



WomenCorporateDirectors
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Revolutionary Medical Device Company – OtoNexus – Wins WCD Startup Pitch Competition for Women-Led Companies

WomenCorporateDirectors “**Launch Zone**” Debuts in Silicon Valley

SANTA CLARA, CA – May 28, 2019 – A woman-led medical device company whose product immediately diagnoses viral and bacterial ear infections in children, and therefore reduces antibiotic overuse, has just won [WomenCorporateDirectors Foundation’s \(WCD\)](#) inaugural **Launch Zone** competition in Silicon Valley.



Pictured left to right: Theo Schwabacher; Dr. Nola Masterson; Una Ryan; Caitlin Cameron, chair and CEO of OtoNexus, winner of WCD’s Launch Zone; Mary Jo Potter; and Bodil “Bo” Arlander.

Winner [OtoNexus Medical Technologies](#), led by Chair and CEO **Caitlin Cameron**, presented its pitch along with five other start-ups before a panel of judges emceed by **Sue Siegel**, Chief Innovation Officer at **GE** and CEO of **GE Ventures**. The audience comprised 200 women corporate board members from 23 countries – attendees of the 2019 WCD [Global Institute](#), WCD’s largest membership gathering of the year. Both attendees and judges voted, and concurred on the winner.

With only 2.2% of total venture capital investing going to female-founded startups last year, Siegel said, WCD wanted to “showcase women entrepreneurs who are putting forward

something they believe in, also giving them the opportunity to get in front of the right people. Women are just not getting funded at nearly the levels they should be.”

When asked about how she felt pitching to a group of women when the vast majority of those to whom she must direct her fundraising pitches are men, Cameron responded, “It’s so wonderful to present to a room full of women. It’s just a different dynamic: Their questions, their engagement, the things they care about. One of the key things that seems to be different is that women are more engaged and engaging. Women tend to ask thoughtful questions and while they are very interested in the financial risk and the market opportunity, they are also interested in the big picture.” She continued: “We have six board members and three of them are women.”

OtoNexus is a Seattle-based firm working to bring the process of diagnosing ear infections into the 21st century. Ear infections, Cameron said, are the #1 reason for both surgery and antibiotic use in children. Currently, there is a 50% error rate in the diagnosis of middle ear infections in children, leading to an estimated \$10-15 billion in annual medical costs in the United States alone. OtoNexus’ winning device shortens treatment time, reduces misdiagnosis, and avoids unnecessary antibiotic use through the innovative use of Doppler ultrasound technology. Commercialization of the product is expected to begin this year.

Other companies participating in the Launch Zone competition include:

- [Intabio](#), led by President, CEO, and co-founder Dr. Lena Wu, is a protein analytics and drug testing company addressing the urgent need for faster and more accurate biopharma drug analysis with their patented Blaze™ microchip technology. Sixty percent of all drugs today are biologics.
- [Joylux](#), led by CEO Colette Courtion, fills a gap in the traditionally underserved female intimate care market. Their flagship product, vSculpt, is the world’s first home-use vaginal tissue and pelvic floor muscle rejuvenation device using light-energy, gentle heat, and sonic technology to treat incontinence, vaginal dryness, and pelvic pain.
- [Safer Lock](#), led by President and CEO Kim Box, created a 4-digit combination lock cap designed to prevent misuse of prescription drugs. Seventy percent of people addicted to prescription drugs start with substances found in the home, yet only 3% of families lock their prescriptions – Safer Lock aims to shift that trend.
- [TerViva](#)™, co-founded by Chief Legal Officer Maggie Kavalaris, is addressing climate change by growing and selling a hardy non-GMO tree crop called pongamia. Pongamia can be grown with little or no irrigation, produces 10X more grain than soy, and produces oilseeds that can be processed into oil for biofuel, plant protein for animal feed or biogas, and biomass for baseload electricity generation.
- [Tivic Health](#), led by CEO and co-founder Jennifer Ernst, is a bioelectronic health-tech company that translates neuroscience into consumer-friendly medical devices for therapeutic benefit. Their first innovation, ClearUP™ Sinus Pain Relief is a small handheld device that’s easy to use, re-usable, and clinically proven.

“The quality of all the presenters was so high,” said Siegel. “They were able to engage with confidence but not arrogance, and stick to the information they needed to convey. It was a lot of fun, and a tight vote among all these impressive women.”

In addition to Sue Siegel, judges included:

- **Bodil “Bo” Arlander**, Founding Partner, Moxie Capital
- **Dr. Nola Masterson**, Founder, CEO and Managing Director, Science Futures, Inc.
- **Mary Jo Potter**, CEO and Managing Director at Healthcare Angels

- **Una Ryan**, Managing Director, Golden Seeds
- **Theo Schwabacher**, Executive Director, Morgan Stanley

WCD members are directors of public and large, privately held company boards. Many are currently CEOs or in other C-level positions, and heavily involved in corporate innovation, investments and acquisitions.

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About WomenCorporateDirectors Education and Development Foundation, Inc.

The WomenCorporateDirectors Education and Development Foundation, Inc. (WCD) is the only global membership organization and community of women corporate directors. A 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, the WCD Foundation has 80 chapters around the world. The aggregate market capitalization of public companies on whose boards WCD Foundation members serve is over \$8 trillion. In addition, WCD Foundation members serve on numerous boards of large private and family-run companies globally. For more information visit www.womencorporatedirectors.org or follow us on Twitter [@WomenCorpDir](https://twitter.com/WomenCorpDir), #WCDboards.

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