

# TOP TIPS

## TO SUCCEED

by Antionette Caruana

My family remains my priority, though they may not believe this. My career has helped shape me. The following are the best values that have made a difference to who I am.



Have a dream and go for it... Make it happen. Believe that no one owes anyone a living. If you falter, try again.



Work with others.



Be as good as you can in what you do.



Always have a passion for learning in everything you do. Keep your eyes and ears open. Be aware of what is happening and contribute.



Keep true to your values.



Tell people who have made a difference to your life that they have, and treasure them.



Say sorry at work, at home, and invest time to build trust and commitment.



Be a good example by working long and hard. Sometimes you will be tired and grumpy but pick yourself up and move forward.



Invest in relationships which really matter.



## Going for it... and all it takes!

**ANTIONETTE CARUANA** shares her successful career from banks to food manufacturing companies

**FEMALE, OVER 50** years old, raising two young adults (who think their mum is technologically challenged and old), a patient and supportive husband (partner for over 24 years), encouraging parents, and friends and family who have been there for me whenever needed. These qualities are the critical aspects of my life which is full, overflowing, sometimes exhausting but truly rewarding. My first job was nearly 35 years ago, and the years have flown by.

Many opportunities were opened by starting my career at a local bank after my first degree at the University of Malta, B.A. (Hons) in Business Management. At the same time, I married my husband who gave me more enthusiasm. My studies opened up a great interest in understanding the role of people in organisations, management, strategy, and performance.

Then I changed my job. Soon after I got married, I took the plunge and joined Playmobil entering a career that lasted more than

13 years. During this time, I learnt so much about business, running an organisation, and people management. The job was challenging and needed long hours with some tears and a dose of determination to succeed, but I could make things happen.

During my job at Playmobil, I had two children, completed my Masters' degree and also got involved in many opportunities outside Playmobil including the Federation of Industry, the Foundation for Human Resources Development, the Richmond Foundation and worked with different departments of the public sector. I also took on different projects and lectured at University to keep in touch with students (the employees of the future) and academics (the launchpad of innovation and debate).

Being an idealist who is obsessed about achieving results, I sought my next challenge: to make a difference by taking a leading role. I applied to head Heritage Malta as

CEO and was chosen. The team was extremely committed to preserving and managing Malta's unbelievable heritage. We did some great things together like keeping museums open 7 days a week and put up the shelters over the Neolithic temples of Ħaġar Qim and Mnajdra. Following that, I worked with Lufthansa Technik Malta when this organisation was quickly growing on the island. Currently, I work with the Parsons Group as Company Secretary and Group HR manager. Being part of the senior management team of one of the long established and most successful local group of companies is another very rewarding experience and continues to provide me with enthusiasm, ambition, and pride.

Nobody is an island and networking is vital. You need it to work with other organisations, to continue learning, to contribute, and to be part of a country's culture. Networking gave me confidence and helped open up opportunities. I have served as director at the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) and until recently the Central Bank of Malta. Before that I served on MEUSAC and also on MPVQAC. The list is very long and I was in touch with various sectors of society from youths to industry. These experiences have touched my life and enriched me.

Now I'd like to talk about being a woman on the job. First off, do not let this make a difference to how you behave since your skills, competence, and professionalism matter. Going for a career demands a strong partnership at home, but I believe that if a woman is good at what she has chosen to do, she would have the sheer determination to succeed by finding those critical opportunities. In Malta, I already see a number of successful women in many spheres. And I hope we will see even more. ●

## Ships to Computers

**KEITH FEARNE** talks to us about his work and success in the ICT business world



**IN 1991**, when the first DOS-based PCs started to become available, I graduated from the University of Malta after having read for a degree in Electrical Engineering. The Internet and mobile telephones still had not appeared.

There were no ICT courses at the UoM. Engineering courses were the closest I could come to entering this field. Teaching of computer science was therefore obviously limited, but at least we received a fair amount of computer architecture and networking theory. We also built our first processor boards, and wrote our first code in assembly language. The Dean was not thrilled when I approached him to announce that I wanted a 'software only' thesis, a first. But I got away with it, and built a software driver for a LAN card, a networking card, using a programming language called Modula 2.

When I graduated my computing future did not look bright. I was tied by a two-year contract with Malta Shipbuilding, to whom I was assigned during the student worker scheme. I had spent three summers working there managing a team of electrical technicians, which toughened me. After this experience, managing teams should have been relatively easy.

During my last months at University I decided that I wanted to enter the IT world. I started shopping around for a job while doing some teaching at a private school. I landed a job at the software company Megabyte as a systems engineer and decided to end my contract at Shipbuilding paying the required financial penalties. Financially not the best decision but best for my career.

After seven years at Megabyte, I moved on to become the CEO of the Internet company Maltanet. I spent 8 years running the company. In Malta, during this time the Internet market was growing exponentially. The pace of technology accelerated tremendously making it a very exciting time within a highly competitive environment. When GO was fully privatised we merged all the subsidiaries and I spent nearly 3 years as Chief Commercial Officer for the group. Managing the commercial portfolio of a quad play operator was an instructive and rewarding challenge.

Today I run my own firm called ICT solutions. In 2009 I set up a joint venture focused on two areas, ICT servicing and software development. It employs a team of over 20 people, mostly UoM graduates. They provide solutions to cater for the ever growing ICT requirements of the corporate world.

So what lessons have I learnt? Firstly, there is no 'one size fits all' solution and everyone needs to build on their strengths. Secondly, you need to put in long hours. If you do not work harder than your normal 9 to 5 employee, then you will remain a normal 9 to 5 employee. Thirdly, you need to keep abreast and understand technology cycles and where the market is going. Be technically competent but appreciate business logic. Fourthly, and most importantly, relate to people and build relationships with your team and clients. ●