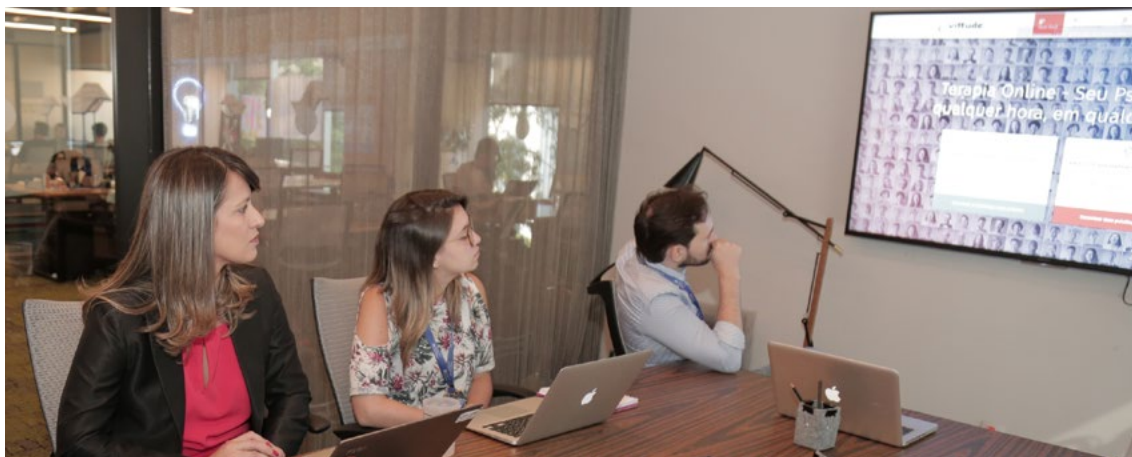


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WOMEN'S INITIATIVE



2019 FINALIST FOR LATIN AMERICA

TATIANA PIMENTA

Vittude - BRAZIL

www.vittude.com

“I never imagined being a tech woman, let alone founding a healthtech start-up!”

In 2012, Tatiana Pimenta was a successful sales executive in a construction firm when her life went dark: the relationship she was in turned abusive and the ensuing fallout sent her into depression. Anxious to avoid a negative impact on her career, she sought therapy, but this brought its own set of problems. After frustrating sessions with inexperienced psychologists who didn't help, she finally found a reputable practitioner. “His office was 11 km away and traffic in São Paulo is atrocious. It took nearly three hours to get there and back every time,” says Tatiana. “I got to thinking, ‘couldn't it be easier to connect patients with quality therapists?’”

A NEW WOMAN

Fast forward three years. Tatiana was between jobs, dealing with her father's ailing health and training to run a marathon. “Running helped me focus,” she notes. “It gives you time to be alone with your thoughts. I realised I didn't want to be an employee any more, or work in an industry becoming eroded by corruption.” When she crossed the finish line of the marathon, “a new Tatiana was born!”

Within two months she was drawing up the business plan for Vittude, a web platform that connects psychologists and patients, removing the barriers to treating mental health. The precept is simple. Vittude's platform enables remote therapy sessions, saving precious time in clogged cities while opening access to therapy for unserved populations. “Our studies find that half of Brazil's cities and towns do not have a psychologist,” says Tatiana. “Some patients tell us they need to travel up to 100 km to find one.”

“My greatest lesson as an entrepreneur? Hire slow and fire fast!”

BREAKING THE BARRIERS TO THERAPY

Other more psychological barriers can be broken down too. Vittude's online model can help people face their apprehensions about therapy, reducing the complexity of finding a therapist thanks to searching by region or specialty field. Both traditional face-to-face appointments and online video sessions are available, the latter specially developed to ensure Vittude is fully compliant with HIPAA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. They pay a monthly subscription fee and Vittude takes a 15% cut per session.

Setting up a business is never easy, and in the early days Tatiana tightened her belt to get ahead. To bootstrap Vittude she became an Uber driver, sold her car and then rented her house on Airbnb, making the most of modern-day platform technology. The site went live in September 2016 and over 2500 psychologists and 3500 patients have already subscribed, with growth averaging 30% a month and revenues increasing 221% in 2018. To mark Vittude out from the competition, Tatiana offers a B2B2C model to bring help to people in the workplace, drawing on her large network from her corporate years. Companies who subscribe to Vittude's services for the benefit of their employees pay part of their therapy fee.

According to 2017 global figures from the WHO, Brazil has the highest percentage of anxiety sufferers and is the fifth most depressed country in the world. "60 million people struggle with a mental health disorder in Brazil," notes the CEO. Depression and anxiety have a major economic impact, costing the global economy an estimated US\$ 1 trillion per year in lost productivity. Sobering figures that put Vittude into vital context

"To succeed in business is all about long distance and not sprinting. You have to keep motivating yourself at every mile to stay strong and keep going."



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