

**Maryann Heil**

Director, Organizational Change Management  
Microsoft Corp.

**ACMP PNW:** Tell us a "fun fact" about you.

**Maryann:** I have lived on every continental U.S. coast. In Ohio, I lived on the North Coast (Cleveland/Lake Erie). In Texas, I lived not too far from the Gulf Coast (though Texas is so big that "not too far" can mean a several-hour drive). In Savannah, Georgia I lived on the Atlantic Coast. And in Seattle, I live on the Pacific Coast. Our favorite is the Pacific or West Coast.

**ACMP PNW:** Tell us about your background. What is your education, and where did you grow up?

**Maryann:** I grew up in the greater Cleveland, Ohio metropolitan area and earned a B.A. from The Ohio State University in Columbus and an MBA from Ohio University in Athens.

**ACMP PNW:** How long have you been working in Change Management? How did you choose this career?

**Maryann:** I started working in change management more than 15 years ago. I was working with different teams on several projects. We were struggling to finish them successfully and, in some cases, failing completely. I wondered why and began analyzing our process. The common thread? The lack of executive support combined with limited employee communication and training.

What could our team do with this knowledge? That question marked the beginning of my journey. I started doing change management before I knew it was an actual job.

**ACMP PNW:** What's the biggest obstacle you overcame in getting established, and how did you overcome it?

**Maryann:** When I first started doing change management, I had to win over project managers. They didn't understand what I did and how it could help them. It taught me the first lesson which is work hard to earn buy-in from project managers.

**ACMP PNW:** What's the biggest reward you get from this career?

**Maryann:** When we go-live and start seeing the value in all the hard work. I also enjoy being part of a team. The harder the project, the stronger the bond between team members.

**ACMP PNW:** What's on your bucket list yet to accomplish?

**Maryann:** In October, I completed one bucket list item. I went to Lisbon, Portugal on vacation. It was as wonderful as I imagined. Food, people, history. So much to see and do. I walked the neighborhoods of Lisbon, ranging from the sea-level Praco do

Comercio, the large public square facing the Tagus River, to the hilly neighborhoods and narrow winding streets of Barrio Alto and Alfama. I also visited the mountainous Sintra region as well as coastal resort towns. And there is so much left to see and do. Another trip is now a second bucket list item.