

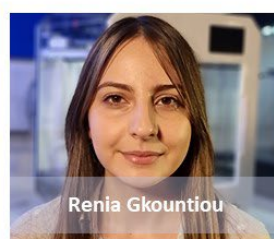
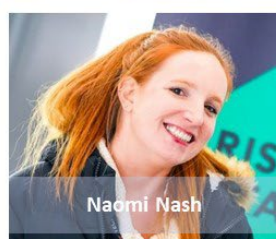
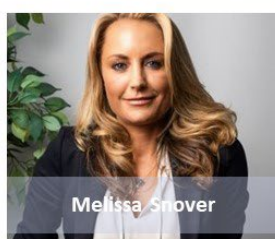
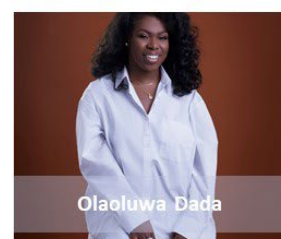
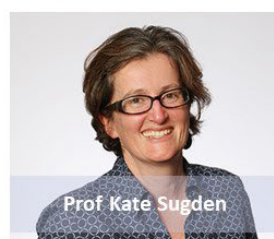
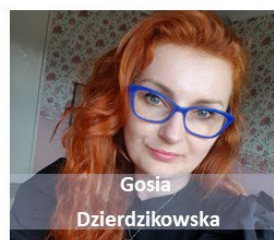
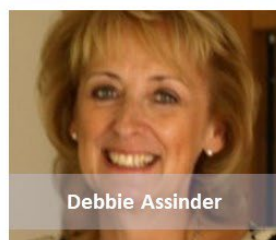
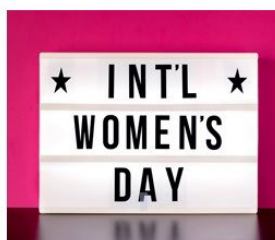
Women: Innovation, Technology & Strength

Wednesday, 9 March 2022, 10am-2:30pm



We discussed what drives women, challenges they come up against and ideas they bring to life.

We had a line-up of girls-next-door, who are passionate about science, business and various causes close to their hearts, and who have gone to do amazing things!



Event Summary:

In honour of international Women's Day, **Advanced Prototyping Facility** organised **Innovation Women Conference**, which focus was on inspiring more women and girls to enter the innovation and technology fields.

Speakers shared stories based on events in their life about what encouraged them to follow their dreams.

This event was also a learning and networking opportunity designed by women for women. Attendees had chance to learn from other successful like-minded women in business and science.

Agenda:

9:30 Registration, networking & coffee

10:00 Opening

10:20 **Professor Kate Sugden** – Aston University

10:40 **Melissa Snover** - Get Nurish3d

11:00 **Kari Lawler** - Youth4AI

11:20 **Olaoluwa Dada** - Niyo Enterprise

11:40 Comfort break

12:00 **Renia Gkountiou** – APF project @ Aston University

12:20 **Heather Golding** - TonyG

12:40 **Shovon Wiggan** – Inspire-a-Doll

13:00 **Jacqueline Champion Reeves** - Champion & Reeves Ltd

13:20 Closing

13:30 Networking lunch

14:30 End

Our hosts:

Debbie Assinder is the West Midlands Enterprise Champion for Enterprise Nation, enabling her to support and promote businesses across the region. Debbie also works with tech start-up businesses at Innovation Birmingham and is the Event Director for the Midlands Women in Tech Awards.

In May 2019, Debbie was awarded Young Enterprise Gold Award, 'For making an outstanding contribution to the work of young enterprise'. Debbie was also nominated for Woman of the Year 2020, in The City of Birmingham Business Awards, which "celebrates those business heroes who have made a difference to the Birmingham city region." Debbie is also currently shortlisted for the West Midlands Leadership Award for Diversity and Inclusion 2022.

Naomi Nash is the Midlands Scaleup Engagement Manager for Tech Nation. She spends her days finding and supporting all scaling tech businesses in the region through introductions, signposting, business support and peer networks. It's her job to know everyone in the tech ecosystem, so if you haven't spoken with her yet, make sure you do! Prior to working with scaleups, Naomi ran a startup incubator at Innovation Birmingham where she helped over 250 startups with early stage investment and market readiness, and MVP building.

Tips from our speakers 🗣️

1. Professor Kate Sugden

- Don't worry about not having a plan
- Be open to opportunity
- Keep learning
- Understand what motivates you
- Work with people you respect
- Somehow find balance!

2. Melissa Snover

- Every time you fail its an opportunity to learn
- Passion + Knowledge = Power
- There are no short cuts to true success
- The mirror philosophy
- Hire people better than you
- Fuel your Fire

3. Kari Lawler

- Teach Yourself
- Don't stop learning
- Many free learning tools are available online
- Follow your passion
- Not always a traditional route is the right one
- Spread your wings!

4. Olaoluwa 'Laolu' Dada

- Imposter syndrome (not only I feel that way)
- Being an apple in a world of pears (embracing my difference)
- Important role of learning
- Passion to improve black women's lives through tech
- Wit for Disruption
- Review & Repeat
- Enthusiasm – God within

5. Renia Gkountiou

- Follow your dreams
- Be inspired
- Overcame prejudice!
- Try, Fail fast, Learn, Move on!
- Appreciate every moment of your life
- Take the opportunity!

6. **Heather Golding**

- Go with your passion
- Don't underestimate your skills - soft skills equally important
- Keep learning
- Surround yourself with people better than you
- Above allows you to sit in "metaphorical crows nest" - allowing ability to get overview of what is happening
- Focus on creating a workplace that people want to work
- Fear of imposter syndrome (embrace your strength)

7. **Shovon Wiggan**

- Identify gap in the market
- Stay inspired
- Is never too late to obtain education,
- Expect the unexpected
- Feel passionate about your project
- Overcome imposter syndrome
- Celebrate individuality
- Never take NOo for answer
- Believe in yourself
- Be solution based

8. **Jacqueline Champion**

- Allow your "baby" to grow
- Be open to academics' advice – they see think differently and can add value
- Square peg in round hole (use this as advantage)
- Understanding your weakness will help you to grow
- Importance of lifelong learning
- Be passionate

Event gallery:













We are proudly building community of female innovators working together to create amazing products and services!

Feedback:

"I have heard some of the speakers before but it was still good to hear them within this context and the directions they are taking to develop their business."

Sophia Tarr

"These events are invaluable for people's ability to understand the unique and special under-represented groups in our city and region, and this event was no different!"

"These events should be celebrated by everyone, we are allies to one another, and even if I felt a bit of imposter syndrome when I arrived, I was very much welcome!"

"The inspiration levels were bursting"

Dan Hoff-Rodrigues

"I love going to events about people who have different experiences from myself too - always challenging our own perceptions and experiences goes a long way to helping us drive equitable environments 🙌"

Clare Streets

"I was there, and my only disappointment was not being able to stay until the end to hear all the speakers! More events like this please!"

Liz Burley

"It was amazing listening to such an incredible, diverse group of women talk about their experience and journey into tech."

Start.Biz

"Innovators and start-ups can so often be husband and wife teams and I'd say it can be as challenging as raising children together - you find out your differences as it calls primary values to the surface. I have a lot more wisdom to impart and am thinking of writing a piece about it specifically after Wednesday's conference, so thanks for the encouragement!"

Heather Golding

"We need more talks like that to show the power of ladies in business!"

Ela Aksamit

"I had such an inspirational day yesterday at the "Women: Innovation, Technology, Strength" event in partnership with Aston University. There was a common theme of;

** Be the change you want to see, in your own unique way,

** Build a team to strengthen your individual weaknesses and; ** YOU can do it!!"

Neeta Solanki

What next....

1. The **MIDLANDS WOMEN IN TECH AWARDS** are a unique opportunity to highlight and recognise the ongoing contribution of women in the tech sector.

The aim of the awards is to raise the visibility of women in this space and enable the next generation to “see it and therefore aspire to it”. Currently just 17% of those working in technology in the UK are female and according to a recent study by PwC only 3% of young women have technology as their first career choice.

We hope that not only will this bolster opportunities for women, but it will also inspire other young women to get involved and realise that they too can enjoy a dynamic, exciting and innovative career in technology.

NOMINATE NOW!

<https://www.womenintechawards.co.uk/nominate/>

2. Venturefest West Midlands 2022 –

Entrepreneurs and innovators from across the West Midlands will have a unique opportunity to develop and grow their businesses by meeting with potential investors and other cutting-edge companies at a free event this spring.

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is sponsoring and co-hosting Venturefest WM 2022 to put growth businesses with investors who have specific expertise in innovation. Venturefest offers the opportunity for entrepreneurs, innovators and investors to share ideas for co-operation and collaboration, particularly in the fields of science and emerging technologies.

REGISTER HERE:

<https://www.venturefestwm.co.uk/register>

3. The **GBSLEP Growth Hub Account Manager Charlotte Bowden** is running a fully funded programme; Female led Learning & Networking Group

This female led Learning & Networking Group is funded by the Growth Hub and brings together diverse cohorts of business leaders to discuss business challenges and growth ambitions with peers.

The programme will be delivered through a series of meetings with a Hybrid approach and option for delegates.

Topics covered will include; HR, Finance, Sales, Marketing, Strategy and planning. This will give the group the opportunity to build and strengthen their businesses and improve overall performance.

CONTACT Charlotte Bowden for more information: charlotte.bowden@gsblepgrowthhub.co.uk

4. Interested in finding out the best way to work with **Aston University**?

CONTACT Business Referrals Officer Nadiyah Vasta: n.vasta@aston.ac.uk

Thank you very much for making this event so successful

**We really look forward to organising
Innovation Women next year**

APF team

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