Chapter VII

Zarina Thesing
Pumpkin Patch

Australasia's Leading Children's Fashion Brand

My name is **Zarina Thesing**. I am the general manager, information technology at Pumpkin Patch.

Personal History

I was born in Auckland, New Zealand. Until I was 10 we lived in Waitakere in west Auckland, where there is a lot of bush and it is slightly rural. We then moved to Lynfield, Blockhouse Bay, another area of Auckland which was known for its harbour and more "out of town" position. I lived there until I got married at 26.

I started primary school in Waitakere. I finished primary and intermediate schools in Lynfield. Then, I attended a public high school. I attended the University of Auckland and earned a Bachelor of Commerce in information systems.

My university degree included a work experience project paper. I was assigned to a company called Peace Computers. They specialize in computer systems for utilities, specifically energy billing systems. I worked in a team of three people on the development of a general ledger system for a client company called Wyatt Machine Tools. It was an interesting process and great experience.

After graduating university, I started working at Peace full time. I was involved initially in designing and writing common modules for the energy billing system. We were developing function-oriented services, rather than everyone just coding a process themselves. I worked on a generic rate calculator and an address finding function. I coded in Informix, a 4GL language. For another energy company, I was involved in the development of an equipment management system. This system kept track of the maintenance and replacement of power poles.

While I was at Peace, I progressed from developer to a systems designer role. I cannot stand chaos, and like to be organized. I like those around me and working with me to be organized. So, I moved more into a systems design role that enabled me to identify areas of work that required development, and assisted in developing, designing, and also co-coordinating the developments for my designs.

After three years at Peace, I moved to Software Consultants Limited, and was assigned to work with BellSouth, a telecommunications company in start up mode in New Zealand. I was head hunted by the consulting company through a girl friend who worked for them. I was not really looking for a new job. They were interested in my skills as an Informix developer for Bellsouth and I decided to take on the new challenge, as I was keen to experience development for another company and the establishment of the company in the New Zealand market.

I was involved with BellSouth on and off for about 5 years. As New Zealand operations were smaller than around the world, we were a trial site for a new cellular billing system from the USA. We had a lot of issues getting the system running and there was no reporting module. I was brought on initially to assist in developing reports that were required for the business, especially the finance team who needed more information on call volumes and flows to set products in the system, which enabled revenue to be gathered. I was also involved in the development of a commission system so that they could have information about how to increase sales of GSM cellular phones to ensure BellSouth could take on their competitors.

For another assignment at Software Consultants, I worked for the New Zealand Navy. A facilities maintenance management systems (FMMS) was acquired to help maintain two new frigates which had recently been purchased. The information system did not have any documentation and the original contract did not include any training. I was asked to provide a systems manual, and developed the necessary training program. I also advised them on system interfaces and other change management systems. While I was on this project, I also did a lot of project coordination. When I think back on this assignment I recall that we really worked hard, but we had a lot of fun as well.

For my next assignment at Software Consultants, I was appointed project manager for the health authority product range. This predominately consisted of a contract management system. We modified it for the Southern Regional Health Authority. This was my first role as project manager, and it involved leading a team of developers

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