

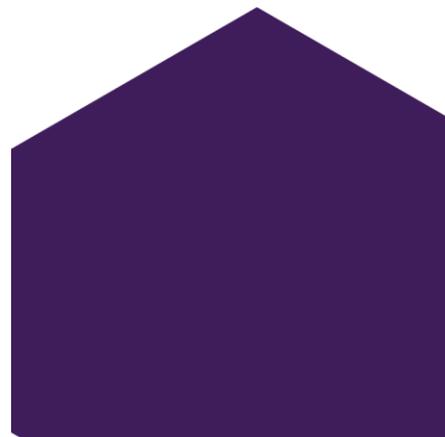
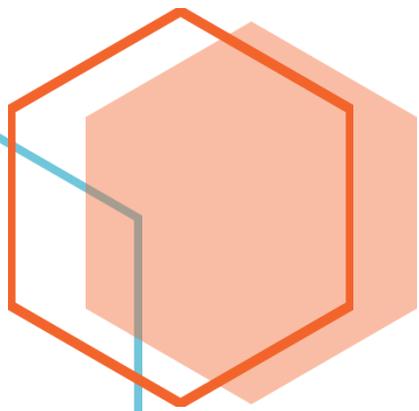


# [Christina Wallace]

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[United States of America]

"Take every chance you have to grow your skill set"





## Person's background

Wallace landed a job as a theatre director and classical musician before venturing out and helping grow numerous startups, as well as founding her own company.

Wallace's first job outside the theatre was as a consultant for the Boston Consulting Group. She left in 2011 to start her own company, Quincy, which was a women's apparel brand that developed their own proprietary sizing model and algorithm. In just 18 months Wallace built the company with \$1 million in angel and venture capital. Unfortunately, in January 2013, Quincy was forced to shut down.

In the summer of 2014, Wallace landed an opportunity to build BridgeUp: STEM at AMNH, a forward-thinking educational initiative at the American Museum of Natural History. She also founded the Startup Institute in New York, an expansion campus in New York City that trains students in web development, product design, technical marketing and sales/account management.

She attended Interlochen Arts Academy, receiving her high school diploma in piano performance before enrolling in Emory University, graduating with a BA in mathematics and theatre studies. She also has an MBA from Harvard Business School

## Brief Introduction

Christina Wallace is an influential entrepreneur, businesswoman, and the founder of several prominent companies, including Quincy, a women's brand based in New York City that had a unique take on sizing. She is originally from Lansing, Michigan.

## **First steps in entrepreneurship and faced difficulties**

Christina spent a year as a management consultant with BCG after business school, so she could save enough money to quit and start a company, then founded Quincy Apparel with her best friend from business school in the spring of 2011. They built the company over the next 18 months with \$1 million in angel and venture capital and launched a new brand of women's workwear focused on improving fit for all shapes and sizes of women. They had a lot of success and the brand really resonated with so many people, but in the end, it failed.

Their production and operational processes were too complex to succeed with the tight turnaround times, small-batch manufacturing, and thinner margins associated with their business model. The biggest difficulty they encountered was that they created a product that was not really focused at target groups. Just for this reason, the product could not be placed on the market, and unfortunately, they had to close the company in 2013.

## **How and why the person has succeeded, lessons learnt**

Christina learned that who you take capital from matters. Every entrepreneur must understand that motivations and pressures matter, because it will affect what advice they receive and what pressures that will then exert on them. She also learned that failure in this one case didn't make her a failure and she learned to separate her self-identity from her project or job at the time. This is the way Christina managed to succeed.

Failure for Christina was more important at some point in her career than success. She had never failed in any capacity. Straight A's through high school and college, president of basically every organization, every teacher's favourite student, every job's top performer. That is why her failure pushed her to the limit of her abilities and she learned where she still needed to grow. It highlighted how thin her emotional support system was and that she needed to build her personal relationships before she would be ready to dive into something that taxing again. It also taught her just how resilient she was. This is why Christina managed to succeed.





Lessons learned:

- Don't limit yourself or fall victim to restrictions put in place by society. Think outside the box and take the initiative to pursue your dreams.
- Failure happens for any number of reasons. Don't let it stop you from getting back up and trying again.
- Make sure you surround yourself with a strong network of people who will support you and share your same vision.
- Hiring should be one of your main focuses, as the people you bring onto your team will make or break you.
- Be willing to step outside your comfort zone and learn about a specific industry, area, or skillset. By taking the initiative to educate yourself and learn about areas you are not as familiar with, you will be setting yourself up for success.
- Be open about your failure.

### **Present situation and tips for success**

Currently, she is the Vice President of Growth at Bionic, an enterprise growth solution that installs startup ecosystems into large enterprises, enabling them to discover and build the future. She is also the co-host of "The Limit Does Not Exist", a Forbes podcast focused on the intersection of STEM and the arts, and a freelance writer, including as a contributor for Forbes.com.

Prior to joining Bionic, Christina founded BridgeUp: STEM, a new educational division at the American Museum of Natural History with a mission to captivate, inspire, and propel girls and women into computer science, funded by a generous \$7.5M 5-year grant from the Helen Gurley Brown Trust. She remains an advisor to BridgeUp: STEM and fierce champion for girls in STEM.

Her main tip would be to take every chance you have to grow your skill set—be interdisciplinary and be willing to look across industries or job titles to find work that is meaningful and gives you the opportunities you are looking for.

## Conclusion

The inspiration comes from the people you surround yourself with. Christina has been very fortunate to find a community of creative and passionate women in New York and across the country. The courage also came in part from her grandmother, who taught her that she could do anything she wanted to as long as she had the discipline to follow through.

The other part—the courage to withstand the unpredictability of her career path—came from a choice to travel solo throughout her twenties (and into her thirties now), which provided a host of opportunities to get more comfortable improvising based on new information as it comes in.

