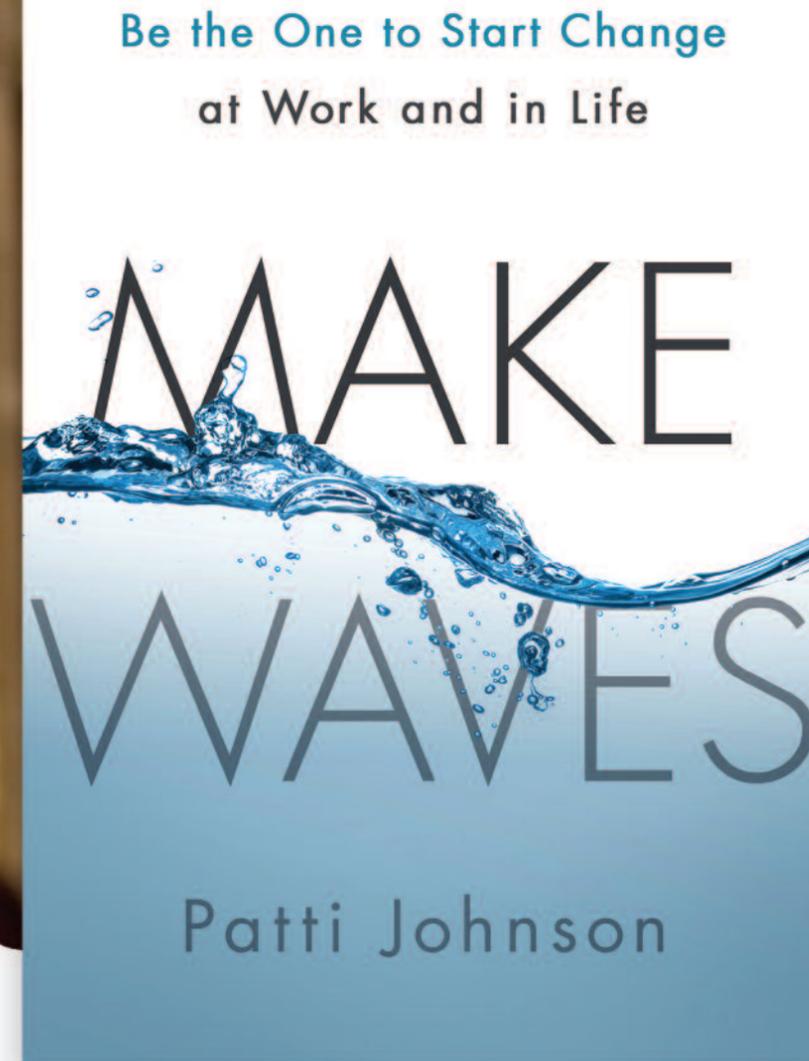




Patti Johnson Makes Her Own Waves

Local CEO, expert in change and author, Patti Johnson writes about how to start a wave, and features 24 'wave makers,' three of which are from the local area.



Why is it so hard for us to start big or small changes in our teams, organizations or community? "Our thoughts get in our way and we rely on the same steps that work for other situations. But—a true change—a wave is different," says Patti Johnson. "A wave requires stepping out and building interest and a commitment that grows organically. It's not just one event."

Johnson is a career and workplace expert and the CEO of PeopleResults, a change and human capital consulting firm she founded in 2004. She and her team advise clients such as PepsiCo, Microsoft, 7-Eleven, Accenture, Frito-Lay and many others on creating positive change in their leaders and organizations. She has been featured as an expert in media such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *MONEY Magazine*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *Fast Company*, *Entrepreneur Magazine*, and *Working Mother*.

In her first book, *Make Waves: Be the One to Start Change at Work and in Life*, she shares how anyone can start or contribute to a wave by diving into topics such as: Why asking "What can I do?" in any situation changes everything, when having all of the answers can work against you, and how to get started without a perfect plan. *Society Life* sat down with Johnson to learn more about her new book and how we can become wave makers.

FROM SENIOR EXECUTIVE TO AUTHOR Johnson described her career path and how she'd gone from senior executive in a large consulting firm, to becoming an entrepreneur, and then landed her first book gig. "I spent most of my career at Accenture, a global consulting firm," Johnson said. "My career has been comprised of leading the people side of business. I spent a lot of time working with clients on mergers and acquisitions. In January 2004, after spending a few years working up the courage, I began my own consulting firm. It has grown and evolved over the past ten years. So, why did I decide to write a book at this stage in my career? I've always enjoyed writing and became very interested in how individuals start changes. We often think it's up to the most senior or most experienced person in an organization. But, I haven't found that to be true. I believe that changes in organizations, the market and communities happen because of the decisions and actions of just a few people—and

then it spreads. This whole topic really caught my interest, especially in the social and mobile world in which we live."

TRACING CHANGES TO WAVE MAKER Given her career path, writing a book about change seems like a natural progression. She said one thing that made her decide to write a book and actually instigated the topic for the book when she began exploring how changes in organizations or communities really began. "I started tracing back to the one person or the few individuals who started the momentum and it wasn't always the one I expected. In one case it was the young entrepreneur who decided to experiment and test a new product. Emma Scheffler, as a high school student, when diagnosed with diabetes asked what she could do. That question evolved into the creation of Insulin Angels, a non-profit organization which is a support system for children when they are first diagnosed with diabetes.

Conducting research and asking a lot of questions is how Johnson decided on her list of experts to interview for the book. "The book has guidance on how to start a wave and includes many stories based on my research. I interviewed many people who have started changes and I chose 24 to highlight in the book. I intentionally chose a very eclectic mix to include such as, entrepreneurs, senior executives, students, community service professionals, a major league baseball manager and a few people in the early years of their careers. It was fascinating that patterns and themes of these individuals are quite similar," she said.

IDENTIFYING WAVE MAKERS AMONG US Johnson included Southlake residents as some of her Wave Makers. "I just mentioned Emma Scheffler who started Insulin Angels as a high school freshman with the help of her parents—an amazing story. Lois Melbourne, was the co-founder of Aquire, a software company, and their firm became global while they were still working

out of their garage. They grew through word of mouth and building a trusted network. You may be familiar with Christmas is for Children. Trisha Murphy-Rae started it by deciding to substantively help parents during the holidays. She started small by helping four families. For more than 20 years it has grown to touch the lives of thousands. Each change started because of the decisions and actions of just one person."

Being a business person, living in a business world, Johnson said when she started writing she realized that she wanted her voice in the book. "I hope people find it instructional, but also with a dose of encouragement and inspiration. Also, it took some creativity to find the time in a very busy life, but my family was very supportive and helped me pull it off," she said.

NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE, CHANGE CAN BE DIFFICULT Gearing the book toward how to start a change

and when change comes to you—how to tackle it, Johnson said there are many times in life when the changes we face weren't initiated by us and those can sometimes be the hardest. In my research I learned that those who have the most impact always ask "What can I do?" So, even when they're in a situation they didn't choose, they found what they could influence and made a difference," Johnson said. When asked if change is difficult to cope with for her, she said, "Sure. I'm no different than anyone else. Change can be difficult. The thing that helps me the most is continuing to learn. One of the habits of the 24 wave makers I featured in the book is that they are voracious learners. Once you accept you don't know all of the answers and that it's ok to not know all the answers—it can free you to realize that you can "learn your way through it."

Johnson has lived in the Southlake area for over 16 years. The book launches May 6, 2014 and can be purchased at Amazon and Barnes and Noble.