UAlbany Weekend MBA Stories – Rafael Alvarez
Vice President, Technology & Business Delivery Services, IPLogic, Inc.

Do you believe in love at first sight? You don’t have to. Technology executive (slash, “junkie”) Rafael, “Raf” Alvarez has enough certainty for the lot of us. “I did a lot of traveling so I didn’t have any time to find a wife,” he laughs. “But the first night I met Amy, I knew there was something special.”

A graduate with a bachelor of arts in psychology from SUNY Oswego, Raf Alvarez was working in New York City and living in New Jersey. “All my old college housemates lived in upstate New York,” he explains. “So, I drove up to Albany one weekend to celebrate a friend’s birthday.” The August 1993 birthday bash turned out to be the evening which Raf Alvarez met Amy and declared to his friends, “I’m going to get married! I just met my wife.”

On April 27, 2013, Raf and Amy Alvarez will celebrate 17 years of marriage. “I’m lucky,” Raf shares with a smile. “Not only is my wife smart, but she gets credit for our two amazing boys.” Both kids share their father’s proclivity toward technology … Raf’s “other love.”

“Love is technology,” he adds unabashedly. “Technology should improve quality of life and solve real business challenges. It’s that simple.” Raf believes that in order to be successful, you have to have a passion for what you do. “Otherwise, you’re just going through motions and people see right through that.”

After spending close to five years with KPMG, developing applications for clients, Raf Alvarez went to work with one of the world’s leading professional services organizations, Ernst & Young, LLP. At the renowned Ernst & Young, Raf held numerous leadership positions.

“I basically learned how to run and support a business from my time with Ernst & Young,” acknowledges Raf about his nearly 13 years with the company. “I was responsible for the oversight and support of U.S. service lines and Ernst & Young partners around the globe.”

Through a series of life transitions, the Alvarez family made the decision to move closer to Amy’s family in Albany. Raf continued to be employed by Ernst & Young but the extended commute quickly took its toll. Raf realized he needed to work closer to home so he could spend more time with his family.

He accepted the position of Senior Project Manager with CDPHP in August 2007, where he was accountable for delivery of corporate strategic projects and served on a $60 million Core Claims system and EDW/BI business transformation implementation. “My caveat was that they sponsor my MBA and allow me to attend, which they graciously agreed to do.”
After diligently researching MBA programs, Raf Alvarez selected the UAlbany Weekend MBA Program because the in-classroom cohort structure offered intangible benefits. “I wanted to be part of a learning environment that offered that kind of energy.”

By the end of the first session, Raf’s cohort elected him Team Leader. “Everything needs a balance,” asserts Raf. “The common goal we all shared was to make each other better. I was simply the one who asked questions, listened, and led the collaboration.”

Raf credits his success in the MBA program to the support of his family and the cohort structure noting, “The truth is, no matter how challenging it became, I couldn’t quit. My wife wouldn’t let me!” A sentiment that was commonplace in Raf’s class. “When graduation came to pass, it was evident it did so because our whole families earned it with us,” he says.

Since graduating, Raf Alvarez occasionally engages with prospective students at the Weekend MBA Information Sessions. “If you believe you can bring value as well as absorb value yourself, then this program is for you,” he asserts.

Raf also shares a word of caution to prospective Weekend MBAers, “Don’t pursue this because you think you can make a lot of money. Pursue it because you have a thirst for learning, knowledge, and collaboration. This program was designed to leverage your skills while providing the opportunity for you to give back.”

Plus, if you’re anything like Raf Alvarez, you’re likely to pick up new lifelong friends and colleagues along the journey.

A seasoned information technology executive with more than 20 years of strategic, operational, and leadership experience, Raf currently serves as Vice President of Technology & Business Delivery Services at IPLogic, Inc., a technology-driven company that designs, installs, and supports networking technology for a variety of industries.

It’s no mystery why Raf Alvarez rose to the top of his UAlbany Weekend MBA class in leadership, integrity and respect. He’s a human “doing” with the conviction individuals should give 100% toward enjoying what they do both personally and professionally.

“Life is short,” he exclaims, “Appreciate what you have and purposefully take time to enjoy it.”

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For additional information on the program, please contact Program Director Don Purdy at dpurdy@albany.edu, at 518.442.4964, or at @UAlbanyMBA.