



# LEADERS

BY KRISTIN TODD STIRES

**THE HANKAMER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS** strives to produce graduates who will become ethical leaders with integrity. We caught up with several alumni to gain

insight about leadership and management within corporations and start-ups. Their stories revealed that dedication and character, combined with experience, have shaped them in to **BUSINESS LEADERS MAKING AN IMPACT IN THEIR RESPECTIVE INDUSTRIES.**





High performance. Delivered.

STUART SOLOMON, BBA '85, MBA '86 > MANAGING DIRECTOR, METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. REGION > ACCENTURE > ARLINGTON, VA.

Although it was several decades ago, Stu Solomon still remembers his first Baylor experience.

"We were living in Lampasas, Texas," he said. "I was in third grade and attended my first football game, which happened to be at Baylor. It was a Baylor versus SMU game. Baylor didn't win, but it did give me a good introduction to the university."

While the game left an impression on Solomon, he learned more about Baylor from his older brother and later enrolled due to the university's culture and Christian environment. After graduating with a BBA in Finance and Management Information Systems and earning an MBA, Solomon joined Arthur Andersen's consulting division, which became Andersen Consulting and eventually Accenture. He now oversees 4,300 employees in the metropolitan Washington, D.C., region.

"Accenture is a great place to grow a career," he said. "While I've been with the same company since leaving Baylor, I have had the pleasure of serving clients in a number of different industries including financial services, public service, high tech, communication, utilities, consumer products and healthcare."

Solomon started his career on the West Coast in California (he's originally from Santa Monica), and then began working with clients on the East Coast. He and his family relocated to Virginia in 1999.

"One of the great things about where we live now is that Washington sits at the crossroads of industry and public service—the commercial world and the government world," he said. "It's a great place to work and participate in the community."

And Accenture places an emphasis on serving the community through one of its core values: stewardship. Solomon is actively involved with expanding the company's corporate citizenship programs and launched the company's annual "Day of Service" five years ago at the D.C. location.

"Accenture hires people that are wired to give back to the community in addition to serving our clients," he said. "That's one of the things I love about working at this company—the nature and caliber of our people. Our 4,300 metro area employees participate in about 100 community service projects with our annual Day of Service, whether they are painting a school or helping a nonprofit install a computer network. Many of them already volunteer throughout the year, but this is a concentrated effort to give back. It's energizing and has rippled out to other locations as well."

Although companies grapple with a number of challenges today—globalization, environmental issues, technological advancements—**SOLOMON BELIEVES THEY SHOULD MAKE AN "INTENTIONAL EFFORT" TOWARDS DRAMATICALLY IMPROVING EDUCATION AND OUR COMMUNITIES.**

"Most Americans in my generation were raised in a very capitalistic environment and focused on climbing the corporate ladder," he said. "**COMPANIES NEED TO BE BETTER STEWARDS OF THEIR COMMUNITIES.** Not just because it's the right thing to do but because of the positive results it brings to the community, which is where their workforce and customers are located. Additionally, we need to focus on education at the K-12 levels in order for our workforce to compete on a global scale. The awareness of the problem exists, but it needs to turn into action."

Solomon has kept ties to Baylor through his support of the university and serving as a member of the Hankamer School of Business Advisory Board. He and his wife of 27 years, Gina, whom he met freshman year at Baylor, were honored as Baylor's 2012 Parents of the Year—daughter Melissa graduated in December 2012, and Michelle (senior) and Jeffrey (sophomore) are current students. Solomon also couldn't be happier that RG3 made his way to the Redskins. In fact, he believes "Sic 'em Skins!" is a fitting motto for all Baylor alumni!

"Baylor is revitalizing our nation's capital through RG3," he said. "Seriously, he is a great example of a committed, high-performing leader that lifts those around him. **WHATEVER YOU DO, DO IT HEARTILY.** Be an 'RG3' in your area of expertise, live your life with principles, and your service will be useful to transforming the lives around you."

[bbr.baylor.edu/stuart-solomon](http://bbr.baylor.edu/stuart-solomon)



Steve Schlabs has experienced significant change throughout his career—transitioning from military to civilian life, switching from finance to tech, working as a vice president of a software company to entering the unknown as a start-up co-founder. But for Schlabs, “it’s all part of the journey.”

Originally from Wichita Falls, Texas, Schlabs attended Midwestern State University with an ROTC scholarship and served four years as an officer in the U.S. Army. He deployed as a platoon leader in Desert Shield/Desert Storm, was awarded the Bronze Star and graduated from Airborne and Ranger School.

“My military experience was amazing in that I met fantastic leaders, like my first battalion commander, Lt. Col. Walt M. Craig, Jr., who are still in my life today,” he said. “After graduating from Ranger School in 1989, I really felt like I was coming into my own, personal understanding of what leadership was all about.”

Schlabs then returned to life as a student and earned an MBA at Baylor. He was accepted into EDS’ Accounting and Financial Development Program, where he completed an international rotation in Sydney, Australia, as a team member working on the \$2.9 billion Commonwealth Bank outsourcing deal, and a corporate rotation through the CFO’s office. In 1997, Schlabs’ field rotation at EDS served as a defining moment when a co-worker recognized his talent for technology. Schlabs relocated to San Francisco and later joined Vignette, a tech start-up.

“I took a chance by leaving EDS for an Internet start-up in 1998,” he said. “I did three years of professional services for Vignette, and then I experienced a layoff during the dot.com bubble. It was another defining moment that helped shape me into the guy I am today. I never want to be on either side of boxes being carried out of an office building.”



The tech world came calling again for Schlabs, and he joined salesforce.com in 2002. After nine-plus years with the company as a vice president and sales executive, he was ready for a new chapter. He partnered with Kristin Kassis, a former customer at Vignette, and Linda Wade, whom he met through salesforce.com, to launch WorkWise LLC on Oct. 1, 2011.

“We wanted to have the creative freedom to focus on the ‘real’ issues that plague the software industry and prohibit their customers from successfully adopting their technologies,” he said. “As a co-founder, there’s a lot of pressure. You’re in the weeds as a project manager; you’re in the weeds negotiating contracts; you’re in the weeds making sure customer expectations are being met. It’s an adjustment, but it’s fun and rewarding.”

WorkWise focuses on helping individuals adapt to transformational change by aligning people, processes and technology. Schlabs noted this change has become exponentially faster with the use of software-as-a-service (SaaS) and cloud-based applications.

“In the past, you may have had one implementation of an on-premise application that took 12 months to deploy,” he said. “Today, companies deploying cloud-based applications experience three to four iterations of a cloud-based application within the same 12-month window. You’re introducing four times the change in the same 12-month period, and our experience tells us, to be successful, you must prepare people and help them adapt to this velocity of change.”

WorkWise partners with companies to proactively strategize for technology implementations by establishing a plan with goals, objectives and consumable training and involving key people to drive the change.

“We ask clients why they are implementing the technology, and most of the time they don’t have an answer based on a measurable benefit,” he said. “Technology and process are only part of the equation—people have to adapt to the change. Our clients may have employees located in multiple countries with cultural differences, political and language sensitivities. We work with getting everyone through the change curve.”

Schlabs is fascinated with change management and has completed programs on executive coaching, strategy and systems thinking, leadership and management. Currently, he is delving into the psychological underpinnings of change through a program offered by the NeuroLeadership Institute, which he expects to complete in June. And that will be yet another experience for Schlabs.

“I’m grateful for all my experiences because they have been instrumental in helping shape who I am today,” he said. **“GAIN EXPERIENCE BY CHALLENGING YOURSELF AND VOLUNTEER FOR THE PROJECTS THAT NO ONE WANTS TO DO.”** You’ll acquire skills, but you’ll also test and improve your own limits as far as creative thinking and problem solving. Be empathetic, self-aware and have a personal code. We’re in this world for a very short time—ask yourself what do you really want to do with it?”

MBA '95 > MANAGING PARTNER AND CO-FOUNDER > WORKWISE LLC > SAN FRANCISCO, CA



If you talk with Jose Lozano, you may not be surprised that he serves as CEO of FKM, a successful, full-service advertising agency. Exuding confidence and an incomparable work ethic, Lozano is not only a business leader but also an embodiment of the American dream.

"I was raised in Houston, but I was actually born in Puerto Rico," he said. "I was five when I came to the U.S. and didn't even know English at the time."

Lozano's drive to succeed led him to Baylor. He graduated with a Marketing degree, which he put to use in sales and marketing for his father's national tire and automotive service company. Lozano later tapped into his entrepreneurial spirit, working as an independent consultant and launching the start-up Mo7, a digital and mobile marketing company that served clients such as the U.S. Army, Reliant Energy and Pepsi. In 2007, Mo7 merged with FKM, and Lozano became CEO in 2011. The integration of Mo7's new media approach with a 30-year-old ad agency required some organizational restructuring, which Lozano took on with several partners including FKM's chief creative officer and president Scott Brown.

"We began the restructure by asking, 'What's the next step that marketing and advertising will take, and how do we get ahead of it?'" he said. "One of my favorite quotes is by Wayne Gretzky: 'Skate to where the puck is going, not where it has been.' That's how we try to run the agency. **WE KNEW WE COULDN'T OPERATE HOW OTHER AGENCIES DO AND EXPECT TO BE CHOSEN BY MAJOR BRANDS.**"

A culture of collaboration fueled by a diversity of perspectives was born. The agency is now divided into three core teams: Innovation, Interaction and Transaction. Each team is composed of employees from different disciplines within the agency.

"Most agencies work in silos—if you need a creative idea, you ask the creative team; if you need insight into strategy, you ask another team," he said. "But our opinion is that model, over time, doesn't facilitate great thinking. We want to know how a brand can be more innovative, how a brand can have more valuable interactions, and how a brand can have more meaningful transactions."

The agency has also launched a hyper-specialized, spin-off agency called Palate that focuses on food, beverage and dining brands. Palate will get insights from FKM's core teams, as well as outside points of view from chefs, mixologists and sommeliers.

"We are partnering with the people that live and breathe food culture and will ultimately impact the food trends," Lozano said. "In order to identify emerging



trends with food and drink, you need to talk to the people creating the culture. We are now replicating this model for other industries as well."

Lozano, with the management team, has catapulted the company into a \$160 million enterprise. With offices in Houston, Dallas, Austin and New York, FKM's clients include Waste Management, Carapelli Olive Oils, Mattress Firm, Central Garden & Pet, Graeter's Ice Cream and Massage Heights. The agency gained yet another client, Clockwork Home Services, after competing on and winning an episode of AMC's reality television series "The Pitch," which aired in May 2012. Lozano, however, remains humble in his achievements and said Baylor's focus on business ethics has significantly impacted his career.

"Be careful what you ask for," he said. "I've always strived to be successful, but this is harder than I ever thought it would be. It was a lot easier to deal with ethics in a classroom. It is much harder when it becomes real, and you're the person making decisions. I'm not affecting a person with a job position; it's a family. I take that very seriously, and it keeps me grounded in my decisions."

With a watchful eye anticipating the puck's next move, Lozano continues to strive for excellence and urges others to do the same.

"I always tell our interns and new hires to 'be the top 5 percent,'" he said. **"IF YOU ARE IN THE TOP 5 PERCENT OF WHATEVER YOU DO, YOU'LL BE SUCCESSFUL,** be given opportunities and survive economic struggles. It's not good enough to be good. It's not good enough to be really good. You need to be great."

[bbr.baylor.edu/jose-lozano](http://bbr.baylor.edu/jose-lozano)