

KYUNG YOON

In her quest to keep achieving, recruiter learns to prioritize



As a child in Korea, family values and work ethic were at the core of Kyung Yoon's upbringing. A diplomat's daughter, she traveled and studied around the world, abiding by her culture's sense of honor and responsibility.

"We had to be polite, aware of other people and always make sure to be welcome," says Ms. Kyung.

As vice chair of Heidrick & Struggles, a worldwide recruiting firm based in Menlo Park, Ms. Kyung puts to practice principles she learned: goal-reaching, accomplishment and opportunity-seizing, all in the context of ethics.

She acts as the bridge between the United States and the Asia Pacific region, helping build and expand Hei-

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drick & Struggles' Asian operation, which today amounts to offices in 10 countries, including Singapore, Japan and China.

"This was the most meaningful project because I learned about the differences and commonalities of the countries," she says. "It was a soul-searching project, in addition to business."

Ms. Kyung recruits job candidates, searches out and coaches executives, and much more. She helps multinational companies such as Dell, IBM and Microsoft do their top-executive searches. It's a job that does not allow for long vacations or leisurely afternoons off.

On a typical day, Ms. Kyung walks into her office at 8

a.m., meets with job candidates, develops business plans, writes candidate profiles, makes calls and e-mails until 8 p.m. In the past, her to-do list was longer and the hours of personal enjoyment shorter.

"I used to come in at 6 a.m. and stay until 10 p.m.," she says.

After years of such a grueling schedule, Ms. Kyung says she feels overwhelmed. "So much goal achievement can be a double-edged sword," she says.

She learned to reorganize her priorities and carefully started to budget her time and energy. This time, her goal was to achieve a balanced life.

"My priorities are changing at my age," the 48-year-old says. "I spend more time with my family and friends."

As the oldest child in her family, and according to her tradition, Ms. Kyung has the responsibility to provide for her siblings and parents.

"The meaning in life is giving and extending yourself," she says.

In 1998 the international technology partners of Heidrick & Struggles honored Ms. Kyung with the Gerry Award for her contributions to the firm. Three years later, she received the Globe Trotter Award for her work on the firm's expansion efforts.

She was named one of the world's top 200 executive recruiters in the book "The Global 200 Executive Recruiters," by Nancy Garrison-Jenn. She also will be featured in the upcoming book "Winning Behavior: How Smart Companies Use Behavioral Differentiation to Win More Business," to be published by the American Management Association.