

# DARE Q & A with: Adriana Karaboutis



*Adriana (Andi) Karaboutis was appointed Vice President and Global Chief Information Officer for Dell in November 2011. She is responsible for managing an efficient and innovative global IT enterprise focused on technology breakthroughs for the company and its customers. She has been with Dell since March 2010.*

*Prior to her appointment as Global CIO, Ms. Karaboutis was vice president of IT, supporting Dell's product groups, manufacturing, procurement, and supply chain operations. In this role, she led critical transformations of Dell's manufacturing and supply chain IT operations, reducing complexity and providing customers choices they truly value.*

*Before coming to Dell, Ms. Karaboutis spent over twenty years in the auto industry in various leadership positions within IT and business operations globally—most recently as General Motors' Global Manufacturing and Labor Information Officer, responsible for all vehicle assembly, power train, and stamping plant systems, as well as manufacturing engineering systems.*

*Ms. Karaboutis received a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science in 1986 from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, where she was a Merit Scholar. She subsequently pursued graduate Electronic Computer Control Systems studies at Wayne State and received an Academic Excellence Award jointly from Wayne State University and Ford Motor Company. She has completed the accelerated Fuqua School of Business Marketing Strategy Program at Duke University. She also received the Certificate of Advanced Greek Language Studies in Athens, Greece, and is fluent in the Greek language.*

*In 2012, Ms. Karaboutis was named one of the "Top 10 Women in Technology" by Little Pink Book and one of the 1"00 Women Leaders in STEM" by STEMconnector®. She served as president of the Michigan Council of Women in Technology (MCWT) from 2008 to 2010, and she has served on the board of the Manufacturing Executive Leadership Forum since 2009.*

**Q:** What is the most challenging thing you have ever had to do?

**A:** After spending fifteen years in IT, I came back to the States from a European assignment and moved—cross-functionally—into a business role, running production control at Ford Motor Company. It was a huge challenge, but also the best IT experience I ever had. Being an IT customer for six years better prepared me to become a stronger IT professional. Until you've walked in the customer's shoes, you don't fully appreciate the value of great systems and strong customer focus.

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**Q:** Where did you get the courage and confidence to accomplish this matter?

**A:** I realized I needed this experience, and I also accepted that change is good. “Embracing change” is a phrase we often hear, but actually doing it is critical.

**Q:** What is the biggest mistake you have ever made? What did you learn and how did you recover?

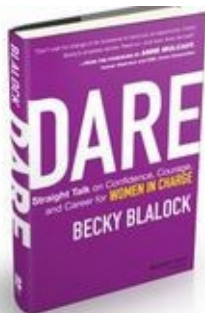
**A:** In my initial leadership roles, I did not spend enough time early on assessing the capabilities of my team and managing our resources accordingly. I did quickly learn to closely observe the leadership qualities, contributions, and cultural attributes of team members. I started assessing whether they were transformers, contributors, watchers, or detractors relative to the goals and objectives of the organization. Transformers and contributors are helpful to the organization, and watchers can be coached to be helpful. Detractors, however, need to be moved to other organizations or even exited. My mistake was to spend far too long hoping to change detractors. This, in fact, hurt the team and did not help the company achieve its goals.

**Q:** If you had a young woman you cared deeply about entering the workforce today, what single piece of advice would you have for her?

**A:** Have confidence in yourself and find what you are passionate about. Once you find your passion and have the courage to pursue it, you will excel.

**Q:** What advice do you have for building self-confidence?

**A:** The best way to build self-confidence is to build knowledge. Learn, learn, learn. Knowing your subject matter and being able to talk about it breeds self-confidence.



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