



STRIDING AHEAD: Liz Hanson left a career in investment banking behind to be a coach to sporting coaches with her Olympian husband Bo. PHOTO: JASON DOUGHERTY/190222

Making mark on sporting world

HOW can you go from a corporate career in investment banking to helping coaches get the best out of their athletes using personality profiling? Liz Hanson has done it, and much in between, even though she is yet to turn 37.

The QUT graduate spent five years in mergers and acquisitions in the mining and resources sector after graduating before going on to a stint as BOC Gases' general manager of finance.

The Maroochydore resident said she then became disheartened with the corporate world and started a consulting company in Sydney offering mentoring programs to corporate women.

"I just wanted to have more of an influence," she said. "I was part of the big corporate environment and I had lost interest in it."

"I had been working in the very male environments of investment banking, then mining and then an industrial gas company. I noticed there weren't many women around and I was always asked to mentor younger women in the organisation... I don't want to say I was the token woman, but I'd get rolled out as the example to other women."

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Liz Hanson

"So I met my business partner and we started Xplore in 2002 aimed at women in big organisations. A lot of my previous employers became clients, so we had banks, government agencies, big accounting and law firms.

"It was about women networking, building professional relationships with senior management and taking time to make sure they were visible.

"The biggest challenge is that women work really hard, they get really great results but they don't tell anyone about it and they don't ask for, or demand, recognition."

Mrs Hanson's career changed tack following the traumatic experience giving birth to her daughter in 2005.

The experience ended well, but it sparked a "life-awakening moment", an immediate realisation that life was short and that the best next course of action was to buy a boat and go sailing, with a newborn and husband Bo in tow.

"We sailed out of Sydney heads

and turned left," she said.

The trio took 15 months to get to Cairns before making a u-turn back down to Mooloolaba, where they decided to settle.

Mrs Hanson opened Athlete Assessments three years ago.

It applies the DISC (dominance, influence, steadiness, conscientiousness) behavioural model to the sporting world and has been used by the US men's rowing team, Netball Queensland and various Australian rowing identities, capitalising on Bo Hanson's background as an Olympic rower with three bronze medals to his name.

It has also worked with coaches and teams from sports as varied as football, hockey, golf, swimming, rugby league and surf lifesaving.

"Our approach is to work with the coach because they can make the biggest impact on the athletes."

Mrs Hanson has been asked to speak at the World Conference on Women and Sport in Sydney next May. Her topic will be coaching Generation Y athletes.

Constructive dismissal: just what is it really?

MANY employers are under the impression that if an employee resigns, they are safe from unfair dismissal claims, but there are situations that arise, where an employee may successfully institute an unfair dismissal claim despite the fact they're the ones who terminated the employment relationship.

The Fair Work Act provides that an employee will be taken to have been "dismissed" if an employee resigns because of conduct or a course of conduct engaged in by the employer. This is known as constructive dismissal and it's now expressly provided for in the unfair dismissal provisions of the legislation.

The difficult part is determining when the employer's conduct is such to make continued employment sufficiently intolerable for an employee's resignation to constitute a constructive dismissal. It's impossible to list all the factors that Fair Work Australia will consider, but a classic example is when the employer instructs an employee to resign or face disciplinary action/termination.

The employer's actions leading up to the resignation will also be analysed and taken into consideration. An employee is expected to have told the employer that he/she has a grievance. In fact one of the factors that played a significant part in a recent decision by Fair Work Australia on constructive dismissal was that the employer consistently ignored the grie-



WORKPLACE LAW

Lisa Aitken

vances of the employee.

KEY POINT: Employers must therefore remember that a letter of resignation will not necessarily protect them from an unfair dismissal claim.

Their conduct towards the employee prior to the resignation plays a significant role in determining whether the resignation will be seen as a true resignation or not. Providing an employee with the option to resign; unreasonable management of an employee; allowing an employee to be subjected to harassment or bullying at work without the employer addressing it; and many more circumstances, are likely to be treated as constructive dismissal if the employee resigns. This is because conduct of this kind may place the employee in the position that they believe is so unreasonable they cannot continue to work for the employer.

Lisa Aitken is an accredited specialist in workplace relations law and the managing partner of Aitken Legal, a law firm specialising in employment law for employers. www.aitkenlegal.com.au. The information in this column is intended as a guide only.

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Sunshine Coast Council

Rural Reference Group Nominations

Council and the Department of Employment Economic Development and Innovation are seeking nominations from

- community organisations
- business representatives
- industry leaders and
- individuals

to nominate suitable candidates interested in participating in a Rural Reference Group.

The intended purpose of this group is to provide advice on key issues that respond to the current and future challenges and opportunities relating to rural areas on the Sunshine Coast.

If you are interested, contact the Sunshine Coast Regional Council's Customer Service Centre on 1300 00 72 72 (within Sunshine Coast) or (07) 5420 8939 (outside Sunshine Coast or mobile phone) to request a nomination form, otherwise they can be downloaded from Council's web site www.business.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au

Nominations close Friday 16 April 2010.

www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au

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