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Senior Technical Woman Profile: Diane M. Bryant, Vice President and Chief Information Officer of Intel

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Each month, we ask Senior Technical Women to share their stories and what they have learned. This [Senior Technical Woman Profile](#) features Diane M. Bryant, Vice President and Chief Information Officer (CIO) of Intel.



1. How did you decide to pursue a career in technology?

It was a bit accidental. I was always strong in math and science and enjoyed the objectivity of the disciplines (in contrast to English, where it seemed rather arbitrary as to whether I'd get an A or a B). I entered college continuing to take the physics, calculus, and chemistry not knowing how I was going to apply it all. A peer in my calculus class asked what my major was, and I told him I was "undeclared." He recommended engineering, stating it had the highest starting salary for a bachelor's degree. Given my status as a cash-strapped student, this was very attractive. I immediately declared my major as Electrical Engineering and transferred from the junior college to UC Davis.

2. Based on your own experience, what skill(s) or characteristic(s) do you think are most important for technical women to succeed?

The first is technical depth and domain expertise. It's important to follow the college curriculum and technical degree with deep technical industry experience. This is what cements your technical knowledge.

There is a great deal to learn from the application of the academic principles whether your aspirations are to manage or be a technical individual contributor. Too often women are pushed into “generalist” roles, like program management or people management early in their career. It’s important to resist as we know that a generalist competency can only take one so far. I was a technical individual contributor for my first seven years at Intel.

The second is to embrace change and be a risk taker. The pace of technology innovation is intense. Every day technology is reaching more people around the world and being applied to solve a broader set of problems – from global warming, to bringing education and healthcare to remote regions, to making food sources lower cost and more broadly available. The pace is what makes the tech industry so exciting. Its why five of the top ten fastest growing professions are in technology! Those that excel in our industry are those that embrace the pace, enjoy the challenges that come with invention, and are excited by the opportunities created from the unknown.

3. What was the greatest challenge that you overcame in your career?

I have been faced with many technical challenges during my Intel career. Those big, difficult technical problems are what have kept me in the industry and at Intel for 26 years. Enormous, complex challenges are what engineers live for!

4. How do you manage work/life balance?

Through very good time management skills and the ability to multiplex. It isn’t easy or simple, but it is worth it. I have two children, 11 and 14 years old, who I am devoted to. And I love my job. I can’t imagine my life without either my family or my profession. And so I make it work by building a strong support system at home, with friends and family willing to help out when I’m in a pinch. And by building a strong staff and organization at Intel that can operate seamlessly when I am absent. Somehow, it all seems to work!

5. What advice would you give to women in high tech who want to advance on the management track specifically?

- a. The first step in being a good technical manager is being a good technologist. You need to first invest in building a strong technical foundation. As a manager, your role is to make the right decisions for your organization and your company. That requires foundational knowledge and good intuition. You achieve this through hands-on experience. And that direct experience also gives you the necessary credibility with your team.
- b. The second step is easier. A good manager is a strong communicator and collaborator and has the ability to identify talent and build effective teams. There are lots of studies that show that these skills come more easily to women than to men. When faced with a challenge, men study the facts; women reach out to others for input. Women are more likely to value multi-dimensional and diverse input. So, the second piece of advice is to let your innate skills shine.

6. How do you stay current in your technical field?

a. For one, I network extensively with my industry peers – other CIOs of Global 500 companies. We are all faced with the same challenges around applying technology to deliver value to our corporations in the means of employee productivity, business growth, and business efficiency. The second way I stay current is simply by coming to work every day. I’ m surrounded by brilliant co-workers. A day never goes by where I haven’ t learned something new.

7. In your opinion, what (if any) are the remaining barriers faced by women in technology?

The number of women pursuing careers in technology remains depressingly low. I struggle with why that is true and think about my own “accidental” entry into engineering. I believe we need to do a better job “marketing” computer science, engineering, and the other technology fields. As technology has moved from laboratory research to touching 2.8 billion people, the inventions have moved from a focus on “speeds and feeds” to how we can enrich the lives of people around the world. I find that exciting, inspirational, and motivational. We simply need to get the word out!

BIO

Diane M. Bryant is vice president and Chief Information Officer (CIO) of Intel Corporation where she is responsible for Intel’ s Information Technology organization. Intel’ s IT organization delivers strategic value by providing professional support, applications, and solutions that enable Intel’ s growth and transformation.

Previously, Bryant held several positions including general manager of the Server Platforms Group, responsible for Intel’ s server, workstation, and storage business encompassing all elements of the platform including hardware, software and services. She was also director of the Corporate Platform Office, responsible for driving the transformation of Intel to a platform directed company, and GM of the Enterprise Processor Division responsible for the architecture, design and delivery of Intel’ s Xeon and Itanium processor families. Before joining the Enterprise group in 1998, Bryant was Director of Engineering of the Mobile Products Group responsible for Intel’ s mobile processors and chipsets.

Bryant received her bachelor’ s degree in electrical engineering from U.C. Davis in 1985 and joined Intel the same year. She holds four U.S. Patents.