

Tools, Talent, and Vision

As a 16-year-old, I routinely assisted my mother, who runs a catering business. But while prepping for one event, she put on a massive tool belt that held two chainsaws. To me, this was totally out of character and conjured up creepy horror-movie images. I was so disturbed that I couldn't even bring myself to peek into the tool shed where she was hacking away all afternoon. Then she emerged with a beautifully sculpted chunk of ice shaped like a dolphin. I felt silly, and my sisters laughed so hard that they cried.



Tonya Maxey-Fuller

Tonya Maxey-Fuller readily acknowledges that her primary inspiration comes from her mother. “She runs a small, profitable catering business and attributes her success to having a solid service orientation,” says Maxey-Fuller. “The same approach applies to the work I do in my career, where understanding the needs and expectations of constituents fuels my passion and keeps me in a work environment that I enjoy.”

Maxey-Fuller grew up in Georgia, where, at age 12, she had to ride a school bus 100 miles each day to attend school in another district. The busing initiative afforded children like Maxey-Fuller the chance to attend better schools and was also intended to create more classroom diversity. “I had to be on the bus very early in the morning and would not arrive home until late evening, so my school days were long and didn't leave much time for homework, much less downtime. But it was a defining moment in my life that taught me the value of perseverance, flexibility, and tolerance.”

Those life lessons have served Maxey-Fuller well in her career at WellPoint, a nationwide health benefits company, where she is staff vice president of Operations Strategy. She now directs more than 1,200 associates and is responsible for an annual budget of \$40 million. Her responsibilities include oversight of vendor management and outsourcing and management of the Enterprise Service Delivery Strategy and Enterprise Quality Assurance-Provider Service for WellPoint's operations organization.

A natural, proactive leader, Maxey-Fuller brings passion to her job and thrives on responsibility and accountability. “Competent leaders like Tonya lead, motivate, and inspire others to explore, to dream, and to discover their potential,” explains her Eagle Award nominator, David Casey, who is vice president of Workplace Culture and Chief Diversity Officer at WellPoint and a 2006 *CareerFOCUS* Eagle Award winner.

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Casey cites an example of Maxey-Fuller’s ability to turn challenges into achievements and deliver results. “By renegotiating a vendor contract in an effort to find additional savings,” he recalls, “she single-handedly saved WellPoint \$2.5 million. Her performances are always on time, on budget, and achieved with style, class, and excellence.”

Maxey-Fuller is an active member of WellPoint Women and Associate Resource Group, two organizations that promote the company’s workforce diversity and retention of women employees. “I truly believe that my purpose is to be an example and a mentor,” says Maxey-Fuller, “and to help educate others about the possibilities in life through collaboration, communication, and the desire to make myself available.”

She extends herself to others beyond the workplace, too, working with the youth organization at her church to touch the lives of teenagers in a positive and uplifting way. Because her own daughter is in the high school marching band, much of Maxey-Fuller’s free time is also spent volunteering as a “Band Booster.” She often organizes fundraisers, acts as a chaperone, and lends support and assistance in whatever ways she can to help the organization and encourage the students who are in it. “Our young people face numerous challenges while navigating the path to adulthood,” she notes, “and I feel compelled to recognize their needs and then reach out to help them.”

CareerFOCUS Magazine™ and the National Eagle Leadership Institute® salute 2008 Eagle Award winner Tonya Maxey-Fuller.

Nominating Company

WellPoint, Inc.

Current Position

Staff Vice President,
Operations Strategy

Professional Milestones

- WellPoint’s 2008 Executive Excellence Program
- WellPoint Blue Chip Advisor
- ASF Contractor Award
- *Who’s Who in Black Indianapolis*

Community Leadership

- Eastern Star Church
- Eastern Star Church Youth Organization
- High School Band Booster Volunteer

Leadership Principle

Deliver results with integrity while building relationships.

Education/Training

Bachelor of Science in Management,
Berkeley College

Birthplace

Tucker, Georgia

Current Home

Avon, Indiana

The Leadership Promise at WellPoint

WellPoint leaders impact our organization by living our values, inspiring our associates, and delivering results that have the potential to transform our entire industry.

High performers at WellPoint are recognized and rewarded with challenging assignments and opportunities for personal and professional development.

Internally, leaders are developed through our Executive Excellence program and Leadership Excellence program. Programs like HIPP (Health Insurance Professionals Program) and internal mentoring programs also serve as career-accelerator opportunities for our future leadership. Externally, we continue to identify new, high-potential diverse talent for our company through association partnerships with groups like NBMBA, NSH-MBA and The Consortium.

At WellPoint, we know that the strength of our leadership will be the driving force in achieving our vision of becoming the most trusted choice in health care and a leader in affordable quality care.