



## If you look, transformative ideas are everywhere: A conversation with Leah Busque

Technology has long been a driver of transformative change – throughout every aspect of our culture and economy. This has been especially true over the past decade, as digital has become the great disruptor and entrepreneurial-minded outsiders have turned industries upside down by bringing new solutions to old problems. In the process, the way we consume media, engage with one another and interact with the businesses and products that permeate our lives has forever changed.

Leah Busque, keynote speaker at the 2018 Albany Key4Women Forum, has been at the forefront of this change. She helped inspire the gig economy not by having an original idea but, as she readily admits, acting on and executing a plan to bring to life an idea many others had before her.

Leah's idea was TaskRabbit, the online mobile marketplace for matching freelance workers with jobs. Here, Leah shares the five lessons learned that she credits for TaskRabbit's success.

### Key takeaways



Leah Busque, founder of TaskRabbit, was featured as the keynote speaker at the 2018 Albany Key4Women Forum.



She talked about how we need only look around to find inspirations for situations needing solutions.



She believes the keys to success are to set big goals, share your plans with others to engage their expertise, and focus on success not just a win.

## Ideas are everywhere

Busque didn't just happen upon the idea for TaskRabbit. It was the outcome of a purposeful pursuit.

"I was doing well in my career, but I felt like I needed more," Busque said. "I made a conscious effort to look for ideas in my everyday life." So one night, before heading out to dinner with her husband, they realized they were out of dog food. They had already called for a cab, but they were worried all the stores might be closed by the time they were done with dinner. It was in that moment she realized their dilemma really was a simple problem that lacked a simple solution. Four months later, Busque quit her job at IBM and built and launched the first version of TaskRabbit.

This experience brought to Busque the realization that "a great idea is not an invention, it's a discovery." Think about the problems – or pain points – in your own life and create a solution. We all think we have "ideas," but an idea is developing the process needed to build a solution and bringing it to market. The idea is the action.

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## Share your idea

There is a natural inclination to be protective of our ideas. However, Busque believes the rewards of sharing your idea far outweigh the risks, which she considers to be minimal. She cites the theory of evolution, the alternating current and the Internet as big ideas that benefited from collaboration. She also uses her own experience as proof that sharing your idea can give it an audience that one, helps you improve upon it, and two, allows you to expand your network and build an audience for it.

"When I was developing TaskRabbit, I would talk to total strangers about it," Busque said. "And one of the key mentors in my journey, Scott Griffith of ZipCar, I met by

telling a friend of a friend about my crazy idea for TaskRabbit. That friend gave me Scott's email address and told me to email him. I didn't know he was the founder of ZipCar at the time, but I cold emailed him and shared my idea." Griffith became TaskRabbit's first advisor and became a pivotal person in its growth – incubating the company in ZipCar's office for the first year and helping Busque secure financing. At the time she met Griffith, Busque had not yet written a line of code, but she was already sharing her idea and getting feedback to make it better.

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## Develop audacious goals

Busque doesn't set goals. She sets Big, Hairy, Audacious Goals (BHAGs). BHAGs are the kind of goals that are so outrageous, so ambitious, that it is almost crazy to consider them. She tells a story about how early in her career, she was told by an older male colleague at IBM that she was too ambitious – as if ambition was a bad thing. But ambitious ideas fuel transformative change. So they became a point of focus at TaskRabbit. One such BHAG: have President Obama post a task on TaskRabbit. While the president has not posted on TaskRabbit, Busque has been invited to the White House multiple times, presented to Obama and has partnered with the White House's Disaster Relief Team to offer their technology during times of crisis.

Busque says the key to making BHAGs a reality is to not let them control you. "The only way to tame them is to be realistic about what the process entails. I think: What can I do in the next 24 hours to move forward. Tomorrow, that may mean briefing the president. But maybe today that means taking out the trash. Dare to dream, yes," she says. "But make sure your dreams can be broken down into actionable pieces."



## Find your inner entrepreneur

We set limits on ourselves. We tell ourselves we can't do this and can't do that...that we're not creative or we're not entrepreneurs. However, what we are not today is really what we have yet to develop. For Busque, she always wanted to be an entrepreneur, she just didn't know how she could be one...or if she could be one. "At first, I wasn't thinking about building a company. I was thinking of building a solution for my idea. But then all of these other things start to happen.

"You need to raise money. You need to hire. And you realize you need to develop new skills. For me, I really relied on surrounding myself with a lot of smart people with different ideas. But what you learn is many times there is no right answer. You are going to have to make the call that is right for you and your business." It is through the process and overcoming challenges that you redefine your limits and become more than you ever believed possible.

Visit [Shine Together](#), an organization Busque recently co-founded that is dedicated to amplifying the awesome impact women have each and every day.

For more Key4Women resources to help you reach your goals, send an email to [Key4Women@keybank.com](mailto:Key4Women@keybank.com), or [visit us at key.com/women](https://www.key.com/women) to learn more.

Was the recap helpful? Would you like to weigh in on future topics? Take our [survey](#).

## Prioritize success

Avoid the trap of confusing winning with success. Winning is about results – the bottom line. Yes, results matter. But so do values, impact and purpose. As Busque says, "winners don't win, they succeed."

Busque shares a story of when she knew TaskRabbit was a success. A mother, based in San Francisco, had a son in Boston undergoing cancer treatment. She could not be with him for his treatment, so she hired a Tasker to bring him soup and spend time with him every day. Through that task Busque realized TaskRabbit was not just about getting things done, it was a tool to build community.

The lesson: success drives winning. Have a purpose, be driven by values and create impact for the larger community. Results – winning – will follow.