

## INTREPID PATHWAYS—REBECCA KELLAM



### PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

#### **Formal qualifications**

BSc(Geology)

#### **Current professional role & responsibilities**

As Account Director for a software company I manage the Australian sales team to meet the company's revenue targets in this region. In the broader AustralAsian business unit, I oversee all customer accounts, particularly the software maintenance business. Our customers pay an annual fee to us to receive support and upgrades and I take overall responsibility for managing their expectations and our delivery of service and product to these customers. It's

a very people oriented job and because I'm now at management level, my job is not so task oriented, but more problem solving, decision making and interactive with lots of people both in and out of our business.

#### **Current employer - type**

Software Company

#### **Overview of career in the industry**

I have been in the industry for 20 years. I started as a geologist at Wiluna Gold mine in 1989 and worked at a number of gold mines for the next 5 years, culminating in two years at the Super Pit in Kalgoorlie. In 1995 I joined Surpac Software and I've been here pretty much ever since, in a number of roles. I've done customer support, sales, training, marketing, but I am definitely most comfortable in a customer facing role.

### EXPERIENCES WORKING IN THE RESOURCES SECTOR

#### **Was working in the resources industry what you expected it would be when you were studying/training?**

No, I had no concept whatsoever what it would be like. I did a geology degree because I was scientifically minded, but in NZ, there was no vocational training at all. I had never visited a mine and I didn't know what a mine geologist did when I was studying. Once I graduated, I began to think about it (yes, I know, very shortsighted). I did know I didn't want to be in a constrained, inside environment when I was in my 20's and the thought of doing something like accounting just horrified me. Now, I love a good spreadsheet.

**If at any time you left the industry and came back, why did you leave, how long were you gone for and what motivated you to return?**

I've left a couple of times - firstly to travel when I was in my 20's and then to have children in my 30's. I missed the stimulation of a busy role when I was on maternity leave and I was itching to get back after both pregnancies.

**What is the single most risky step you have ever taken your career? Did you find it paid off? Is there anything you would have done differently?**

Having children was risky - and my career suffered, but I wouldn't change that for the world.

**What would you say have been the most significant 'step changes' in your career pathway, and how have you adapted to these?**

Having children has been the biggest step change and it is hard to adapt at first. There is a significant reprioritisation required and your career can take a step backwards. I think I've adapted well now, but I'm mindful that things can change quickly.

**Have you ever been in a supervisory or senior management position? If so, what are the pros and cons of being in such a role?**

I am in a senior management role - I don't see many cons actually, as I really enjoy the responsibility.

**What have you found most rewarding about the industry and what would you most like to get out of your career in resources in the future?**

I love the sense of adventure in the mining industry - it is full of people with big ideas, new projects, exciting possibilities. I like that it changes constantly - being in a technology company associated with a fast paced industry is great. The mining industry, whilst slow to adopt some ideas is not particularly conservative, when you consider the energy and spirit that goes into starting up a new mine. It's also full of very practical people who have to make decisions quickly, so I like that. I'd just like to stay in that kind of environment.

### **WORKING LIFESTYLE**

**What are your current work/accommodation arrangements?**

Capital city based (with limited travel)

**Do you have a preference for any particular working arrangement? What have your experiences with different types of arrangements been like?**

I definitely preferred residential in Kalgoorlie to FIFO, although socially I still found it a bit limiting. I did make some fantastic lifelong friends however. I just got over the heat, flies and pub life. I think that FIFO is very destructive - for both singles and couples.

**What changes or compromises have you had to make in order to balance family or other responsibilities or interests with a career in the industry? Have you found the right balance for you?**

Well, I guess my husband is making the compromise at the moment - he works part time and I work fulltime. I like this balance, but maybe you need to talk to him!

**Has your employer been open to negotiating changes to your role or roster to accommodate non-work interests or responsibilities?**

My employer is reasonably flexible and I'm really in charge of making sure I deliver what is expected of me (plus more).

### **BEING FEMALE IN THE INDUSTRY**

**What challenges have you experienced by virtue of working in an industry that is predominantly male? Do you feel you have had to adapt to 'fit' the industry?**

I really enjoy working in a male dominated environment - it's just what I've always done. That said, it's wonderful to see women entering the industry in increasing numbers and I'm always happy to see things are easier for them due to more female peers. I certainly felt I had to adapt when I was younger, but now I have more confidence in being myself it's not such an issue.