

Women in Business and Technology

Transcript of Episode 004 - Strategies for Male Allies and Advocates

Guest: Scott Hanselman

Summary: In this episode, Sonia and Colleen head to the Create & Cultivate conference and speak with attendees about the criticality of community in building a career. We then meet male advocate Scott Hanselman, who shares his best practices on building inclusive teams and “lending his privilege” to communities that are underrepresented in technology.

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[MUSIC]

>> It cannot be overstated that just a simple existence of a person in power that happens to look like a young person, that will change a young person's perspective.

[MUSIC]

>> You are listening to the Women in Business and Technology podcast, from Microsoft.

In each episode, you will hear from women in amazing technology and business roles, as well as male allies, who are helping make the industries more inclusive.

We are diving into programs that promote greater diversity in the pipeline, and bringing you tips on

how to build a successful career in a supportive community.

Welcome to Women in Business and Technology.

[MUSIC]

>> Welcome to episode four.

My name is Colleen O'Brien.

>> And I'm.

>> And today we're going to kick things off in our Community Connect segment by talking about the Create and Cultivate Conference, which recently came to the Microsoft Campus.

>> And then we'll jump into an interview I have with a male advocate, fellow Microsoft employee, and fellow podcaster Scott Hanselman.

And then we'll wrap things up in our cutting edge segment where we're going to talk about CurvyCon, which is driving inclusivity at New York fashion week.

>> So, Sonya, you and I recently attended Create & Cultivate, which happened this weekend.

>> It was awesome.

>> It was awesome.

Create & Cultivate is this amazing brand and company with this bold mission to help women get their dream jobs.

They create a ton of amazing and inspirational content

on their website and on their social feeds, but they also host a conference that happens three times a year. And Microsoft was lucky enough to host them on campus this past weekend. Sonya, you and I were both at the conference, and I'd love to hear a little bit more about your experience there.

>> First of all, it was amazing.

The words phenomenal women just kept kinda flashing in my head. I was fortunate enough to play a roving reporter. And I got to go around and interview a couple of the keynote speakers, panelists of the women who are attending. I was so impressed.

It was a single-day conference, and there was women coming in from all over the country. So women from Florida, Wichita, like Dallas, Texas, it was amazing seeing how many women had come out. And it was just this energy that was buzzing around. And it was infectious.

And got a chance to interview Brooklyn Decker and Whitney Casey, the founders of and get their input on what it was like to be key note speakers at such a large event.

I wish I could have talked to I was like amazing.

But it was just infectious, and

I also loved having them on campus, and

I get to show them a little bit of what's going on in our world.

And it was just amazing to see what drove women to attend, and all their different reasons.

So some were to provide advise, some were looking and

seeking advise, and it was just all around awesome.

And I think we should

get more involved with opportunities like this.

>> Totally, I was at the conference as an attendee.

You and I were lucky enough to witness the interview with

Easter Ray at the end of the day, her keynote interview.

She's this amazing actress, writer, director, producer.

She created one of my favorite shows, Insecure.

So that was [LAUGH] >> Ultimate slashy as you

call it.

>> [CROSSTALK] >> Director slash actress.

>> Yeah, totally, and another great panel that I

caught during the day was about snackable content, interviewing women who were using technology to start their own businesses.

So whether it was the blogger behind A Cozy Kitchen, or

What's Gaby Cooking,

to local entrepreneurs Entrepreneur Molly Moon,

who has all of these amazing ice cream shops throughout the city.

It was an amazing spot for me to learn from and

get inspired by women who are using technology

in really innovative ways to capture a market opportunity.

>> Community Connect, get involved and stay connected.

>> Sonia and I caught up with Create and Cultivate attendees

at happy hour the night before the event kickoff.

One of the women we met was Karina Fabre,
who works in publishing and
was specifically interested in getting access to greater
diversity of thought when she purchased her conference ticket.

>> I decided to come to Create and Cultivate this weekend
because I feel like we kind of live in a bubble,
specially in our internet age where it's difficult, sometimes,
to get outside and meet other people in person.
And it's, I think, an exciting opportunity to learn
about the field that I'm in from women that inspire me but
also about new areas that I want to kinda build up my skills in,
from people that I admire a lot in a setting that's very
inclusive and uplifting.

>> Merchandising analyst Marga Bueno
was attending the conference with her best friend Druly,
both of whom were looking for some inspiration.

>> We are starting to work on one of our ultimate goals,
which is really looking out what other people are doing,
what mostly women, and how they're contributing to
the community, and how we can bring people together,
inspire other people and just create opportunities for
other women and other countries that are in need.
I'm from the Philippines and I really want to start focusing
on bringing more projects over there so
that I could create opportunities for
people who don't really have any connections.

>> Kat Earles, an advertising strategist, was on the hunt for some important and critical conversations with other attendees at the conference.

>> Recognizing and acknowledging the fact that in order for women to succeed in today's business world, there are barriers we have to face and not being afraid to talk about them or get in front of them and meet other women who are on the same page. I think that community is really important for us all to get to where we want to go, and these types events are a really good way to bring people together, to kind of move forward together.

>> Producer, Meera Jogani, was specifically looking to grow her network and find a supportive community.

>> So Create and Cultivate is interesting because it is a brand that really brings women together. And I love that idea of empowering people and having an environment where you can have these open conversations where it's not necessarily competitive, but really about growing, like their name, Create and Cultivate. So yeah, it was basically about that, just meeting women that are like-minded.

>> The CEO of clothing rental company Armoire, was leveraging the conference to connect with her business' target audience, professional women.

>> I wrote a business that's focused on solving problems for the women who are here.

So it's really exciting for me to talk to them, understand their challenges and see how we can tailor our solution to best meet them where they are.

[MUSIC]

>> So Scott, in addition to having an impressive and storied career, you are a podcast host of This Developer's Life, Azure Friday and just to name a few.

You are also a frequent guest on other shows and panels.

And because you are so prolific, this could easily be a marathon of an episode.

But I'm hoping we can really narrow down the lens and focus on your work specifically in diversifying the tech pipeline, so if we can make our conversation about that today.

So first off, you've had a pretty interesting childhood, I've listened in to a couple of podcasts where you've talked about it.

And you managed to get your hands on the school's single computer, it sounded like they only had one.

And you'd keep it on the weekends to apparently stay out of trouble with The local gangs you mentioned, making fake IDs which I thought was hilarious.

And I also know you're a fan of teaching systems thinking at a very early age.

Can you tell us a little bit more about your journey into tech and maybe any advice to newcomers?

>> Well, everyone has their journey so, just to be clear,
I'm not trying to compare my journey to anybody.
It was a fairly middle-class, blue collar kind of environment.
My mom was a zoo keeper, my dad was a fireman.
So, working with their hands, hadn't gone to college, and
I was getting into trouble.
There was some meetings, basically.
Back in the day, they would get all the teachers together and
they would have meetings about
different kids that were problems.
So I was one of the meetings, right?
And this fifth grade teacher, Mrs.
Marian Hill, she said, this kid is worth something and maybe we
can give him some access to the computer, it was an Apple II.
And they made a deal where,
if I borrowed the computer over the weekend,
that I could keep it as long as it was back by Sunday night.
And that one of those moments,
I think we've all had that teacher, we've all had that
mentor, we've all had all that boss who looked at you and said,
you're worthy, and they lent their privilege to you.
She gave me access to something I would not have been able
to afford.
And then, about a year later,
my dad sold his van and bought a computer.
Had he not seen me weekend after weekend working on a computer,
which we couldn't afford,
he wouldn't have done that amazing thing and sold this van.

So, there is an example where two different people,
one in the form of my fifth grade teacher and
one in the form of my dad,
lent their privilege to me that I would not have had otherwise.
So then, my whole career afterwards has just been trying
to lend whatever privilege I have to whoever I can
to try to lift all voices.

>> And I think that also relates a little bit to what you talked
about, importance of exposure to technology and
having, it's a privilege, as well.

Anything you could shed light on about having exposure to
tech and how you can take advantage of it?

In our previous podcast, we talked about the latest NASA
class, which is five women, seven men, and
one of them grew up next to one of the space centers.

It was a privilege having this tech right next door.

Anything you can shed light on?

>> We have these images in our mind of where two 20-year-olds
arrive at college and one's a man, one's a woman, or
one is one race and one is another.

But we don't necessarily see that maybe one had computers in
their life for 10 or 15 years, and one just simply
had no access to them or maybe saw them at the library.

That is an exposure, just an ongoing background process,
I think, that's running in the mind.

So by me having access to even a simple computer at age 12,
gave me 10 years jumpstart.

>> Yeah.

>> That I think other wouldn't necessarily have.

I think we are simplistic to believe that simply having a phone means that everyone has access to computers now, and that that's a solved problem.

We have phones that we can consume information with, but we don't have maker devices.

How many people are watching Netflix versus writing programs?

So I wanna make sure that we understand that production and creation and creativity around computers is as important as simply having access to them.

>> As we were learning more about your podcast, Hanselminutes, you share that nearly 60% of people you interview are women, which is awesome.

We talk a lot about the importance of representation on our show specifically, and we really appreciate that statistic.

Was that actually a goal you had set for yourself?

And is that something that you're very closely tracking stats on?

How easy or difficult has it been to actually achieve that gender ratio on your show?

>> So, it's not been a goal.

It just happened, which I don't know if that's good or bad.

>> [LAUGH] >> It just happened.

One thing that I would say, and there have been people who have noticed that statistic and that aspect of my show, and some people have declared that my show is a women in tech show. It's not, it's nondenominational.

>> [LAUGH] >> But

one of the things that I've noticed is that I haven't needed to invite any white guys on the show.

They introduce themselves to me, and they invite themselves on the show.

I have lots of people who've said, hey, I'm working on this great, cool technology, I'd love to be on your show, so I have them on the show.

And it's usually a great show.

In my experience, and

I apologize if I am making a generalization here, but in my experience in 600 shows, very rarely have I received cold emails from women or people of color saying, hey, I've done some great technology, I should be on your show. What I have come up with is 50, 60%, where half the people invite themselves on the show, and the other half, I invite on the show because I see that they're doing cool work.

If I see that you're doing something cool, I'll email you.

And you might say, I don't know, I really haven't spoken.

No, no, come on the show!

And just this much encouragement, just a tiny bit of encouragement, and it turns into a great show.

And what I've also found is that if you look back in the archives of my show, you'll find that a lot of the people who maybe got their start on my show, that was the lift that they needed to start then inviting themselves on other shows.

So, you can say that that's personality types, you can say that's gender differences, whatever.

But the fact is, some people can self-promote, some people can't.

But some people can be taught to self-promote.

And that makes me happy, so I try to, again, lend my privilege.

And that term,

lending privilege, I got that from my buddy, Anjuan Simmons.

He's got a fantastic whole talk that he did at South by Southwest that he did on lending privilege.

And that's what the show intends to do.

>> Way back in 2012, you hosted Kimberly Bryant, the founder of blackgirlsgo.com on your podcast, just a year after her organization was actually founded.

Many large tech companies, even including Uber, which just released its first diversity report this year, are seemingly slow to pick up on the importance of inclusion in the industry.

What was your perspective that lead you to bring Kimberly on your show so early on?

>> That's a good question.

It has been now five years, you're right, and it was really when she was just getting started.

I think she was just working on her non-profit status and things like that, and now she's a force in the community.

I think that, having been in the industry now 25 years, at some point I'd looked around and realized that I was mostly just working with people that came up the same way I did.

Whether it was blue collar people that went to community college, or whether they went to Stanford, it was mostly just people that looked like me and spoke like me.

And I don't know, it got a little boring.

>> [LAUGH] >> We tend to make the same kind of projects and software.

You've worked on projects in college where the team is just people who look like you, and who grew up in the neighborhood you grew up in.

>> Homogeneous, yeah.

>> You know, homogeneity in any way is not a good thing.

So, recognizing that Kimberly was trying to break the mold, I thought it was great and I wanted to support her in any way I could, and we've remained good friends.

>> In that interview with Kimberly, you had this great quote.

It cannot be overstated that just the simple existence of a person in power that happens to look like a young person, that changes a young person's perspective.

Also in that interview,
you shared that your children are mixed.
Are you very intentional about presenting them with role models
who look like them?

>> Yeah, and honestly,
I'm trying to do it in a way that everyone can understand.
Because if you have seen 42, 43 presidents that are white men,
then it's very easy for you, as a white man, to say, hey,
I could be president, totally awesome.
But I've got a picture of my two-year-old standing in front
of Obama being elected and pointing at his hair.
Those moments, the Serena Williams, the Mae Jemisons,
are all opportunities for someone to go and say,
hey wait a second, I can do that.
The Hidden Figures,
every single little moment like that Even what the models look
like at Target when you're buying clothes.
All of those little moments, they don't hurt me
as a white man to see someone else succeeding.
Their success does not lower mine.

>> In your Hanselminutes interview with Lamees and
Abeer, two very successful women IT, you discuss
how nearly 50% of the people at the Cairo Code Camp are women.
This gender trend is not our reality here in the technology
industry in the US, however.
How did you learn from those women, and how can we change
the tide of representation in STEM here at home?

>> This was at the Cairo Code Camp in Egypt, and it was seven or eight hundred young people, and it was really like 50 plus percent women.

And this was in a Muslim country, a lot of people were in the hijab, and Someone who doesn't necessarily have a passport or hasn't had the blessing to travel that I have, may not believe these things to be true, but I have been there.

And while there may be challenges around how women are treated in those countries.

In Egypt, the parents, the fathers, the head of the household, the most amazing thing you can do to honor them, is to get into science.

They want doctors- >> It's cool.

>> They want lawyers, they want mathematicians.

So if you're a young woman in Egypt and you can get into one of the STEM careers.

That's one of the things that they talk to all about the aunties and all the uncles about.

I think that when we say it starts at home, it's that it's tutors for your kids.

It's making sure, we call them tapes, the tapes that run in your children's' heads in the back of their minds that are saying I'm not good at math, I'm not good at math.

My nine year old has started that tape already, where he seems to think that because he's not good at his times tables, that I'm not good at math.

Ten years of a tape running in the background saying I'm not

good at x, causes problems.

>> Yeah, and you mentioned systems thinking at an early age, can you explain a little bit more about systems thinking, how that might help?

>> Systems thinking is this common idea, but I learned about at first from this amazing woman named Kesha Rogers, and I did a podcast with her and she says that everyone's out there trying to teach kids how to code.

But they're not teaching kids about how the system works.

And she used the example of a toaster.

The toaster doesn't work.

It's not making toast.

Well, you can shake it, or flip it upside down, or plug it in, or unplug it, and for most people that's the end of it.

But if you think about the larger system, the fuse, the fuse box, the power to the house, that kind of house-wide debugging, as you run around looking for things to reset or restart, just even simply rebooting the router.

Is the understanding that the Internet itself is a system.

Is it my computer?

Is it the router?

Is it something between my system and the router?

Is it the files into the house, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

I don't think that we teach people those systems.

>> That's great, any lessons that you've been teaching your kids directly about systems?

>> This will sound silly, but honestly the basics.

My kids want a digital watch.

They can't have one until they can read an analog watch.

Because you don't want to grow up to be 35 and
you can't read a clock.

Those little things matter.

>> Of course race and gender are just two spectrums against which
inclusion can be practiced.

Also in 2012, you spoke on a South by Southwest panel
entitled, On Pie Chart Diversity at Technical Conferences.

So do you mind, explain a little bit,
what pie chart diversity is?

>> In my opinion, pie chart chart diversity is, or
what I also have called Power Rangers diversity
is when you are putting together a team, and
you want it to look attractive, aesthetically pleasing from
a Power Rangers/United Colors of Benetton, kind of a way.

>> [LAUGH] Right. >> Which, okay we're putting
together a team.

We need one black guy.

I've got two qualified black guys.

Nope, sorry, just have one because it's the Power Rangers,
there's just one black guy, right.

>> Right, of course.

>> You get two white people, a boy and a girl.

You get an Asian person, maybe a Latino or Latina,
doesn't matter.

And then you've put together your team you've put them
together to make sure that the aesthetic pleased someone and
that the boxes were checked, where they qualified.

>> Right.

>> Maybe you put together an all white or
an all male team because that's where the qualifications are,
but are they all white people that went to Stanford
that grew up in the Bay area in the '80's.
There are multiple levels of homogeny.

>> Right.

>> Do you have veterans, do you have disabled people,
do you have neurologically diverse people?

There's a lot of different aspects to diversity and
it does not always make an attractive pie chart.

So I am encouraging people to think about diversity and
inclusion at a deeper level, including disabilities,
including veterans, including age.

And then also

not trying to build a team of Power Rangers because that might
not necessarily be the most qualified team.

>> I know you had some fellow panelists actually, with you,
and you had some shared stories.

Any other learnings you had in how we can hopefully diversify
more panelists, or
any feedback you can give conference attendees?

>> I found that, I don't like the word diversity,

I like the word inclusion.

I feel that if you use the word diversity too much you end up
othering people again,

because then you refer to they're not diverse.

Or you start using coded language, we're looking for
a diverse candidate, which just means a non-white guy candidate.

And that's gonna make non-white,

that's gonna make white guys angry. Right?

So how do you find that balance

and I think you say, we're looking to really cast a wide
net here and put together a really inclusive team.

We're looking for all kinds of people, of all flavors.

That means old and young,

veterans and not, disabled and not.

We're looking to put together a team that is not just,
the same people.

What I think we're doing is we are casting a wider net to put
together a team of people who think differently than I, and
presumably we'll have a better product for it.

So another way to look at it from the pure economics
perspective is you're gonna have a better product and
a product that represents more people and

you're not gonna have your product get into trouble.

All those kinds of issues can go away.

So, there are perfectly good reasons not just because inclusion is the right thing to do, but economically.

>> And are there any other examples of conferences, or any other tactics that you think employers can tap into for that exact purpose of getting more inclusive groups together? And sounds like We Rise was a great example.

>> Yeah, We Rise Women in Tech, the work that Wayne Sutton is doing with Tech Inclusion Conference, Afro Tech. I mean there's dozens and dozens of great conferences that are inclusive conferences. And hopefully we won't have to split out the inclusive with the non-inclusive conferences.

>> You mentioned this, We Rise, Women in Tech Conference, that was back in June.

Hosted by, Women who Code Atlanta.

It's a pretty tactical example of you demonstrating your commitment to advancing the careers of women in tech, especially as a male ally.

For others and our listeners hoping to strengthen their commitment to the cause, can you break down how you got involved with this organization specifically, and how that opportunity came about?

>> Women in Tech, they invited me.

So that was one of those things that I think is after spending ten years of just kind of quietly lifting voices.

>> Yeah.

>> I'm trying to do this in a not overt way.

Because as a man in tech, you don't wanna change your profile on Twitter, and say I support women in tech, and then start patting yourself on the back.

I'm not trying to say that people necessarily do that.

But, you don't simply like jump onto the other side.

You don't just jump over some theoretical line and then declare you're an ally.

You know what I mean.

>> Okay. >> And even that term ally is loaded.

I think of it more as like, Advocate.

Or maybe when appropriate, accomplice.

>> Okay. >> You know what I mean?

How far are you willing to take this?

You know what I mean?

I don't speak on all-male panels.

I won't go to conferences that have all-male lineups.

But that doesn't mean that I'm gonna go and write mean Medium blog posts and tweet, subtweet people about it.

I try to work it quietly from the inside.

So I think that the number one thing that someone who wants to

be an ally or an advocate can do, is kind of shut up and listen, and ask questions in a non-judgemental way. And when they get the answers back, listen again, as opposed to waiting for their turn to talk.

>> So mentioned that you'd prefer using the word advocate over ally, where do you find the distinction between the two?

>> It's tough, I mean one doesn't wanna overly parse words because sometimes that gets you into all kinds of politics around people feeling like you're overly parsing words.

But I can only begin to empathize what it means to be a woman in tech.

So, can I align myself with them?

Can I be their ally?

I don't know.

I can't relate.

I can only advocate for them.

I can only begin to imagine and to empathize.

>> So it sounds like you were given the honor of being one of the keynote openers, specifically, at We Rise Women Tech.

But you were a bit nervous about it, coming in as a male presenter, and you mentioned that you wanted to avoid mansplaining.

How did you avoid any accidental patronizing at gender-aware events?

>> I think that there's a spectrum right now,
of people who are enthusiastic about helping women in tech.
And that spectrum can go from fairly moderate and
harmless things to do, all the way up to very enthusiastic
people who will swear and go very confrontational.
Aspects of, they feel so
strongly about that that this is gonna be a fight.
And I don't want to do anything other than just help people out.
At the same time, I don't really feel like parsing my language
too much, so usually I just ask.
If you're working with someone, and
you don't know their gender pronoun, you ask.
If you are talking to someone, and
you say- you start explaining HTTP, and you say,
" how familiar are you with the HTTP stack?
And they say,
completely familiar, then assume that they're right.

>> Right. >> They said completely
familiar, and then up-level.
From a conference's perspective,
I literally just assume everyone is an engineer.
Those little changes make it a lot easier for
me to not mansplain.

>> So, you mentioned you are the chair of Oz Con and
you've been working to increase the number of women speakers.
How do you establish that representation goal and
rally the conference team to work towards it?

You mentioned earlier about an inclusive panel, but how about specifically for female speakers?
More representation for keynotes.

>> The number one thing we've been trying to do is to cast a wide net and to use a great quote from a friend of mine Siran Yutbarac who runs codenewbies.org.
She says that technology has always been diverse, it just hasn't always been inclusive.
So while some people might not necessarily believe it, the women are out there.
The people of color are out there.
They're coding, it's just maybe you can't see them.
So I think that the arguments of there's a pipeline problem or there aren't enough people in tech.
I think that there just aren't enough people in tech that are working in visible ways.
And the more visible people that we can find the better and it's just going to improve you know the statistics until the statistics are representative.

>> Right. >> I don't think it's gonna be a 50/50 thing right.
If you look at for example black people in America are 13% of the population. It's unreasonable to expect them to be 50% of the technology population but if it's roughly representative where it's know rolling the dice comes out with some statistical representation that's great.

So, while trying to avoid pie chart diversity,
we're simply trying to cast a wider net.
We go out to different organizations and
let people know that the CFP is out there, that the call for
papers is happening.

>> Specifically for our listeners, how do you think they
can help create more inclusive workplace cultures and
help best support diversity in the tech industry.

We talk about conferences and panels,
but what about our day to day coworkers?

>> I feel like it's the little things.

I'll give you one example, and hopefully my team won't mind.

I'm on a team right now.

I have a team of four people, myself included, right.

And I have a young black woman on my team and
then two men, white men.

You might look at them and say okay well the two white guys and
Scott are all the same people.

But one's a veteran and one has an invisible disability and
there is diversity for lack of a better word there.

But when the young black woman joined our team, we started
using GIFs and memes to refer to the things that we understood,
like the movie Office Space,
which is clearly required for everyone, right?

>> Of course. >> But

she'd never seen it because she's in her 20s, right?

>> Mm-hm.

>> The simplistic thing to do would be to say, well make her watch Office Space so that she'll feel part of the team.

But that could encompass her with our culture and ignore hers.

Do you see what I'm saying?

So instead we made a team, our Microsoft team is a group.

We said everyone give us movies that you think we should watch and TV shows you think we should watch.

And we'll all watch them.

And then we'll merge all of our memes together.

So she said you all should watch Doctor Who

because she's English and none of us ever

watched Doctor Who >> Yeah.

>> Now we're all into it and

now we're mixing memes with Chewing Gum,

which she watches and Office Space which we had her watch.

So we made our team culture, the sum of its parts,

as opposed to forcing her to join our team and be us.

We don't want her to be us.

We want her to be her.

>> So where can our listeners find you online?

>> You can google me with Bing and if you search for

Scott Hanselman, you'll find hanselman.com.

You can find my Podcast there, you can follow me on Twitter.

[MUSIC].

I've been online for the better part of 20 plus years.

I got over 600 almost episodes of my show.

So if you go to Hanselminutes it's a 30 minute show,

it's a great commute show and

there's a lot of really cool women in tech.

So if you like this show I think that you will like my show

as well.

>> That's great.

[MUSIC]

>> Cutting Edge, our take on stories in the business and

technology world.

[MUSIC]

>> In this cutting edge segment we're gonna talk about
an article that was published in Levo League in mid September
entitled.

Welcome to Curvycon, the body positivity celebration that
New York Fashion Week desperately needed.

Curvycon was previously a gathering of fashion bloggers
who were specifically interested in plus size fashion.

But this year the conference officially became part of
New York Fashion Week with their inaugural runway show.

And the show was met with a lot of great acclaim.

It was sold out.

Which I think is demonstrative of this interest and

acceptance of this part of the fashion world.

>> So this is a trend that we've seen, fortunately,
gain some traction over the years.

I remember back in the days when I was modeling,
they were starting to enforce some
healthy BMI level restrictions.

So any woman that was below a level 15, she wasn't allowed to
be part of fashion week until she got healthy again.

And so we've seen this now start to accelerate,
I think, in the past few years.

And there's a growing acceptance of women of
all shapes and sizes.

No pun intended.

But it's great to see a growing and diverse areas of fashion.

We've seen Ashley Graham get on the cover for
Sports Illustrated.

All the way to the women taking it in their own hands and
starting to create fashion lines themselves.

So Gabi Gregg and

Nicolette Mason launched a plus sized fashion line.

It's awesome and I'm super excited to see what happens in
the next couple of years.

>> Totally, you know this article cites a poll of 1,500
women who wear a size 14 or larger and
self identify as plus size.

72% of those 1,500 women said they do not believe fashion
designers create their designs with the average woman in mind.

And the stat and the conference itself
sort of points to the significant market opportunity.
I think that CurvyCon creates this space for women with
an inclusive perspective to recognize early on.
In this case super late in the game
that there's a huge market opportunity here.
And to capitalize on that by creating their own lines and
making this previously restricted
industry in the world open and accepting of more humans.

>> I love that people are taking it on and creating their own
lines and I have to give a shout out to a Surface partner I was
working with previously.
She started a company called Lab 141 which are going
to existing designers,
equipping them with her tech to basically make a made to order,
outfits that are of a plus size woman's specific needs.
So in terms of helping fit the market there and
understanding that there are these women who are willing and
able to spend for existing designers and
they're just having difficulty finding their sizes.
She's helping fill that void.
But I love seeing all these women at Curvycon who are like,
you know what, I'm gonna create my own designs and
I'm gonna make it and take it into my own hands.
So, I think this is a awesome step in the right direction.
And like I said,
I'm excited to see what happens in the February Fashion Week.
Who knows what'll happen then.

>> Yeah so,

shout out to all of these people creating awareness of the market opportunity, making more people feel included in this world, and making options that work for a more diverse group of people.

[MUSIC]

>> Another great episode.

Thank you so much for tuning in.

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