

What have been some of your greatest challenges & how have you overcome them?

I had been at HP for about five months when my manager asked whether I would like to represent the Company at the AIUM/NEMA committee meetings (American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine/National Electrical Manufacturers Association). They were to be held in Las Vegas, NV that October and this was to be my first business trip.

There were two committee meetings that were relevant to my work: Technical Standards Committee and Bioeffects Committee. Prior to the trip I met with HP regulatory engineers who had participated in these meetings in the past to understand the format and what I was to expect to bring to and back from the meetings.

I was extremely nervous. At that time I did not like speaking in front of large groups. I do not have a very loud voice and my English accent tends to throw people initially until they adjust to it. The meeting was attended by physicians and clinicians, professors and scientists and representatives from other companies – HP's competitors in the marketplace. It was a very intimidating environment. I had only been with HP for about five months and I was nervous on two fronts: saying something stupid, and saying something that was HP confidential.

The meeting began and the Chairman suggested that we state our name and affiliation for the minutes. What happened next was embarrassing yet it broke the ice and brought some laughter to the group. I had been married for just a few weeks, so when it came to state my name, I inadvertently said my maiden name before quickly correcting myself. "My name is Frances, I mean .... sorry, I just got married...." It must have sounded so funny, everybody laughed. I'm sure that I turned a lovely shade of red, but the laughter was calming in a way – I thought that whatever followed couldn't be any worse than that.

I listened a lot in that meeting. When I did wish to say something, I kept to subjects that I knew well. I had written a few papers on temperature affects of Ultrasound in tissue and near bone, so although not an authority by any means, I felt comfortable speaking on these topics. I had also seated myself near the center of the table so that I wouldn't have to feel like I was having to shout to be heard at the far end of the room. At subsequent meetings, and even now, I try to be close to the microphone or telephone in a

teleconference or at the front of the room in a large meeting. I also find that it can be helpful to be seated near a person that you know will be speaking – whether it be the chairperson or technical lead. This way, if you do want to say something, you don't get the phenomenon of all heads suddenly turning your way since they are likely to be already facing in your direction anyway.

I attended the Ultrasound committee meetings as an observer twice a year for the next four years. I enjoyed this participation and responsibility more and more as my confidence grew. The ladies and gentlemen involved in these committees were a pleasure to work with and extremely welcoming of a new kid on the block. I learned a lot from them – most had been in the business for a long time – and I contributed what I could to discussions and working groups. At my last meeting before leaving HP and joining IBM, the Technical Standards Committee was taking nominations for members to the committee. To my complete surprise, one of the members whom I most respected brought my name forward as a candidate. I was deeply honored to be considered by this person to be a possible positive contributor to this national committee.

I learned a number of things from this experience: 1) Contribute what you can, but remember that at the beginning you're not expected to know everything. 2) Never cease to learn from the wealth of experience of others that surround you, and 3) Others can see competence and insight grow and you never know when you'll be asked to step up to the plate. I also learned the few tips I mentioned earlier to do with speaking up in large meetings. I also benefited from taking opportunities to talk to colleagues in smaller groups during the breaks in the sessions. This helped me get to know the other members, but also helped me vocalize and collect my thoughts on a particular matter before speaking to the whole group.