

Happiness is reaching your full potential

Yesika Aguilera, Tespack Co-founder & CMO. Interviewed at the Digital Freedom Festival by **Ieva Riekstina**, Consultant at Pedersen & Partners in Latvia.

Yesika was recognised by Forbes 30 Under 30 twice, named a “Tech & Energy” industry disruptor, and one of the Top 200 Leaders of Tomorrow Globally. Participated in the St. Gallen Symposium, debating with prime ministers, top entrepreneurs and higher education (HE) leaders on how to achieve global growth with entrepreneurship and HE. Was also named one of the Top 30 Social Entrepreneurs Under 30 in Spain and appointed Mentor for the Queen’s Young Leaders to support leading social entrepreneurs and NGOs across 53 commonwealth countries. Advises on tech, personal development, entrepreneurship and PR in the programme lead by Her Majesty, the Queen of England.

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YESIKA
AGUILERA
TESPACK CO-FOUNDER



#FUTUREOFENERGY
#TECHSWAG

“I believe in doing something you are passionate about and this is what we do at Tespack, creating the #FutureOfEnergy. Everyone seeks happiness, but there is a misconception on achieving this through money or fitting society’s expectations, like getting awards, receiving titles or pursuing something that is considered to be success in the eyes of others, but the truth of happiness is reaching your full potential and doing what you truly love, without trying to fit into society’s expectations (otherwise I wouldn’t be in the tech industry according to stereotypes).”

Ieva: How did you end up working in the field of technology, when your background is in education and marketing?

Yesika: I obtained my degree at the age of 22 but have been working in the education industry since I was 16 mentoring and training people—a hundred ambassadors of the University were under my charge. Additionally, I used to work on HR and Marketing until the other founders of Tespack contacted me and offered to move to Finland to focus on the marketing side of the company and that’s when my tech journey began.

Ieva: Whose idea was it?

Yesika: Our CEO Mario Aguilera was in the special forces and used to commute from the base camp to rural areas to train, and carry heavy car batteries to stay charged while on the trainings. This was time-consuming and not sustainable because one or two days had to be wasted just for travelling to recharge the batteries. Mario’s background is in solar energy, so he knew there was a need in the consumer sector and wanted to provide reliable, durable and yet stylish mobile energy products that helped people work anywhere in the world.

Once the project had initiated, after 8 months I was offered by the other founders to move to Finland and to be in charge of the marketing side, but sacrifices had to be made as we all had to bootstrap and live from our savings. In my case, I left my job where I was already an expert, had appeared in newspapers at a very young age to go onto something that was new to me. However, staying where I was wasn’t scary anymore and when something is not scary, it is because you have reached the comfort zone and that should be scarier in itself. I also got encouragement from my Mom who has always been a strong role model for me. She was the first telecommunications engineer woman in Bolivia, lead a hundred men, and this was 30 years ago! She told me that life is about discovering yourself and experiencing life outside our comfort zone, and that my potential was a lot higher but it was up to me to reach it.

Ieva: So, you moved to Helsinki?

Yesika: Yes. I decided to move because it was time for me to pursue something new and see how much I was capable of. The first 6 months in Finland were really tough, as I had to learn a lot about solar energy and tech. Because if you want your brand to be the best in the market then you need to know your tech inside out. At that time, what I thought was my biggest weakness turned to be my strength—the lack of knowledge about solar energy made me the master to educate the market in the simplest way. But I fell in love with tech so much that I am a solar tech expert now. I have also been learning about coding in my spare time (just because a new world was shown to me with endless possibilities).

Ieva: Currently, everyone is talking about learning technology. What is your take on this?

Yesika: Technology is an intrinsic part of our lives now and will be even more so in the future, however it does not mean that you need to learn how to create technology in order to benefit from applying it. If you only have engineers and no sales or marketing people, then how would you sell this technology or build a brand? Like I said, I'm a true believer in following your passion because you'll always be the second best if you don't pursue what you love. Don't get me wrong I'm still studying about the latest Energy trends, but I'm not going to go directly into designing circuit boards, because my forte is in training people, creating a brand, growth hacking and developing partnerships, so I invest my time in learning to excel what I'm best at and love doing the most.

Ieva: As women in many cases we are responsible for families and have to balance family and work responsibilities...

Yesika: Yeah, but it's also about not giving up on our dreams. For example, if you give up on your dreams for your family, you are sending the message to your daughter that she can't have a family and follow her dreams, which in this century shouldn't be the case anymore. This is why it's important to teach kids from a young age that they can pursue what they love doing and teach boys and girls the same values to bring a real equality.

Ieva: From your LinkedIn profile I understand you were in the army, correct?

Yesika: Yes. My family comes from a military background and I went to the army cadets when I was 15 and also become an instructor later on—a Royal Regiment of Fusiliers in UK. It involved weekend activities, such as camping and learning survival skills.

My Mom's dream was to join the army, but she couldn't because she was a woman and wasn't accepted in those times. Even to become an engineer, she had to go through many obstacles. This is why she taught me to pursue my dreams. In return, I wanted to do something for my Mom, so in a way, I completed a part of her dream by going to the army cadets. This also shaped me in a strong person and I am not afraid of being different.

For example, I love being feminine, even though there are stereotypes in the technology sector that you need to look geeky, put your hair up and wear massive glasses to look older and be taken seriously. But I do not want to pretend to be someone I'm not, so I'm going to rock the technology world wearing heels and being very feminine. At the end of the day what is the message we are sending to our girls? That you need to look masculine and geeky? This is why many women don't want to join the tech world, because they can't relate to that person.

Ieva: I think that taking risks from a personal perspective is the most difficult thing. We all have our patterns that make us comfortable.

Yesika: Fear never goes away even if you have all the experience. However, we only live once, and my scariest thought is not having experienced life enough. I know I'm not going to be here one day, so this is my time to experience as many things as I can, and the truth of the matter is that we can all do it. It doesn't matter the age, or what you have been doing so far. The beauty of life is that you can just wake up and change the way you think and start consciously pushing yourself toward things that are hard and scary until they become natural to you.



“So, I decided to be myself because this way I can make an impact and help many girls relate to me, show them that you don’t need to turn yourself into a man to be in the tech industry, but rather have a strong personality and be proud of who you are.”

leva: Do you have examples where you gave a speech or did mentoring somewhere after which a person approached you and said: “Yesika, you really inspired me”?

Yesika: Yes. People approach me after the majority of my events and I believe it’s because when I tell a story, I don’t make it sound perfect, as life isn’t perfect and you need to say things like they are—raw. I had many people come and thank me for making them realize that it’s ok to be scared and it should not stop them from taking risks.

leva: How did you feel when you learned that you were chosen to be among 30 under 30 most influential innovators?

Yesika: I was very honoured. At the same time, behind every person there is an amazing team, so I do not take full credit for my accomplishments, it was thanks to the team—it’s the effort from every single individual that has contributed to us getting to “The Best Energy Startup in EU”. The more you realise it’s a team effort the bigger things you will achieve in life.

leva: Can you tell us about your latest products. Solar panels for astronauts, is this just an idea?

Yesika: Our solar backpacks have very advanced technology and are tested by astronauts in the toughest conditions similar to those on Mars. We also work together with several NGOs: United Nations, Save the Children, Plane International and many other governmental and rescue teams to implement our tech into the energy solutions they need.

leva: Where are these products sold?

Yesika: We are already selling our solar smart backpacks in the outdoor stores like Intersports, and our power banks in telecommunications stores like Vodafone, Orange, etc. and we have an online shop too. However, as mentioned above we do provide our Energy solutions to big companies and Governmental entities tailoring it to their needs.

leva: I also noticed you are involved in a climate lobby organisation.

Yesika: I’m an advocate of the sustainable development goals, so I was invited to the Vatican to be a youth delegate. They chose around 30 youth leaders from 50 countries in various fields. My field was technology and entrepreneurship, and I talked about how to integrate sustainable development goals into a business model and showcased our company as an example.

In general, I'm very involved in any project that is helping society either with the environment or education, because while I am an entrepreneur, at the same time I like to put some of my time to providing support on causes that are important to me, because if you are not the one making the change, who else is? In this sense I like to be involved.

Ieva: Many people say: I will get richer then I will do it.

Yesika: I believe that you don't need to do be rich to start making a change. For example, by recycling or teaching someone how to recycle, or even by implementing these policies in your startup, you are already making an impact. At Tespack creating a positive impact is important from creating renewable products to educating consumers, even the small little things like giving the option to customers to opt out from the product plastic package That is also a small way to help the environment.

Read the whole interview [here](#).



[Ieva Riekstina](#) is a Consultant at Pedersen & Partners, based in Riga, Latvia. Ms. Riekstina is an HR management and recruitment professional with over twenty years of experience in the Technology, Telecommunications, Banking, Insurance, Finance, Plant production, and FMCG sectors across the Baltics. She has placed C-suite, management, functional, and operational executives across these industries. During her extensive career in the MTM industry, she collaborated with several local and international IT companies where she worked as HR and Administrative Manager, Senior Consultant, and IT recruiter and was in charge of HR strategy, recruitment, policy development, process redesign, and talent transformation. Prior to joining Pedersen & Partners, she served as an IT Recruiter for the Latvian branch of Accenture, the biggest IT company in Latvia, where she supported the corporation's expansion to over 10 countries through highly-specialised IT positions recruitment, training, and integration.

Ms. Riekstina has a unique but multifaceted educational background, combining Mathematics, Psychology, IT, and business. Her academic credentials include an MBA from Riga Business School and two Bachelor's degrees: one in Educational Psychology and another in Information Economics from the University of Latvia. She speaks native Latvian, and fluent English and Russian.

Pedersen & Partners is a leading international Executive Search firm. We operate 57 wholly owned offices in 53 countries across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia & the Americas. Our values Trust, Relationship and Professionalism apply to our interaction with clients as well as executives.

If you would like to conduct an interview with a representative of Pedersen & Partners, or have other media-related requests, please contact: Anastasia Alpatcova, Marketing and Communications Manager at: anastasia.alpatcova@pedersenandpartners.com