

## **Tell us about three of your accomplishments. (600 words)**

Since childhood each person is being told what one can and cannot do. In my case, growing up meant realizing that I can choose my dreams and goals without blindly relying on opinion of the majority of people. I found out that by working hard to overcome stereotypes on the way to my dream I can become wiser, stronger and create a point of difference distinguishing me from everyone else.

In 2002 I left [no name] for the [no name] with a goal to improve my mastery of English. While taking several language courses I also decided to find a job. I wanted to practice my English in a real-life professional environment and also to cover tuition and living expenses. In spring of 2003 I became a Sales Representative at one of the [no name] chain stores. At first, my colleagues did not meet me gladly. I was looked down on quite often, as in highly-developed countries, such as the [no name], people from [no name] are not always perceived as good professionals. However, gradually, my friendly attitude and strong professional performance changed the situation for better. I would cheer up colleagues during a hard day, step up to work with the most difficult customers and help to raise the sales by re-arranging the products on the shelves. All this made me a respected team member, often asked for advice.

Moreover, after a year in the company I became a Supervisor selected on a highly competitive basis. It was an unparalleled step for a person from [no name]. I proudly list this fact as my first accomplishment, as on that occasion I successfully managed to overcome the nationally-colored stereotypes, winning the trust of my colleagues and top-level managers.

Another achievement I would like to mention comes from my work experience in [no name]. I joined the company in 2005 as a Channel Marketing Manager responsible for supervision of 8 regional posts in several countries, including the team of 11 regional managers and 51 merchandisers. It was my first ever time to manage such a large team. Besides, all of my subordinates were male and mostly older than me, so they took my appointment quite suspiciously. The strategy I have chosen to win over their respect and loyalty was the path not so much of words, but of concrete actions.

On my initiative, employees finally got their social packages reviewed. Top-notch technical equipment was installed in their offices, a new effective motivation system was developed and a series of trainings were held. I supported the ideas my team members produced and directed them to the Head Office. As a result my team appreciated not only my professional qualities, but such simple human traits as compassion and supportiveness. Even years after I had left the company I kept receiving letters from my guys asking: 'Hey, are you coming back to us yet?' That was how I succeeded in breaking a common stereotype that women (especially, young women) rarely make good leaders.

Finally, the third important achievement I would like to describe is my family which I have been cherishing by successfully combining work and family life for over a decade. Preserving this state of things requires daily efforts, especially considering the fact that my husband and I work in totally different industries. My husband is a designer and a very sensitive and creative person, while I am a manager with a highly practical mindset. In our first years together we would often argue about the smallest issues. I would say 'This green dress looks nice', and he would comment: 'It is not green, it is pistachio-coloured!'

However, gradually I realized we had a lot of knowledge to exchange. I learned to find compromises, to see the world through other person's eyes. Now I can discern the slightest hues in the color specter, know the principles of composition, and even developed an interest in photography! There is a saying in [no name], stating that 'Physicists and lyricists do not get along well', however my husband and I have been enjoying each other's company for 11 years already, thus proving that the stereotypes truly exist in order to be broken.