

Top-notch firm outstanding for finance and accounting consultants



The Financial Dream Team at RoseRyan (L to R) pictured are Carole-Lynn Glass, Pat Voll, Michelle Hammond, Michelle Perez, Patty Clerkin, Maureen Earley, Kathy Ryan, Maureen Ryan, Salena Oppus, Christine Wetra, Kelley Wall and Diane Conry

By Heather Cassell

Kathy Ryan knew she needed to make a change in her work life. After 15-years working as an accounting executive at Quantum Corporation and Price Waterhouse, she realized the 70-hour work weeks just didn't fit into her life anymore. No longer single, her goals now included having a successful marriage and raising children.

For Ryan the long hours, office politics, and the narrowing of her professional responsibilities were not what she wanted. Unwilling to give up the richness of her career or the quality of her family life, she started looking for a different way to integrate her work and still have a full personal life.

Little did she know she was more than 10 years ahead of a future shift in thinking about balancing work and personal lives.

Following her desire to maintain the diversity of her career responsibilities, and have a successful personal life, she co-founded Macias & Ryan, now RoseRyan, with Sue Macias in 1993.

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"I wanted my talent to be used in a diverse way and this issue of working more and more in a silo was very much on my mind when I left my job to start the firm," says Ryan. "I realized that I needed to make changes in my work habits and did not think it would be possible in a corporate environment without negative repercussions."

From the beginning of the firm, Ryan sought out highly experienced accounting and finance executives like herself that were looking for a new way to work and live. "Much to my surprise, Sue and I created a viable workplace with challenging, rewarding jobs minus the headaches of a corporate workplace," says Ryan.

For 15 years the Silicon Valley-headquartered finance and accounting consulting firm has attracted top-tier accounting and financial experts, in part by identifying what has been dubbed the "Mommy Track" long before "opting out", "off-ramping," and "on-ramping" were buzz words.

Women taking charge

Women are truly equal and valued at RoseRyan. In fact women are a majority of the firm, making up 55 percent of the total.

But more importantly, women hold a majority of the executive and man-

agement positions as well. Women hold two of the four chief executive positions, three of the four director positions, and two of the three managers. That is very unusual in a financial services business. Of the RoseRyan finance dream team, 70 percent are CPA's, 50 percent are parents, and 35 percent take advantage of flex hours.

"In a perverse way, we couldn't be as successful in business without the Mommy Track," says President and CEO Mike Rose, who also enjoys the benefits RoseRyan offers. "For us it's a match made in heaven."

Rose joined the finance and accounting consulting firm in 1996. Rose and Ryan formed a partnership that fueled the firm's growth by 2007 into a \$20 million company by solidifying the company's culture and re-branding the company into RoseRyan (www.roseryan.com) in 2005.

"We knew that if we could provide our team with stimulating, rewarding work along with sustainable hours—a rarity in corporate finance—we could harness outstanding talent for our clients," says Rose. "We do it so well because our people are seasoned, dedicated, supported, and able to focus 100 percent on client's work. They're

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RoseRyan

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not distracted by office politics or other workplace issues. They're fresh, and performing at their peak."

The RoseRyan model includes: diversity of work; work that combines consultants' skills, experience, and interest; work/life balance; competitive compensation and benefits; and self-managed and self-motivated projects. Consultants work at a wide array of businesses around the Bay Area, including biotechnology and high-tech companies of all sizes.

Another unusual aspect of RoseRyan consultants is that they are salaried, meaning if they aren't working with a client they are still compensated. "It just makes better business sense," Ryan says. She believes this aspect creates loyalty. Some consultants are hourly at their request, which provides a flexibility with the workflow which benefits RoseRyan's clients. RoseRyan consultants also receive ongoing training and are supported in their work by RoseRyan's robust infrastructure and high-touch mentoring.

Satisfying clients and employees

Salena Oppus, who joined the firm in 1999 and works on interim projects and new system implementations, says she appreciates that the firm provides a sense of work/life balance and boundaries.

"While I'm working very hard at my assignments, I also know that they don't own me," says Oppus about the difference between working for RoseRyan and other companies. "Before, I felt that I had to be on-call all the time. It's a great feeling when my cell phone rings and I know it's probably a cousin in Texas instead of work."

Today the firm is in demand with 100-plus consultants on staff and growth at 33 percent last year. The firm's ability to turn work-life balance into business growth was noted this year by *Wall Street Journal* workplace columnist Sue Shellenbarger in a feature regarding trends.

Their family-friendly policies attract top-notch employees to their

three offices in Silicon Valley, San Diego, and Orange County.

RoseRyan consultants have an average of 15-years' experience. In fact, they turn away most applicants because they don't meet the company's minimum qualifications.

"We offer a diverse roster of senior-level talent in finance and accounting that most companies don't have or can't afford to have internally," says Ryan.

"While many of the 'headaches' of the corporate world went away, I was surprised by how many new responsibilities I took on as a result of establishing a business," says Ryan.

"Personal integrity, openness and direct communication are very important to me and have become a part of the RoseRyan culture."

— Kathy Ryan

Having her name boldly in the public eye, Ryan says she was surprised by how 'personal' owning her own company became.

Hiring former co-workers and family members only intensified her strong sense of responsibility to create an environment that she can be proud of.

Ryan grew up in San Jose, and has four sisters, two of whom work with her at RoseRyan. "Personal integrity, openness and direct communication are very important to me and have become a part of the RoseRyan culture," Ryan says.

Her sister, Maureen Ryan, vice president of business development agrees. She actively seeks out potential clients that can form a good relationship based on their business philosophy.

"A win for RoseRyan is a client who is ethical, honest, values our services and provides a positive environment

for our consultants to work," Maureen Ryan says.

Delivering quality & diversity

"I have always felt a strong need to make sure that the quality of the work that I do, as well as the work of all our consultants, is outstanding," Ryan says.

Ryan says it's a highly desirable model for the consulting firm's clients, which include Netflix, NetApp, Ocara Networks, Websense and First American Title, because RoseRyan provides top-notch financial talent the companies need.

"We truly value our consultants, who are the very lifeblood of our business," adds Ryan. "Our company's culture helps with retention—this is especially important because of the competitive field that we work in. We really want to keep our talent and we strive to do so."

As any smart business owner knows, the cost of hiring and training a new employee is estimated to be a minimum of \$25,000. So being able to maintain a stable workforce is important to the company's financial success as well. And, this fact is compounded by the ongoing shortage of talent in the accounting and finance field. "We have been able to hire and retain smart and business savvy individuals who want work diversity," Ryan adds, certain that their policies help them greatly reduce turnover.

Fifteen years later, she still enjoys the work, even with all the dramatic changes and growth over the years. And now she and her husband are happily raising their children in Livermore.

Ryan has accomplished the American dream of owning her own business, and in doing so, has created a haven in the accounting and financial field for others to live out their dreams as well.

Ryan's firm is always looking for talented people with a minimum of 10 years of experience, with several of these years spent at a CPA firm. CPAs are preferred. To learn more about RoseRyan or employment opportunities see www.roseryan.com/dream.html.

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