

R/GA and Cannes Lions Announce the Fourth Annual Start-up Academy at Cannes Lions Innovation Will Select All Female-Founded Companies

Cannes Lions Startup Academy invites female founders with the potential to impact the global marketing, media, and communications industries

Cannes, France, March 8, 2018 - Today, R/GA and Cannes Lions Innovation are pleased to announce that the [Start-up Academy](#) will be returning to Lions Innovation at the 2018 Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity for its fourth consecutive year.

This year, the Academy will promote female founders across the global start-up ecosystem: identifying technology-enabled companies with the potential to impact the marketing, media, and communications and advertising industries, and exposing global brands to an expanded pool of innovative solutions. The program highlights the ongoing commitment from R/GA and Cannes Lions to champion diversity and inclusion in meaningful ways.

Since its inception in 2014, the Cannes Lions Start-up Academy at Lions Innovation has given early-stage and growth-stage companies the opportunity to learn from, and network with, executives across the media, marketing, advertising, and innovation ecosystem, and pitch in front of an influential audience. Providing them with hands-on support from some of the world's best communicators, the program has helped founders sharpen their brand identity, focus their business plans, and market their products and services more effectively.

“The Academy promises to be beneficial to both corporates and founders: providing industry leaders with access to emerging technologies, business models, and market opportunities, and helping start-ups accelerate their development and growth,” said Stephen Plumlee, Global Chief Operating Officer of R/GA and Managing Partner of R/GA Ventures. “Female entrepreneurs represent a significant and often untapped opportunity for brands looking to push their businesses forward.”

“We know from Cannes Lions initiatives such as See It Be It how powerful it can be to bring female talents together at the Festival,” said Louise Benson, Executive Festival Director of Lions Innovation. “The opportunity to learn with and from each other can be transformative. The R/GA and Cannes Lions Start-up Academy offers a combination of learning, mentorship, and networking within the specialist Lions Innovation environment, and I can't wait to meet this year's participants.”

Start-ups with at least 51% ownership by a female founder or co-founders are encouraged to apply. Applications are open until 23 April, 2018. The program specifically seeks applications from global tech-enabled start-ups that can offer truly innovative products and services to global brands and advertisers, and who are prepared to take full advantage of the unique access this program can provide.

The 2018 Cannes Lions Start-up Academy welcomes start-ups from the areas of:

- Advertising, Marketing, Communications, and New Media Solutions
- Mobile and Social Marketing Platforms
- Content Creation Tools and Management Systems
- CRM/Loyalty Services
- Brand and Consumer Experiences
- Connected Retail and Future of Commerce Technologies
- Customer Database and Engagement Platforms
- Augmented, Virtual, and Mixed Reality Technologies
- Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Technologies
- Esports/Fan Engagement

Selected founders will receive two complimentary passes to the Cannes Lions Festival in France, as well as accommodations.

Start-ups can sign up to the 2018 Cannes Lions Start-up Academy [here](#). Follow us on Twitter [@rgaventures](#) and [@Cannes_Lions](#).