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Top 10 Emerging Entrepreneurs of 2023

Jon Stojan Contributor

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This year sees leading entrepreneurs promoting diversity, empowerment, inclusion, and mental wellness across a wide variety of sectors. These top 10 examples are making the world a better place through capital investment, consulting, transport, education, technology, coaching, entertainment, and finance.

1. Robert Purdy, Founder and CEO of Aperion

As a seasoned professional in the private equity investment space, Robert Purdy recently launched Aperion to entice new investors to join his Private Equity world and fund groundbreaking tech-inspired ventures. However, Purdy is not looking for just any company — in his words, he is out to find and finance the early-stage ventures poised to “make a dent in the universe.” The companies and startups he partners with are set to change the fundamental ways people live their lives and do their business.

Thanks to Aperion’s experienced team of investors, its first call brought droves of companies knocking. In all, Purdy and his team evaluated over 185 companies to settle on their portfolio of ventures.

The Aperion team focuses on transformative companies innovating four trending areas:

Infrastructure Revolution and Industrial Technologies

Supply Chain and Logistics

Fintech & Digital Banking

Health & Wellness Platforms

Though Aperion focuses primarily on early-stage investing, the fund is committed to supporting portfolio companies as they scale. Unlike many capital investors who invest in hundreds, hoping a handful hit it big, Purdy’s mission is to grow every single company with whom he partners.

Purdy is uniting entrepreneurs and investors with one thing in common — they thrive on making a difference in the world. In addition to capital, Aperion backs these new companies with business plan support, team building, business development, brand awareness, market development, mentorship, and a promise to step back and let companies grow. Purdy finds today’s leaders, visionaries, and rule breakers and empowers them to become tomorrow’s game changers.

2. Huseyin Burak Erten, President — US Capital Investments Group

Huseyin Burak Erten, President of US Capital Investments Group, is an expert in structured finance, credit-enhanced transactions, and risk mitigation strategies. In the private sector, he consults with multilateral

organizations and governments around the world to support institutional capital aligned with US interests. To make this happen, he cultivates partnerships with financial institutions and C-level/advisory-level roles worldwide.

For almost three decades, Burak Erten has been a key player in global affairs. His roles include principal for The Center for Transatlantic Economic Partnership, executive director of Q Group, and president of US Nexus LLC. He has worked with more than 50 emerging market governments and institutions, shared insights in international economic and trade forums, spoken in the EU Parliament, and served as senior policy advisor for the COH Foundation.

Today, Burak Erten pools all of that experience behind one mission: bringing manufacturing back inside US borders and contributing to the country's economy. He views manufacturing as an economic linchpin and says now is the time for the US to lead global markets out of the suppressive Debt Trap policies of other countries.

Burak Erten's book "Prosperity Bonds" offers a call to action for the G7 and practical solutions involving novel connections between the US and frontier markets that deploy capital in innovative and meaningful ways. In his opinion, revitalizing the US manufacturing sector through impactful capital involvement with foreign markets represents a win-win for everyone.

Currently, Burak Erten partners with numerous companies and negotiates with emerging market governments to encourage greater connectivity. As a firm believer that "good business creates good diplomacy," he urges the US and its G7 allies to uplift emerging economies. In this way, he hopes to assist developing nations and build a network of frontier partners who appreciate the fundamental financial and business values of the United States.

3. Maria Pendolino, Professional Voice Actor and President of Voice By Maria Inc.

Maria Pendolino is a multi-talented voice actor, voiceover artist, and professional communicator who enjoys getting paid to talk. Through her company, Voice By Maria Inc., she works with businesses, brands, and media producers around the world to convey recorded messages and live announcements.

Pendolino records, edits, and distributes these messages and audio recordings daily to national and international customers from her broadcast-quality home recording studio. Without realizing it, thousands of people are treated to her distinctive fresh sound every day on national commercials, promos, animation, video games, corporate videos, educational courses, pop culture documentaries, live event and award ceremonies, and even telephone systems. Yes, that's her on the other line saying, "Please hold; your call is important to us."

Though Pendolino navigates a successful award-winning voiceover career, she openly identifies as disabled due to a severe case of psoriatic arthritis. Out to empower others in similar circumstances, she helped launch the first-ever Disabled Voice Actors Database. This registry connects disabled artists with the industry's top casting directors and producers.

Today, Pendolino continues to update the database and advocate for the inclusion of disabled performers in the entertainment industry. Later in 2023, she'll be launching her first podcast, *We Talk For A Living*, where she will talk about the power of using your own voice with guests from all different professions and backgrounds.

From her home in Buffalo, New York, she is able to partner with many non-profit and trade organizations, including the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) and The Alleyway Theatre, where she serves as board president. Maria is also an Advisory Board Member for the National Association of Voice Actors (NAVA).

4. John Taylor McEntire, CEO and founder of Mutual Prosperity

As founder of the consulting firm Mutual Prosperity, John Taylor McEntire brings over three decades of practical expertise and cross-cultural experience to managing business models and policies for technology transfer offices worldwide. To understand his exciting ecosystem, it helps to look at the time before it existed.

Before the US Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, if the US government funded research that led to an invention, the government owned it, which typically led to inventions gathering dust on shelves. When the Bayh-Dole Act allowed institutions like universities to own, patent, and profit from inventions backed by federal funds, it turned the US into an innovation powerhouse.

Mutual prosperity: that's what research institutions, inventors, entrepreneurs, technology business partners, and the world experience when stakeholders work toward common goals. McEntire enables specialized workforces to rethink processes in any creative environment.

As a consultant and success principles coach, he works with institutions, companies, and governments to integrate teams whose members speak different scientific, academic, legal, and commercial languages. He helps these groups understand each other and collaborate with surrounding stakeholders. Ultimately, his work justifies investment in a variety of ecosystems, and developing cohesive groups for a better society.

McEntire's proprietary and multicultural "**S.Y.N.C.**TM - Synchronize Yourself Naturally within your CommunityTM" approach is holistic. He's not just about implementing policies — he's about nurturing people's full potential. As he advances the prospects of the organizations he consults, he helps individuals recognize their purpose, accomplish projects, maximize potential, and bring increasing value to their communities.

McEntire facilitates ultra-creative environments by inspiring culturally diverse teams and cohesive workplaces where everyone finds joy in creative efforts. By ensuring everyone feels heard using S.Y.N.C., he solidifies the whole by strengthening each part.

Mutual Prosperity empowers organizations and individuals to draw on creativity, inclusion, and transparency to develop solutions and discover the value of each individual part. When both the parts and the whole thrive, they create a mutually prosperous society.

5. Alex Vasylenko, Founder of The Frontend Company

Alex Vasylenko is a successful tech entrepreneur who has been in the game for almost a decade. He established The Frontend Company to specialize in front-end development, user interface, and user experience.

Vasylenko and the Frontend team work tirelessly to develop and design efficient user interfaces that cater to businesses' unique requirements. This award-winning firm gained Clutch's titles of "Top Angular Company" and "Top React Company" in recognition of its expertise in using these frameworks to develop user interfaces.

The Frontend Company is not simply there to provide services when businesses ask for them. It creates proprietary solutions that streamline the process of moving from legacy interfaces to brand-new interfaces.

Vasylenko believes personal relationships are still essential in today's digital world. This fundamental belief inspired him to develop Necton, a smartphone app that seeks to revolutionize how people build connections and cultivate social capital. His goal with this innovative platform is to empower people to expand their networks and open up previously inaccessible opportunities.

Overall, Vasylenko and The Frontend Company are committed to providing superior services and groundbreaking solutions. They anticipate their consumers' needs, listen to their pain points, and use this information to deliver software that simplifies users' daily routines.

6. Rich Gilman, President and Co-founder of Terrace Metrics

As president and co-founder of Terrace Metrics, Rich Gilman is dedicated to building resilience within individuals and organizations. Resilience is the ability to successfully work through or overcome adversity, and is one of the biggest predictors of personal, social, academic, and workplace success.

Dr. Gilman's experience as a licensed psychologist and researcher prompted him and his team to develop an empirically valid, comprehensive, and user-friendly system that can enhance resilience.

The groundbreaking assessment is fast, private, comprehensive, and easy to understand. The results are directly tied to self-guided curriculum and other resources, allowing users to enhance their own resiliency. Users can monitor their own resiliency over time — much like a person would monitor physical health markers such as blood pressure or cholesterol.

Dr. Gilman and his team assert that anyone has the capacity to solve their own issues, if they know what to target. Terrace Metrics provides information that helps individuals better understand their strengths and areas to address, and gives them the tools to address them.

Given its innovative approach, Terrace Metrics' system has been applied to schools, general workplaces, healthcare settings, and treatment settings nationwide.

7. Ryan Weiss, Founder and President of Effective Performance Strategies

Ryan Weiss is the founder and President of Effective Performance Strategies. He entered the entrepreneurial space by founding his first enterprise when he was only 15 years old. That first successful business is still owned and operated by his youngest brother nearly 30 years later.

After his first venture, Weiss went on to acquire a rich and diverse business background. He led large global teams with hundreds of employees, managed a \$500 million technology portfolio, and founded three successful corporations. He lived, worked, and developed business processes & teams throughout Asia for five years, and led project teams in over 20 countries.

Today, Weiss' passion for organizational change is evident in Effective Performance Strategies. This global business process leadership consultancy and technology company is based on the principles of the OPTIC(S)TM System. With his trademarked approach, he teaches business leaders and owners to align people and processes to achieve optimal results.

Effective Performance Strategies has quadrupled in size over the past three years. The company has developed a growing software platform with employees based in North America, Europe, and Asia.

Effective Performance Strategies' mission is to better the world by helping companies simplify, document, and execute effective processes. Its OPTIC(S)TM System enables organizations to realize their full potential through improved performance, streamlined operations, and clear accountability.

Weiss believes that when companies optimize their processes, progress and productivity follow. His strategies and software platform help businesses make giant strides toward their missions and accelerate performance to a whole new level.

8. Jackie McManus, Founder and CEO of KJ Media

Jackie McManus is the founder and CEO of KJ Media. In the male-dominated transportation industry, her women-owned business stands apart. McManus's journey into the world of trucking commenced immediately after college, and after five years of experience, she found her passion and recognized the need for change.

In 2013, she launched KJ Media, a recruitment advertising firm. Today, her specialized agency is devoted to crafting state-of-the-art recruitment and retention strategies exclusively for trucking companies operating within the US.

From its inception, McManus's overarching mission has been to effect meaningful change within the industry. KJ Media actively pioneers innovation in the trucking sector, offering solutions that not only improve carriers' operating ratios but also simplify the lives of drivers.

As a woman-owned business in an industry traditionally dominated by men, KJ Media has consistently set itself apart as a champion of diversity and inclusivity. In response to the unique challenges posed by the pandemic, McManus founded "5th Wheel Hub," building a community that champions gender equality and diversity to empower the next generation of truck drivers.

The \$791 billion trucking industry hauls 72.5% of the nation's freight, but the massive industry is showing signs of distress. Among the sector's approximately 3.5 million truckers, there is a 95% driver turnover rate.

The transport industry desperately needs fresh people, and KJ Media believes the answer is a focus on younger, minority, and women drivers. It reaches these untapped demographics through creative media campaigns. McManus's podcast, "Attention Retention," showcases companies that are finding success as they redefine trucking stereotypes.

9. Lisa L. Baker, Founder and CEO of Ascentim

For three decades, Lisa L. Baker was a shining example of empowerment in the Fortune 500 space. As a prominent fintech executive, she tirelessly promoted both women and people of color in corporate America.

In 2021, Baker's diverse background enabled her to follow her passion and launch Ascentim. This coaching practice specializes in helping high achievers overcome leadership obstacles and develop the skills for higher roles. As one who is all too familiar with the challenges along the road to the top, Baker has what it takes to guide others to their full potential.

While coaching clients in the core areas of connections, careers, and finances, Ascentim empowers them with a transformative leadership experience. After years of being trapped in the quagmire of mid-level careers, they quickly rise to a future full of possibilities. Through Baker's groundbreaking G.R.O.W. coaching technique, her clients learn to "gain clarity, realize new possibilities, overcome obstacles, and win at life."

Baker founded Ascentim to be more than a traditional coaching practice — she envisions a mission-focused business reaching further than its clients. To serve the surrounding community, Baker and her team donate 20% of Ascentim's annual revenue to improving the financial literacy and economic well-being of underserved populations.

In its first year, Ascentim earned the prestigious Inc. Best in Business honor and a Globee award for Women-Owned Startup of the Year. The world is ready for equity and social justice, and this rapidly growing coaching practice enables thousands of aspiring leaders to break down barriers, recognize success, and rise to greatness.

10. Christy Whitman, Energy Healer and Transformational Leader

Christy Whitman is a well-known energy healer, transformational leader, and celebrity coach. She is also a two-time author on the New York Times bestseller list with her popular books "The Art of Having It All" and "The Desire Factor: How to Embrace Your Materialistic Nature to Reclaim Your Full Spiritual Power." In addition to being a Master Certified Law of Attraction and Abundance Coach, she is the force behind Quantum Energy Mastery.

Whitman's entry into the field of personal development was driven by her own painful experiences. It began when she embarked on a journey to discover the means of healing the mental and emotional agony in her life.

Whitman believes everyone has his or her own personal energy signature. By teaching people to achieve a direct connection with the divine, she helps them release themselves from harmful patterns and emotions.

Today, Whitman is the messenger for a group of spiritual guides known as The Quantum Council of Light. These guides offer cutting-edge energy processes, meditations, and tools. Whitman empowers her clients to

access this transformative energy in their day-to-day lives, so that they can experience life at its fullest.

During "light shifts," or sessions with Whitman and the Quantum Council of Light, clients are enabled to release long-standing blocks to their well-being, success, abundance, and love.

The processes made available through Whitman and the Council create never-before-experienced ease and flow in clients' energy. This transformation impacts every aspect of their physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental bodies. At long last, they can thrive in every area of their lives.

The trails blazed by these entrepreneurs in the areas of inclusion, mental wellness, diversity, and resilience are bettering individuals and society at large. They serve as an inspiration for everyone who believes 2023's businesses can be out for more than boosting the bottom line.

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