



### **IT Wasn't My Thing, Until It Was**

I always say that I fell into IT by accident, especially since I never considered it as a career despite my lifelong interest in computers and technology.

After relocating back to New York City from Miami in 2008, I needed to find a job. I landed a role via a temp agency working in the corporate office of Weight Watchers (now WW). I started in supply chain doing customer service. My manager oversaw both supply chain and IT, yet luckily decided to focus more on the IT side. This created a chance for me to transition from Long Island to their New York City office. It was always a dream of mine to work in the city, so I was fully on board.

That was the opportunity I needed to take my skills to the next level. After showing my value and worth, I was one of three contractors converted to full time. And I was fortunate to be in an environment that fostered growth and learning, in more ways than one.

One day our team was receiving training on how to support a new app. Those who were more seasoned in tech were slated to get the training first. I thought this was odd given the whole team needed to take the training, so I brought this fact up to my manager. She listened to my point of view, agreed, and then placed me in one of the first training classes. That taught me how to *not* be afraid to speak up for myself and what I want. Had it not been for that moment, I would not have had so many other career opportunities I've been fortunate to receive. Too many times we miss out because we're generally afraid to ask or afraid that someone will tell you no.

## **Empowered work-life balance**

When it comes to the concept of work-life balance, my approach is always family first. While I love my job, it is important that I am always available for my family, especially since we are in different parts of the country. I appreciate the flexibility VMware allows colleagues regarding the ability to work from home as needed, including when unforeseen circumstances like the pandemic impact our lives.

I have been blessed to be part of a business unit that has great leaders from the top down, and the bottom up. They are extremely supportive both personally and professionally, foster our wants and needs for growth, and ensure that we have the proper work-life balance—so that we can continue being both great to ourselves and great for the company. Not everyone can say that, and I am grateful that I can.

## **Set your goals and follow through**

Dovetailing with my work-life balance beliefs are the goals I have set for myself, both personally and in my career.

My goal in life is to continue to be a great example of what a phenomenal woman, good human, great friend, and successful person looks like for my daughter. I also pour all the skills and knowledge I have developed back into underserved communities so that people will see an example of someone who has a similar background and still made it. My goal with this initiative is to reach as many people as possible. After all, you cannot be what you cannot see, and I want them to know that you don't always have to take the traditional route to become successful. However, you must have grit and remain diligent.

Saying you have goals and then going about achieving them are two separate things. For me, I employ journaling—an important part of my life—to stay on course when pursuing my goals. I think of what I want to do, write it down, pray about it, and then actively take the steps toward accomplishing it. Without writing it down, it's easier for me to lose focus because I can't see it. Writing it down has led me to purchase the home I wanted (except for lots of windows, I got everything I sought out), receive the promotion I wanted, buy the new car I wanted, have the energy to consistently work on my mental and emotional health, and find happiness in love.

## What's the future look like for IT?

IT is here to stay and growing by the day. XaaS (platform as a service, infrastructure as a service, etc.) and security are becoming the wave of the extended future. VMware is an integral part of that. I always say, "we're your favorite company's favorite company," and I firmly believe we are setting the model for what an IT company really looks like in the modern era.

I'm here to stay, too! VMware has provided me with so many opportunities for professional growth, leadership training, conference attendance, and connections with highly talented professionals (most of whom have become friends outside of work). As long as there's a place for me, I'm here for the long run. I've seen so many improvements across the board during my five-plus years and look forward to seeing (and being a part of) what's to come.

## A few more things

Wrapping up, I have a lot of outside interests in addition to what I've already mentioned. I love reading, music (all genres), traveling, cooking (although I hate the prep work, lol), roller skating, bowling, plus crafting handmade soaps and candles.

That's me in a nutshell. Overall, I strongly encourage you (and everyone I meet) to advocate for self, continue to network, continue to grow, and remove fear. Remember, you cannot be good to anyone else if you are not good to self, so *always* take care of yourself first.

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