

THE V O X M A G I N E

LUKASZ CYRAN

USE THE FORCE, LUKASZ

**WOMEN IN
TECHNOLOGY**

THE POWER TO EMPOWER

NEW! VOX POPS

WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?

**WATTSON'S
WANDERING**

WHERE, OH WHERE HAS
THAT LITTLE BULB GONE?

**MEN IN BLACK
(AND TAN)**

DOUG'S FASHION TIPS

ISSUE 02/ VOL. 02



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intro/

EVERY QUARTER, WE REVISIT OUR GOALS, AND EVERY GOAL WE REACH IS A VICTORY. OUR BIG HAIRY AUDACIOUS GOAL (BHAG) OF 200,000 CUSTOMERS AND BEYOND HAS BEEN REFINED INTO A SERIES OF SMALLER GOALS. WE KNOW WE WILL REACH 200,000 CUSTOMERS IF WE CREATE AN UNPARALLELED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE.

In 2014, the New York Public Service Commission initiated a “Reforming Energy Vision” proceeding to review and propose improvements to the retail energy market in their state. But in February, the NYPSC issued an order that dramatically impacts the market by limiting Energy Service Companies’ (ESCOs) abilities to serve residential and small non-residential customers. We have been assured that the questions of reform will be readdressed at later dates.

We think of the New York situation as an opportunity for an improved, more competitive energy market. It is our goal to push markets like New York to fully restructure like Texas and Georgia. Such markets no longer have the utility selling natural gas or electricity. They only provide the distribution system (pipes and wires). This allows ESCOs to forge real relationships with customers, giving them the unparalleled customer experience they deserve. That makes it easier to reach our BHAG.

Meanwhile, our Texas brands are growing consistently. That’s especially good news for Veteran Energy. It’s a brand with a very strong mission. That’s why we’ve set a goal to reach 8,000 Veteran Energy customers in the next quarter.

We’re around 125,000 in total customers count. That’s just 75,000 shy of our main objective. We’re within striking distance because we’re all working hard towards the same goal, an unparalleled customer experience.

Coordinated effort leads to execution. Stay passionate, stay focused, and we’ll proudly get there together.

Sincerely,

Rich Blaser, Darin Cook and Kevin Barber



THE VINE

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wandering wattson/

TO THE ELECTROPHILES THROUGHOUT THIS MAGNIFICENT ORGANIZATION, WELCOME.

I, WATTSON, THE OFFICIAL ELECTRICITY MASCOT OF INFINITE ENERGY, AM ABOUT TO
EMBARK ON A TRULY INSTRUCTIVE AND PERHAPS EVEN AMUSING EXPERIENCE.



AT ANY RATE, I ISSUE THIS REQUEST TO ALL INFINITE ENERGY EMPLOYEES: IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO TRAVEL SOMEWHERE ON THIS BEAUTIFUL PLANET, TAKE ME WITH YOU. ”



You see, as a light bulb, most of my time is spent in the rather solitary confines of an electrical fixture. It can be a lonely existence, screwed into a socket. Yes, every once in a while I am illuminated, but who knows for how long? So a most enterprising member of our company, one Whitney Laveaux, Digital Marketing Coordinator, approached me with a rather startling proposal.

Ms. Laveaux, known affectionately by her peers as Whitbit or Whitneybobby, suggested it may be time for me to expand my horizons, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no bulb has gone before. (I'm a bit of a Trekkie.)

It was her idea to send me traveling here and there, throughout the country and perhaps even the world, in what used to be termed a publicity stunt, but has since evolved into what is commonly known today as social media marketing. At one time in society, you had to rely on traditional media to make your unusual acts known to the general public. This may have involved walking on the wings of an aeroplane, or scaling Mount Everest, or displaying the world's largest collection of potato chips carved into the shapes of nations with one's teeth.

But today, the marvel known as the internet has truly democratized the publicizing of silly things. Cat videos, for example. I have no animus toward the feline species, but I do wonder why they spend so much time on windowsills, knocking off flower vases.

At any rate, I issue this request to all Infinite Energy employees: If you are planning to travel somewhere on this beautiful planet, take me with you. Ms. Laveaux has thoughtfully flattened me out and laminated me, rendering me virtually waterproof and stain-proof. I can fit comfortably into any suitcase, or even the seat pocket in front of you on an airline flight.

There appears to be a rumor circulating that this concept was inspired by someone or something known as Flat Stanley. I do not know a Flat Stanley, nor do I have knowledge of how Stanley came to the two-dimensional realm, but should I ever meet this Flat Stanley, I sincerely hope he will introduce me to Wide Livingstone.

For those of you who intend to accompany me on your journeys, I fancy myself quite the sightseer. My large cranium is bursting with memories of picturesque vistas in such exotic locales as Savannah, Georgia; Napa Valley, California; Washington, D.C.; and it's up to you, New York, New York! Ahhh, show tunes.

So my advice to you is to pose me in stunning settings. A pyramid. A leaning tower. That part of Frisco Bay Kim Novak dove into in *Vertigo*. Before long, our virtual scrapbook will be teeming with indelible images. And think what this will do for our Instagram page!

Do take me along on your bon voyages. Until next we meet, stay bright. V



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be prepared/ With Jason Lewis

There was an email sent to the company not long ago, and I wanted to call your attention to it because it contains an important piece of information about activity and circulatory wellness. The message said that sitting too much is the “new smoking.”

The latest research says, shockingly, that even 60 minutes of exercise a day is less effective than just five minutes of movement every hour. This was discovered even in people in their twenties. Too much sitting can worsen cardiovascular health, which may contribute to heart disease. It can also contribute to developing type 2 diabetes or cancer.

If it were up to me, I’d suggest people move more frequently. Stand up or change positions every 10 or 20 minutes to get your circulation going. (Try setting an alarm on your phone to remind you.)

I mention all this because here at Infinite we have the perfect way to combat these alarming statistics. It’s the Infinite Energy Walking Towards Wellness

program. It’s a 12-week program in which you walk toward specific goals and earn rewards. You wear a pedometer to measure the number of steps you take, on your way to a goal of 70,000 steps or 35 miles per week. So get your blood moving and get your rewards by walking with us.

YOUR QUESTIONS

I’ve been asked about the best strategy to win our Biggest Loser competition. It can be summed up in one word: consistency. It’s a test of endurance, in a way. Nutrition is a key factor in weight loss. Becoming more physically active helps a lot, but nutrition will likely pay out better results when considering the length of this competition. The best way to describe nutrition can be summed up with “it’s simple, but not easy.” V

Jason Lewis welcomes your questions on health and wellness. Contact him at JDLewis@InfiniteEnergy.com.

A Mature Solution.

All IEI employees in Marietta and Houston should enjoy the same free access to fitness facilities. So we've partnered with LA Fitness to give you this great deal:

Sign up with LA Fitness at the reduced monthly rate of \$29.99 a month with \$25 application fee. IEI will reimburse you \$30 a month if you visit LA Fitness 10 times during your fee period.

For full details, email Jason Lewis at JDLewis@InfiniteEnergy.com.

LA FITNESS.

VOX pops/

Tell Us Everything, and Don't
You Leave out Anything

WHAT'S THE STRANGEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE IN FRONT OF A CAMERA?

**LUKASZ KEPT MAKING ME SAY "DEAD KITTIES . . . DEAD KITTIES"
OVER AND OVER. - HILLARY TURLINGTON**

I DON'T THINK THAT IT CAN BE PUBLISHED IN THE VINE. - PATRICK WILBER

**SILENCE OF THE LAMBS BUFFALO BILL DANCE.
ENOUGH SAID. - PAOLO ESTRADA**

**WRESTLED WITH TWO GUYS STRUGGLING TO PUT
HANDCUFFS ON ME FOR 20 MINUTES. - LISA KOLAK**

KISSED A FISH . . . A BASS TO BE EXACT. - KELLY HAVEN

WHEN I WAS IN MY BLACK BELT PROGRAM AS A TEENAGER, MY MASTER ASKED ME TO "MODEL" FOR A PHOTO SHOOT DEMONSTRATING KATAS FOR DIFFERENT BELTS. DONE FULL SPEED, THIS IS NOT WEIRD AT ALL. I, HOWEVER, HAD TO DO THEM FRAME BY FRAME FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHER, FREEZING IN PLACE MID-MOVEMENT WHILE SHE GOT THE SHOT PERFECT. I FELL SEVERAL TIMES, EVEN ONCE ON MY FACE. WHEN PEOPLE ASKED ME WHERE I GOT THE BLACK EYE FROM, I KEPT IT SIMPLE BY SAYING, "FROM A BLACK BELT." - BEAU WILSON

Next issue's question: *How have you embarrassed yourself in a theme park?*
Send your responses to MTSchildberg@InfiniteEnergy.com



A man in a light-colored suit jacket and white shirt is shown from the side, looking towards the right. He is positioned in front of a large, vibrant background depicting a space scene. The background features a dark red and black gradient with numerous small white stars. In the upper left, two TIE fighter ships are flying towards the viewer. A massive, dark, cylindrical structure, resembling a planet or a massive starship, dominates the center-right. The overall aesthetic is a blend of professional and science fiction elements.

LUKASZ
DIRECTOR OF GAS TRADING
CYRAN

employee spotlight/

CAN A KID FROM A COMMUNIST BLOC COUNTRY FIND HAPPINESS IN CAPITALIST AMERICA AS A NATURAL GAS TRADER? IS WARSAW THE IDEAL PLACE TO DISCOVER CINEMA? AND IF VIDEO KILLED THE RADIO STAR, HOW COME THERE HAVEN'T BEEN ANY ARRESTS? THESE AND MANY OTHER QUESTIONS WILL BE ANSWERED IN TODAY'S EPISODE OF "ŁUKASZ CYRAN, BOY COMMODITIES TRADER!" THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW HAS BEEN EDITED.

You agreed to this interview on the condition that there would be no nudity. Were you referring to yourself or to me?

Why not both?

That's diplomatic.

I was referring to myself. My body isn't ready yet.

That's okay. Mine never was and never will be. How long have you been in your role?

Almost six months now, which is crazy. By the time you publish, it'll definitely be six months. If I'm still around. According to Kronos, [I've been with Infinite] 11 years and 11 months.

Are you able to explain in 30 seconds – give the elevator pitch for what exactly the Trade Room Director does? Or is it so complicated, you just say you have to be there?

Yeah, that's a tough one. I think I can give it a shot. So the Trade Room is responsible for buying and selling all the gas for the company, and that falls into two parts. One, we make sure that all our customers get their gas. And then two, using all the stuff that our customers bring with them when they come to Infinite Energy. We try to optimize that stuff. That stuff is called assets. It could be storage, it could be pipeline capacity. So we have two functions: Meet our obligations to them, and make more money.

I would have to assume, therefore, because there is a lot of commodities trading, there is a lot of futures purchasing being made.

There is some, but it's only associated with fixed prices. We don't speculate. To put it another way, the Trade Room mitigates risk. When we take on risk, it is very small, with small risk/high reward. Our job is to avoid a situation where something can go bad for the company.

It's not a financial instrument. It's real molecules in pipelines. A lot of people think of it as a stock-market-type thing where we're just buying and selling Apple shares, but instead of "Apple shares," insert "natural gas futures." It's actually buying real molecules in real-life locations around the country. You own a real piece of the pipeline. It's like a timeshare.

There are no Gordon Geckos in the Trade Room.

That's right.

Because it's so numbers driven and so opportunity driven, what kind of college majors do you look for in people who are qualified to trade?

I think the company's culture has been you don't need a degree of any kind. We've had a mix of educations. We're really just looking for bright minds. We look for people who can create opportunities, create new processes or systems.

Think of the pipeline network as a road system. What happens is traffic jams develop. A lot of gas tries to flow through that street. If you can find a way down a back road, another pipeline that maybe no one else knows about and get around the traffic jam to your destination, we make money. We're just looking for the best person that has the right attitude and shows us that spark.

You have a very Slavic spelling of your first name.

I'm Polish.

What city were you born in?

Warsaw.

Did you emigrate to the United States at a young age?

We left Poland when I was 6. We went to England, because at the time Poland didn't have a Canadian embassy. It was the Iron Curtain time period. We spent a year in England and then emigrated to Canada, where my parents lived for about five years. When the Canadian economy started to fail, we moved to Sarasota, Florida.

I've been in the United States since my freshman year of high school. I went to college in Sarasota, I went to the University of Florida, and I got my citizenship along the way. I never really left Gainesville, except I worked in New Jersey for about two years for Infinite.

I once played a board game from Poland in which the object was to obtain hard-to-get material goods, because there was a lot of waiting in line.

(Laughs)

Is that true?

That was a good representation of the Iron Curtain days, as it were – why my parents left.

In other words, most of the way you won the game was you knew someone who knew someone who could get you your cigarettes.

First of all, these are skills applicable to the Trade Room. (Laughs) Second of all, I actually remember just barely – I must have been 4 or 5 – waiting in line with my grandmother. Because the government would be giving out what were basically rations, and then they'd go out and purchase things. One of the criticisms of communism, definitely.

I want to move on to what is clearly a great passion of yours, because of the equipment you have, which is video. What attracted you to it?

I don't even know. Why do people start hobbies? Maybe dreams of grandeur? I couldn't tell you. It was fun. It's just fun. It's a lot of work too, but it's one of those things that doesn't feel like work.

It's not as glamorous as many people think, although I made the holiday video, and I helped Darin with a video for KnowNote [music education software], and I helped a friend make a music video that unfortunately came out not as well as I originally hoped. It was a lot of fun. Still is.

I'm going to assume it's because you're fascinated by moving images.

I am. I love movies. I've taken a couple of classes on critique and analysis. They make you watch [Jean-Luc] Godard, and I have to tell you, if you're not into experimental film, stay away. But it's fascinating. It's really cool, some of the things he does with sound and the way he cuts. They jerk you, but at the same time he is saying something with it.

I don't actually like Michael Bay, but I'm more of a Michael Bay filmmaker. Everybody criticizes him, and I'm like, cool! I like science fiction, I like Christopher Nolan. Kubrick. Kubrick is an amazing madman.

I've never understood Kubrick's obsession with symmetry.

It's like Doug. I just compared Doug to one of the most brilliant filmmakers of all time. It's a compliment.

The equipment you use: You have a green screen. You have a shotgun mike. You have a very good camera.

I have some Canons, yeah.

What's the editing software you use?

I use Adobe Premiere Pro and After Effects.

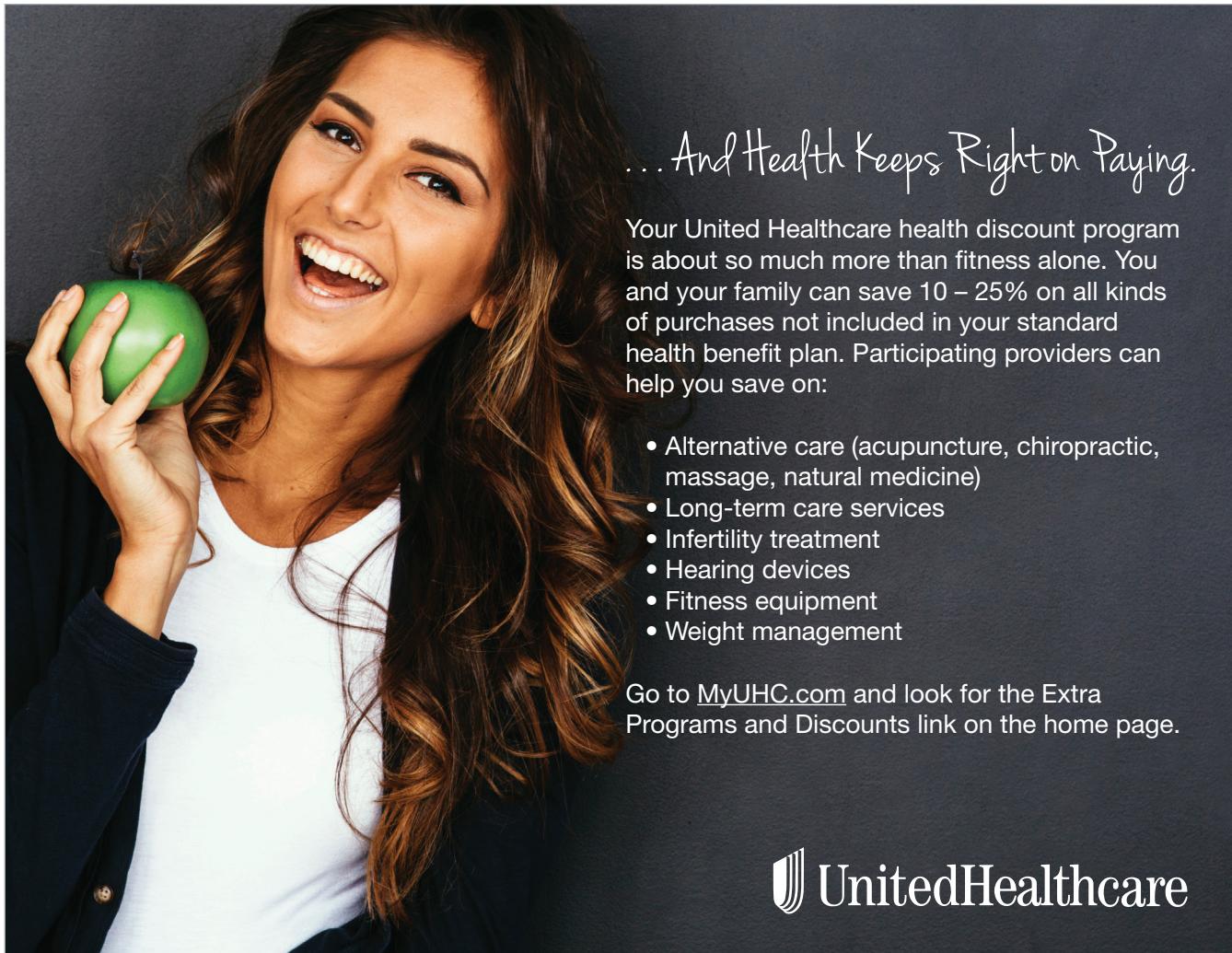
All these toys in the toy box are enabling filmmakers to create films that are visually dazzling, but they've kind of moved away from story. Everybody at Pixar will tell you there are three big words emblazoned over the creative department: Story Is King.

I wish you could go back in time and talk to George Lucas. I think he was like, "Cool, I'm going to make like a really cool CG character. I need to focus my attention on that, and forget the other things." Which is a shame, because he was one of the proponents of "The Special Effects Are There to Serve the Story, Not Vice Versa." And I think, ultimately, maybe he got so focused on – just like with *Citizen Kane* – "I'm gonna drive the industry forward. I'm gonna create things that have never existed." But he became obsessed with that and forgot his own advice.

When you shoot, what do you hope to get out of creating a video?

Ultimately, I was trying to make pretty pictures, kind of like eye candy. So I was really trying to frame the shot and light the shot in a way that just looked appealing. When we do the holiday videos, you can't really tell a story. You're just trying to make people have a good time at the party, take the seriousness out of the room, laugh and joke around a little bit.

Many people at Infinite don't realize what a special place they work for. I know this because I know people at other energy companies, and there's something about Infinite. It's like lightning in a bottle. I don't even know how it happens; it just does. I'm very happy with that. **V**



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summer '16: announcements/

Jennifer Johnson wonders if animals count in our requests for life events. Yes, Jennifer, of course they do. Congratulations to her mare, Tuffy, and her "newly minted" colt.

Congratulations also to Darin Cook and Michael Selvester for being elected to the GRU advisory board!

Tish Mitchell has made good on two of her three New Year's resolutions: She bought a house in Gainesville and now can spend more time with her family! Tish says she's still working on being mindful of others. Aren't we all?

Nicole Mace won The VINE's "Where's Therman?" contest and received her swag bag on March 31. She thought her boyfriend would especially enjoy the barbecue sauce.

In March, Jeff Weber finished second in the 2016 Georgia State Singles Racquetball Championships! He moves on to the Pro/Open division later this year. If that wasn't enough, Jeff also received the 2016 10 Under 10 Award from Reinhardt University in April! The award is given to alumni who graduated in the last 10 years and have achieved success in the military, business, nonprofits, government, the ministry or the arts. Well played, sir.

Julie Naji tells us that Sheryl Patton purchased her first home on April 6. As if that weren't accomplishment enough, Julie adds, "She is a single mother who has been able to battle cancer, overcome it and purchase a home all on her own. Her team is incredibly proud of her!" It's fair to say her company is proud of her, too.



Chasidy Jones's daughter, Chaniya, built a solar-powered car for the North Florida Energy Whiz Expo at Gainesville Raceway on April 9. Not only did Chaniya win at the 4th grade level, she beat the middle school team! She'll be headed to the national competition in Cocoa Beach soon! Vroom!

Thanks to all Gainesville employees and their families for joining us at the company's family picnic, held April 23 at Kanapaha Botanical Gardens! Hope you all got enough to eat and nobody tripped on their wristbands.

And Adreka Garrison announces that her daughter, Shakira Lawson, graduated from Florida State University with her BSW on April 30, and that she has been accepted to the University of Georgia to obtain her master's degree. Outstanding! V

SAY, DARIN AND MICHAEL, YOU COULDN'T GET THEM TO LOWER MY BILL, COULD YOU?

corporate citizenship update/

A NEW YEAR OF VOLUNTEERISM KICKED OFF IN FEBRUARY WITH AN INFORMATION SESSION AT THE GAINESVILLE CAMPUS FOR EMPLOYEES WHO WANT TO SUPPORT EDUCATION. GUEST SPEAKERS MADE APPEALS FOR THEIR ORGANIZATIONS, AND INFINITE EMPLOYEES SHARED THEIR VOLUNTEERING STORIES.

More February news: Because we support entrepreneurship, four employees assisted in judging student presentations at Buchholz High School in Gainesville, in a DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) marketing communications competition. The contest set out marketing challenges for groups of students or individuals and gave them very limited time to prepare. Then the students were given a few minutes to present to a judge and answer questions. (You can guess who the judges were.)

Karyna Diaz was highly impressed by the poise of the teams, even for freshmen and sophomore high school students. She said, "It was great to hear how they understood the way the market works and what their ideas would be, and why. They really did have to work as a team and develop the whole plan."

Elsewhere, school reading programs continued or were introduced in IEI service areas. In Texas, participation began in Read Houston Read, which al-

lows employees to remotely tutor first graders via computer. In Gainesville, Reading Pals continues to build child literacy.

And in Marietta, the fun got rolling as four employees took part in an Easter "Eggstravaganza" held at a local Easter Seals Child Development Center. Easter Seals serves children and adults with autism and learning disabilities. Jeff Weber had an especially good time dancing with an 18-month-old girl and playing with dinosaurs with a 4-year-old boy. Virginia Roberts, in a Quarterly Corporate Sprint, referred to this outing as the real meaning of an unparalleled customer experience, given that Easter Seals is an Infinite customer.

We wrap up with a reminder that a complete list of volunteer opportunities is posted on the new company SharePoint site. For full information, please enter "Employees" in your browser, and then click on the Corporate Citizenship page link. **V**

VETERAN ENERGY

IN CASE ANYONE wondered whether veterans really look out for one another after returning to civilian life, read this story from Bryan Escobedo: "I had a crazy thing happen. My oil pan was cracked by something in the road. I didn't know it, but it was a golf-ball-sized hole! All my oil dripped out and my engine cracked! Luckily, I was able to run across two veterans who helped me push the car to the mechanic. He was also a veteran. I sold that car and bought a new Corolla. The car salesman was also a veteran! How about that?"

Bryan also reports that in May he will take over a "Service Platoon" with Affinity Partner The Mission Continues. He will be coordinating big service projects in low-income areas of Houston. What he likes about it is he can get "brokers to come out and get their hands dirty."

And big news from Kevin Barber: Veteran Energy has won the Employer of Veterans Award (Small Employer) given by the Texas chapter of Disabled American Veterans. DAV is a national nonprofit that offers disabled veterans rides to medical appointments, benefits claims assistance and employment resources. Kevin hopes to be in Austin, Texas on June 10 to receive the honor.

That's The Power to Give Back™. v



teach me how to dougie/

Doug Bianchi's Guide to Dress for Success, Anytime, Anywhere

Is clothing necessary?

What time of day is it?

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

Work,
home or
away?

Work

Home

Away



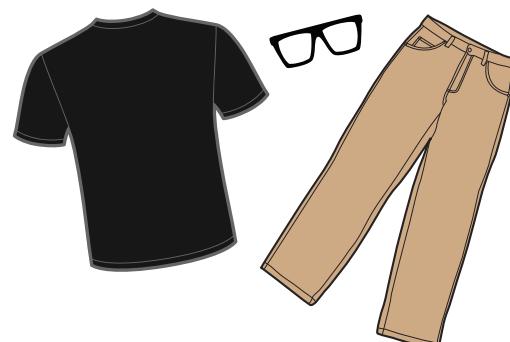
Formal,
sporty or casual?

Formal

Sporty

Casual

You should wear:



Dennis Connolly
Tharon Moore
Christopher Shuemake
Oliver Straw
Nicole Mace
Aylen Menendez
Joe Williams
Andrew Nicell
Ryan Davis
Rubina Shaldjian
Daniel Davis
Zarai Enrique

Lenedra Poole
Forest Halualani
Fenton Inman
Destiny Null

Josiah Blakemore
Don Gerstenberger

service awards/

CONGRATULATIONS. YOU'VE MADE IT THIS FAR.

THESE INDIVIDUALS CELEBRATED THE ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR HIRE DATE DURING FEBRUARY, MARCH AND APRIL 2016.

IEI IS PROUD TO RECOGNIZE THESE EMPLOYEES FOR THEIR MANY YEARS OF SERVICE.

Marguerite Patrick
Crystal Cobia
Kymberlei Parham-Jones
Tasha Zazo
Jose Figueroa
Robert Salas

Nicholas Farmer
Julia Sander
Elizabeth Ouligian
Sue Rocher
Heer Mehta
Daniel Perez
Ryan McKeon

Hillary Turlington
Ana Lopez-Castaneda
Chad Greene
Christian Kieber

Aparna Venkatesan
Carlos Garcia
Janivea Lewis
Jaime McKay
Nancy Penski
Scott Thomas
Cindy Ferrie
Christopher Swendsen

Srinivas Jonnalagadda
Richard Paez
Ashanta Simmons

Jeremy Roggenkamp
Joan Reisinger
Angel Thomas
Debra Stephens
Isadora Marion
Judson Scott
Oscar Trujillo

Raquel Bates
Matthew Brock
Sheryl Patton
Alan Escobar
Demetric McBee
Joseph Bissinnar
Syrena VonSeggern
DeAnna Morrison

Brandon Hanson
Alejandro Gomez
Ray O'Dom

Carol Lambert
Heather Fullen

George Macomber

Kathy Reaves

Bill Wagner
Sajid Hasan



at WIT's **beginning/**

YOU CAN'T HAVE WIT WITHOUT IT. AND IT JUST ISN'T THE SAME WITHOUT DIVERSITY. A MARCH 23, 2016 STORY IN THE WALL STREET JOURNAL SAYS, "TECH FIRMS LAG BEHIND THOSE OLD-LINE BUSINESSES WHEN IT COMES TO ADVANCING WOMEN. . . . NOT ONLY ARE WOMEN UNDERREPRESENTED AT ALL LEVELS OF TECHNOLOGY FIRMS, PARTICULARLY IN KEY ENGINEERING, PRODUCT AND FINANCE ROLES, RESEARCHERS FOUND, BUT PLENTY OF THOSE WOMEN ALSO BELIEVE THAT THEIR GENDER IS HOLDING THEM BACK AT WORK."

Sensing this, Infinite Software Developers Sue Rocher and Malka Jackson started WIT (Women in Technology), a support group for female tech employees that now includes a guest speaker series presenting women in tech leadership roles. WIT also includes a Coding After Hours series of workshops in which coders can hone their current skills and learn new ones.

The VINE sat down with Sue and Malka someplace where there aren't any keyboards or monitors to find out how it's all going. The following interview has been edited.

Who came to whom first with the idea for the series?

Sue: Malka actually came to me after we both talked to Curtis [McMillen, Director of Software Development] separately about the exact same topic. We were concerned about the support structure overall and making sure that we had our talented women engineers included in decisions and goals for the department.

So Malka asked if we might do something. I agreed, and we decided on a support group, a leadership event series and a technical meet-up.

In other places you've worked, when the issue of women in technology came up, were you met with a lot of eye rolls?

Malka: It never actually came up. I was the only female on my team when I worked at Gateway Computers.

So the thought never even crossed their minds.

Malka: No.

Obviously technology doesn't recognize gender; it just recognizes code. From your perspective, what can women offer a tech department?

Sue: Mainly it is a different perspective. Men and women often think differently about how to accomplish or approach projects. We have different experiences, ways of thinking, and ideas on how to accomplish engineering goals. [It's] been proven through various studies that the more diverse teams you have, the better and more productive those teams are.

EDITOR'S NOTE: A study conducted in 2010 by the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University stated, “[S]ocially different group members do more than simply introduce new viewpoints or approaches. In the study, diverse groups outperformed more homogenous groups not because of an influx of new ideas, but because diversity triggered more careful information processing that is absent in homogenous groups.”

Malka, what do you think you bring to technology development here at the company?

Malka: I have a kind of out-of-the-box view of a lot of things. I don't think linearly. I pick up on things that aren't caught, stylistic things we can do to make things easier.

I like to think this is the kind of company where you can raise an objection or point out something overlooked without fear of retribution.

Sue: Agreed.

When you take a high view of technology, are you thinking how this will make people's lives better, or how it will get them what they need?

Malka: I've always liked the ability to improve our process, and that's one reason I really like technology. You have the tools to find a hindrance, and you can improve the situation, and make things more accessible or more efficient.

Do you present women speakers in this series who have found ways to improve process through technology?

Sue: We're trying to highlight women in what we're doing currently. We're not opposed to bringing in men, but we're trying to highlight women this year who have accomplished some sort of leadership in the community – leaders of tech companies or leaders of just any company, because we want to learn more about leadership and encourage other women to join the ranks of leaders. There are a lot of role models in the community, and we don't often hear about them. It is not so much about presenting women who found ways to improve process, but presenting local leaders who can act as role models for other would-be leaders.

What did your first speaker, Angela Pate, say about leadership?

Sue: She brought her perspective of what it was like to become a leader and not realize she was becoming a female leader in the tech industry. She didn't realize until well into her career that she really was the only woman in the room. She started realizing it when seeing other women and [saying], “Hey, there's only a few of us.” She had a natural talent for leadership and entrepreneurship. She continued to grow her career and become a leader in technology. She's had an impact all over the world.

Let's talk about Coding After Hours.

Sue: It's a work group. It meets every two weeks on Thursdays. We meet up for about two hours to work on a project that we've all decided to work on together. So now we're building a carpool app, and we're learning to work with technologies that we're really not comfortable with. In some cases, it's code or code bases or structures we've worked with before,

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and in other cases, we're delving into new territory. We're exploring it together so that we're all learning the technologies.

Do you feel women in technology should take more innovative roles?

Malka: If they're comfortable with that. Sometimes even if they're a little uncomfortable with that. The more we put ourselves out there, the better it's going to be, not only for us but for those who follow us.

Sue: We have an emphasis now on finding people who are passionate about what they do. One way someone may show passion is through projects they work on outside of their normal work load; that shows the dedication people have for learning technology and really wanting to do this as their living.

The problem is that a lot of women have either other activities in their lives or families at home that they're expected to take care of. And so [they] don't actively pursue new, innovative technologies on their own, as many of the men do.

A lot of articles indicate that more women are getting higher degrees than men. (*EDITOR'S NOTE: In 2015, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that, for the first time since measurement began in 1940, women were more likely than men to have a bachelor's degree.*) Women are educated and do have the skill set. But the difference is that women tend to apply for a job when they meet 100 percent of the qualifications, and most men apply for a job when they have 60 percent of the skill set needed. It's a perceived difference. Women don't feel they fit into something until they're 100 percent there, and men are willing to take more chances. We're finding that lack of confidence, and that's documented over and over again.

At one of our last meetings, we talked about how to find good mentors. Not just [for] women, but men and women. We think that would be beneficial for everyone.

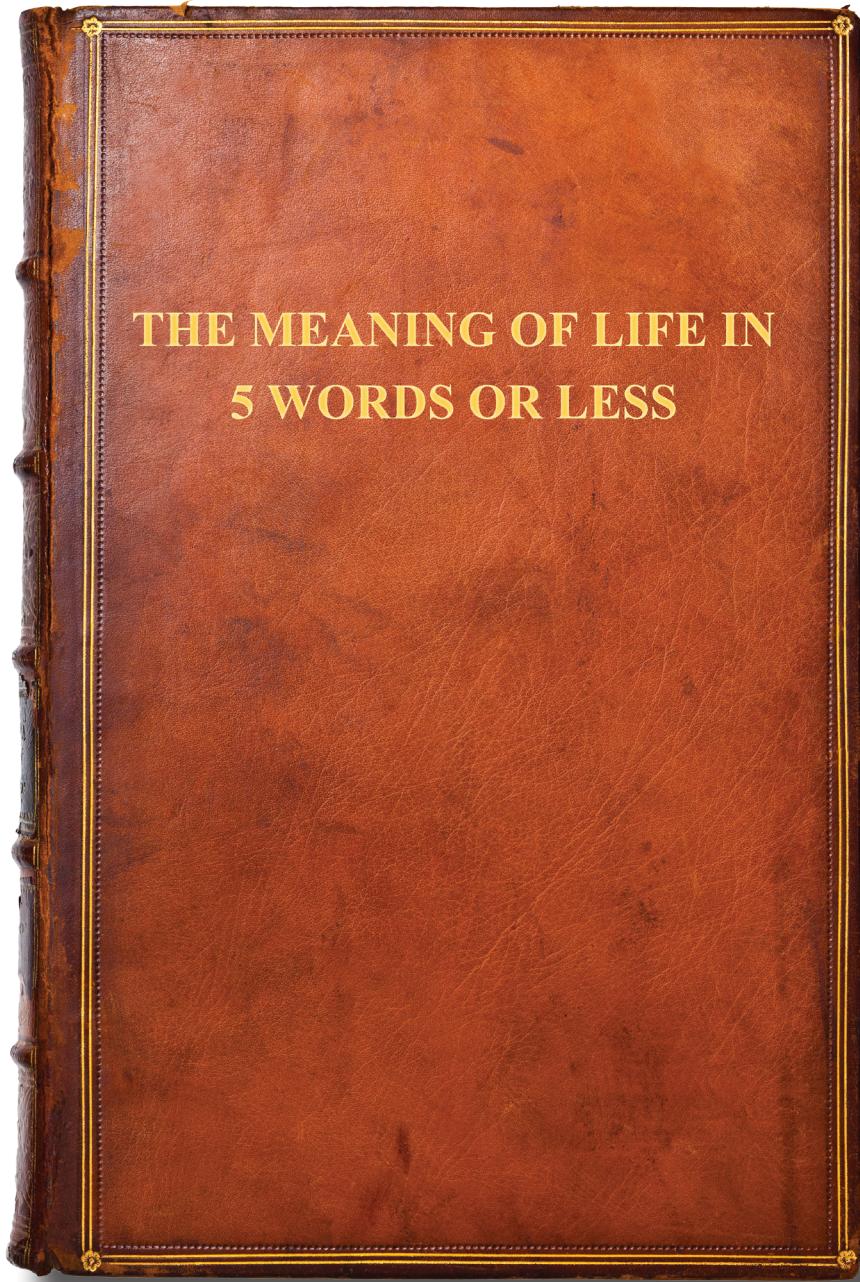
Do you mentor informally?

Sue: I think we do, yeah. We have people we can go to and talk about personal or technology-related items. This might be someone we talk to at lunch to get advice, someone we take a walk with, or someone we outright ask to be our mentor.

If there was a net take-away from this, I guess it's the power of teamwork.

Sue: There are a lot more articles coming out now about how women in STEM jobs of all sorts, not just software development, [are] helping companies become more successful. When there are more women involved in executive teams and things like that, there tends to be higher revenue. Better software is being built. Diversity in general is helping to make things better.

EDITOR'S NOTE: An article from April 3, 2015 posted by AAUW.org (website of the American Association of University Women) is a harbinger of things to come: “[Improving diversity in STEM fields isn't simply the right thing to do; it's the smart thing to do. In [the computing and engineering] segment of the economy, where jobs often outnumber qualified applicants, increasing the number of women . . . would greatly increase the size of the available talent pool. More importantly, companies would be bringing a diverse set of minds and experiences to bear on the most challenging issues of the day.]” V



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