

**On the line Podcast #13:  
Women in Tech  
with Julie Leclerc and Alice Brisset**

Miguel: Today we're on the line with Julie Leclerc, who works in business development and partnerships at Orange, hello Julie!

Julie: Hello!

Miguel: And Alice Brisset, who works in marketing at Orange, hello!

Alice: Hello!

Miguel: You are both in a unique situation of working at Orange in Silicon Valley in the USA south of San Francisco. So the first question is to Julie: why is there an Orange location in San Francisco in Silicon Valley?

Julie: Very good question! In fact, Orange has had a presence in Silicon Valley for over 20 years. We started out in 1999 as a research and development centre, mainly focused on internal development inspired by Silicon Valley. But little by little we've opened up to the ecosystem, especially to start-ups. So today our role is to find products and services that are "made in Silicon Valley" or "made in the USA" and bring them in front of Orange and our customers.

Miguel: You're spies?

Alice: Exactly.

Julie: A bit!

Miguel: OK, so we won't talk about Silicon Valley, at least not too much. Our subject today is "Women in Tech", which is a programme that's close to both of your hearts. What does "Woman in Tech" mean to you Alice?

Alice: So "Women in Tech" is an initiative we launched within Orange Silicon Valley last December. It's a community of men and women from Silicon Valley and beyond who meet regularly to discuss diversity and inclusion issues, especially in the field of new technologies.

Miguel: It doesn't just concern women?

Alice: It's true we choose topics that concern women, but here we include everyone.

Julie: Yes, in fact it's not just a female topic; it concerns men too, because if we want to change things, everyone has to be involved.

Miguel: Change things, what does that mean? What are you doing more specifically?

Julie: So the goal is to promote entrepreneurship and female founders. Because in fact in Silicon Valley there are very few women at the head of businesses, or indeed venture capital. Our programme aims to share perspectives and identify potential start-ups for Orange.

Miguel: Are you saying that even in Tech women are under-represented, Alice?

Alice: Yes, absolutely. And in fact we realised that we had a chance to meet many female founders and entrepreneurs during the events Orange is involved in. And just by listening to their story, and for personal and professional interest, we started to organise our own events. The first hosted just twenty people, and in fact we asked our contacts to bring their contacts as well to create a really intimate discussion where everyone felt comfortable asking anyone a question, no matter the subject. And that's how it started. It's now grown to more than 250 in the community.

Miguel: Ah, not bad. In how many years?

Alice: Almost a year, not quite.

Miguel: OK so things are progressing well! Julie?

Julie: And outside Orange, concerning the broader figures in Silicon Valley, even among GAFAs, so Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon, women still only make up 20% of the payroll.

Miguel: No!

Julie: Yes, yes, yes... It's quite surprising... And when it comes to venture capital it's even worse. Because I have some stats in front of me that show only 11% of the payroll within VC is female. What's more, 12% of funds raised in the USA are within start-ups with a female co-founder whereas start-ups created by women alone only account for 2% of US funding.

Miguel: But that's just crazy! So, what are the benefits of this "Women in Tech" programme for Orange in particular?

Julie: It's to promote Orange as a progressive brand that is interested in promoting diversity and inclusion. And also to identify potential start-ups that we can invest in or work with.

Miguel: So we agree there's still a business side!

Julie: Of course.

Miguel: Is there also a sustainable development side? Do you subscribe to what's known as CSR within large organisations? This is a very important factor, sustainable development, and the impact the company has on society? Do you believe in it?

Alice: Yes, of course. In fact our goal when we created this initiative at Orange Silicon Valley was to continue the ongoing commitment already set out by Orange, which does a lot for diversity and gender equality. So it plugs into the "Women Start" programme, an internal Orange community that brings together more than 6,000 men and women who share articles or advice on how to promote equality. We're working side by side with the Orange Foundation – for example, since 2015 they have set up more than 200 Digital Centres to help train women around the world in digital technologies and business management. So therefore it's quite natural we are represented when it comes to all the innovative technologies in Silicon Valley. I'm talking about Blockchain and smart cities, but also when it comes to focusing on the human inside too, which fits with what our colleagues are doing here.

Miguel: Exactly, so can this type of programme be extended to all Group entities Julie?

Julie: That's our ambition, if people are listening to this. Yes of course! We'd love to replicate what we started in Silicon Valley across other Orange entities.

Miguel: Yes, Alice?

Alice: For example, we already have other ideas, but we'll be producing interviews focused on women as that's what's important enabling girls to see inspiring stories about women who work in tech, just to give them the courage to begin these journeys. And also, we have started to partner events in San Francisco such as TEDx San Francisco, and we're also organising a "Women in Tech" event with them in 2020. So these are some small steps that we're taking, slowly but surely.

Miguel: But it's going well.

Alice: Yes it's progressing.

Miguel: Excuse me for being a bit naive but I've heard the word "Femtech" – what's the difference between "Women in Tech" and "Femtech"?

Julie: I would say that "Women in Tech" is the umbrella brand and "Femtech" is a sub category of "Women in Tech". In fact "Femtech" focuses on products and services that are developed mainly by women for women, to improve their health and well-being. We discovered this theme – "Femtech" – through our various "Women in Tech" events, as it is not very well known yet.

Miguel: So what does this mean?

Julie: This is an industry that's already established as women's health products and services have been around for a long time. But the word is really being used more and more within this industry because there are now more women taking the lead in actually launching new products and services to meet the needs they've always had.

Miguel: Alice?

Alice: In fact "Femtech" is a niche market, which is starting to develop in the United States and also emerging in France. You should know the market is set to represent \$50 billion by 2025, so it's not inconsequential! It really touches everything, in fact we have no idea as to everything inside but it affects fertility, menopause, reproduction, sexuality... so it's really an exciting subject. And there are a lot of start-ups, new technologies, applications and connected devices being created right now within this sector.

Miguel: And so since the beginning of the initiative a year ago, what has changed? What have you managed to change? Alice?

Alice: I think our events have been successful, we've both been surprised. But when we start to look and present the initiative, even internally, we're realising that there are more and more people and so it's quite natural we want to strengthen our commitment. One of the best ways to make a difference in gender equality is education. So last month we started to charge entry fees to our events and give the proceeds to a nonprofit that's related to the theme of the event.

Miguel: For example?

Alice: For example our last “Femtech” event three weeks ago was held in partnership with a nonprofit called The Cup. Every ticket sold helped a girl in Kenya, donating a menstrual cup that they can use for 10 years, knowing they would not have access to one otherwise. So we’re going to start doing this for all our upcoming events. It’s something that’s important for us and also our membership community, to make a more positive impact.

Miguel: And things are changing! Do you see things changing in your future Julie?

Julie: Yes, and we’re listening to our community who are asking for us to host more events.

Miguel: Yes, there’s a real demand!

Julie: Yes. We’ll continue to organise them. We’ll continue to donate the proceeds to nonprofits. And honestly, we’re open to all ideas, for anyone out there listening. For example on the subject of “Femtech” we organised two events which were a real hit. We’d have no idea “Femtech” even existed had we not met people who had suggested it to us. So if listeners have ideas for our next events, or if they want to share their perspectives or experiences, please don’t hesitate to get in touch.

Miguel: You’re “open” as you say, in San Francisco.

Julie: Exactly! Super “open”.

Miguel: They are super “open”, you can see this for yourselves by contacting them to talk about initiatives you’d like to share with the “Women in Tech” programme. All the details are available on [orange.com](https://orange.com), just like this Podcast. Thank you both!

Julie, Alice: Thank you!

Miguel: Thanks a lot!

You’ve been listening to “On the line”, an Orange Podcast.