WOMEN IN TECH
Q&A

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What is your specific job?
I am a Senior Solution Architect working in the Capability Center, primarily focused on designing Wireless Mobility Solutions and Unified Collaboration Solutions.

What does a 'day in the life' look like in your role?
I have many different "days" all depending on what I am working on. A good way to explain it would be to walk through a typical engagement and the tasks that come from it. The engagement with a prospective customer starts with an introductory meeting where I listen to them describe their future initiatives and ask questions to understand their needs and requirements. From that meeting, I put together a proposal that detailing a solution that would meet their needs, including documentation on the components, the bill of materials required, and a sample of the professional services that would be needed. When the customer agrees to move forward, I work with them to finalize the quote and to further delve into the level of effort required to deploy in order to write a Statement of Work. Once the deployment starts, I stay engaged to ensure what is delivered is what was discussed between the customer and myself by providing technical project oversight. In order to keep my technical knowledge up to date, I also attend technical training webinars and other educational opportunities. So, as you can see, a day in my life varies and that is what I love about my job.

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What top skills do you believe are needed to thrive in a career in technology?

I believe motivation, discipline, and perseverance are necessary skills to succeed in technology. Motivation to want to learn what is necessary for the aspect of technology you are interested in. Discipline to make the time to stay up to date and to get the work or studies completed in a timely manner. Perseverance to keep going, to keep striving to better yourself, despite setbacks or obstacles that may happen along the way.

What is one trait you need to be a great leader?

Caring is one of the biggest traits you need to be a good leader. Leadership is not about being in charge, leadership is about taking care of the people in your charge. To gain trust and loyalty people have to know you care.

Research suggests women can face different challenges in the workplace. What are some of the challenges you have faced and what advice would you offer to help someone overcome such challenges?

The biggest challenge I have faced being a woman in technology is people having a preconceived idea that I won't know as much about a technology as a male counterpart would. It happens often, and you recognize the signs: they don't pay as much attention to what you are saying, and they don't believe what you are saying. However, if a male counterpart backs it up, then they are satisfied.

My advice is to be confident in your capabilities and not let those type of people affect you or make you doubt yourself. In many instances, I have seen the meeting start that way but then after hearing me talk, and realizing I do in fact have the expertise, the attitudes shift and the conversations move forward productively.

What role does education play in promoting technology as a great career for women to pursue?

Education plays a key role in preparing women for a career in technology. The skills you learn through education, such as discipline, study habits, exam preparation, and time management are all essential skills. People in technology careers use these skills every day.

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