

Representing New York's Tech Economy

An Interview with
Julie Samuels, Executive Director, Tech:NYC



Julie Samuels

EDITORS' NOTE Before assuming her current post, Julie Samuels was Executive Director at Engine, where she remains a member of the Board. Earlier in her career, she worked at the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), where she was a senior staff attorney and the Mark Cuban Chair to Eliminate Stupid Patents. Before joining EFF, Samuels litigated IP and entertainment cases. Prior to becoming a lawyer, she spent time as a legislative assistant at the Media Coalition in New York, as an assistant editor at the National Journal in D.C., and worked at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) in Champaign, IL. Samuels earned her B.S. in journalism from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and her J.D. from Vanderbilt University.

ORGANIZATION BRIEF Tech:NYC (technyc.org) represents New York's fast-growing, entrepreneurial high-tech industry with government, civic institutions, business, public policy forums, and the media. Its primary goal is to continue to attract tech talent and jobs to NYC, to support the growth of the technology sector, and to increase civic engagement by leaders of the New York tech community. Tech:NYC mobilizes the expertise and resources of the tech sector to work with city and state government on programs and policies that ensure New York's pre-eminence in the global innovation economy.

What was the vision behind the creation of Tech:NYC?

It's increasingly clear that tech companies have become a bigger part of the economic pie of the city. They have become more mature and that fact drove the creation of the organization.

In New York, there are many who came before us, both inside and outside of tech. For instance, we have to look at organizations like the Partnership for New York City or REBNY, which do a great job in organizing companies in their sector. The Tech Meetup had also successfully been organizing tech workers for years.

In tech, in particular, there was a lot of energy behind the concept of companies and their leaders coming together, so it was clear we needed to create an organization to facilitate that.

We're just over one year old and we now have 500 members. Over the course of this year, the most important lesson we've learned is that there probably is only one thing that all of our members agree on, which is that they love New York. People in tech, especially founders and CEOs, at some point made a conscious decision to build their companies here. They chose to do so because there is something about New York that they really love, or there's something about New York that really attracts them to the city.

Is the full impact of the tech sector on the future success of New York City and its economic growth well understood?

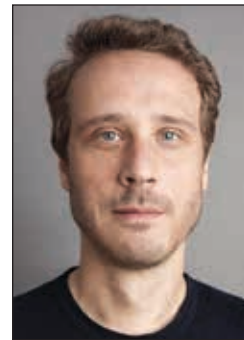
Technology is having such a big impact on the economy here. The rapid growth of these companies and this industry is part of a larger international narrative being dictated by the growth of technology.

However, New York is special in this regard, and there are real advantages that set New York apart. We have experience across industry, which comes with access to capital, expertise, and mentorship opportunities. Why build a startup anywhere else when the best minds in that space are right here?

We also have a very creative culture – the arts in New York lend itself to technology and people who work in technology, especially those who write code or who are engineers. I don't think most people realize what a creative endeavor that is and being around the creativity that is constantly flowing in New York is unique. Everyone in the city is taking the subway, bumping into people on sidewalks, and creating moments of spontaneity and creativity that don't exist in most other places in the country. That lends itself to an entrepreneurial and creative spirit that helps drive technology companies. ●

Driving User Engagement

An Interview with Gaspard de Dreuzy,
President and Co-Founder, Pager



Gaspard de Dreuzy

EDITORS' NOTE Gaspard de Dreuzy's passion for using technology and design to disrupt business models and empower consumers has led him to start business ventures in the finance, gaming, and entertainment industries, and now in healthcare. After producing games for the Xbox, PlayStation, and Nintendo consoles, He co-founded NYC-based fintech startup Kapitall, the first online broker for Millennials, and TradeIt, the leader in retail brokerage APIs. In addition, de Dreuzy was a senior strategic marketing consultant for Warner Music.

COMPANY BRIEF At Pager (pager.com), employees are on a mission to transform healthcare by offering patients better tools and more access to high quality care. Pager is a mobile-first, patient-facing technology that is changing how people connect with and navigate healthcare. Founded by a group of experienced entrepreneurs, Pager is considered a leading innovator in the healthcare industry.

What is the mission of Pager?

We started Pager in 2014 with the goal of providing a more consumer-centric way to assist in care. Our first version of our product was developed to help providers assist consumers in the home. It also attempted to leverage that to make it more efficient for providers and to make a profit.

We started with an on-demand healthcare approach. From there, we grew a bit and then started helping patients access care on an online basis, and also using Pager as an education tool.

One of the challenges we identified that faces all patients is that they usually don't know exactly what they have or where to go. We built this clinical triage that enables owners to direct patients to a point of care.

Pager has always been focused on this consumer-centric care. We started with a minimum product featuring healthcare on demand, and we have evolved into a communication platform that directs our patients to the most convenient and affordable point of care.

How are you building awareness about the product?

We originally decided to go direct-to-consumer, so we use all the tools that marketers have, as well as word-of-mouth. We did that because we initially needed to create something where we could test our online proposition.

Last year, we decided to shift from a direct consumer focus into more of an enterprise model where we now work with large systems and companies to help them with their patients and members.

Will the partnerships you are building be with hospitals and health systems?

Health systems and health plans. This year, we announced a partnership with Baylor, Scott & White, which is the largest health system in Texas. We will be announcing other partnerships in development now.

How quickly do you have to adapt to changing technologies today?

We take nothing for granted and we launch things that are not necessarily perfect, but the feedback helps us move forward.

Overall, with Pager, it's important to drive user engagement, so our technology has to improve on the backend and we have to stay updated.

We want to stick to our fundamentals but also test new things. ●