Ranked among one of the “50 Digital Power Players” by The Hollywood Reporter, it’s clear when talking to Randi Zuckerberg that she is breaking ground and forging ahead in the rapidly growing world of technology. Her passion for life and her work is infectious; in talking with Zuckerberg, you can’t help but want to learn more about this businesswoman and mother of two young boys.

Randi ZUCKERBERG
Forging Her Own Path in a Dot-Com World
GETTING STARTED

"I’m always looking toward amazing women who are doing things in various high places and aspiring to do bigger things," says Zuckerberg. For all her successes so far, she’s the first to say there’s still a lot more to accomplish.

When she was a young girl growing up in Worcester, Zuckerberg’s dreams for the future were much different than the path she’s since followed. "It wasn’t something I could say I wanted to do, because social media and all these innovations I know on every day wasn’t even a dream anyone had at that point," she says.

Instead, she dreamed of a singing career on Broadway. "That was my biggest dream and I thought it to be realistic," she says, "I kept talking it through my tech career because it felt that’s what people around me wanted me to do."

With that dream on hold, Zuckerberg’s path led her to Harvard University, where she studied psychology with a focus on business. "Without even knowing it, I was studying how to create a good company culture," she says. It’s an area that has always been important to her as she advises start-ups and invests in various projects.

"With technology moving at the speed it is, part of being lucky and successful in today’s society is being open to new opportunities." Around this time, the computer science era began to emerge. As a freshman in college, Zuckerberg noticed that the seniors who majored in this area were being hired by big tech companies like Microsoft and Google and given substantial salaries right out of school. "As a woman I felt left behind that I could never catch up," she says. "There were no women in the computer science major, and I felt like it was out of my reach." These feelings of exclusion were what first drove her to encourage women to pursue technology and entrepreneurship.

LIVING IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Fresh out of college, Zuckerberg began her career at the New York advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather, followed by a stint at Forbes, where she worked as a production associate on the financial TV show "Forbes on Fox."

It was only a year later that Zuckerberg took a leap of faith and left New York to join her brother Martin at Facebook as a marketing director out in Silicon Valley. "I saw myself as a New York girl in the creative industry, and all of a sudden the opportunity presented itself to move all the way out to the suburbs of California to work on a tech start-up."

She describes her time there as an "amazing experience," one that affirmed her belief in pursuing new avenues. "With technology moving at the speed it is, part of being lucky and successful in today’s society is being open to new opportunities."

"It really is such different experience when you are working on something you own; you have ownership in, and are working with people who are hungry, ambitious, and passionate about what they’re building," says Zuckerberg. One of her proudest moments from that time was work done during the 2008 election and the 2009 inauguration. Social media changed the entire tone of the political conversation and gave voice to people who were previously unheard, she says. "This opportunity allowed the building entrepreneur to roll up her sleeves and take on much more responsibility than most at a young age. Her advice for anyone who has
the risk tolerance to start a company or work for a start-up venture.

MAKING AN IMPACT

In 2001, Zuckerberg was ready to branch out and start making his own mark in the digital world. And just a few short years later, he's achieved a multitude of successes. She is now the CEO and founder of Zuckenberg Media, a boutique marketing firm and production company that works with high-profile organizations and Fortune 500 companies. She also serves as CEO and CIO of a large-scale lifestyle website, and in a New York Times best-selling author of both a children's book, "No!," and an adult fiction novel, "Dot Compliments: Unplugging Our Wired Lives." That's in addition to hosting her own business radio show, "Dot Compliments with Randi Zuckerberg," on SiriusXM Radio.

This month she stars in a new "TV" show, "Quit Your Day Job," on the Oxygen Network. The show gives women from all walks of life a chance to take their business ideas to the next level.

"We had a lot of entrepreneurs come through who would have never gotten a chance to start a dot-com or an e-commerce firm," says Zuckerberg, who is one of the show's four investors and mentors.

Indeed, being a rescue is something that's important to Zuckerberg. "I've had a lot of wonderful moments along the way, and I've been very thankful for all of them," she says, mentioning her two teenage daughters, 12-year-old Zuckenberg, who is 12, and 14-year-old Zuckenberg, who is 14, in particular. She describes Orange as a "woman's woman," who plays a powerful role in the lives of others.

"She practices what she preaches," says Zuckerberg.

EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION

Another project Zuckerberg is currently pursuing is an animation children's TV show based on her book, "Det," which will be premiering in the fall in collaboration with The Jim Henson Company on Sprout.

Zuckenberg is excited to bring the character she considers "a strong woman" to life. She believes that in order for girls to think about a career in tech, they need to see girls in pop culture who are "techy." It's also a project she can show to her children.

"My son and I went into his pre-kindergarten and read "Det,"" she says. "We really enjoyed it," she says. "The best thing you can do is give them."" In the course of following her dreams, Zuckerberg has learned some life lessons along the way. She says that she's learned the importance of reaching for great dreams,

"If you have a passion for something, don't be afraid to be a three-dimensional person - your career and your family will be there," she says. "Don't be afraid to be someone you see fit into other people's expectations." This past summer, Zuckerberg and her family moved to the city she grew up in, now home to her current projects. Zuckerberg says she's "living the dream." "I feel like I can return to New York with my head held high," she says. "Don't shave who you are to fit into other people's expectations."