



Women in Technology - Melissa Simmonds

Melissa Simmonds is a business leader, Customer Configuration Management (CCM) based in Singapore. Here Melissa takes a few moments to share her career story.

What is your background?

I attended Northwest Missouri State University for three years, and then completed my B.A. in Business Administration at Lindenwood University. I spent my first four years at MasterCard focused on Operations Support. From there, I moved to Customer Implementation Services, where I spent 14 years supporting US market debit customers. I was the technical project manager for large conversions that included Washington Mutual, Bank of America and KeyBank.

In 2012, I moved from being an individual contributor to a people manager. I was able to learn about leadership from different perspectives with this move.

How did you decide on a career in technology?

I started my career at MasterCard as a temporary employee, while supporting my infant son and completing my studies. As a temporary employee, I had some opportunities for career mentorship from some of the most brilliant minds in our industry. They saw the passion that I had for technology and encouraged me to pursue it. Twenty one years later, I can honestly say that I continue to be challenged and enjoy finding ways to add value to our business.

What are some key career highlights for you, so far?

It is in my DNA to take risks where they make sense on a personal and professional level. I recently relocated to Singapore – and it's proven to be a really valuable career move for me. In my career, I've had the opportunity to start a new team in Dublin, and now I'm further developing a team in Singapore. Both of these teams are important to our global footprint in implementations and has delivered on our 'follow the sun' methodology to better serve our customers.

Also, I had the opportunity to represent the implementation team on several sales initiatives in various regions making sure our customers saw the value we add, and helping potential customers to identify pain points in their operations.

How do you give back to the community and continue to encourage young women to pursue careers in technology?

It's an honor and a privilege to be able to mentor young women in their career. I think we are most successful when our actions align with our words, and we give our time to people.

I am currently a mentor to the most amazing young women with all different types of career goals. Sharing technology and my career story is something that never gets old to me. Every day, I experience a career that truly impacts the global community, implements solutions into life, is dynamic, is fast-paced and employs the most intelligent individuals in the world. Who could resist a career with those attributes?

What would readers be surprised to learn about you?

I am a working mother of three children (Trae 21, Justice 13, Gabrielle 10). My husband home schools our two youngest children. This structure is definitely not traditional, and we get lots of questions about it! It's great to have a husband and children who support my career dreams. They have literally followed me to the other side of the globe!

We are constantly looking for opportunities in the global community to assist where we can. My husband had the opportunity to spend several months last year in a Nepal orphanage, and we are planning more of these efforts as a family in 2015.

What advice would you give to women looking to move into the technology space (early in their career and/or someone looking to make a career change)?

I always advise women not to be intimidated if their social, school or work backgrounds are not in the areas traditionally thought of as technology-related. Technology needs diverse thought and skills sets in order to thrive.

Also, mentorship has a significant role in my career. I encourage every woman to seek out a mentor who is mature in the Technology field. I always have a good running list of people I know who love to mentor, including myself, and I do not hesitate to refer individuals to them.