

Women In Automotive Interview Series

Part of Informa Tech Automotive Group's Summer Festival of Automotive.

In partnership with:



Meet Xantha Bruso, Manager, AV Strategy, AAA Northern California, Nevada and Utah

1. Why did you get involved in automotive?

A. Transportation is now the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in California, and in the United States as a whole. Research indicates that automated vehicles, if they are electric and shared, can provide the mobility that people need at lower cost and with fewer greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, I wanted to see what I could do to advance them.



2. What are you most excited about that you are working on right now?

A. I am excited about the reopening of our AV testing facility, GoMentum Station. At AAA Northern California, Nevada & Utah, we have been committed to advancing road safety over 100 years. GoMentum Station is an extension of that commitment with a focus on AV safety, bringing together public and private stakeholders to tackle complex problems that are facing the industry. We had to pause operations in April due to the shelter-in-place directive, but since mid-May we have been operating and are now seeing pre-pandemic levels of AV testing activity.

3. How will your work impact the future of transportation?

A. AAA Northern California, Nevada and Utah was founded with a commitment to helping the motoring public travel safely, and we remain committed to that vision today. With 94% of motor vehicle crashes caused by human error, we believe AV technology has the potential to save millions of lives. However, we need to ensure the technology is implemented in a safe way before it is on public roads. I hope that my work advocating for AV safety in policy forums at the state and local level will help ensure public safety is a key priority when considering how to test AVs and when they are permitted to operate on public roads.

4. What do you think is the greatest challenge facing the autonomous vehicle industry?

A. Right now, there is no formal federal regulatory approval process for an Automated Driving System, or ADS (the "robot" that drives the vehicle) in an existing commercially-available vehicle. And the technology is advancing far faster than the pace of policy development. This is concerning, as it can take years to get a new Federal Motor Vehicle

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Safety Standard (FMVSS) approved by NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration). We need trained staff at regulatory agencies to be able to develop these regulations in a robust and timely way, and we don't have enough of them yet or the political support to prioritize this issue.

5. What is the biggest opportunity in autotech right now?

- A. Drivers are increasingly seeing the safety benefits of Automated Driving Assistance Systems (ADAS). There is a huge opportunity in ADAS as consumers demand more of these features and expect them to be included in newer vehicles.

6. How do you see today's global pandemic reshaping the AV industry?

- A. The pandemic has highlighted the value of contactless delivery and has increased demand for delivery in general. Therefore, there's been more interest in the use of AVs to make delivery safer, cheaper and/or more convenient.

7. Any predictions you want to make for 2020/2021?

- A. Due to the impact of the pandemic on the economy, I predict further industry consolidation.

8. Why does diversity matter in this field? Anything in particular that you are doing to promote diversity in your company and/or our industry?

- A. The availability and affordability of transportation is a key factor in economic mobility, so it's important to advocate for new forms of transportation to be accessible to a broad range of people.

9. What advice do you have for rising women in this space?

- A. Pursue your interests and avail yourself of all the great webinars, information and articles in circulation - there's so much to learn and now lots of free content to learn from.

Thanks, Xantha for taking the time to talk to us about your experience working in Automotive.

For more insightful intelligence, please visit the [Summer Festival of Automotive](#).