

An interview with Franka Winchester, General Partner of Pacific Crest Group, [www.pcg-services.com](http://www.pcg-services.com)

*As described by SLiCs Forum-mate, Sara Moss*

I am certain that when you get the opportunity to meet and speak with Franka Winchester at an EO event, you will find her as engaging and intriguing as I do. First, you'll be drawn in by her boundless energy and her adventurous good nature. You'll then pick up on her "German" accent, which is, in fact, Austrian). You'll wonder how this amazing person ended up founding a business services firm in Larkspur (co-founded with fellow-SF EOer, T.J. Van Voorhees, no less). Within moments of your first conversation it will become clear that Franka puts all of her passion behind whatever she does until she achieves, achieves some more, and then just keeps on going.

### **Austria & Beyond**

At the age of 19, Franka packed her suitcase to leave Linz, Austria. "I had a strong drive to see the world, learn languages, and experience different cultures," she explains.

Knowing virtually no English, she went straight from Austria (a country with a total population of 8m over 80k sq km) to the middle of NYC (8m in 800 sq km). Manhattan was a lot of fun for Franka, but stretching that au pair salary got old.

Franka once again packed her bags and headed for the wonders of California — a different pace, more space, and some sunshine. She headed straight for San Francisco and began attending college in Marin County. Fittingly, she met her husband, Cody, in a chemistry class. (She later got her bachelor's degree in nutritional science from Cal Poly.)

### **OPS (Other People's Startups) & Beyond**

After receiving her degree, Franka held financial and human resources leadership roles at several start-up companies around the Bay Area, including Colo.com, Camp6, and Softbank, Inc. After a few dot-bomb layoffs, the entrepreneurial lightbulb went off for Franka. She realized that she would be more successful if she ran a damn company herself. Too right!

### **Business #1 & Beyond**

In 2002, Franka formed her first company, Dakota Partners Inc., a San Francisco-based firm that provides financial and real estate services.

In, 2003, Franka and T.J. met and decided to join forces to found Pacific Crest Group (PCG). PCG was a natural next step for Franka, as it combined her entrepreneurial skills and healthcare background with her HR and accounting expertise. PCG provides accounting, HR, and IT services to small and medium sized businesses in the Bay Area. By focusing on medical practices, PCG has experienced double-digit growth during their first four years. They are now branching out into other industries.

"Being an entrepreneur has allowed me to really use my talent and creativity," says Franka. "I cannot imagine ever going back to working for someone else. Now the only restrictions I have are those I set for myself."

### **Beyond Work**

Perhaps Franka's most adventurous act-to-date was becoming mother to Lukas just 18-months ago. "Lukas is a little fireball, and it is so fun to show him life's adventures and to watch him explore the world."

That's our Franka — always finding the adventure in everything and making the most out of life.