?

Julia Haried:

... so they also support us as well.

Brent Bachus:

Okay, wonderful. I view every step of the journey that we're on as a life learning experience, right. So maybe talk a little bit about something that you learned at MakerGirl that you've been able to apply so far in your career at Deloitte.

Julia Haried:

Well, I think people love to work with people who are interested in what they're doing. So no matter what that is, even if it's super boring and you're literally, I don't know, stacking papers, as long as you're interested in it, people like to be around you. So I think one thing that I've learned through MakerGirl and my work at Deloitte is, be excited about what you're doing and have fun, kind of independent of what the task is at hand, because it's not always going to be the most thrilling thing.

Brent Bachus:

Right.

Julia Haried:

Either at Deloitte, MakerGirl, wherever you're working.

Brent Bachus:

There's always some grunt work that needs to be done, right? Yeah.

Julia Haried:

Yeah, exactly. But doing that with a positive attitude, and knowing the importance and value in what you're doing, I would say those things.

Brent Bachus:

Very good. One of the interesting things I read about you coming into this was, you had two goals upfront for why you had started MakerGirl. One was around wanting to see seven to 10 year olds thrive. The second one, which really caught my attention was, you wanted to open their eyes to see how powerful they were. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Julia Haried:

Oh, my goodness. Yeah. These seven to 10 year olds are so powerful. So, when the girls walk into our sessions they're a little timid and the energy's kind of low and they don't really ... They're in a new place, they've never been there before. But once they start actually 3D printing and CAD-designing and understanding how cool what they're doing is, there's a whole new boundless energy in the room that is so powerful.

Brent Bachus:

Amazing discussion today. I know you've mentioned that Deloitte's been involved with Impact Day and what have you. What advice would you have for others who are hearing this and they want to get involved in MakerGirl? What are the things that they can do?

Julia Haried:

Definitely. So we're always looking for supporters, kind of back to your question about how people can make a bigger life. So if they want to get involved with MakerGirl, that'd be amazing. So they can email me at info@makergirl.us or visit our website, www.makergirl.us. So if they want to host a session or donate, we're always looking for support. That'd be awesome.

Brent Bachus:

Well, that is great. I wish you nothing but continued success, both with MakerGirl as well as your career at Deloitte. Clearly you have a great track record so far and I know that the future is super bright, so congratulations to you and all you've done so far.

Julia Haried:

Great. Thank you.

Brent Bachus:

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