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Leaders in Diversity Awards 2020: Lolita Taub, Catalyte

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Lolita Taub

Title: Chief of staff at Catalyte

Age: 34

Education: Bachelor of arts in international relations, University of Southern California; MBA, IE Business School in Madrid



CATALYTE

Lolita Taub is chief of staff at Catalyte.

Lolita Taub understands what gaining access to a career in technology can mean for members of “underestimated” communities — namely people of color, women and members of the LGBTQ community.

Raised by poor Mexican immigrants, Taub became the first in her family to attend and graduate college. She spent much of her early career in the tech space working in sales roles for companies like IBM and Cisco. When she went on to join her first startup, which was led by a woman, she got a first-hand look at the kinds of struggles underestimated founders face.

Taub was attracted to Baltimore-based Catalyte for its core goal of seeking to retrain workers from diverse backgrounds to work as software developers. The company bucks traditional hiring practices and identifies promising tech workers through aptitude assessments.

She's proud to be working for a company that elevates diverse leaders internally and prioritizes diversity.

“Diversity is sometimes marginalized as a kind of fluffy talking point. But the fact is, if you want to make money, you’ve got to serve minorities,” Taub said. “It’s a good business decision, and good to just have respect for your fellow human beings.”

You have a background in VC. How has diversity played a role in your investment strategies?

When I got into startups, it opened my eyes to this world of VC and this pattern of homogeneity between the people who were leading companies and the people who were writing the checks. I saw there was so much money being left on the table, not supporting founders of color from diverse backgrounds — I just didn’t understand it. I jumped into VC after doing my MBA because I saw this gap in diversity and inclusion in investing, and I wanted to be part of addressing it.

What other organizations are you involved with outside of work, and how does diversity play a role in those endeavors?

During evenings and weekends, I do a lot of work with startups in the ecosystem. I'm a mentor for TechStars and part of the Vinetta Project in [Washington,] D.C., both focused on support and funding for entrepreneurs. I also run a biweekly newsletter where I share resources with folks, because part of what I've seen in the tech community is underestimated founders just don't have access to the kind of information that could help them get to the next level.

I am also working with my husband to build a startup investor matching tool that connects VCs with founders looking to raise capital, based on certain baseline investment requirements. I'm trying to address and eliminate the bias that exists in the investment space, and also help make more efficient introductions and increase opportunities for founders to get on calls with people they may not otherwise have had access to.

What challenges have you personally faced as a person of color in your industry?

So many microaggressions on a daily basis. Lots of mansplaining, lots of, "Go get me coffee." I have to do so much work to just get onto some level of credibility with people, no matter how much education or experience or expertise I have.

I've been very lucky working with Jake [CEO Jacob Hsu] at Catalyte. He has been very supportive and a huge advocate for me as a woman leader. As a person of color in any industry, you need to work harder and prove yourself constantly. But there are also those people out there who are saying, "I see you, and here's your chance, go run with it." That's exactly what we need more of in the world.

[Read about our other 2020 Leaders in Diversity Award winners.](#)

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