

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/why-govtech>

GLASS founder and CEO Paola Santana explains why she founded a govtech venture despite the perception that government and startups don't often mix well. She emphasizes the immense purchasing power of governments, the huge potential of governments to effect positive change, and the relative neglect of the sector by tech companies.



Transcript

- So why GLASS? 00:00:06,283 You cannot change what you cannot see.. So if we don't see what we're doing wrong in the public sector and in government entities and how we're managing the things that belong to all of us, if we don't see that better, we cannot do better.. So that's why GLASS is as simple as that.. I wanna put a glass over public sector entities and governments so we can see how they're managing the world and to do that better today.. Governments are un-sexy, but not to me.. I love governments.. And just as a reminder, governments are the biggest decision makers in the world, determining the way we live and our opportunities to thrive from education, transportation, healthcare.. Even if you have private access to all these things via private sector, all these entities depend on government regulation, government policy, or government decision making.. But to go to the more granular level, governments are also the largest purchasers in the world.. And imagine for a second, that the largest purchasers in any jurisdiction, any region, any city, any country in the world, don't have access to the simplicity and the tools that you and I have to live our day to day lives..

They don't.. They use 1980 software.. They use very clunky pieces of technology, all patch up together.. A little bit of this, a little bit of that, a little bit of something that an external consultant built and a little bit of something that we built internally, in house.. And when you put that together, that's a Frankenstein.. Why? Because typically in Silicon Valley, we have put a lot of money into building amazing software stacks and software suites for enterprise.. And what government has received has been a repackaged something of that product that was designed for someone else.. And in Silicon Valley we know the power of a good user experience and user interface.. We know that if we follow the problem, again, of that specific user or client, we will create something totally different that in the beginning, from the beginning, will have in its DNA, that user in the whole experience.. So those products, that suite ecosystem of software products for governments, does not exist in the world..

And that's what GLASS is creating.. An ecosystem of software products starting with procurement products.. Why procurement? Because government is not what government talks about, it's not what the laws that they pass in Congress.. Government, the loudest way that government speaks is where they put the money behind.. Or the projects that they allocate money behind.. And public procurement is how governments speak.. So we create products that allow governments to spend money more strategically to maximize their budgets.. And one of our latest discoveries is that government spends, so governments, I would say is the largest market that Silicon Valley hasn't cracked.. So it's a \$16 trillion, I mean, I'm not even making an effort here.. It's a \$16 trillion global market that depends on public sec, on private sector..

We need to buy goods and services.. However, hear this, every country spends about 20% of their budgets, 30, in public purchases, but they do not purchase from what we say are the backbone of our country's economies, the small and medium businesses.. Four hundred million small and medium businesses that probably need just one more paperwork or two more clicks to be able to sell to the largest purchaser in their jurisdiction.. So we create platforms that connect the largest purchaser in the world to the backbone of our country's economies.. It's like, no brainer, right?..