

## You add a lot of value when working in the technology field, Riga TechGirls

**Riga, Latvia** – “You create something from nothing, and you work together with plenty of smart, humorous and focused colleagues.” Valerija Makijenko, Head of Development at Visma Enterprise Latvia. [Evita Lune](#), Global Digital Economy Partner, interviewed Valerija for [Riga Tech Girls](#), an IT community in Riga, Latvia dedicated to tech, start-up and digital education.



Valerija Makijenko has been a software development addict for more than ten years. Currently she is working as an R&D manager at Visma Enterprise Latvia, as well as giving lectures at Baltijas Datoru Akadēmija (BDA) and Riga Technical University (RTU). Before stepping into management responsibilities, Valerija worked in various software and product development projects as a business analyst, system analyst, and product owner.

While being a development manager she ensured that her team was able to move from “waterfall-ish” command-control ways of working to self-driven flat organisations guided by agile principles, which resulted in better product quality and engaged the entire team. Speaking about herself, she says that a clean code and good shoes always put a smile on her face. Valerija motivates herself and her colleagues to promote awareness of IT industry in schools and universities.

Visma is a leading Scandinavian IT solutions company with over 7,000 employees in 9 countries. The company is serving over 400,000 clients worldwide and is represented by three legal entities in Latvia.

### **Evita: Was it difficult for you to enter the world of computer science?**

**Valerija:** I like it when it's difficult, I am not afraid of studying too much, in fact I think that if you are in the technology field you have to be open minded to study really-really hard all the time. At school I was always strong at mathematics, chemistry and physics, but was struggling with history, poetry and such, so entering engineering and computer sciences was a clear choice for me, although originally I wanted to study construction.

### **Evita: And now what is your motivation to work in this field?**

**Valerija:** [...] My greatest motivation is the idea that we are bringing value. My development team is responsible for the Latvian market. This is our way of serving the country—developing solutions for government institutions and private companies in Latvia. Hopefully, this will help them become more effective for citizens and people in Latvia.

The second source of motivation is people. Most people in IT are smart, focused, and have a good sense of humour. There is no backtalk, no wasting of time with irrelevant chats, and the atmosphere and temper in the team are really great. [...]

### **Evita: What would be your recommendations for girls and women who are still struggling with both—trying themselves in the technology space and proving themselves as leaders, as opposed to just back office executors?**

**Valerija:** If you are structured enough, if you are able to understand the problem and able to suggest how to solve it, you do not need to be very technical to be a part of IT. Second, you need to be able to learn really fast. You need to be able to read tons of materials and understand how to apply your new knowledge to your work. For a chaotic, creative type of person it would be quite difficult. At Visma we have women with non-technical background from accounting that work in our team really well.

How to become leader-oriented... talk to other leaders, ask about their fears and how they overcome them. IT does not have gender, race, anything. What is worshiped are your ability to work, to perform, and your attitude. It does not matter which society level you come from, or how exactly you have become a master in what you are doing. IT can help you even if you have no money to attend official education—you can learn a programming language in the library and start earning money for your family.

**Evita: Do you have any overall recommendations or observations?**

**Valerija:** The main message is for parents and teachers to have a better awareness of what is happening in the world because of IT. Use all materials to explore technical matters with young children in a fun way. Sometimes parents are deciding for their kids in a stereotypical way. For example, if it is a girl, she will probably go to ballet or philology. I encourage to show how interesting, how fun technology can be, and what a huge impact it will have on our daily life. We have a huge shortage of talent and we hope that more and more women will become engineers.

**Evita: When we talk about future professions, even if a girl chooses to study medicine or be a teacher, technology awareness will be a key requirement for any profession in the near future. You will be doing virtual reality surgery or online French language classes. Without technology awareness, you will automatically remain at the lower level of qualification in any profession, and will get a lower salary; you discriminate yourself and limit the growth of your career.**

**Valerija:** And there are plenty of modern technology-based professions, which are very female at first sight, but have a lot of logic and technology-awareness behind—such as fashion bloggers or ladies who build a large audience on Instagram by showing, for example, what they have bought. It looks very feminine, but you have lots of analytics behind it. We have an excellent balance and diversity at Visma at all levels, even at the management team, and it gives excellent results for the company. Women need to be constantly encouraged and motivated to join the technology world and to become leaders in their fields.

Read the whole interview here: <https://medium.com/@RigaTechGirls/you-add-a-lot-of-value-when-working-in-technology-field-20ae39e1da57>



**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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