

SAN ANTONIO BUSINESS JOURNAL

Paula Waggoner-Aguilar

President & CEO, The Energy CFO LLC

CATEGORY: PRIVATE - MEDIUM



"I help hard-driving owners and executives start up, fix and grow companies for a living – let's just say I have a lot of energy. I do not spend much time at a desk"

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Paula Waggoner-Aguilar is a senior finance executive with 20-plus years working for entrepreneurs, independent exploration and production, midstream master limited partnerships, integrated energy, natural resources and oil field service companies.

She founded her niche energy finance firm, The Energy CFO LLC, along with the Women's Energy Networks South Chapter in the same month, April 2013. Waggoner-Aguilar specializes in entrepreneurial energy finance, corporate finance and risk management. Through her firm, she provides CFO services to energy entrepreneurs, family enterprises and private equity start-ups across South Texas.

Waggoner-Aguilar started out in the industry in the 1990s in oil field services and worked her way up the auditing and accounting ranks in Latin America. She continued to work her way up the energy chain over the next decade, expanding her expertise.

She has held several senior leadership roles in corporate and business unit planning, finance and transaction advisory for private and publically traded U.S., European and Australian global 500 corporations and joint ventures operating in the U.S. and Latin America.

YEARS ON THE JOB: 17 months

COLLEGE DEGREE: BBA in accounting, the University of Texas at Arlington; MS in Taxation, The University of North Texas

FIRST JOB EVER: I was 9 years old when I started chauffeuring my grandfather who was a rancher in the Texas Panhandle. I quickly "moved up the ladder" to pulling trailers, driving tractors, taking apart things and figuring out how to fix them. When I was 15, I started working at Hunt Properties Inc. as a receptionist and then accounting.

Who piqued your interest in finance? Nancy Craig, CFO of Hunt Properties Inc.

What is it about finance that you find interesting? Not a day goes by that I don't see or learn something new. Analyzing or mining data is both challenging and interesting. Some of the more complex quantitative economic models can also be very challenging.

What's your financial management style? I help hard driving owners and executives start-up, fix and grow companies for a living – let's just say I have a lot of energy. I do not spend much time at a desk. I am known for my candor, adaptability (I work with employees across the organization) and being focused. I spend a lot of time listening. I enjoy a good challenge and eliminating headaches for owners. Most importantly, I really enjoy people and learning new things.

What is that one big mistake in your career that taught you your greatest lesson? Not recognizing how critical having a sponsor is for your career. Fortunately, I have had a couple of very influential sponsors who recognized my talents early on, coached me and advised me how to navigate my career internationally and domestically, and made every effort to help give me amazing opportunities and help promote me.

One cost-saving measure you implemented (or one you typically champion) in your career

that has had an impact: For private companies, I focus on improving owner's cash flow and profitability. I start with the fundamentals and look at pricing, procurement, and productivity. I have a lot of experience eliminating manual processes across the organization including tracking and approvals, adopting technology or utilizing existing systems to their full capabilities, automating certain tasks, and redeploying personnel time to more critical areas.

What myth would you like to dispel about your job? People skills, listening, confidence, consensus building and solid communications skills are just as critical as financial and analytical skills and industry knowledge.

the **energy**cfo