



WOMAN IN TECH, Diana Hanson Vadis!



Women need to shift from thinking “I’m not ready to do that” to thinking “I want to do that and I’ll learn by doing it.”

— Sheryl Sandberg, CEO of Facebook

Never judge a book by its cover! This maxim holds true for tech sales titan, Diana Hanson Vadis...a petite, powerhouse blonde with a gregarious personality, who recently retired at the top of her game after 30 years!

Like many female executives in tech and other industries, it is always a nuanced dance of working and entertaining clients while maintaining professional boundaries and trying to close deals. As a mom to a now-teenage son, Diana also faced additional pressures of maintaining a work-family balance, a common challenge for many working moms. However, being raised in a household of brothers, Diana is one tough cookie and refused to let anything stand in her way of reaching her goals.

Defying all obstacles, Diana left an indelible mark on the tech sales and computer consulting services industry and blazed a trail way for future women in this niche industry. The former vice president of strategic accounts at Tech-Pro, Diana is now able to spend more quality time with her family and friends.

I was blessed to finally be able to sit to down to interview Diana, a busy bee, often hosting amazing parties at her Bearpath home, shuttling back and forth to her Florida homes, or embracing her various interior design projects. While Diana is enjoying her retirement, it is bittersweet. Since the tech industry is primarily male-dominated, Diana feels that she left a void and hopes that more women follow in her path.

Why did you go into a career in tech?

Diana was in her 20s and actually wanted to go into advertising. It was the 80s, and there were not many women in tech. As luck...fate would have it, she crossed paths with a top CEO who referred her to the global consulting and tech firm, Capgemini. Diana started out in their Chicago office. The rest is history!

What was your favorite thing about working in tech?

Diana is a problem-solver and loved solving tech problems with people, as she placed the right computer consultants at various Fortune 500 companies to provide tech solutions. She also loved developing and nurturing relationships with clients at these Fortune 500 companies.



What was your least favorite thing about working in tech?

In Diana’s own words, “Your product is people.” Diana explained how working with people trained as engineers was, at times, challenging. She had to manage different personalities, match those personalities with clients’ needs and keep abreast of the various changing immigration laws, which impacted the visa status of many of her consultants, who had international visas.

How has the tech industry changed in 30 years?

Diana chuckled as she explained how back in the 1980s, they were using those big phones, like the infamous Gordon Gekko (Michael Douglas) used in the movie *Wall Street*. “We didn’t have iPhones, no emails, no texting. It was face-to-face interaction with clients...”. These interactions often involved “martini lunches,” commonly depicted in the iconic *Mad Men* TV series about ad executive culture in the 1960s. The tech industry was and still is, to a certain degree, a very macho and misogynistic culture. Often the sole female at these client meetings, Diana held her own and exclaimed, “I was the oldest of six kids in my house...all brothers; I learned how to roll with the punches!”

What changes would you like to see in the tech industry?

Diana said she would love to see more women working in tech. She would also like it to be more personal, more human.

What advice do you have for high school seniors or college freshmen interested in tech?

In Diana’s words, “Technology touches every single industry that exists. Study technology. Study math, science and computer sciences. You will have your pick of careers, starting at six figures, in a dynamic industry!”

What advice do you have for your 18-year-old self?

“Listen to that voice in your head. Don’t doubt yourself. You should start your own company when you are in your 30s!”

“Bearpath Buzz©” is a monthly blog created by resident Michelle Hellbusch to get a pulse on the various things that residents are dealing with or talking about. She and her husband Jon have been Bearpath residents since Christmas of 2013, along with their elementary school children and dearly departed 17-year-old Shih Tzus. Michelle has been a sports and entertainment lawyer for over 15 years