



Tonica Francis

B.S. in Chemical Engineering (2000)
TPx Communications, Walnut Creek, CA

Describe your overall duties/responsibilities as a Senior Business Advisor:

I communicate daily with C-level executives of various industries such as healthcare, retail, construction, and legal, and listen to understand their pain points so that I can find ways to help them solve problems related to their network, voice, and cybersecurity for their businesses. I work with internal experts to help design, present, and implement managed services solutions for their businesses and provide hardware, software, and internet-based applications to their locations across the United States and potentially globally, utilizing partners such as Cisco, Microsoft, Fortinet, VeloCloud, Datto, and WebEx. Additionally, I work with the internal management teams to discuss market trends and customer needs in order to design solutions for each of the unique markets that we serve.

Explain the skills/abilities that are required for being successful in your role:

In my role, thick skin is probably the most important ability and I certainly learned that from being a minority and working through my studies. Pushing yourself to keep believing in yourself, your company, and your mission no matter what the competition is doing, or how much the customers are afraid and are rejecting you, is what you must do to survive in my role. I did not have the technical skills for this industry when I

was hired so I had to use my people skills, tenacity, ability to learn difficult material in a short period of time, and skill to be adaptable and teachable when I am used to being a know-it-all.

What advice would you give to students who are considering majoring in Chemical Engineering?

When I started my journey to complete my B.S, I was a poor, African American single mom from the east side of South Bend, IN. I was the first in my family to graduate, including my grandmother's 10 children. I was told by many that I would not make it through the program because there were those who did not have the adversity that I had who did not make it through. It was extremely challenging and difficult, but once I graduated with my degree and all of the skills and confidence that I had gained, there has been nothing that I could not accomplish. My advice is if you can start it, please know that you can finish it but be willing to put in the work because, in the end, it is worth more than you could ever dream of.

