
Minicase

Developing Leaders at UPS

UPS is the nation's fourth-largest employer with 357,000 employees worldwide and operations in more than 200 countries. UPS is consistently recognized as one of the "top companies to work for" and was recently recognized by *Fortune* as one of the 50 best companies for minorities. A major reason for UPS's success is the company's commitment to its employees. UPS understands the importance of providing both education and experience for its next generation of leaders—spending \$300 million annually on education programs for employees and encouraging promotion from within. All employees are offered equal opportunities to build the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. A perfect example of this is Jovita Carranza.

Jovita Carranza joined UPS in 1976 as a part-time clerk in Los Angeles. Carranza demonstrated a strong work ethic and a commitment to UPS, and UPS rewarded her with opportunities—opportunities Carranza was not shy about taking advantage of. By 1985 Carranza was the workforce planning manager in metropolitan Los Angeles. By 1987 she was district human resources manager based in Central Texas. By 1990 she had accepted a move to district human resources manager in Illinois. She received her first operations assignment, as division manager for hub, package, and feeder operations, in Illinois in 1991. Two years later, she said yes to becoming district operations manager in Miami. In 1996 she accepted the same role in Wisconsin. By 1999 Carranza's progressive successes led UPS to promote her to president of the Americas Region. From there she moved into her current position as vice president of UPS Air Operations, based in Louisville, Kentucky.

The \$1.1 billion air hub she currently oversees sprawls across the equivalent of more than 80 football fields. It can handle 304,000 packages an hour, its computers process nearly 1 million transactions per minute, and it serves as the lynchpin for the \$33 billion business that has become the world's largest package delivery company.

Carranza attributes much of her success to her eagerness to take on new challenges: "The one error that people make early on in their careers is that they're very selective about opportunities so they avoid some, prefer others," she says. "I always accepted all opportunities that presented

themselves because from each one you can learn something, and they serve as a platform for future endeavors.”

It has also been important, she says, to surround herself with capable, skilled employees who are loyal to the company and committed to results. After nearly 30 years with UPS, Carranza says teamwork, interaction, and staff development are the achievements of which she is proudest: “Because that takes focus, determination, and sincerity to perpetuate the UPS culture and enhance it through people.”

Carranza’s corporate achievements, determination, drive, innovation, and leadership in business have earned her the distinction of being named *Hispanic Business Magazine’s* Woman of the Year. She credits her parents, both of Mexican descent, with teaching her “the importance of being committed, of working hard, and doing so with a positive outlook”—principles she says continue to guide her personal and professional life. These principles mirror those of the company whose corporate ladder she has climbed nonstop, an organization she says values diversity and encourages quality, integrity, commitment, fairness, loyalty, and social responsibility.

Among Carranza’s words of wisdom: “Sit back and listen and observe,” she says. “You learn more by not speaking. Intelligent people learn from their own experiences; with wisdom, you learn from other people’s mistakes. I’m very methodical about that.”

1. What are the major skills Jovita Carranza has demonstrated in her career at UPS that have made her a successful leader?
2. Consider the spiral of experience that Jovita Carranza has traveled. How has her experience affected her ability as a leader?
3. Take a look at the characteristics of successful leaders in Highlight 2.1. How many of these are demonstrated by Jovita Carranza?

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End Notes

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