



HR STAR



ITM Group Inc. President: Sharlyn Lauby

[By Robin Salisian]

While a broken leg was what forced Sharlyn Lauby to transfer from the education department to the human resources department at Sea World, she has had no regrets in her professional career — including that broken leg. Today, this president of HR thrives as the creator of HR consulting firm ITM Group Inc.

“I got my first job in human resources by my education and work experience,” says Lauby, who graduated with a degree in political science and several electives in accounting and math. Of the latter, Lauby says, “over the years...all of the math and accounting coursework from college [has] helped me tremendously in human resources.

“The rest of my jobs I got by referrals from colleagues. It just goes to show you that networking and building relationships is important. This is something that I’m adamant about. Any business person has to know the importance of a professional network. More importantly, you have to understand that this takes time, and it’s too late to start one at the point you need it.”

Once the vice president of HR for an organizational consulting firm, Lauby eventually ventured out to launch her own business. Her current position as ITM’s president speaks to her success. However, “It was a challenge,” she admits. “Sometimes consulting is perceived as just something people do between corporate jobs. For me, this is my full-time job, and I approach it that way with my clients, employees, and peers.”

But the challenge paid off. According to the company’s [website](#), ITM was “recognized in 2004 as a ‘Rising Star Business’ by the *South Florida Business Journal*.”

Typically, Lauby works with medium to small-sized companies of 4,000 employees or less, writing custom training programs and delivering sessions per the clients’ needs.

ITM’s primary focuses are on “training design and delivery, organizational development, and employee relations/retention.”

“I also do a lot of speaking engagements on a variety of human resource related topics at several conferences and private company

functions each year,” Lauby adds. “Lastly, I’m an adjunct professor teaching human resources coursework at a local university here in South Florida.”

Her roles are numerous; however, this variety is what excites Lauby. Each day is different. Each project has its own “uniqueness.”

“I also enjoy learning about my client companies and the nature of their business,” she explains. “The variety gives me exposure to a wider range of workplace issues and broadens my depth of knowledge — more than I could get working at a single corporate office. And I truly enjoy sharing in my customers’ success and knowing that I’m a part of the reason for it.”

Variety and excitement can take their toll, however, and one particular challenge Lauby has discovered is balancing home life and work life. “I’ve learned over the years that life is about ‘quality’ not quantity. I approach being an entrepreneur as a lifestyle, and that works well for me.”

Yet she’s also learned to relish her challenges: “During my career, I’ve spent a lot of time in turnaround situations. I enjoy the challenge of taking negative workplace conditions and changing [them] for the positive. There’s something very energizing about being presented with a situation and the desired result, and working with a team to make the result happen.”

Having received professional certifications in HR including a Senior Professional In

Q. What do you like to do outside of HR? Any odd hobbies/interests? Are you married? Do you have children? Can you explain a little about your personal life outside of work?

A. I’m married, for 20 years. Have no children. I like music, art, and cooking. I read a lot — biographies mostly. And, I’m currently learning how to make jewelry.

Q. What CD is in your CD player right now?

A. Here’s some of the favorites on my iPhone: The Beatles, *Sergeant Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* Alicia Keys, *As I Am* Pink Martini, *Hey Eugene!*

Q. What is the last magazine you read?

A. *Vogue*. I’m a collector of shoes and handbags!

Q. What is your favorite TV show?

A. I don’t watch TV much...but when I do it’s usually the *Food Network* or football.

Q. Who is your role model?

A. I really admire Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield (founders of Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream.) Here are two guys who developed a very successful business doing something they love, and [they] didn’t forget about community while they were doing it.



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Human Resources from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and a Certified Professional in Learning and Performance from the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), Lauby understands HR backwards and forwards; however, she’s realized that not everyone in the industry does.

“There are a lot of very talented human resources professionals out there, but there are also plenty of people who call themselves HR but are really out of the loop with regard to what our role can bring to an organization. It’s the latter folks who prompt articles like ‘Why We Hate HR.’”

Her solution? “I encourage all HR professionals to be true business people — know the ins-and-outs of a P&L, learn about sales and marketing, and understand all of the various business aspects of their companies. We have got to start considering what we do as more than just a job...it’s a profession, and we need to be true professionals.”

Finally, with so much experience, Lauby offers this advice to young professionals interested in HR: “I would tell anyone that professional development is essential. Our profession is changing every day. Set a goal for yourself to do one thing each year to make yourself a better human resources professional. Remember

the importance of being a business person first. If you need to, include general business courses or subscribe to business-related online newsletters or podcasts as part of that development. Secondly, I would recommend that people learn how to network and build relationships. It’s so critically important to have resources that you can tap into.”

ON THE NET

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