Tech-education startup founds EDI-Product Management program, placing students globally

Canadian-founded Tacit Edge, seeding the Product Management sector with needed expertise

CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA, January 16, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Tacit Edge, a Canadian-based tech-education startup launched one of the only successful gender and race Equity, Diversity and Inclusion-based (EDI) Product Management education/training programs globally, placing first graduating classes of visible minority/BIPOC and female students with companies such as Benevity, Microsoft, Deloitte Digital, the Government of Canada, TELUS, Shopify, ATCO and more.

Tacit Edge Founders Christa Hill and Renee Matsalla

In partnership through the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) and with funding from Alberta Innovates, Tacit Edge's 12-week Applied Product Management Program graduated their first students in 2021/2022.

The courses are a combination of online learning, coaching and group facilitation that can be designed for post-secondary institutions and private companies, making an impact on individuals and industry by helping to attract, train and retain qualified Product Managers, a skill set which is needed not only in the technology sector but all industries.

Since the Tacit Edge Applied Product Management Program's launch with SAIT in May 2021, results indicate:

- a 73% hire rate of graduates into product management and related roles
- of which, 56% are women
- and 72% identify as visible minorities

This is comparable to industry stats that reflect the gender ratio in the field is historically

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>
> *Christa Hill, co-founder Tacit Edge*

dominated by 64.1 per cent males to that of 35.9 per cent female. While more than 70 per cent of those are identified as white.

Gender Ratio in North American population of Product Management professionals study by Zippia:
- Male, 64.1%
- Female, 35.9%

Race ratio in North American population study:
- White, 71.2%, Hispanic or Latino, 12.0%, Asian, 9.8%, Black or African American, 4.3%, Unknown, 2.5%, American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.2%

Source: [Zippia's The Business Product Management statistics](#)

Tacit Edge is founded by Christa Hill and Renee Matsalla in Calgary, Canada.

The duo honed their skills with global companies such as Apple, Google, Microsoft, German-based Fyber, Morgan Stanley, and Calgary-founded unicorn Benevity, before launching Tacit Edge in a mission to make Product Management an accessible and equitable field for all who are eager to bridge their skills into the technology and other sectors.

Matsalla and Hill are passionate and successful Product Managers, as well as entrepreneurs who know firsthand what it's like to break into a gate-kept field and industry.

"Product Management is a career that has very few opportunities to gain post-secondary education unless you're already hired at a company and rise through the ranks or participate in online theory-only education. It's often trained in-house, yet businesses regionally and globally need diverse Product Managers," Matsalla says.

"Companies don't have a trusted standard source of Product Managers to draw from, and students struggle to find a trusted high-quality place for low-risk hands-on learning. These are the 2 sides of the problem we are seeking to solve."

Diverse teams are proven to produce outstanding results; attracting investment at multiple levels.

Product Management is defined as the business process of planning, developing, launching, and managing a product or service. It includes the entire lifecycle of a product, from ideation and development to 'go to market'. It's a field that bridges the gap between technology innovation and business strategy.

"Under-represented groups, newcomers to Canada and those who have faced adversity often make the best Product Managers we can imagine. Because these individuals thrive in ambiguity and have already overcome challenging situations unique to their lives navigating the complexity of starting a new life in a new country," says Hill, adding that this is the cornerstone of the field.

"Product Managers are wired and passionate about solving business, supply and technical problems with innovative, outside-of-the-box thinking born from empowered teams. Who better to take on these emerging roles than the very populations who have faced adversity, ambiguity, and actively solving complex problems daily."

According to the 2021 Boston Product Management Association's (BPMA) Study on the State of DE&I in Product Management research/survey, less diverse product organizations underperform more diverse teams. Less diverse teams share limited perspectives, build less successful products, and their teams perform at a lower level.

Similarly, the BPMA's research from McKinsey and Company showed that ethnically diverse executive teams outperformed non-diverse teams, achieving 1/3 higher (34%) higher financial results. If the same applies to product management, non-diverse product teams risk delivering lower financial returns in addition to lower team performance.

Tacit Edge and SAIT's first cohort of graduates (upwards of 60 students) are experiencing successful placement in prominent companies, such as Attabotics, Benevity, Microsoft, Deloitte Digital, the Government of Canada, TELUS, Shopify, ATCO, Virtual Gurus and more.

For Students who have graduated to some of the above companies, such as Kelly Medeiros, the mentorship and coaching they receive from the program and Hill and Matsalla have helped set a foundation for them to enter the industry with confidence.

"Their hands-on approach gave me actual experience in creating a technical product from inception to delivery. I still refer to my course notes and materials when I'm faced with uncertainty in my current role," says Kelly Medeiros, Program Manager, Microsoft. "I am constantly sharing their teachings with my peers and colleagues to improve our processes and products.

Calgary-based Goodlawyer who have taken part in the programming and worked with students from the first cohorts are also blown away by results.

"I got to propose a real-world UX problem from Goodlawyer and I had three talented and mature students work on it for six weeks. They conducted interviews, designed, and executed surveys, led ideation sessions, designed wireframes leading to a functional prototype and effectively communicated their insights. All in six weeks on evenings and weekends. They are fab indeed!" Tom Alvarez, Chief Product Officer/Co-Founder, Goodlawyer.

Tacit Edge has plans to scale the Product Management programming for industry and post-secondary partners in the coming year. There are online courses available as well, more info at TacitEdge.ca.

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