

# Backing purpose-driven teams driving the technologies of the future, a profile of CapitalT

*With #QVCS, Maddyness profiles different funds to give founders and entrepreneurs the information they need to choose the right investor. Today, we speak to Janneke Niessen, founding partner at CapitalT.*

Temps de lecture : minute

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My co-founder, Eva de Mol, and I connected over our shared vision for a venture capital firm that values team dynamics and diversity. Eva, who holds a joint PhD in economics, has extensive expertise in team assessment and the relationship between team composition and venture success. She organised an event where I was a speaker, which led to our collaboration.

Combining her academic insights with my background as a serial tech entrepreneur, we founded *CapitalT*. Today, we invest in software companies solving real problems in climate tech and future of work where we focus on the potential of their teams and using a proprietary model to evaluate startups holistically and minimise bias.

Investing in the best founders results in a portfolio with founders from all backgrounds. Because of that our portfolio grows stronger in diversity of thought and problem solving. We welcome cold pitches and actively seek visibility beyond our networks. We believe that the best group of founders is a diverse group of founders.

## Which industries are you working in?

We invest in software technology companies that aim to revolutionise the ways people live, learn, work, and communicate by addressing real-world problems. Our primary focus areas include ClimateTech and the Future of Work, with a particular emphasis on the transformative potential of data and AI.

## What do you look for in a founder?

In a founder, passion and grit are paramount. Beyond these qualities, we prioritise soft skills that have been proven to positively impact the success of a venture, such as stress resistance, perseverance, resilience, self-reflection and risk-taking. We also assess experience and human capital skills to ensure that these skills complement each other within the team. In addition, we examine team dynamics, including shared vision, trust, psychological safety, conflict resolution and results orientation. Our assessment takes into account the stage of the business to provide a comprehensive view.

## Can you talk about your current portfolio?

We invest in founders who demonstrate creativity, ambition and laser-focus.

In the ClimateTech sector, Vaayu is a standout portfolio company. Their software tracks, reduces, and offsets carbon emissions in real-time, focusing on the retail industry, which is a major contributor to global emissions. Vaayu's team excels in product, sustainability, and climate change, and is well-versed in the challenges retailers face in reducing their carbon footprint.

In the future of work, TestGorilla exemplifies our focus. They offer a talent

assessment platform that makes hiring fast, easy, and bias-free. With the hiring market ripe for disruption, we believe that TestGorilla's technology can significantly improve employer-candidate matching. Their scientific approach ensures screening tests are valid, reliable, and fair.

## What does the future look like?

In the tech industry, evolution is constant, with new trends and technologies emerging regularly. It is therefore crucial to stay informed and understand how these developments impact your strategy and the verticals you invest in. While AI is currently a major focus in the market, it is still in its early stages. On a positive note, we have observed a sustained increase in funding for climate tech, which is encouraging for the future.

## What makes CapitalT different?

We combine hands-on entrepreneurial experience with science-backed insights into the psychology of successful teams. Our approach is powered by a proprietary model that assesses the potential of founding teams. This model leverages our deep understanding of what drives effective teamwork, allowing us to identify and invest in promising founders early on, often providing their initial institutional backing. Our distinctive insights into team dynamics and our dedication to early-stage investment differentiate us in the venture capital landscape.

## What one piece of advice would you give founders?

It is important to remember that the grass is not always greener on the other side. It is crucial to have fellow founders with whom you can have honest conversations about the challenges you face. As everyone is

navigating significant obstacles, often simultaneously, it is essential to understand and support each other. Being a founder is challenging so this will help you get through this incredible rollercoaster ride.

Janneke Niessen is a founding partner at CapitalT.



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