



## Schwartz leads pack on information technology highway

Early venture puts business major in top spot at USAA

By Edmond Ortiz

Greg Schwartz loves his work and loves technology. So you can say he hit pay dirt a year after graduating in 1982 from Texas State University and landing a job with USAA, an Antonio-based Fortune 500 financial services company for military families.

Today, Schwartz is the chief information officer and senior vice president of information technology services for USAA. In the 32-plus years he has been with the company, there have been many advancements in technology, especially in computing.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, personal computer manufacturing was just beginning for home and commercial use. Back then, collegiate programs with a concentration on computer technology-related studies were scarce. Schwartz initially planned to pursue a general business major. "Nobody had a PC back then. PCs were just starting to emerge in the marketplace," Schwartz says. "The most that those of us coming out of high school had ever heard of information technology were spreadsheets.

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He narrowed his college choices based on the new programs, finally picking Texas State. One day a visiting professor explained the emerging major. The professor wrote on the chalkboard four sets of numbers that appeared to be salary ranges. The third highest, beating out business and accounting majors, was the starting salary for information technology (IT) graduates. The professor further explained that an increasing number of IT graduates were receiving numerous job offers right out of college.

"The professor said, 'This is the future where business is going,'" Schwartz recalls. "This immediately got my attention. I saw it as an emerging skill set. I really appreciated learning back then what value it would provide later."

Schwartz earned a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in computer information systems. He later graduated from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas.

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In his time at USAA, a diversified financial services group of companies, Schwartz has seen consumer technology evolve by leaps and bounds. His IT team at USAA numbers nearly 3,000 employees. Individual and companywide awards and honors have been bestowed upon USAA and its employees over the years. Schwartz was named an honoree of Computerworld's Premier 100 IT Leaders in Insurance and Technology in 2010.

Schwartz is most passionate about cloud computing, social media, mobile, and big data — the types of technologies "that are allowing USAA and other companies to reimagine their future." These tools, Schwartz adds, allow USAA to encourage consistent, quality communication with clients, and to support sound real-time transactions and other business dealings.

Schwartz sees his alma mater as a hub for business and tech-savvy students ready to immediately take on the professional world. "Texas State is still a good source for great talent. Last year, we hired from more than 40 colleges, but Texas State remains one of the main pipelines," he says.

Married to Renee, also a former Bobcat, the couple have three children and two grandchildren. Schwartz says he has no plans to slow down at USAA, in the tech industry, or in promoting the best of what Texas State has to offer. In 2011, he was honored with an Alumni Achievement Award. "Students coming out of college now, I try to steer them into the field of IT and to USAA. Within the IT community, we really try to make this a special place," he says. "We want to hire Bobcats."