

Bay Area People

CAREER MOVES IN THE REGION'S PROFESSIONAL SECTORS

CONSULTING

COO to focus on growing Oakland consulting firm

BY GEORGE KHALAF
San Francisco Business Times

As a modern dancer, consulting executive Robin Nasatir knows the value of good choreography.

The new president and chief operating officer of Cliff Consulting has spent years preparing for her new role. Nasatir stepped into the shoes of founder Bob Cliff, who is shifting to a strategic role within the 35-year-old Oakland firm. Formerly the firm's vice president, she will now oversee 15 employees and manage day-to-day operations.

"Bob and I co-managed the firm for the last four years preparing for this transition," Nasatir said.

Nasatir joined Cliff Consulting in 1987 after a career as a dancer and manager for several Bay Area and New York modern dance companies. The firm offers a team of project leaders who help companies improve their operations and implement new technology. Cliff Consulting boasts low turnover; the average

consultant tenure within the firm is 11 years. This quality translates into a productive team and a consistent Bay Area client base, which includes Blue Shield, Kaiser Permanente, the Packard Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. Wells Fargo has been a client for 30 years.

"We aren't out there selling or trying to find the next big thing. We just feel like we're helping people," Nasatir said. The firm, whose most junior consultant has 10 years experience, will look to add a few consultants this year in addition to diversifying its client base. Nasatir acknowledges it will be a challenge to find the right people. "We are looking for people who can lead and partner. That's a rare breed," she said.

Nasatir made the transition from dancing to business when a fellow dancer mentioned that her interest in organization, planning, facilitation and efficiency would make her a good match for a career in consulting. The seed was planted. Nasatir got her



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M.B.A. at the University of San Francisco School of Business and Management and was recruited by Cliff Consulting in 1987.

It's been a perfect fit for me," she said. "I'm lucky. I stumbled on this great opportunity and mentor."

Nasatir, a Berkeley native with two teenage sons, lives in Oakland and continues to dance. She is involved with three dance companies, one of which will bring her to Poland this summer.

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