



## Celebrating Our People: Janice Burns

Janice Burns has held several roles at MasterCard, including Chief Diversity Officer, HR Business Partner, Product Manager, among others. She is currently, Chief Learning Officer in the HR Organization. MC Central spoke with Janice about her career journey, early influences and major accomplishments.

### **MC Central: Provide some details on your career journey (previous work history/experience).**

**Janice:** I was a psychology major in college and originally thought that I would pursue a career as a clinical psychologist. I worked as a counselor at a residential treatment program for children and then as a teacher in the New York Public School system for one year, but found that my analytical and strategic skills were under-leveraged.

I applied for a position in Chemical Bank's retail management development program and landed one of the 13 spots offered that year. I was selected to manage the marketing programs for Chemical's mass market retail deposit products – a foundational role because it leveraged my psychology skills in designing programs that created demand based on my knowledge of consumer wants, needs and behaviors. This position taught me the importance of experimentation and failing fast. I was expected to pilot 10 new programs/promotions each year with the knowledge that most likely only two would pan out. Working in that environment helped me to build confidence in my decision-making abilities and to develop courage in charting new paths.

I joined MasterCard as a product manager 22 years ago in New York City (as a child prodigy) to manage the insurance and purchase benefits associated with our card products. I have had numerous roles at MasterCard within the business and HR and enjoy being able to blend my

knowledge of the business with my experience as an HR professional to advance our company's strategy.

**MC Central: Share some major accomplishments.**

**Janice:** I have had many accomplishments throughout my career. I am most proud of the impact that I have made in areas where my work has helped to change the culture of our organization, such as launching our diversity initiative and establishing the first five Business Resource Groups (BRGs). I also am proud of the advocacy work that I participated in as an HR Business Partner and head of our employee relations function. I have gotten the most satisfaction, however, out of developing teams and helping my team to discover strengths that they didn't know existed.

**MC Central: Share something which gave you inspiration.**

**Janice:** My father has always been a source of inspiration for me. He was born in the American south and endured many challenges. Although he was college educated with a degree in architecture, he was unable to legally practice during the early part of his career due to segregation laws. He turned this negative into a positive by teaching mechanical engineering and designing houses for prominent African Americans in Atlanta. Finally the laws changed and he opened the first African American owned architectural firm in Atlanta. My father's actions taught me an important lesson, "Do not be confined by your current reality, only you are the master of your destiny." Whenever I face challenges, I think of my father and know that I can overcome them if I think beyond the obstacle and into my vision of success.

**MC Central: Provide a couple of fun facts.**

**Janice:** I love music (all genres) and have 4,000 songs in my iTunes library. I love to sing (even though I can't), but my car lets me sing to her every day. I played the saxophone and clarinet until I graduated college and love to listen to live jazz and old standards.

**MC Central:** What advice or guidance would you like to share with LEAD members and employees?

**Janice:** People rise to the level of their expectations, imagination and dreams. Set your sights high, imagine the impossible and dream BIG. Surround yourself with people who believe in you and will support your dreams. Then take action, persevere and move forward.