

## **Cristina Mossi Scaling Peaks with Devis**

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Washington, DC - In 1994, when Cristina Mossi first reported for work as a systems analyst at a small company call InfoStructure International, she was the first official computer engineer in the company.

The company billed itself as an IT consulting firm but served mostly USAID clients, with a mission to support and solve international development needs. It was not primarily an IT company. It was small--less than ten employees, as Mossi recalled.

Mossi was offered the job because of her IT background and expertise and because she spoke Spanish, a useful skill given that many of the USAID clients were in Latin America. "Right away, they sent me off to Swaziland in South Africa, to learn and train on a system developed for USAID. We came with an old huge projector, a huge, bulky PC and a big box of floppy disk. E-mail had not evolved to what it is today and data sharing was complicated and time-consuming."

A lot can happen in 16 years, and it did. InfoStructure International morphed into Devis (Development Infostructure), and it really is a highly sophisticated IT company now. It's moved into a much bigger office in Rosslyn, Virginia, it's increased its work force seven fold (75, 40 in the Rosslyn office) and in addition to a continued and important relationship with USAID, it's client list now includes a good portion of the federal agency registry. A minority woman-owned company, Devis is now described as a "leading provider of information technology consulting service to Federal, state and local governments as well as the international development community."

And Mossi? Today, Mossi is Chief Executive Officer, Chairman of the Board and an owner at Devis. Having been with Devis for over 16 years and being a part of the budding relationship with USAID, she has been able to help Devis' growth continue down the path started in 1992, staying firmly planted in its roots. She's also a classic American and Hispanic success story, in effect, working from the ground up to achieve executive and ownership positions.

For their continued and accomplished work with USAID, Devis and Mossi were recently honored at the Peak Performance Breakfast Series (sponsored by Mountaintop Marketing Group) with the small business spotlight award. The monthly breakfasts bring together small (as well as large) business leaders with representatives of government agencies, for information exchange, contracting info and networking opportunities. Jerry Horton, Chief Information Officer of USAID and Mauricio Vero, Director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization of USAID, spoke at the event.

Mossi says she owes a lot of her renaissance technological skills to her father, a civil engineer by training and business, who lives in Honduras. "I was born in the Untied States," she said, "but I consider myself Honduran, It's who I am as much as anything else. I think he takes a lot of pride in what I've accomplished, as do I."

"I think what we've all done here at Devis is an example of what you can accomplish in the U.S., the opportunities that exist, the risks you need to take, and the teamwork involved."

In today's economic climate, where so many small (and large) businesses are struggling, Devis is growing and succeeding. "We continue to grow as a result of our commitment to our clients, understanding their needs and looking out for their best interests," Mossi says. "I consider myself a partner of the organizations Devis supports, most of all USAID."

Mossi, who received a degree in electrical engineering from George Washington University and worked at a tax software company and as a programmer in California, began as a systems analyst at Devis and worked her way up. She was a project manager, then the director of the company's Project Management Office, and then vice president of business operations, and joined the Board of Directors, which she now chairs in 2005. "Devis' decision in 1999 to offer its employees the option to own shares was important to me. It gave me the opportunity to become an owner," Mossi said.

So what's it like at the top? "It's a challenge," she said. "Every day is a challenge, but you're always moving forward, accepting new challenges, growing."

Mossi returns to Honduras frequently to see her family and actively participates in the Hispanic community in Washington. She lives in Woodley Park.

For further information about Devis visit [www.devis.com](http://www.devis.com).

For more information about the Mountain Top Series go to [www.mtopseries.com](http://www.mtopseries.com).

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**WHERE :**

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Photo Captions: [1] Cristina Mossi of Devis receiving Small Business Spotlight award from Michael Bowlds of Mountaintop Marketing Group. [2] Jerry Horton, CIO of USAID, with Cristina Mossi, CEO of Devis, at the Peak Series Breakfast program. [3] Cristina Mossi, CEO of Devis, receiving congratulations from attendees of the Peak Series program.

Photos by Edgar Becerra.