



**Keren Brown Tsamir –**

**A mentor for startups, an entrepreneur, and an activist for women in the Hi-Tech industry**

*Keren Brown Tsamir is a lawyer and economist specializing in accompanying start-ups in their preliminary stages. She helps entrepreneurs to change their thinking regarding employee management in the hybrid age, including recruiting, retaining, and managing employees in Israel, and opening development centers abroad. She recently established a new start-up of her own in the field of 3D real estate simulations and their integration into Metaverse. Special interview // Galya Hipsh, in collaboration with Keren Brown Tsamir*

It's been years that Keren Brown Tsamir (49), a lawyer (LLM) and economist, accompanies start-up companies in their various stages. Many companies can thank her for the push and inspiration she gave them in their early days. Over the years she has been involved in many start-ups, both as a CEO of a software house and as a consultant.

This year she launches her new and exciting start-up "My fully owned independent venture", she says. "I'm the one who came up with the idea, and I'm the one promoting it now as it is doing its first steps. At the same time, I continue to mentor start-ups, because this is a true joy for me".

Brown Tsamir is an inspiring woman. As part of her career, she ran hi-tech companies and at the age of 40 she established her own software house: OneCode that specializes in advanced graphics, 3D and VR. She is intensively active in promoting women in hi-tech and now incorporates a new way as an entrepreneur.

Up until recently, not many understood the importance of 3D development. Today everyone understands that this is a critical building block for the world of Metaverse. "It's important to understand that the Metaverse is not a parallel reality, and it won't replace our physical world. It is basically an Internet network that will be integrated into the world surrounding us," she explains, "At first the Internet was on desktops only, then it became mobile on smartphones, and very soon, as part of the natural evolution, the Internet will be around us as AR or we will literally go into it as in VR".

She adds that "Until recently, the whole 3D issue was a kind of niche related mainly to computer games. We at OneCode specialize in taking 3D to the worlds of commerce like real estate apps and stores, professional apps in optics and footwear, and of course gaming.

Nowadays, with the rise of Metaverse, we don't have to explain that 3D has moved from the field of gaming to the world of e-commerce. In just one day, since the announcement of Mark Zuckerberg, we moved from a professional niche field, which was known to pioneers only, to development at the forefront of future technology - the Metaverse"

"It won't happen in one day, but the world is getting there, and in very big steps. Huge sums of money are invested today in many companies and in large parts of the world. We see investment in hardware developments related to VR glasses, AR capabilities and computing power to support it, as well as expansion of the clouds so that they can save and handle all the new masses of data. This only shows that the question is not if it will happen, but when it will happen. Companies that will not be able to adapt their products to this day, can find themselves behind".

### **Entrepreneurs today face impossible challenges**

Despite her new involvement in her private enterprise, Brown Tsamir does not abandon her favorite business: assisting start-ups in the early stages.

"My clients, especially entrepreneurs who just begin their journey, are facing impossible challenges today," says Brown Tsamir. "The big companies hire the experienced programmers and offer them bonuses and conditions that are out of reach of young companies. The young start-ups have to reinvent themselves because they have a hard time competing with the signing grants, indulgences or salaries proposed by the big companies".

### **What is the solution in this case?**

"The solution requires first and foremost a change of thinking, especially among managers and entrepreneurs. Start-ups have an atmosphere of elite unit and a sense of mission, and employees are truly involved in building the product - all this should be emphasized. In addition, there are two things a start-up can offer his employees: hybrid work and job diversity. It's not easy to adopt these values. Some entrepreneurs still want to get 8200 graduates ready for work, but they are no longer available to them as before. They need to open their minds to other possibilities, such as ultra-Orthodox or Arab employees, alongside older people and women in technological management positions ".

"These populations, which have been excluded from the start-up scene for many years, are bringing high value to companies that are willing to integrate them. Hybrid work is nothing less than a revolution in the future labor market, a revolution that is here to stay long after Covid-19 will be over. This is also a call for women: dare more, especially now. Start-ups are flexible to a lot of things that have blocked you in the past. Work-life balance is available now thanks to the possibility of hybrid employment – working part-time from home".



"Job diversity, including hiring juniors alongside seniors, will allow an entrepreneur to recruit good employees for the long run, and strengthen the stability of the organization's

workforce. Maybe after two or three years some will move to big companies, but not all, and some will want to stay and bring their friends to work. It is true that employment diversity is forced on the entrepreneur because there are no experienced programmers at hand, but he will thus achieve flexible, cheaper workers, with more motivation, and the Israeli economy will benefit".

#### **And what about the solution of outsourcing abroad?**

"This is a complex issue that is undergoing very big changes these days, given the changes in the global labor market. In general, working with developers abroad is less relevant to start-ups at the beginning of their journey, for several reasons. Entrepreneurs find it difficult to recruit in subsequent rounds if they are based on workforce abroad. In addition, experience in managing teams abroad is required. If we add to this the challenge of traveling abroad during Covid, we are left with a clear preference for finding solutions in the local market".

"However, there are entrepreneurs who turn to this solution, in light of the labor shortage and the high costs in Israel. For such start-ups, I recommend recruiting both in Israel and abroad. Hiring abroad can be done only if there is a real shortage in human resources in Israel and if these are not key positions. Key positions in the company, such as CTO and VP R&D and the talents in the core business of the start-up must be local.

#### **And what happens to all the start-ups that insist on opening offices in the heart of Tel Aviv?**

"Sometimes there is justification for this, and the difficulty of recruiting in the periphery is significant, but not always and not every start-up has to sit in the center of Tel Aviv. I have a client, a start-up that raised money, that opened an office in Tel Aviv and was unable to recruit even one single employee. I advised him to move to Rishon Lezion, to Rehovot, or to a remote location that is close to a central train station and find local workers. The entrepreneur moved his offices to the Science Park in Rehovot, and managed to recruit two teams already" .

#### **Is the hype in the hi-tech recruitment market likely to stop someday?**

"There is indeed a hype and it is sometimes excessive. Covid-19 accelerated technological processes, and it is good for the hi-tech industry, but in the short term it has created hype in recruitments that is difficult to manage".

"However," she adds, "there is no way back from the changes the Covid has forced us to do", she explains, "When employees get used to hybrid work, it's hard to go back to five days of work in the office. There are some trends that indicate that the hype is about to be moderated, but it is not relevant to entrepreneurs who have raised money and need the professional workforce here and now to meet the goals set by them and by the investors".

## The new venture: HomeyVerse



Brown Tsamir is currently busy with her new, unique and intriguing 3D project. It all started when she bought a new apartment a few years ago. "I received simulations and drawings from the developers, and as someone who owns a software house that deals with virtual worlds, I could not understand or feel the spaces and the vibe of the apartment".

"I noticed that the proportions in the simulation do not match reality. The furniture that is used in the simulation does not always match the actual size of the furniture, and I had to make decisions about breaking or leaving walls, choosing electrical and socket locations and so on. I

turned to a programmer at my software house and asked him to make me a 3D imaging system that will allow me to enter the apartment, that does not exist yet, with VR glasses, walk around it and understand exactly what is going on there. I saw, for example, that when I sit on my bed in the bedroom, I can see my son in the living room through the balcony. Such an angle cannot be felt in any other way".

The visualization of her private apartment made Brown Tsamir realize that this is the next step for her, and that she will connect these new development to Metaverse.

### **What is the difference between a 3D experience in HomeyVerse and the common simulations of the real estate market today?**

"The commonly used simulations are similar to photographs, usually at angles that flatter the apartment and do not show it as it really is, or schematic models that can be rotated on a computer. In any case, they do not give the feeling of being inside the apartment (First person view). Only with a VR simulation you can really feel the apartment, even if it is not ready yet".

Brown Tsamir's start-up is developing a real-time 3D engine, which turns the apartment's paper drafts (2D) into the Metaverse (3D). "You can make changes and see them materialize in virtual reality, just like in computer games, in real time," she explains. "You can invite guests to the apartment and discuss with them about the apartment itself, the furniture and more, and all this is done very quickly, through a combination of automation, artificial intelligence and machine learning".

### **Tell us a little about your activity to promote women in hi-tech.**

"I've been active for many years to get more women into development and management positions in the Israeli hi-tech, in order to increase the participation of women in this industry and encourage them to be promoted to senior technology positions and management positions. In OneCode, for example, I work with many women And I'm happy and encouraging everyone to spread their wings and move on. I'm in touch with most of them to this day and happy to advise and assist them later in their careers.

At the same time, I am a mentor at the "Yozmot Atid" organization and accompany talented and worthy women so that they will not be left behind, and will succeed in establishing their first business, in various fields".