

WWD

EXCLUSIVE: Women Execs of Retail, Wall St., Silicon Valley Form ‘DealmakeHers’

The DealmakeHers community calls on an impressive list of female founders and funders, with the launch to be honored by the NRF at the Big Show.

By **Kaley Roshitsh** on January 6, 2020



DealmakeHers inaugural members include: Sarah Kunst, Rachel Shechtman, Michelle Cordeiro Grant, Jill Granoff, Andrea Weiss, Janie Yu, Alexandra Wilkis Wilson, Angela Chan, Marigay McKee.
WWD

“DealmakeHers,” a new invite-only executive community of “leading female dealmakers” shaping consumer behavior, launches today with a long list that includes unicorn founders — [Stitch Fix](#)’s Katrina Lake and [Rent the Runway](#)’s Jennifer Hyman — as well as others in the [retail](#) and private funding spaces.

Selected inaugural members include Iris Apfel, 97-year-old businesswoman, interior designer and tastemaker; Ankita Bose, cofounder and chief executive officer of Zilingo; Karen Katz, former chief executive officer of Neiman Marcus Group; Kay Koplovitz, chairman and cofounder, Springboard Growth Capital; Tracy Sun, cofounder and senior vice president, new markets, Poshmark; Diya Talwar, principal, Vestar Capital Partners; Marigay McKee, cofounder and general partner of Fernbrook Capital Management, and Heidi Zak, founder and ceo, ThirdLove, among others.

The community was founded by three executives who have helped foster deals in the space for years: Stacy Berns, president of Berns Communications Group; Stacey Widlitz, president and chief international store hunter, SW [Retail](#) Advisors, and Mary Ann Domuracki, managing director, MMG Advisors. The National Retail Federation will mark the DealmakeHers launch and members at its upcoming Big Show, which begins Jan. 12.



THE DEALMAKEHERS

“Despite heightened awareness and coverage of women leaders who have founded or are growing consumer businesses, women are still underrepresented on the financial side of the consumer and retail industry,” said Widlitz.

While inaugural members mostly come from the deal-making hubs of Wall Street and Silicon Valley, the female executives span industries including venture capital, retail and technology, with the aim to cultivate relationships and advance positive change in the consumer space. It’s what Domuracki says makes the community so unique.

While the competition for deals and funding is more intense than ever, even in spite of more capital, those on the DealmakeHers list touted a few of their personal highlights.

Alexandra Wilkis Wilson, cofounder of Gilt, Glamsquad and Fitz, acted as the investment banker selling closet organization and styling business Fitz to Tradesy in 2018, to later become Tradesy Closet Concierge. While Janie Yu, partner at Fung Capital said data science company Celect (acquired by Nike for an undisclosed “nine-figure amount”) was her favorite deal in 2019.



Janie Yu, partner at Fung Capital and inaugural DealmakeHers member.
Courtesy Image

“The right dealmaking formula requires the ability to tell a story, to share a vision and to demonstrate results. That is the perfect deal trifecta,” said Andrea Weiss, founding partner at The O Alliance.

In the VC world, female founders are what venture capitalist Jennifer Neundorfer called an “underlooked asset class that is overperforming,” in an October interview with company insights platform Crunchbase. In fact, Crunchbase noted a record year for female-founded unicorns in 2019, which saw the emergence of 21 privately held companies with at least one female founder passing \$1 billion in valuation.

Harnessing decades of member expertise, DealmakeHers will convene its network to inspire and promote new deals through private events, educational programs, VIP forums and related experiences.