

Debra Snider
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Debra Snider is an author and speaker. Her debut novel, *A Merger of Equals*, was published in November 2006. The novel has been described as “the thinking woman’s dream—a fun love story set against the backdrop of the business world that is chock-full of important and inspiring lessons about the true nature of career and personal success.” People who work in the business world will appreciate the book’s astute insider feel; everyone will appreciate its understanding of human relationships, both personal and professional, its perceptive take on gender issues in the workplace and its inspiring outlook. From its provocative opening sentence to its touching final pages, *A Merger of Equals* is an intelligent, thoughtful story for readers who want an insightful, thought-provoking and ultimately stirring read.

Ms. Snider is also the author of *Working Easier: A Toolkit for Staff and Board Members of Nonprofit Arts Organizations* (Illinois Arts Alliance Foundation, 2005) and *The Productive Culture Blueprint For Corporate Law Departments and Their Outside Counsel* (American Bar Association Career Resource Center, 2003), as well as numerous articles and essays. She has been a featured speaker in the United States and Europe on topics including strategic productivity, client development, change facilitation, leadership, law department management, time management, and success strategies for professional and business women. She has also consulted on these topics for corporate, legal services and nonprofit clients.

From 1995 through September 2000, Ms. Snider was Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Chief Administrative Officer of Heller Financial, Inc. in Chicago (formerly NYSE:HF, the company was acquired by General Electric Capital Corporation in 2001). In her combined functions, Ms. Snider had management responsibility for approximately 100 people and \$100 million in annual expenditures. As General Counsel, she developed the vision, strategies and tactical blueprints for the law department, and led its transformation from a cost center into a true strategic asset for Heller. Productivity, employee job satisfaction, customer satisfaction, enterprise risk management, and operating efficiency were all significantly enhanced. Under Ms. Snider’s leadership, Heller’s aggregate internal and external legal costs boasted a *negative* compound annual growth rate from 1995-2000, despite substantial increases in overall corporate size, complexity and costs over the same period.

As Heller’s CAO, Ms. Snider had executive management responsibility for the company’s corporate services functions, including facilities, purchasing, office services, travel, records management, telecommunications, business resumption planning, corporate security, and the Knowledge Center. In that capacity, she developed and implemented process improvement, vendor management and other strategies and programs that aligned administration functions with business strategies and resulted in significant cost rationalization and savings.

From 1989-1995, Ms. Snider was a partner at Katten Muchin & Zavis (now Katten Muchin Rosenman) in Chicago, where she practiced primarily in the securities, securitization and mergers & acquisitions areas. In addition to her law practice, at KMZ she chaired the Securities Department, was Co-Hiring Partner and co-founded the KMZ Women’s Forum, a network of over 750 professional and business women in the Chicago area. Before that, she was First Vice President and Associate General Counsel at The Balcor Company, and an associate at Hopkins & Sutter, another large Chicago law firm.

Ms. Snider, who is admitted to practice law in Illinois, serves on the Executive Council for Reading In Motion, a nonprofit organization committed to improving literacy in Chicago’s at-risk children, on the Advisory Board of The Corporate Legal Standard, Inc., and is a member of The Chicago Network, Chicago’s premier organization of professional women. She is a 1976 Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Michigan, where she majored in English Language and Literature, and a 1979 graduate of the University of Chicago Law School. She and her husband now live in Nevada; they have two grown children.