

Bonk said college essay



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On top of that, she embraced transformational change and had proven her ability to make it happen in multiple realms. The Board would welcome her in the WIN leadership role. But Squiggle first needed to persuade her that taking the role would be as good for her own career as it would be for the future of the firm. Do To Bonk, adding WIN to her current portfolio seemed out of the question.

She was already fully committed to two new leadership roles-? Lead Client Service Partner on one of Dolomite's largest west coast clients and Consulting High Technology Sector Leader.

Further, the Initiative had been ongoing for eleven years and Bonk felt the firm could " just call it a win and move on. " It wasn't clear what a new leader could add, but she knew Squiggle would try to persuade her to take on the WIN leadership role. Bonk contemplated how she should prepare for their upcoming conversation.

1 As used in this case, " Dolomite' refers to Dolomite & Touché USA ALP and its subsidiaries. Professors Kathleen L. McGinnis, Deborah M. Kola, Simmons School of Management, and Research Associate Calling B. Hammer prepared this case.

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Cathy Bonk: WINning at Dolomite & Touché (A) 907-026 Bongo's Early Years
Cathy Bongo's background was noticeably different from that of many of her fellow partners at Dolomite. Though she had the seemingly requisite MBA (Harvard Business School, class of 1989), her earlier years had been an unlikely prelude to her current career.

Born third of five girls in a New Jersey working class family, Bonk had grown up on and off welfare. In high school, she was " a good student, not great," but her grades and school participation Were good enough to earn her a scholarship from her town that she used to attend Katherine Gibbs' Secretarial School. You The one year advanced course, in addition to making Bonk " very good at punctuation," allowed her to land an Executive Secretary position in New York City. She enjoyed the job, the suits and the

commute, but after three months she questioned what the future might bring, “ Maybe I shot a bit too low,” she Hough.

Shortly thereafter, she was promoted out of the administrative ranks into the company’s evolving information technology group. As she trained in the new position, she started taking college classes at Ramps College on the weekends. She attended three semesters a year for five years, graduating with a dual degree in Operations Management and Management Information Systems. Armed with her degree and five years of experience in IT, Bonk moved to a software company in Motivate, New Jersey.

At the company, illness, she took on project and product management roles.

Bonk enjoyed the work, but name to realize that she was ready to pursue something on her own. She left Ins and started her own systems integration consulting practice. Her former employer fed her much of her new consulting work. Twenty-six years old, making \$600-700 per day, Bonk reached a decision point.

She could find investors and grow her company, or she could move on to whatever was next. Believing she may have robbed herself by not going to college “ like normal people do”, she set her sights on earning her MBA.

Before she had acted on her aspirations, Shearers Lehman, one of her clients, invited her to join their business systems group. They convinced her that having vice president at Lehman on her resume was a sure ticket to a top b- school. At Christmas dinner two years later, Bonk announced to her family, “ I’m going to apply to Harvard.

" Her mother stopped stirring the turkey gravy and looked her in the eyes: " Are you crazy? People like us don't go to Harvard. You're setting yourself up for a fall. " But Bonk was undeterred.

Though Lehman had offered to put her through Columbian's Executive MBA program, she decided she " needed a brand and wanted a full-time experience.

" She would apply to one. If she didn't get in, she would go to Columbian's Executive MBA program. Either way, Lehman assured her she could return to her job at Lehman after she graduated. So Bonk entered Harvard Business School in September, 1987. " L was intimidated beyond belief. You introduce yourself to everyone in the section—one guy is a rocket scientist, really, another is out of West Point, another, Annapolis.

To be honest with you I was embarrassed. I didn't even mention Katherine Gibbs. I didn't say anything in class for literally..

. It must have been five or six weeks. Then one day this guy said something and it was the stupidest thing I had ever heard. Member thinking to myself ' well if that is all it takes, can do that. " And she did.

By the end of the first term, she was in the top 15% in the more technical classes and comfortably keeping up with her butterfingers classmates in the more disciplinary courses like managerial economics. Ins, which later evolved into Peoples, was founded in 1989 as one of the early pioneers in managing and transforming data into competitive advantage. (<http://www.Accelerometers.Com>) 2 Because she was planning on returning to Lehman

after graduation, Bonk decided to interview for summer internships with only a few, top tier impasse “ as a character-building experience. ” One of her interviews was with Touché Ross’ consulting group.

They offered her a summer job in Los Angeles and she accepted-? the offer to work in Marina del Rye and live in a free apartment there seemed too good to pass up.

Dolomite and Touché YOU Bonk impressed the partners in Los Angeles. Touché Ross offered her a job as Senior Consultant when she graduated from HUBS. She could have her choice of offices in Los Angeles, New York, or San Francisco.

IT was an emerging area for the firm, and they knew it would be valuable to have an MBA with IT experience on their staff. She informed Lehman that she would not be returning to the firm and accepted the job with Touché Ross in San Francisco. Her plan was to “ stay for a couple years and then get a real job. In the early sass’s, the institutionalizing of income tax in the united States launched many accounting firms. Demand for accountants grew with calls for independent auditing and regulation of public corporations.

After multiple mergers and acquisitions, Dolomite, Haskins & Sells and Touché Ross emerged among the national leaders. The summer that Bonk accepted the job with Touché Ross in San Francisco, Touché Ross and Dolomite, Haskins and Sells announced plans to merge the firms. In December, 1989, Dolomite Haskins & Sells and Touché Ross & Co. Finalized the merger, forming Dolomite & Touché USA ALP.

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Dolomite and Touché went on to become one of the nations “ big four’ accounting and professional service firms with offices in 90 cities and nearly 35, 000 employees. When Bonk began working for Touché Ross in San Francisco in 1 989, the office housed approximately 40 consultants and five partners. “ Everyone knew everyone,” reported Phil Strauss, then Managing Director of the San Francisco office. After the merger with Dolomite, the office doubled in size, but Cathy was always recognized as a clear star and future leader,” Strauss continued. “ She is a great upward manager-? she understands what people are looking for and gives it to them.

As a result, “ she had opportunities to work on top projects-? those with the right partners and the right clients where she could have impact. ” For three years, 1989-1992, Bonk moved across multiple small projects and industries. Each assignment, lasting three to nine months, proved how her unique combination of business and IT expertise could add value to Dolomite Consulting clients. Bonk considered herself “ a utility player.

Loud do lots of things, so I was on lots of lists. I transitioned off one job and onto another when I got the call from the next project partner.

Each assignment was new, interesting, and engaging, but wasn’t proactively managing my career. ” In 1992, Bonk was assigned her first large scale management job running one of Dolomite’s first big projects with a major IT component.

Her team included 15-20 consultants from D&T and more than equal that number of staff from the client, as well as an extended team of advisors. The job touched all aspects of the client’s business. A competitor firm had been

running the reject for a year when the company asked Dolomite to take over. The company's staff was unhappy with the switch and made their displeasure obvious to the Dolomite team.

Bongo's approach was to build relationships: " Don't trash the previous work; meet the people where they are; and pick up on some of the work already done. " When some of the clients staff withheld information in an attempt to undermine Dolomite, Bonk triangulated from what was available and went back to them with her own estimates.

Gradually, she and the Dolomite team built up their credibility with the clients staff. 3 Economic Studies until March 2014. Copying or posting is an infringement of " We were fortunate how well it worked," she explained. The project sponsor and champion started sending kudos, and the momentum turned in our favor.

The eighteen months during which Bonk managed the new account were a turning point both personally and professionally. In the fall of 1 993, she was promoted to Senior Manager and married George Debunker, an international marketing executive for a semi conductor equipment manufacturer.

She also managed two other successful IT strategy and implementation projects, one in the mining sector and the other in the financial sector. Bonk Makes Partner In July, 1 994, Bonk, met with Greg Seal, Managing Director of the San Francisco (as of 1 993) office to discuss her maternity leave. She was eight months pregnant.

Bonk recalled the conversation. " In 1994, no one in the office was having babies. There was no firm policy or even guidelines on maternity leave.

Greg asked how much time I needed. I told him three months sounded about right. His response was ' I think you need six. ' He set up six months of ' radio silence,' no contact at all, at full pay.

" Seal knew this was a good bet. " When I came to the San Francisco office, I asked ' Who are the players, the top ten difference-makers? ' Cathy was at the top of the list. She pushed back on every suggestion anyone ever made-? she didn't take anything on blind faith.

I was a strong advocate of her taking time off for her child. " In January, 1995, six months after the birth of her son, Brendan, Bonk returned to work and was assigned to take over an ongoing project at Blue Shield of California.

Deborah Bowels, the Director of Large Group Sales at Blue Shield and the leader of the reengineering effort underway, recalled meeting Bonk for the first time. " We met for breakfast. Cathy was still on maternity leave. It was an instant connection.

I walked away thinking ' She has this amazing brain. ' I'm always fired up with ideas when I leave her. Blue Shield was undergoing a complete transformation, restructuring all processes and client interfaces in a \$4 billion company. The front-end diagnostics were complete, and the job was at an inflection point. At any given time, there were 20 - 30 full time Dolomite people in the implementation phase, as well as multiple in-house system provider staff and up to one hundred Blue Shield people working

together in 20 teams. Bowels marveled at the efficiency and effectiveness of the project: The change initiative included components in HRS, communications, facilities, business processes and market assessment.

In 18 months, we cut \$54 million out of the operating budget and closed ten of fourteen service centers. The twenty teams were a web. We were all staying in hotels together and the teams became our lives. We spent a lot of time experimenting with ways to run check-in for twenty teams. We ended up with rules for meetings and a 3- minute Stop watch for key issues.

Cathy and I could step in for One another-? we could speak shorthand.

Bowels recalled a memorable example of her relationship with Bonk. In the middle of implementation, one of my best friends died and disappeared from work.

Cathy just took over-? no one missed a beat. " At the end of the eighteen month engagement, Bonk and Bowels wrote and sang a closing song to the tune of the " Beverly Hillbilly's. " Their performance was the hit of the final party.

Blue Shield had put a related data warehousing effort up for bid. The in-house information system provider of twenty years and Dolomite were the contenders. ' Oho in-house provider] team was looking forward to having the reengineering effort behind them so they could get back to business as usual," related Bonk. Importantly, they held the data.

Bonk asked the team leader to work with her on a joint bid, but he was uninterested.

“ Why wouldn’t he be-? it was theirs to lose,” Bonk recalled. Undeterred, Bonk compiled a solo bid, knowing that if Dolomite were to win the project, they would have to engage the in-house providers services to get the job done. “ Our proposal wasn’t an IT proposal. It was about a business proposition-? here’s how you’ll change your business with data. The in-house provider said ‘ here’s how we’ll store your data. ‘ We won at several times their price,” Bonk said.

L went back to the team leader and asked once again to partner with Dolomite. Bonk recalled the tense conversation: “ What the hell are you doing here,’ Was the tenor of his response. ‘ You Won-? why rub our nose in it? ‘ I told him that we thought teaming was the right answer all along-? and that hadn’t changed just because we won the bid. ” Bongo’s plea convinced the leader, but not his team. Together with Bonk, he put together an intimate meeting of the two teams.

They developed a working agreement of how the members of both teams agreed to behave with each other during the project. The projects were a huge success most of all for Blue Shield.

It was also beneficial to Bonk personally. Her husband’s marketing position kept him on the road, often even on weekends, and the Blue Shield job involved little travel for Bonk.

She “ made partner on this engagement. ” Greg Seal, Managing Director of the San Francisco office at the time, was a primary advocate in the arduous partnership application process. He had urged Bonk to apply the year before, but she had resisted. She knew that she would be the first woman consulting

partner in the San Francisco office and she was unsure she could Andre the demands of partnership with a new child.

So waited a year to find out," she said. Her successful experience at Blue Shield convinced her that it was possible to manage her home and her work lives simultaneously. The engagement also provided more than sufficient evidence of her sales and leadership skills to the partner admissions committee. Six years after starting with the firm, in 1 996, Bonk was admitted into the Partnership at the top of the class. Global e-Business Leader NO In December, 1 998, Bonk left for her second maternity leave.

Her daughter, Elli, was born in January, 1999. The " radio silence" lasted for a shorter period this time.