

## Araza

By David Swan



Victoria Kluth

Victoria Kluth kicked off Araza four and a half years ago with the simple dream of being able to work with her friends.

Fast forward to 2018 and her consultancy firm has expanded from five people to more than 300, working with some of Australia's biggest brands on their digital transformation.

Unlike other consultancies, Araza casts a wide net, with the projects it tackles covering everything from Microsoft Office 365 integrations to robotics. And sometimes it even turns down business if it is not a good cultural fit.

It also has true gender balance, with about a 50-50 male-to-female split across its staff. Kluth says Araza doesn't have gender quotas but relies on hiring and interview processes that are free from bias.

"We feel we have our finger on the pulse; when you're talking about the businesses of tomorrow, that's what they're going to look like," Kluth tells *The Deal*. "They will strive to be gender equitable. Businesses will learn that having women in decision-making roles is going to bring them more money. All the data shows this is what will happen, and I think my competitors will finally be smart enough to realise they too can have it."

Kluth spent her career working in public companies with shareholders expecting judicious decisions based on quarterly financial goals. She says running her own company means she can make decisions predicated on other factors entirely.

"You can make decisions based on politics, or feelings, for example," she says. "Each of our own salespeople has their own bias – they'll say 'Victoria, this isn't a good partnership', and we can discuss that. Last week I had dinner with a client but I kindly rejected their offer. It just wasn't a good fit. To say you can do it all is silly and old-fashioned."

Kluth says she has worked for systems integrators and consultancies since graduating from university. It's the only sort of work she has ever done.

"I was working for a large consultancy, and they were changing my role," she says. "I thought if I'm going to change my role, why don't I just go and start my own company? I quit the next day with no business plan."

"I started with a couple of clients, and I just backed myself from there. It is really hard giving up the expense account and the security, but you just have to know you can do it and trust that."

Growing as fast as Araza has comes with a cost, and for Kluth the challenge is to minimise the risk and ensure growth isn't merely for its own sake.

"Growth sounds great, but growth for growth's sake isn't how you want to operate as an organisation," she says. "Cash flow is queen. Some people say king, but I say queen. But while we've only been a business for four years, we're now a medium-sized business and that comes with complexities."

"We just keep our eyes on the prize, and the end game for us is to have successful delivery where clients keep coming back to us. And to do that you make sure your people are doing really good things."



Stuart Elliot, CEO and co-founder of Planet Innovation

### Employment Options

SA, Healthcare and social assistance  
Community-based not-for-profit helping people find employment, gain education or training, and navigate a secure future

### Ete Swimwear

WA, Retail trade  
Beachwear range featuring unique designs and exclusive, handpainted watercolour prints by a WA artist

### eWater Systems

Vic, Other services – biotech  
Biotech company supplying electrolysis units to generate sustainable and effective alternatives to chemical cleaners and sanitisers

### Exaptec

Vic, Other services  
Delivering state-of-the-art service robots, social robots and telepresence robot solutions in health and business settings

### Fab Dock

Qld, Manufacturing  
Providing boat owners with simple, affordable dry-docking, reducing water pollution and maintenance costs

### Forbidden Foods

Vic, Wholesale trade  
It's all about rice: black rice, red rice, green rice – view recipes, buy online or find stockists

### Frank Green Enterprises

Vic, Retail trade  
Stylish reusable coffee cups with inbuilt chip allowing users to pay through the CafePay app

### Future fitouts

Qld, Construction  
Providing stress-free fitouts by managing projects from start to finish

### GlobalCQ

Vic, Professional, scientific and technical services  
Helping employers meet gender and cultural diversity goals by connecting them to professionals from all backgrounds

### GMG Digital

Vic, Information media and telecommunications  
Digital marketing agency specialising in strategy, data and analytics, media, user experience design, social and creative

### Good Goods

Vic, Other services – direct-to-consumer eCommerce  
Making Who Gives a Crap? toilet paper then donating half the profits to build toilets in developing countries

### Good Super

Vic, Financial and insurance services  
Personalised superannuation – choose the social, environmental or corporate issue in which your money is invested

### Gourmet Basket

NSW, Other services  
Click-and-send delivery of Christmas, food, wine and new-baby gift baskets and hampers

### Grace Papers

Vic, Other services  
Award-winning programs empowering expectant and working parents to navigate family and career

### Graphene Manufacturing Australia

Qld, Manufacturing  
Developing technology to manufacture graphene, a semi-metal stronger than steel and more conductive than copper

### Gronade

NSW, Professional, scientific and technical  
Scientific problem-solving, growth and social change through data science, design thinking and real-world validation

### GroupPrezzie

NSW, Other services  
Group gift-giving made easy online – invites, reminds and collects money from your group

### Guide Dogs Victoria

Vic, Other services – charity  
Providing services to people living with low vision or blindness to maximise their independence and mobility

### Hart Sport

Qld, Retail trade  
Selling all kinds of sporting equipment to keep people moving regardless of age or ability

### Hello Cars

NSW, Retail trade  
Buy and sell used cars online – delivered to your driveway with a seven-day/500km money-back guarantee

### HoMie Street Store

Vic, Retail trade  
Retail clothing store and fashion label providing occupational training for young people experiencing homelessness

### Hydrobiology

Qld, Professional, scientific and technical services  
Environmental consultants specialising in risk and impact assessment, water quality, freshwater and marine ecology, geochemistry

### Hydrox Technologies

Qld, Manufacturing  
Developing solar-shrink mulch film to help farmers minimise costs and waste – and use less plastic

### Imbros

Tas, retail trade  
Distributor of oceanographic, marine, aquaculture monitoring equipment and scientific laboratory instruments

### InDebted Australia

NSW, Financial and insurance services  
Collection services and technology provider, helping clients improve recovery rates, reduce risk and lower costs

### Inklng Women

SA, Education and training  
World-class training that directly and substantially lifts the percentage of women at leadership level in organisations