

**Interview with Viktoria Kanar**  
**CEO & Co-Founder**  
**Re-Fresh Global**

**About Viktoria Kanar**

As a fashion producer and entrepreneur, Viktoria Kanar brings together key experts and innovators from around the world to develop new and circular initiatives that will have a long-term impact on how we manufacture, purchase, sell, and recycle textiles. Viktoria's international experience has evolved through the creation of GeekChicTLV, an agency that specialized in innovative fashion and tech productions in Israel and abroad. In previous years, Viktoria had the pleasure to work around the world with LVMH, Tel Aviv Municipality, Gindi Investments, Tel Aviv Fashion Week, The Strauss Group, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Israel, and has led communities of entrepreneurs that combined the fields of fashion, innovation, and sustainability.

**About Re-Fresh Global**

Re-Fresh Global is disrupting the textile industry through its ground-breaking technology which transforms textile waste into new raw materials. Founded in 2019 by entrepreneurs Viktoria Kanar and Revital Nadiv Zivan, the company confronts the global problem of textile waste that affects industries, governments, and the social sector. Using innovative techniques, the company has developed one solution and three products which aim to radically change the direction of the existing linear textile industry:

- Smart-Up Textile Waste Upcycling System: A complete “turn-key” urban textile waste management solution.
- Re-SanPulp: A customizable textile pulp made out of recycled synthetic fibers.
- Re-Thanol: A bio-ethanol with applications across a range of industries.
- Re-Nano: A patented bio-plastic that reduces the manufacturing carbon footprint.

**Can you give us a short overview of how you came to start your own business?**

I have worked in the fashion industry for a while before that. As a producer of international fashion events and conferences, the main goal had always been to see how to drive more sales, leading to more production and more consumption. The more I traveled, the more I became aware of the problematic side of the industry that didn't take responsibility for the waste it was creating and leaving behind. I started looking for innovative solutions to this problem, but I did not really find any that were providing a response in scale. On this journey I met my co-founder and together we decided to tackle this challenge on our own.

**Which were the most challenging experiences during the process?**

We realized that most stakeholders in the fashion and textile industry weren't willing to change their ways and that only a set framework like legislation and regulation would make them agree to a different approach in manufacturing and doing business. On the other hand, we understood that it would be hard to implement innovation without support and funding from the eco-system. This is why after doing a very successful pilot in Israel, we still decided to move operations to Germany, since in the EU the EPR regulation is coming out in 2025 that will be the first crucial step towards circular textile economy in Europe.

## **What do you think can be done from a policy perspective to improve the start-up ecosystem in Germany?**

Germany should try becoming less bureaucratic about legal processes when it comes to establishing companies, getting necessary paperwork, enable an investment-friendlier environment and making it more attractive to foreign investors. There are already great start-up activities in place, but there seems to be more talk and less business as opposed to eco-system activities in the U.S.

While quality does require time - especially for startups - time is often of the highest essence and it is crucial that those that want to support startups and see them thrive, create faster and more efficient ways to provide that support.

## **Why are you excited about winning this award?**

Working on such a challenging problem like textile waste and developing a physical hardware solution, doesn't feel rewarding at times. Many organizations that have the power to drive innovation, especially in the field of sustainability, don't look far enough to actually lend their support to make it happen and prefer to go for quick wins instead.

This is why I am so particularly excited to have been chosen for this award. I know that our path is not a quick and easy one, but I truly believe that there is no other option if we want to leave a better, cleaner, and more responsible world to the next generations. I am particularly delighted that it's the AmCham that chose me for this award, because after the German market we truly hope to be able to establish a permanent presence in the U.S., which will surely benefit from our solution.

---

### **Interview with Carmen Rommel COO & Co-Founder BIOVOX**

#### **About Carmen Rommel**

Carmen Rommel, COO of BIOVOX, founded BIOVOX in 2021 with Vinzenz Nienhaus and Julian Lotz to tackle the plastic problem in hospitals. Her background is in mechanical engineering where she focused on sustainable product development and supply chains. Passionate about sustainability and a better world, she also enjoys the outdoors on bike and foot often accompanied by her dog.

#### **About BIOVOX**

BIOVOX pioneers medical grade bioplastics for a sustainable and circular healthcare. Healthcare plastics currently are not future-proof: They cause over 90 metric tons of carbon emissions each year, and many are on regulatory phase-out lists. With a unique positioning for long-term regulatory compliance, a broad material portfolio and deep industry-specific, technical, and sustainability expertise, BIOVOX provides a convenient, safe, and cost-efficient solution for MedTech, pharma and lab manufacturers to transition to a sustainable circular economy.

## **Can you give us a short overview of how you came to start your own business?**

Originally, the idea was a bioresorbable implant material to reduce operations and risks with orthopedic implants. Talking to the doctors we noticed the huge amounts of plastics that are used during the operations. This led to our pivot, as we realized the massive impact, that we could have with sustainable

medical grade plastics.

**Which were the most challenging experiences during the process?**

As a start-up in MedTech, we need staying power: Sales cycles are long due to the high regulation, which is unusual in the startup world. The upside of this is a long-term regulatory lock-in of our customers.

**What do you think could be done to promote female founders?**

In my opinion visibility and role models are key. In order to tip the scales and inspire more female founders, dedicated female only programs are just as important as mixed ones with a balanced gender ratio.