



# Gabi Zijderveld

Technology Executive  
AI Innovator • Startup Mentor

Driven to build and fix stuff, Gabi is a visionary, innovative and highly experienced technology executive, startup advisor and investor. In the past 10+ years she has been at the frontier of AI, building and commercializing disruptive AI products. Gabi turns big ideas into novel businesses by leaning on her vast multi-disciplinary perspectives in international business, strategy, product management, marketing and strategic alliances, along with her extensive global leadership experience.

With a strong background in innovation, transforming companies, and driving growth, Gabi has launched numerous v1 products and created new technology categories. Her mantra, “scrappy not crappy,” embodies her talent for delivering outstanding results with lean teams and small budgets through resourcefulness and unwavering commitment to high-quality execution. Gabi's career has been defined by international roles. Her extensive travels have given her invaluable insights into cultural nuances and the intricacies of conducting business on a global scale. Gabi has a track record of success in enterprise software and cutting-edge AI at 7 startups and 2 public companies, including IBM.

Most recently, Gabi co-founded Blue Tulip Ventures, a VC firm investing in early-stage human-centric AI. Beyond sourcing and vetting deals, she leads operations and marketing, and functions as executive-in-residence. Previously, as Chief Marketing Officer and Head of Product at MIT spin-off Affectiva, she transformed it from a niche MarTech vendor into an innovative AI startup. She created the new technology category of Emotion AI, positioning Affectiva as the leader. And, she led the product team behind its cutting-edge automotive interior sensing AI. Her ability to drive product innovation and deliver results was pivotal in raising multiple funding rounds and Affectiva's successful exit in June 2021, when it was acquired by Smart Eye. Subsequent to the acquisition, Gabi was asked to join the Smart Eye Group as Global CMO, where she played a leading role in integrating Affectiva, building a high-impact marketing team and co-inventing a new concept for an empathetic in-vehicle assistant, combining Interior Sensing, Emotion AI, and ChatGPT.

Prior to this, Gabi held several leadership roles at IBM, where she managed the \$75M IT Asset and Financial Management product portfolio, leading a team of product and market managers, and then led cross-company marketing for Linux, influencing \$6 billion in annual revenue and delivering a 10%+ increase in revenue share. Earlier in her career, Gabi was a product manager for Dragon Naturally Speaking version 1, a ground-breaking speech recognition software.

Respected for her honest and direct approach, and friendly and collaborative nature, Gabi is a recognized thought leader. Her views have been shared broadly in the media, including WIRED, AI Trends, Forbes, Fast Company, MIT Technology Review, IEEE Spectrum, PBS Nova and Ad Age. She is a dynamic speaker and frequently invited to speak on stage, where she makes complex ideas resonate with different audiences. Gabi is a valued mentor and gets great joy from guiding and advising employees, co-workers and startups.

## Expertise

AI / Tech    Innovation    Growth  
Product    Marketing    Execution

- Strategic thinking, problem solving, pragmatic execution
- Transforming technology concepts into commercial solutions
- Creating new technology categories
- Go to market strategies, entering new markets
- Developing ecosystems and strategic alliances

## Board Service

- DAISYS Voice AI
- Northeastern University Center for Entrepreneurship Education
- CMO Huddles
- MIT Enterprise Forum Cambridge
- Center for Collaborative Leadership UMass Boston
- All Raise Boston Chapter

## Recognition

- Inventor on 10 issued patents
- CMO Huddles' 101 Top B2B Marketing Influencers
- Valiente Awards, Winner Be Bold category
- The CMO Club President's Circle Award Finalist
- IBM Outstanding Contributor Award
- Black Belt Karate

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# Gabi Zijderveld

## Select Accomplishments

### BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

- Co-founded Blue Tulip Ventures. Lead operations and marketing. Source and vet deals, support startups.
- Transformed Affectiva from niche MarTech vendor to an award-winning, category-defining AI startup.
- Key member of Affectiva executive team that secured two rounds of funding of \$40M and realized a successful \$73.5M exit through the Smart Eye acquisition and merger.
- Drove market adoption of KVM (50% YoY share growth), strengthening IBM's position with key competitor. Established IBM KVM Centers of Excellence in Beijing and New York.
- As first team member of Centra's international department, developed company's international business and created UK office from ground-up.
- Mentor early-stage startups and judge pitch competitions, at, for example, MIT Sandbox, MIT DHIVE, Harvard Innovation Labs, FoundersBoost.

### INNOVATION & NEW PRODUCT LAUNCHES

- Created the new technology categories of Emotion AI at Affectiva, Human Insight AI at Smart Eye and Open Virtualization at IBM; established the companies as leaders in the new space.
- Co-invented new concept for Smart Eye's empathetic in-vehicle assistant that combines Interior Sensing and Emotion AI with ChatGPT (patent pending).
- Inventor on 10 issued Affectiva patents, spanning Emotion AI and automotive use cases.
- Led IBM's entry in data center infrastructure management market, by participating in M&A due diligence, and developing and launching a v1 product built on the acquired IP.
- At Centra led product management, localization and go to market of products in 12 languages, reduced release lag-times by months and brought to market first Chinese and Arabic products.
- As product manager, launched the non-English versions of Dragon Naturally Speaking v1, first ever product of its kind; released 61 retail and OEM Dragon products in 5 months.
- Advocate for the ethical development and deployment of AI.

### STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS & ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

- Engaged Affectiva in MIT Startup Exchange, MIT Advanced Vehicle Technology Consortium and The Partnership on AI.
- Created Affectiva's annual Emotion AI Summit, an AI thought leadership conference for ecosystem stakeholders: 1 day, 500 attendees, 45 speakers.
- At IBM founded the Open Virtualization Alliance with industry-leading tech companies and managed founding member ecosystems. Developed joint Linux programs with Red Hat and SUSE.
- Developed and implemented international channel strategy at Be Free and Centra. Created and executed channel enablement and marketing programs for partners in Europe, Asia, Latin America and North Africa.
- Member of founding leadership team of the Boston chapter of All Raise.

### BRANDING & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

- Designed Affectiva PR strategy. In peak years earned ~400 pieces of Tier 1 media coverage, including The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Fortune, TechCrunch, Wired, Fast Company.
- Earned recognition for Affectiva as leading AI startup, including CB Insights AI 100, Fortune Top 50 Companies Leading AI Revolution, Forbes Top 10 Hot AI Tech.
- Built robust content strategy and content machine to establish the category of Emotion AI and Affectiva as the pioneer in this space.
- Led marketing of Affectiva CEO's memoir in collaboration with Penguin Random House and organized a successful virtual book tour during COVID-19 pandemic.
- Strategically positioned Affectiva's patent portfolio as industry-leading IP; inventor of 10 issued patents.
- Collaborated with Harvard Business School on an Affectiva case study.
- Positioned Smart Eye as a leading AI provider in the emerging market of automotive interior sensing.