

## Diverse Supplier Spotlight:

KDM Analytics'

# Djenana Campara



COURTESY OF DJENANA CAMPARA

With 30 years of experience and leadership in software and security engineering, Djenana Campara is the president, CEO and co-founder of the cyber security consultant KDM Analytics.

She is responsible for the company's business direction and represents KDM Analytics, which has locations in Washington D.C., New York and Canada, in leading industry standards groups.

Previously, Campara was CTO and chairwoman of the Board of Directors of KLOCwork, a company she founded in 2001 through a successful spin-out from Nortel Networks as an independent company. She also served as KLOCwork's chief executive officer, securing the company's first round of funding, and established its customer base. She has been awarded four U.S. patents for her groundbreaking static analysis and formalization techniques that were implemented in KLOCwork's products.

Read more below from *Diversity in STEAM Magazine's* chat with Campara:

### DISM: What encouraged you to be an entrepreneur?

**Campara:** Innovation — I always liked to innovate, however, you are very restricted on how much innovation you can do in a company that you work for. I was fortunate to work for Nortel Networks (started when Nortel was Bell-Northern Research Lab) where employees were encouraged to innovate and then turn those in-

novations into business, which spun out into an independent company. That is exactly how I founded my first company, KLOCwork, and became an entrepreneur. My second company is KDM Analytics.

### DISM: Can you share some obstacles or challenges you've faced as a female business owner?

**Campara:** Prior to spinning out from Nortel, my business unit was going through the business incubation process. Since I was still very technical (I had 3 awarded U.S. patents and led the team to implement these innovations into products that were utilized in Nortel's business units) and learning the business side (like drinking from a firehose), I had a couple of business analysts assigned to me. At the time, no one was thinking I could be positioned in the role of CEO — I was female and an immigrant from a war-torn, socialist country without business training. However, I thought I would be excellent in the CTO role and I expressed that interest to executives and business analysts. I was told by the analyst, and I quote, "I always thought that a CTO should be a male with gray hair." The General Manager assigned to us at the time said to me, and I quote, "Why do you think I should give you that role?" He was considering male employees with less qualifications and no knowledge in the area of my products. Ultimately, none of them,

or other new people that they brought into picture, could put the package together for Venture Capital and clearly communicate ROI to the investors. When they exhausted all venues, they asked me to take it over and give it one more shot prior to shutting down the business. My team and I successfully put together the VC package and presented it to tier one VCs. A month later, we successfully spun out the business, became an independent company and I was unanimously voted to be CEO.

At the same time, I was told by the president of Business Venture Group that I would/could not be a successful CEO because I "don't take risks." My response was very blunt: "I considered taking the risk when I was in the plane, landing in the war zone under sniper fire. However, this business for me is an opportunity that I will take and exploit to the maximum."

### DISM: What unexpected pleasures or outcomes does owning a business bring you?

**Campara:** I can take the company in the direction of cutting-edge cybersecurity innovation — one of the most consequential fields in this modern time. In addition, as an immigrant coming to North America with \$2,000 in my pocket and an 8-month-old baby to become founder and co-business owner of a cybersecurity company, I am living the American dream!