

PROMOTION TO THE TOP TIER OF THE TECHNICAL LADDER

Lori Diachin, Lawrence Livermore National Lab

Vida Iderem, Intel

Kathleen Fisher, Tufts University



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PROMOTION WITHIN THE NATIONAL LABORATORIES

***Lori Diachin, Director
Center for Applied Scientific Computing
Lawrence Livermore National Lab***



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Increasing your visibility is critical to career advancement and promotion

- *You must work hard, but others need to know of your accomplishments and expertise*
- *Increasing visibility is not the same as bragging or clamoring for attention*
- *Key decision makers should know:*
 1. Who you are
 2. What value you bring to the organization



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Understanding the process is important – what is valued by your organization?

Every organization is slightly different so it's important to investigate what **you** need to do in the context of your current environment

Understanding your environment: Talk to others...

- Talk to your supervisor about the promotion process
- Talk to peers who were recently promoted
 - How did they make the case?
 - What was the key change that earned the promotion?

Understanding yourself... get feedback

- What are your strengths?
- Where are your gaps? What can you do to fill the gaps?
- What are your values?
- In what type of job assignments do you thrive?
- Have a 360 evaluation done
- Have a mentor give you candid feedback



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An example: The CASC value system has four basic axes we consider for promotion



Showing initiative is a critical component to raising your visibility

- **Ask for more responsible assignments** and do them well – show you deserve them and that your skills are underutilized
- **Take risks** - Step outside your comfort zone – stretch professionally
- **Volunteer** to represent your department at meetings, committees or projects
- Look for opportunities to put unused skills to the test



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Include mentors and sponsors in your network to help ensure success

- **Mentor:** Helps advise you on your career and company culture
- **Sponsor/Champion:** Advocates for you; making sure your work is visible to influential people in the company
- Both can help you identify opportunities to shine
 - Speaking/presentation opportunities
 - Help you identify and pitch your strengths
 - Be sure they know your career goals!
- Have a variety of mentors and sponsors
- Become a mentor or sponsor yourself



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Actions I have taken that have helped my chances for promotion

- Volunteered for a variety of assignments (some were not very glamorous)
- Stretched professionally – taking on deputy and leadership roles and then working hard to ensure they succeed
- Found great mentors and sponsors
- Take advantage of opportunities when they presented themselves – say Yes!
- Focused on improving presentation skills and speaking up more in meetings
- Introspection to understand strengths and weaknesses; build support teams with complementary skill sets



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PROMOTION WITHIN THE INDUSTRY LABS

*Vida Ilderem, VP Intel Labs
Director Wireless Communication Research
Intel Corporation*



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Lessons Learned/leadership Qualities

- Understand the requirements to get to the next step
- Be passionate about what you do— Deliver --- Get noticed
- Be noticed by a sponsor
- Establish your expertise. Become go to person
- Persevere. Be resilient.
- Establish your network--- volunteer
- Get out of your comfort zone



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PROMOTION ACROSS INSTITUTIONS

*Kathleen Fisher, Professor
Tufts University*



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Positioning yourself for promotion

- Understand yourself
 - Goals, non-goals, and available resources
- Understand your institution
 - Values, non-values, and institutional challenges
- Devise a plan so *you* fit your organization beautifully
 - Dialog with your manager(s)
 - Dialog with your mentor(s)
- Be a leader
 - Technically, organizationally, and as a mentor



Understanding myself

- I want to be a recognized leader in my research field (programming languages)
 - Work on problems I find technically interesting
 - Publish papers in top venues
 - Serve as program chair, journal editor, etc.
- I wanted my work to solve technical problems facing AT&T

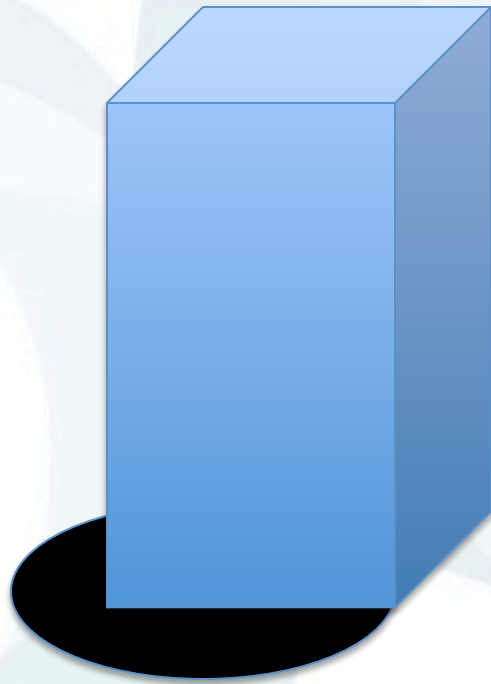


Understanding AT&T

- Valued:
 - Contributions to solving company problems
 - Contributions to research community
 - Building systems that others can use
 - Leadership (in pretty much any form)
- Not Valued:
 - PL in abstract, papers for papers sake
- Challenges: Cataclysmic industry upheaval
 - Monopoly -> Competitive industry
 - Low-growth industry -> Pressure from Wall St.
 - Lay-offs and downsizing



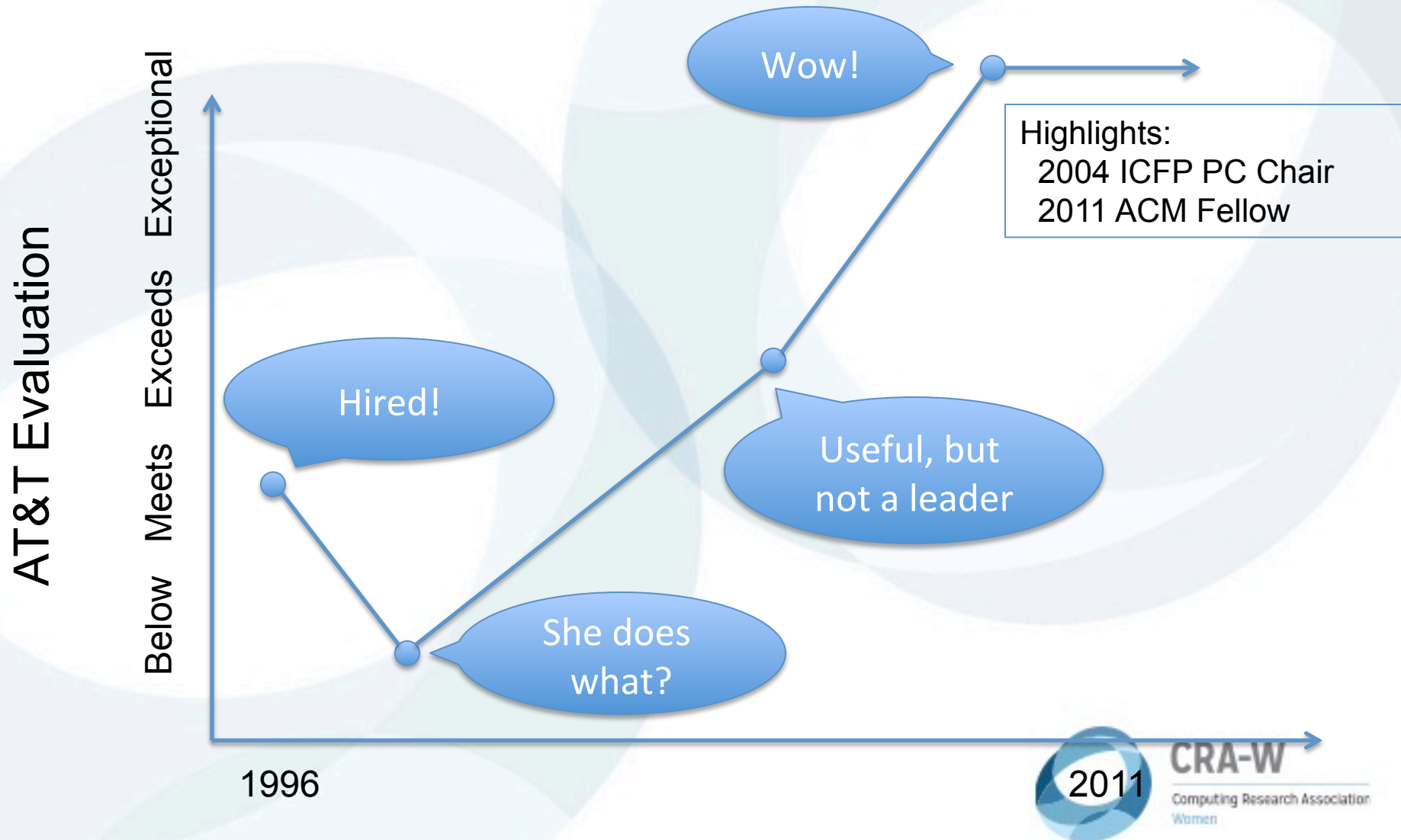
Assessing the initial fit




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The (bumpy) Road to a Beautiful Fit



So, Promotion?

- Not at AT&T 
 - Layoffs, promotion and hiring freezes
 - Were considering using my case to force a thaw
- Transitioned to other institutions, with the equivalent of a promotion:



Individual contributor



Program Manager



Full Professor



Lessons Learned

- Believe in yourself.
- Mentors are important for keeping sanity.
- Champions are necessary for advancement.
- Don't limit your horizons to current employer.
 - Employability is the best job security
 - Craft your work so your CV shows you are well qualified for desired jobs & advancement levels.



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