

self expression *Cool Coworking Spaces*



Go Big or Go Home:

Hera Hub Cool Coworking Spaces

Q & A with Felena Hanson

Those who know Felena Hanson would tell you that she is very passionate about education and the success of female entrepreneurs. Hanson found her passion through her leadership roles with various professional women's organizations. Her passion resulted in the birth of a "coworking space" called Hera Hub, a flexible spa-inspired work and meeting space that provides a productive environment for women who primarily work from home. Hera Hub members enjoy access to a professional space to meet with clients, connect, and collaborate with like-minded business owners. ▶▶



My interview with Hanson was very insightful. This is what she had to say about Hera Hub:

Lumbie Mlambo (LM): What made you start Hera Hub?

Felena Hanson (FH): It was the result of a need to create a collaborative space for women. This journey began after I got laid off from my job. After my third layoff at age 30, I decided to start my own consulting business out of my house. That was really to prepare me for a space, not a full-time office. I was craving a sense of community, but also people's ears to bounce my ideas off of and share my expertise. All of the coworking spaces that I found were pretty much technology or male focused. So, I saw a need for a space that was focused on supporting women.

LM: How did you pick the name "Hera Hub"?

FH: I had always been attracted to Athena, the goddess of wisdom. In San Diego, there was an organization ►►





called Athena. I knew I couldn't use that name, so I researched other names with similar "goddess" meanings behind them. I came across Hera, "a Greek goddess of women," known to be watchful and protective of women at every stage of their lives. "Hub" is used a lot in the coworking world because the hub is where people come together and gather from all walks of life. So, Hera Hub seemed to be a suitable name. And that's what I named it.

LM: What sets you apart from other coworking spaces in America?

FH: We are different from other coworking spaces in several ways. Our priority is on women, comfort, and productivity. We also focus on helping our members through every stage to find the resources and support they need by connecting them with other members and finding mentors for them...it's really more about community than it is about space. But, the space is also important. Not all shared offices and coworking spaces are created equal. But, for the most part, the workspace

has to be beautiful and comfortable, and that is quite different from a lot of coworking spaces.

LM: What is Hera LABS? Is it included in the membership package?

FH: Hera LABS is our sister company. It is separate from Hera Hub and was founded by Silvia Mah; she also sits on our advisory board. Hera LABS is optional for someone looking for more support, getting a business off the ground, fleshing out a new business idea, or looking to take a business to the next level with a need for more strategic planning and ongoing accountability.

LM: What's the growth rate of your membership?

FH: That's hard to define, but I can tell you that our attrition rate is about 5%. So, we engage our members for quite a long time. Each location has a membership maximum. We don't want 200 members at a location; we've found that it doesn't work and that it doesn't ▶▶



build a strong community, so the maximum is about 150 members.

LM: How does Hera Hub give back?

FH: We have a giving mission about supporting women and empowering them to learn about entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency. We teach and help women to learn something new so that they can perhaps start their own businesses. We support Girls Inc. A lot of our giving has to do with members going into the communities and teaching, educating, and mentoring. We also donate a ton of space. We host almost every professional woman's organization and nonprofit, as long as doing so is in line with supporting women and girls. We are very open to donating space and time and to helping with fundraising. We support hundreds of freelancers, entrepreneurs, and nonprofits in over 16 industry segments.

LM: You have a magazine (Hera Herald). What is it about, and who is it for? Is it online or print?

FH: It's for female entrepreneurs, and it shares the stories of women who have started and grown their businesses. We do interviews and podcasts. It's also news and commentaries on what's happening in the world of female entrepreneurship. The magazine is available online.

Hanson's next goal is to support over 20,000 women in the launch and growth of their businesses through 200 Hera Hub locations over a short period of time. To learn more about Felena Hanson's Hera Hub, visit www.herahub.com. **E**

