

Tech startups founded by women have twice the number of female employees, study says

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Startups with at least one female founder build companies where nearly half the staff are women, a study found.

With an average of 48 percent female workers, [women](#)-led firms have nearly twice the industry average and outpace some of the nation's largest tech companies in [gender diversity](#) including Google (31 percent), Facebook (33 percent) and Uber (36 percent), according to the study by online startup investing platform FundersClub that surveyed 85 U.S.-based tech startups.

Alex Mittal, co-founder and chief executive of FundersClub, said startups are key to addressing [gender](#) diversity in the workplace because the ones that succeed may someday be big companies. (Most of the startups surveyed had fewer than 20 employees).

They "have the potential to become huge - they're great agents for change," said Mittal, a co-author of the study.

The study also examined the effect of female tech founders on leadership and engineering teams. Women made up 38 percent of executives at firms with at least one female founder - 2.4 times the average at startups with no female founders. At women-led firms, females made up 23 percent of the engineering teams - 2.3 times the average at firms led by men.

Women in the industry say the survey's findings are no surprise.

"Top female talent is more attracted to work on a team where they can see themselves in leadership and know that is respected in the company," said KJ Erickson, CEO of Simbi, a service exchange platform.

Natalia Oberti Noguera, founder and CEO of Pipeline Angels, a network of women investors, noted that the survey did not address race.

"How many of those women founders are white women?" she said. "It would've been even more exciting if this report had included race and gender together."

A 2016 study found that only 0.2 percent of venture deals from 2012 to 2014 went to startups led by black women. Lauren Schulte, founder of Flex Co., agreed that gender is just one part of the diversity equation.

She recalled attending a Los Angeles gathering for women founders that attracted more than 200 women, but few of color.

"There were only two [black women](#) and maybe four Asian women; the rest of women were predominantly blonde and very attractive," Schulte said. "This is not representative of the people that are out there."

Diversity - gender, race, age, among others - is crucial to being competitive in the startup world, Schulte said. It "can bring a richness to problem solving that you can't get if you have 10 people who are clones."

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