

THE TOP 25 NONBANK WOMEN IN FINANCE

JOAN KELLY

GROUP EXECUTIVE, SYSTEMS DELIVERY,
MASTERCARD GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY & OPERATIONS
MASTERCARD WORLDWIDE

Prior to 2001, MasterCard had an aging, patchwork network. It lacked real-time transaction settlement and lagged in areas supporting merchant promotion and marketing. Seven years and \$160 million later, MasterCard is a little savvier.

Its contactless PayPass system now supports “tap-n-go” New York transit payments. Issuing clients can graduate their customers to premium card levels without changing the 16-digit account number. And corporate cards now come supported with an array of expense and reporting features. “We really started in the early 2000s, and laid the foundation,” says MasterCard technology executive Joan Kelly, recalling the introduction of MC’s global transaction network that supplied the No.2 card association with an advanced data and processing infrastructure. “We created a state-of-the-art foundational system enhancement strategy, and what we’ve been doing since then is continually investing and bringing more added value.”

Kelly, 58, is one of the chief architects behind this evolution. A 16-year veteran of MasterCard, the group executive for systems delivery at the company’s St. Louis-based

global technology and operations center has been a leading force at upgrading core legacy systems and introducing new functions that handled 900 million cards and 18 billion transactions worth \$2.3 trillion in 2007.

So far that’s the peak year for activity, when a multi-year systems enhancement strategy had ripened enough for the rollout of new services driven by her team. That includes product graduation (the “account-for-life” feature described above), an automated savings program for BusinessCard holders, corporate card account controls, and two expense and financial management tools for domestic and multinational commercial cardholders.

All these feature-sets came from inter-divisional team huddles, sometimes in collaborative “wiki” environments, between product lines and the company’s technologists, orchestrated by Kelly. The new services helped to double MasterCard’s income to \$1 billion in 2007, fueled by a 22-percent increase in revenue to \$4.4 billion

last year. In the second quarter of 2008 MasterCard’s net income came in at \$297 million, above the 2007 level of \$195 million.

As the senior female technologist at MasterCard—and a peer of former MasterCard Americas president Ruth Ann Marshall—Kelly is keenly involved in promoting opportunity for women in the organization. She’s a member of the MasterCard Global Diversity and Inclusion Council, and was a panel speaker for MC’s Women’s Leadership network forum. —GF



VITALS

Age: 58
Favorite Pastime: Golf
Children: Two; aged 20 and 13
Last Book Read:
Ike: An American Hero
Last Movie: “The Bank Job”
Charity Most Active In:
Junior Achievement
One thing on your Life List:
Spend a month in Europe
Top Non-Business Concern:
Economic and lifestyle preparedness of upcoming generations