

Investing in the Future: An interview with Rachel Delacour

Paul Ferretti spoke to Rachel Delacour, CEO and Co-Founder of Sweep, about gender equality, the weight of legacy and the importance of non-financial topics.

Temps de lecture : minute

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Can you tell our readers more about Sweep?

Sweep's mission is to enable companies to manage their carbon and ESG data in one place. The platform allows them to connect to their various business data, so that they can measure it and act on their carbon data, on their sustainability data, with the aim of being aligned with a decarbonised world to be able to transition to a low-carbon economy.

How can we encourage companies to recruit more women?

It is important to encourage companies to recruit more women. First of all, this is part of the criteria that are now required from an ESG point of view. In addition, a modern company must be a company that thinks about regulation, about being aligned with what is required by law today.

"Companies need to understand that gender equality is paramount to develop a diverse and successful environment, but also from a

reputational point of view for the company."

Should the changes be made through legislation or education?

If you're looking to speed up your inflection time, you have to do both. I see it with my own company: it's quite rare to come across female CVs.

This is because of the educational system: we see far fewer women coding, far fewer women working in software design. Therefore, for a tech company, it's complicated to get a stack of resumes that contain a perfect balance between the number of men and women.

However, there are also recruitment agencies that only showcase women. It would therefore be wrong to say that it is impossible to recruit women today.

I'm thinking of WILLA, for example, which gives access to a community of women.

Services like this help to correct this still unbalanced entry point into education.

Is the world of startups and tech gradually diversifying? Or is the situation stagnating?

After 15 years running a tech company as a CEO, I do see more female CEOs in tech today. But the numbers are still ridiculous. In 15 years, things have barely doubled. But they doubled on a percentage that was initially close to zero; we are today barely 10% if we rely on the statistics from France Digitale.

I think investors are also becoming more and more aware that this is important to them. In terms of tech, investors are realising that they need to invest more and more in female founders, if only for their own KPIs. So I think there will be more and more female startup founders who are going to be successful in raising money.

There also needs to be more regulation on these subjects. I am in favour of quotas in companies.

We need to prime the pump now, so that we can stop these quotas in the future, but after having first re-established a semblance of balance. Things are moving far too slowly. Efforts from investors, regulatory work, and raising awareness amongst managers are all required to recruit more women despite the lack of incoming CVs.

In the same way that climate tech startups play an important role in the struggle against global warming, do you think entrepreneurship has a role to play in the fight for gender equality?

As a startup, you're starting from scratch. You don't carry the weight of a legacy on your shoulders.

In a company established 30 years ago, where there are 75% men and 25% women, you would have to recruit only women for several years to redress the balance. But that would be discriminatory against a part of the population.

A start-up, by starting with zero employees, has the choice to be part of a certain modernity.

Start-ups must be breeding grounds for experimentation on these societal issues. They can be guarantors of a certain modernity and reflect the society they want to create.

Scale-ups are also part of the companies that are new and have normally made decisions about diversity. I've seen a lot of scale-ups that have managed to integrate this modernity into their ESG indicators.

Companies that decide to ignore these topics are not companies that are thinking about investing in their future.

It is very important for companies to understand that if there is no understanding, measurement and action on these non-financial topics, there is no sustainability of the company over time.

"In 2024, it is no longer possible to think of your business solely through a financial prism."

Rachel Delacour is the Founder and CEO of Sweep.

Article écrit par Paul Ferretti