**Unblocked: Women Working to Gain Influence in Cryptocurrency**

*There are encouraging signs the crypto industry is working to achieve...*

By Joanne Cleaver - May 1, 2018

This is the crypto industry's chance for #NotYouToo.

As the tech industry struggles with its copiously documented gender gap, women in blockchain and cryptocurrencies from repeating the mistakes made in other industries.

“So far, it seems to us that the major players in the crypto and blockchain industry are not taking a more enlightenered approach to avoid the diversity problems that have plagued the tech industry in general,” according to a statement by the four co-founders of the Token Women Project educate women about the industry and how to get involved, but we want to elevate the voices of women who are using blockchain for social impact.”

**Less Likely to Hold Senior Roles**

*Catalyst*, of New York, and the *AnitaB.org Institute*, a Palo Alto, Calif.-based nonprofit that advocates for women in attracting enough women or holding the women it does have. Women are “three times less likely than technical men to be in senior roles,” Catalyst finds that women comprise 12.2 percent compared to 17 percent of consumer brand companies and 16.9 percent of financial services companies.

Women are rare enough in the crypto industry that their relationships enhance their power. Simply by raising their own voices and presence a bit more they can change the dynamic.

Women are still so scarce that each one has a disproportionate effect on attracting other women and in product development, says Hlidkova.

Now is the best opportunity for women to enter the industry,” says Alice Hlidkova, founder of *Through the Changing Glass*

“The business case is not in debate. The issue is how to put it into action.”

She tells *ThirtyK* the crypto industry is more open to gender equality, partly because the current generation of leaders is steeped in diversity awareness and partly because of increasing evidence that gender-diverse teams deliver better results across most industries. “When women say, idea,” says Hlidkova.

Yet, there is a small but promising countertrend of women asserting their qualifications as company founders, conference speakers and influencers of the industry. The more women entering the industry now, the more will become founders and leaders.
Looking to Boost Participation

That women were not often in speaking roles at last January’s North American Bitcoin Conference sparked much criticism, when reclaimed a Miami strip club for a party generated enough criticism to change industry conversation to action.

“We’d love to see the various blockchain and cryptocurrency gatherings and conferences commit to having 50 percent female speakers and presenters. We need more coverage in the mainstream tech news websites and magazines covering women who are building companies and one of the Token Women’s co-founders and public relations director of Boise, Idaho-based marketing firm Oliver Russell.”

Pivotal Roles at IBM

There have been a few signs of progress.

Women are calling out the industry, determined to prevent history from repeating itself. “We need to make sure this phase of technology is not with everything happening in one place, one demographic deciding how this stuff gets built out and how we use it Group, at a February gathering of women, as quoted in Wired.

Two women – Bridget van Kralingen, senior vice president of global industries, platforms and blockchain, and Donna Dillenberger, blockchain development lead, have pivotal roles with IBM’s blockchain initiatives.

The business and tech media are tracking gender equity and related issues closely, well aware of the heightened awareness generated by the #MeToo movement and gender pay equity research and advocacy. Groups, such as the online CryptoSister, are forming so women can mentor, sponsor and advocate for each other.

About 250 people attended the first Women in Blockchain conference held in late April at the University of California in Berkeley. A Summit featured an all-woman panel on women in blockchain.

Advocates for metrics and accountability are rapidly emerging. “If you can’t measure it, you can’t improve it,” says intelligence company Querlo, which in 2013 started supporting digital education for Afghan women. “There are any number of metrics that can be used to ensure a gender-inclusive culture. Each company can select and adapt them as needed. Simply put, it’s less about any one yardstick than the process of discernment, of making the effort to understand one’s colleagues.”

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