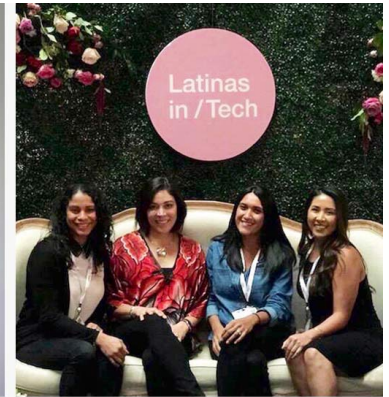


# The woman who wants to empower Latin American women in Silicon Valley



*“When I went to work in **Silicon Valley**, I wasn’t just the only **Latin American woman** but also the only mom. There were very few women.”*

This is how **Rocio Medina**, [Tec de Monterrey Marketing](#) graduate and co-founder of [Latinas In Tech](#), recalls the beginnings of her work experience as a Latin American woman in the technology industry.

Despite **not studying engineering**, this **Tec graduate**, who was born to Mexican parents in San Francisco, California, managed to fulfill the dream of **working** in a **Silicon Valley company**.

This lack of **representation in leadership positions** that she experienced inspired Rocío to help **connect and empower Latin American women** in technology companies.



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## Seeing few women and Latin Americans in tech companies

In 2005, Rocío moved to the United States along with her husband, who had been accepted to [Harvard](#).

*“As a U.S. citizen, I was able to get a job with a software company when I arrived in Boston. Through marketing, I entered the world of technology.”*

After five years, she moved to **Silicon Valley**, home to large technology companies such as **Google, Apple, Microsoft, and Facebook**, to work for **Prezi**, a remote presentation software firm.

She recalls that in all those years, **she never had a co-worker with a Latin American background and there were very few women in that environment.**

*“From my first job, I never had a colleague or superior with a Latin American background. I only saw them doing cleaning jobs or in the dining room.”*

Currently, 40% of California residents are Latin American but **only 1% of them work in the technology industry**, the **Tec graduate** says.

## An opportunity to help other women

Then in 2014, she met **Gretel Perera**, a Venezuelan woman who worked for **Evernote**, a cloud-based note-taking software company.

Due to the low representation of **Latin American women**, and to change what they had experienced at the beginning of their careers, they both decided to **found Latinas In Tech**.

This is a non-profit organization whose goal is for **women to grow professionally** in the **technology industry**.

*“A Latin American investor introduced us to each other. Then Gretel said: ‘**A Latin American woman, let’s get together!**’ The first time, we met at a coffee shop, then we started to bring colleagues. There were four of us, then eight, and that’s how the group grew. **Now, there are thousands of us.**”*



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### **Supporting Latin American women in tech companies**

Rocío says that **Latinas In Tech** has provided support to **nearly 17,000 women in more than 20 cities**.

*“Our organization’s mission is to **get the Latin American women in those tech companies promoted**. I want those women who are already in the industry to be **bosses, mentors and heads of department** in these organizations,”* says the co-founder.

That’s why Rocío explains that they have three strategies:

**Working with women to help them grow professionally.**

This can be through **seminars and training to inspire and motivate them** or through events like summits, the most recent of which was attended by more than 2,500 women.

### **Collaborating with technology companies.**

Today, Latinas In Tech has **more than 40 sponsors** who support the cause of the organization and the women who are part of it. These include industry leaders like **Google, Facebook, and LinkedIn**, to name but a few.

### **Motivating and influencing legislators and public officials.**

**This is to influence public policies** and pass legislation that **helps members of the Latin American community** who work in technology companies, in areas such as enforcing benefits and labor laws.

***“Our organization’s mission is to get the Latin American women in those tech companies promoted. I want them to be bosses, mentors, and heads of department.”***



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## **Her interest in technology was born from the Internet**

Rocio says she has been interested in **technology** and **computer science** since she was 14 years old.

*“I managed to get online in the early days. It was something that had just arrived in Mexico. I discovered the Internet when I was visiting my father at his work at a university, and it has fascinated me ever since.”*

Her father, **Dr. Magdaleno Medina**, was Director of the Physics Institute at the Autonomous University of San Luis Potosí, the state from which her family is from.

*“They had Internet there because the university had a partnership with **Tec de Monterrey**. So, I had to go to the institute get online. I even learned programming. That was my first interaction with technology.”*

While in middle school, Rocío excelled in STEM areas such as physics and mathematics, winning national awards at the **Physics Olympics**.

When she was studying at **PrepaTec** in San Luis Potosí, she attended a conference on the Monterrey campus, where she met **the woman who inspired her**.

*“I got to listen to **Ana María Olabuenaga** talk about marketing and her journey. When I saw her, I said: ‘I want to be like her.’ She was the one who inspired me to study marketing and be a warrior, just like her.”*

Rocío finished her degree at the Monterrey campus in 2003.



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### What she learned from the Tec and future plans

Rocío says that the Tec gave her many fundamental principles to get to where she is.

*“Things such as **leadership and entrepreneurship**. During my studies, I remember that they put us in contact with companies and **we worked with real cases** where our suggestions were implemented.*

*“I also had the opportunity to study in France. Obviously, that helps you have a **global vision**. Also, at the Monterrey campus, I had **professors who were leaders in marketing**, some of them were the authors of the textbooks we learned from,” she says.*

For two years, Rocío has been the full-time executive director of **Latinas In Tech**.

Today, the organization also has **chapters in various parts of the world**, such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Brazil, and Mexico City. One is also about to open in Madrid and there are talks of opening two more in Mexico, in Guadalajara and Monterrey.

*“When Gretel and I got together, **we shared tips and celebrated our victories**. We gave each other advice and talked about strategies to grow as professionals.”*

Now, that advice has reached **thousands of women** and Rocío hopes that they continue to reach many more.

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