Gabi Zijderveld

Tech Executive · AI Innovator · Startup Mentor

Driven to build new stuff, Gabi is a visionary, innovative and highly experienced technology executive, startup advisor and investor, who has spent the past 10+ years at the frontier of AI, building and commercializing disruptive AI products. She 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, she has launched numerous v1 products and created new technology categories at 7 startups and 2 public companies, including IBM.

Expertise

AI / Tech	Innovation
Product	Marketing
Growth	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, partnerships and strategic alliances

Professional Experience

Blue Tulip Ventures | 2024 - present

Co-founder & Operating Partner

- Founded VC firm to invest in early-stage startups building human-centric AI and drive impact at scale.
- Lead operations and marketing. Support fundraising. Source and vet deals. Advise startups as executive-in-residence.
- Mentor early-stage startups and judge pitch competitions at, for example, MIT Sandbox, MIT DHIVE, Harvard Innovation Labs, FoundersBoost.

Smart Eye / Affectiva | 2021 - 2024

Chief Marketing Officer

- As member of executive team, developed new corporate strategy incorporating recently acquired subsidiaries Affectiva and iMotions.
- Built high impact global marketing team and positioned company as leader in new category of automotive interior sensing AI, winning CES 2022 Innovation Award.
- Co-invented new concept for empathetic in-vehicle assistant, combining Interior Sensing, Emotion AI, and ChatGPT.

Affectiva | 2014 - 2021

Chief Marketing Officer & Head of Product

- 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.
- Transformed Affectiva from niche MarTech vendor to an award-winning disruptive AI startup, as recognized by Fortune Top 50 Companies Leading AI Revolution, Forbes Top 10 Hot AI Tech, CB Insights AI 100.
- Created the technology category of Emotion AI, established Affectiva as the leader in this innovative space.
- Led product management team and launched v1 of a novel automotive interior sensing AI solution, leading to acquisition by Smart Eye.
- Engaged Affectiva in MIT Startup Exchange, MIT Advanced Vehicle Technology Consortium, Partnership on AI.
- 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, The New Yorker.
- Strategically positioned patent portfolio as industry-leading IP; inventor of 10 issued patents.

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IBM | 2006- 2014

Program Director, Worldwide Marketing Linux and Open Virtualization
2011 - 2014

- Led cross-IBM marketing strategy and execution for Linux, a business that influenced $6 billion in annual hardware, software and services revenue (10% YoY growth). Designed joint marketing programs with Red Hat and SUSE.
- Created category of open source virtualization, drove market adoption of KVM (50% YoY share growth), strengthening IBMs position with key competitor. Established KVM Centers of Excellence in Beijing and New York.
- Founded Open Virtualization Alliance with industry-leading tech companies; managed founding member ecosystem and marketing.

Manager, ITAM, ITFM, DCIM Product Management and Product Strategy
2006 - 2011

- Built and managed team of product and market managers for the Tivoli IT Asset Management, IT Financial Management and Data Center Infrastructure Management products; drove $75M in annual revenue.
- 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.

Other Professional Experience

MRO Software	Product Marketing Manager (*acquired by IBM*)
Segue Software	Product Marketing Manager (*acquired by Borland*)
Centra Software	Product Marketing Manager | International Product Manager
Be Free	International Business Planning & Strategy | International Product Manager
Dragon Systems	International Product Manager
ON Technology	International Marketing Communications Manager

Select Highlights

- Launched non-English versions of Dragon Naturally Speaking v1, a category-defining product; released 61 retail and OEM products in 5 months.
- As first team member of international department, developed Centra's international business and created UK office from ground-up.
- 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.
- Developed and implemented international channel strategy at Be Free and Centra. Created and executed channel enablement and marketing programs in Europe, Asia, Latin America and North Africa.

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 founding team member

Thought Leadership

- Broadly covered in the media, including WIRED, AI Trends, Forbes, Fast Company, MIT Technology Review, IEEE Spectrum, PBS Nova and Ad Age.
- Dynamic speaker, frequently invited to speak on stage.

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

Education

Master of Arts (Doctorandus) in Art History and Archaeology University of Utrecht, The Netherlands

Languages

Dutch, English - *native*
German, French - *proficient*
Italian - *basic*
Classical Latin and Greek