

Maria Buot

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#SheInspires

Maria has worked in the IT Industry for more than 26 years in diverse roles. She is a Gulf war era veteran and a 1st-degree black belt in martial arts. She is known for her distinguished performance and quality work.

In this conversation with the editorial team, Maria talks about how she happened to get into technology, the challenges of being a woman in STEM field, and what it takes to get ahead as a female tech manager.

Hello, Maria! Could you give us a quick introduction about yourself?

Hi! My name is Maria Buot and I work for HCL America as a Technical Specialist. Working at HCL, I have had many interesting experiences. I've got to travel more with HCL than I did while I was in the military.

Can you recall any incidents or experiences — positive or negative — that relate directly to your role as a technology leader?

Soon after graduation, I suffered the biggest accident of my life while working with the US Navy. Since there were no safety precautions that were supposed to be there, and which only came in place after my accident, a 40-foot fall from an ice patch gave me a serious head injury and almost took my life, save for the efforts of my shipmates, who saved me with the precious 5 counts of CPR.

The entire incident was life-altering in the sense that it taught me about the value of life, of courage, the importance of a phenomenal team, and most important, the fact that sometimes attention to detail can mean the difference between life and death. The realization that I might not have tomorrow or even 20 minutes from now, empowered my resilience to achieve all that I ever dreamt of.

As an aftermath, I was left with a brain and frontal lobe injury which, according to the doctors, severely minimized my chances of pursuing my interest in higher-level math.

Throughout your educational and professional journey, what has been your approach toward balancing your personal and professional lives?

After my years in the military, I decided to join school for MIS Computer operations with a business background, since that had always piqued my interest back in the Navy days. As a result, I found myself going to school while raising my children. I also went on to join martial arts classes with my children and earn a black belt.

What is the one piece of advice you would give young women aspiring to your level of success?

I feel that if one has the ability, the understanding, and the spirit to learn or pursue something, they must do it and not let society's stereotypes define what they can be and what they can achieve.



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