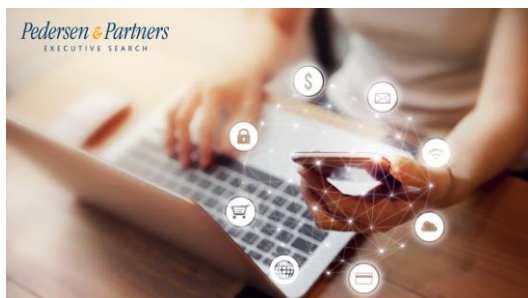


I wanted to inspire other people and create something that did not exist before, Riga TechGirls

Riga, Latvia – *Daria Dubinina has dedicated eight years to mastering payments, e-commerce, and business development. Leading strategist and entrepreneur, Daria has also lead major partnership deals with PayPal, Alipay, Riot Games, IBM, and others. Her expertise and specialization lie in the fields of payments, strategic management, international business development, financial technologies, and international regulations.*



Crassula is a FinTech platform that empowers companies to create their own payment systems, wallets, and online banks. Crassula delivers White Label products for PSPs, Payment Processors, Banks, and others, allowing to fully outsource technical solution. With high level of customization, it allows to set the products up and running within several days.

The company was founded in 2015 by banking, payments and tech professionals. Today Crassula is creating an infrastructure for

FinTech companies, offering convenient box products, implementing blockchain and cryptocurrency technologies and developing the open ecosystem.

Evita: Why did you decide to start your own company in FinTech space? There could have been many other business ideas, which are much simpler?

Daria: It's mainly because of my background. Before starting my own company, I was in payments and FinTech industry for five years dealing with online payments, e-commerce, add-on features, and it's a very interesting space to be. It was essential for me to continue in this field. It was like adding another feature to the product I know.

Starting up wasn't so easy, I had to figure out lots of details, but it was very interesting, and I could engage with a lot of smart people.

Evita: What did you have to learn and how important is the continued learning for your role?

Daria: I had to learn a lot, for example, the stuff which is basic for the technology specialists—databases, how the APIs work, and such. I have team members, which are technology professionals, and they are willing to understand my vision about their work.

Then I had to learn all the things related to running a company—how to inspire and manage people, how to put things together and make everything work. My role is often to develop managers and leaders, I advise them not to pressure people, because there would be a burn out. I am learning something new every day. For example, the technology is constantly changing, and I have to develop along with it.

Evita: And why becoming a leader instead of a team member or mid-level manager?

Daria: When I was working at payment industry, I felt my work was like copy pasting, doing the same things every day all over again. I did not see the room for personal development. I wanted my ambitions to come true, to make a difference by running my own company. I wanted to inspire other people and create something that did not exist before.

Evita: What are the sources of your motivation? You are passionate about novelty and creating something that did not exist before. Why are you doing this? Is this for money or changing the world or another big goal?

Daria: You are looking at people, who are successful, and you want to become one yourself. Not always successful people are the richest ones, but they are very knowledgeable, full of experience, they have seen the world, they are well connected.

For example, I consider the year (2016) I spent in the Silicon Valley as a significant step on my way to success, because you meet inspiring people every day. I have burned almost to zero the company's budget and my personal savings there, since it was a very expensive place to live, but in terms of connections and experience, it was totally worth it.

Evita: Why did you go to the Silicon Valley?

Daria: I went there to understand the U.S. market and to raise the funds for the project. I had a better success for the first goal than the second one. We did raise some funds and gained some interest, but it was not very sustainable, and we had to change our strategy. But I understood the market, as well as the mindset of the people living and working there.

One thing I understood and learned there, which I am now practicing every day, is that you have to "give back", meaning—you would never gain the success just by yourself. Someone helped you, and you have to help someone else in return.

Evita: You are truly a global entrepreneur. Originally you are from Ukraine, living in Latvia, and have travelled the world. Where do you see the potential for Crassula's business the most?

Daria: We are targeting the companies that would like to create their own payment solutions—payment systems, banking, wallets, etc. From the business perspective, we are trying to reach the developing markets. In old Europe our products would be used less. For example, we are targeting Latin America, East Europe, South Africa, Middle East, South East Asia, Japan, Korea—the countries where something is missing, where there's an interest in FinTech field or where there is a space for growth.

Evita: In terms of Crassula's products, could you highlight anything unique that your company offers?

Daria: We are developing the infrastructure for the companies that would like to build something by themselves—they do not need to spend years and hundreds of thousands of dollars to develop their own payment solutions, they can test their ideas on our platform and understand whether their idea is good, whether they can gain customers' trust and start doing business.

Another unique feature is that we are implementing the Blockchain solutions and cryptocurrencies. By adding these features, we enable our existing and future clients to create crypto-wallets, crypto-banks, allow merchants to accept cryptocurrencies as a payment method, etc. We do a lot of R&D creating private blockchains that can connect with each other and exchange currencies between each other, and all the transactions are carried out in a decentralized ecosystem.

Evita: When I speak to people from your industry, be it banks or payment service providers, sometimes they refer to Blockchain as a matter of fashion, saying why should Blockchain be that different from other technological solutions...

Daria: In our space (payments), there are some problems, which can be solved with Blockchain, for example, double spending problem. In a traditional economy, we can of course protect customers from double spending, however, some of the companies are still doing this manually, and manual work always leaves the room for mistakes. There are lots of other processes done manually. We are trying to automate the processes by implementing computing power and mathematical algorithms for solving complicated tasks or strictly complying with set terms. Finally, the decentralization itself can make the transactions unchangeable, which protects from fraud or illegal actions of participants in the process. These points are very crucial in the payments sphere.

Evita: Being a female entrepreneur in the tech space on a global scale, have you experienced any special situations or attitude?

Daria: When I first came to the U.S., I thought there is a lot going on about discrimination of women. They said women are paid less, trusted less, investments are more difficult to be raised by women. In the U.S. they speak about this loudly and I could experience it myself—the VC guys do not trust you—they see you as a young woman, who will want to have a baby in upcoming years and will not pay the attention to the business. I thought this was only the U.S. case, but this attitude appears to be everywhere. One of my friends—a woman executive in Ukraine—was refused a salary increase with the explanation that it should be a husband who provides for the family. This attitude should be changed. I am faced with lots of situations when it's better to send my male co-founder to the meeting so that he is taken more seriously. He would take the commitments first and I would do the work afterwards. The situation should be changed, there is still a huge problem and we should speak about this loudly.

Evita: They say that technology space is more liberal, because the most talented tech professionals are appreciated regardless of gender or ethnicity. Are your observations more related to entrepreneurial or selling side of the business than technology?

Daria: It is more liberal, however, not always. In terms of technological progress some work can be done from home, so there is no difference who does the work—man or woman—provided that the work has been done well. I have heard lots of stories that women which are trying to get an office job as developers or project managers or similar roles in technology are not given the opportunity because of the expectation that they would have babies and would drop the job, or they are too pretty to be smart, or something along those lines.

Evita: Daria, could you give a word of inspiration for women in tech space or entrepreneurship? Why should a woman even try given all the difficulties and stereotypes?

Daria: I am an example of a woman working in the tech space. I am doing well, there is nothing impossible for a woman, be it technology, development, finance, entrepreneurship. Moreover, this can all be combined with having family and children. I have seen women doing coding, women travelling the world and having great families at the same time.

Evita: What are your areas of personal development?

Daria: I am always working on making my knowledge deeper. I am meeting a lot of people and I need to have a strong position to argue. I subscribe to a number of newsletters in the tech space, in payments' space, and in cryptocurrencies space. I read a lot—not only business or sales books, but fiction as well. I also need to be aware of news in the world and the economy. In terms of personality, I am developing the networking skill, since this is a relevant ability required for an entrepreneur. I am trying to learn something every day which makes me a better person, better networker, better technology expert and a better businesswoman.

Evita: Anything else you want to add for our readers?

Daria: A minute of inspiration. When you are an entrepreneur, there is always stress and anxiety. You are always worried that you are doing something incorrectly, that you are missing something out, that something is going wrong. And, you know, a lot of things can go wrong. Try to focus on the main things—eat healthy, do sports, read, drink a lot of water, spend time with your family, do time management in the way so that your life is full. If your project is not a total success, at least you have your health and your family. And if not all your projects are total success, keep throwing the ball and one day it will definitely fall into the basket.

Evita: Good luck to your company and may it grow to the level you aspire, and may you have many other successful ventures in the future!

Read the whole interview here: <https://goo.gl/n3Ry5h>



[Evita Lune](#) joined [Pedersen & Partners](#) in 2005; she is a Partner who develops and implements the firm's Global Digital Economy strategy, while simultaneously leading the Retail Practice Group and overseeing the Latvia, Poland, and Belarus teams. Currently she has a deep-seated focus on FinTech assignments, partnering with global clients to build digitisation capabilities and reinvent core organisational elements through critical talent acquisition strategies. As Partner, Ms. Lune also takes on regional oversight, and through completing numerous senior-level assignments, she has established strong cooperation with clients in Poland, the Baltics, Scandinavia, Russia, and CIS across the Banking, FinTech, Consumer Goods, Retail, Pharmaceutical, Manufacturing, and the Professional Services sectors. Her previous experience includes three years with the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga as the Executive MBA Program Director and six years with Shell in international and regional marketing management functions in Riga, Budapest, and Brussels.

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