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Profiles in Diversity Journal®

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Here are some simple principles that have guided me. **Keep yourself open to new experiences and adapt to changing dynamics.** After working on patents for five years, I took the opportunity to get involved in litigation, although I had little experience and was the only woman litigator in our firm at the time. Taking on that challenge opened up a new and rewarding dimension of the practice of law. This same openness has helped me embrace the challenge of expanding our firm into Asia. Don't be afraid to try your hand at something new, to get out of your comfort zone. Change can be transformative; it can expand our horizons and enrich our lives in immeasurable ways.

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Second, **understand and maximize your strengths**, while targeting your interests. Engage in candid self-assessment periodically to ensure that your strengths are being properly utilized. If you are able to align your interests and strengths and put them to work for you, you can strive toward your maximum potential. My abilities and varied interests have together facilitated a unique work/personal mix that is deeply fulfilling. On the professional side, forging into Asia, expanding my client base, and taking on new and expanding legal roles have proven stimulating, as has my involvement in our firm's women's initiative. On the personal side, my interest in social activism has been realized through my role as the United Nations representative for the Isha Foundation, a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in India that is at the forefront of education, environment, and health initiatives. I also am involved with the leadership committee of the United States India Political Action Committee.

Third, the ability to **look to mentors and learn from constructive criticism** is essential for one's development. Mentors serve as professional guides and role models to help us achieve our aspirations. Likewise, constructive criticism helps us progress.

Fourth, **be assertive when the situation demands**. As director of human resources and a member of the management committee, I am sometimes faced with complex and uncomfortable tasks. When a difficult situation arises, it is essential for someone to step up and take the necessary action, however difficult that may be. The person who takes care of these situations provides tremendous value to any organization and satisfies a much-needed role.

Finally, with everything that you do, **immerse yourself totally**. As Abraham Lincoln once said, "In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years."



TITLE: Shareholder, Member of Management Committee, Director of Human Resources

EDUCATION: Bachelor's in chemistry and economics, cum laude, Kalamazoo College; JD, Wayne State University

FIRST JOB: Cashier at a Kay Bee Toy store

WHAT I'M READING: *Midnights with the Mystic*, by Cheryl Simone and Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev

MY PHILOSOPHY: Embrace every challenge as an opportunity for personal growth. Life is filled with unexpected and challenging obstacles. How we handle these obstacles helps shape us as individuals and reveals meaningful lessons. If we are able to handle these obstacles with some ease, we can revel in the beauty of life and allow it to transform us along the way.

FAMILY: Husband and daughter

INTERESTS: Hiking, yoga, swimming, reading, travel abroad

FAVORITE CHARITY: Isha Foundation

COMPANY: Brooks Kushman PC

HEADQUARTERS: Southfield, Michigan

WEB SITE: www.brookskushman.com

BUSINESS: Intellectual property and commercial law firm

EMPLOYEES: 140