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**Fourth Annual We Own It Summit seeks to ensure access to capital for women-led, high-growth companies; currently less than 5% of venture capital invested in women.**

*Most promising woman-led companies from around the world are sought to apply for Global Pitch Competition*

**(SAN FRANCISCO, USA and LONDON, UK)** 1 May 2013 - While the number of women-led firms continues to grow, the size of those firms does not. Yet those female entrepreneurs who are successful at accessing networks and capital perform on par with their male counterparts. In an ongoing commitment to women high-growth entrepreneurs a global collaboration of women and men, named We Own It, seeks the most promising woman-led companies for a **Global Pitch Competition** organized by Astia and The Next Women. Entrepreneurs will compete for cash prizes, global visibility, and valuable investor contacts, at an international audience at the Fourth Annual We Own It Summit in London, UK on June 27th.

Entrepreneurs with an innovative product or offering in a high-growth sector such as technology, life science, clean tech, consumer products and who qualify for the criteria of the **‘Global Pitch Competition’**, can apply until May 15, 2013. Qualifying applicants are high-growth businesses ready for equity funding with at least one woman in a c-level position or equity stake. Additionally, the company must either have a global market or be ready to expand into one.

“Innovation can come from any source,” noted David Bott, Director of Innovation Programmes at the UK’s innovation agency, the Technology Strategy Board, lead sponsor of this year’s competition. “We are pleased to sponsor the summit as a way to encourage women entrepreneurs to showcase the great ideas that will lead to future economic growth.”

Both Astia and The Next Women have a strong track record of sourcing, selecting and showcasing exceptional female entrepreneurs and connecting them to the investor community. Both organizations have built global ecosystems that ensure access to capital as well as expertise.

“The Global Pitch Competition presents an excellent opportunity for greater participation and visibility in the industry by these exceptional entrepreneurs,” commented Simone Brummelhuis, CEO, The Next Women, “so I anticipate a lot of applications.”

“New research by Dow Jones shows that women-led venture-backed companies outperformed their male counterparts over the past fifteen years.” commented Sharon

Vosmek, CEO, Astia. “As a collaboration, we believe that it makes absolutely no sense that women account for less than 5% of venture-backed companies while at the same time they account for over half the college graduates and graduate degree participants. With the Global Pitch Competition, we are increasing the opportunity for female entrepreneurs and investors alike.”

The Global Pitch Competition will culminate in finals held during the Fourth Annual We Own It Summit, 27 June and 28 June 2013 in London. Interested startups and investors can register on the We Own It Website: [www.weownitsummit.org](http://www.weownitsummit.org)

### **About We Own It**

The We Own It Summit convenes visionaries, thought-leaders, idea generators, game-changers and disrupters to identify paths of success for women high-growth entrepreneurs: from women’s access to capital, to women’s participation on boards, to the full participation of women as investors. “Salon” style discussions lead to actionable plans to make 2010 – 2020 the decade of the woman entrepreneur. Keynotes and panels of exceptional risk takers draw the larger funding and entrepreneurial eco-system into the conversation. The Global Pitch Competition highlights the most promising women-led high-growth companies, while the Awards Dinner celebrates great achievements in venture capital investment in women-led companies. The 2013 Summit is sponsored by Platinum Sponsor Thomson Reuters and by Technology Strategy Board, Bloomberg and Gust.

### **About The Next Women**

TheNextWomen.com (<http://www.thenextwomen.com>) is an international online magazine, cross-media business development platform about women in business reaching more than 100.000 women leading, investing or founding start-ups and growing businesses in the US, UK, India and Europe. Since 2009 and across Europe it has been organizing numerous Pitch events benefitting more than 2000 women-led companies to gain contacts with and advice & funding from investors, experts and experienced entrepreneurs with excellent results. The Pitch events have been nominated and shortlisted by the European Training Foundation as best practice training for access to capital for female entrepreneurs. TheNextWomen is supported by Dell, Microsoft, ABNAMro, the Ministry of Economic Affairs of the Netherlands, Orrick law offices, XS4All, and many more. Membership to The Next Women is possible for non-paying and paying subscribers, dependent on the information and services required. Via <http://www.thenextwomen.com>, all social media channels are available.

### **About Astia**

Astia ([www.astia.org](http://www.astia.org)) is a global not-for-profit organization with a distinct focus and mission – to propel women’s full participation as entrepreneurs and leaders in high-growth businesses, fueling innovation and driving economic growth. Guided by a proven philosophy that gender diversity is an essential element of innovation, Astia works with startups around the world as they access capital, grow their businesses, and hone the leadership skills of their founding teams.

The Astia model of engaging a community of over 4,000 experts to the benefit of the select startups it serves has resulted in an exceptional success rate: since 2003, over 60 percent of companies that have participated in the Astia Investor Forums have secured funding or achieved an exit within one year of presenting, totalling more than \$1 billion raised and 29 exits, including two IPOs. Headquartered in San Francisco, Astia delivers programs for entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley, New York, London and India. Astia is generously supported by the following sponsors: The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, The Three Guineas Fund, Fenwick & West, Dentons, Silicon Valley Bank, Moss Adams, Microsoft, SAP,

Lowenstein Sandler, Cisco, AOL, Wells Fargo, The Althea Foundation, Gust, Salesforce, ideaSpace, Andreessen Horowitz, Prolog Ventures, Golden Seeds, Illuminate Ventures, Alloy Ventures, Opus Capital, AOL Ventures, SAP Ventures, Asset Management, StarVest Partners as well as the generous support of individual donors. For more information, visit [www.astia.org](http://www.astia.org) and follow the organization on <http://www.linkedin.com/company/astia> and <http://www.facebook.com/astiaglobal> and <https://twitter.com/astiaglobal>

### **About the Technology Strategy Board**

The **Technology Strategy Board** is the UK's innovation agency. Its goal is to accelerate economic growth by stimulating and supporting business-led innovation. Sponsored by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the Technology Strategy Board brings together business, research and the public sector, supporting and accelerating the development of innovative products and services to meet market needs, tackle major societal challenges and help build the future economy. For more information please visit [www.innovateuk.org](http://www.innovateuk.org).

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