Mike Swinson

Adam Holcroft
QPS Benchmarking :: *General Manager*

'We are not a software company,' says QPS General Manager Adam Holcroft. 'We are a benchmarking and quality improvement company. We provide a framework for quality improvement which includes benchmarking and measuring performance in the health care sectors including residential aged care, community care, day surgeries and multi-purpose health facilities.

'We have approximately 15 percent of the aged care market and our clients are located throughout Australia and New Zealand'.

QPS has developed from humble beginnings. It starts with Silvia Holcroft, Adam's mother. She is a Director of QPS and a founding partner. Her CV is impressive, it includes time as the CEO/DON for Acute, Aged and Community Care Services; National Quality Manager, MBF; Health Care Service Planner, IAHS and National Education Consultant for ACHS. Silvia is a senior evaluator with SAI Global and has been working with the Australian Business Excellence Framework for over 16 years.

Her qualifications include: Registered Nurse, Diploma of Science, Bachelor of Applied Science, Master of Business Administration (Hons), and Certificate IV in Organisational Self-Assessment.

Anyone who knows Silvia knows that she is a female powerhouse, so it's probably no surprise to learn that her son Adam developed some of the same qualities in order to excel in his IT degree and associated work projects at Wollongong University.

'Some things came easily to me at school,' says Adam, 'so I probably didn't apply myself as I should have. Computer studies was something I enjoyed and I was lucky enough to gain early entry into University. During my Uni years, I got my work ethic into gear and was involved in a major IT assignment in Samoa, building a high end IT project for mental health services.

'Part of my degree included compulsory work experience, so I asked Peter Johnson, the other Director of QPS, if I could do some work with them.' Both Mum and Peter said 'Yes.'. Adam recalls that 'as soon as I got into the office in Sydney, I noticed the business needed better data bases to track information, so I started to build new systems.'

Once Adam finished Uni he was offered a job at Nestle'. He asked Peter to be a referee, instead Peter offered him a full time job at QPS. Adam's Mum's advice was to 'take the Nestle' job.' Silvia thought it would be important for Adam to make his own way in life, however Adam, being a bit of a rebel, well that's what he told me, took the QPS job.

'Sorry Mum!'

Adam says one of the main reasons for accepting the job at QPS was because he knew his work would cover a broad range of areas, and it has. 'I have been involved in management, marketing,

statistics, and IT. It's given me a great grounding over the whole business, rather than just a being a specialist working in IT, which is where I would have been if I was working for a large firm such as Nestle'

When I asked him about his relationship with his Mother, he said 'Considering that we work together every day, Mum and I still get on well, it can be a challenge, but I think we do a pretty good job of it. When we get on well, we get on really well, when we argue, we do that full on as well. That's probably got something to do with her passion and my stubbornness.'

Adam told me that when he started at QPS, the company was installing some pretty sophisticated software for the time and he realised their clients and the aged care industry in general were not ready. 'I could see that most of our clients were not ready to implement the "latest and greatest" software, and that was a big wake-up call to me after studying the use of IT in business for five years. So I decided to stop the development and deployment of that software and go back to a paper based system. I know it sounds insane, but it worked very well.

'We have now introduced our new software at a time when we believe the industry is ready. Although I have an IT background, I realise that software has to be designed for the user and ultimately provide benefits for the user'.

Adam says these days the aged care sector is far more IT savvy, ready to implement software and use it. Adam believes that the aged care sector should be very proud of themselves and congratulated for making great progress in embracing IT, 'we can see this clearly with our own clients, the uptake of our online services has been overwhelming and clients are utilising the technology effectively.' He said the QPS software had to have the capacity for people to enter data easily, understand both their expected performance and when things were not going well. The end product has to be a valid report which is used by clients to make improvements. The whole process of collecting and reporting for the client is based on learning and reflection.

Adam said the software development 'took a year of planning, designing and testing, and came in very close to the budget and the time frame we had set.'

"Are you a hard bastard to work with?" I asked him. He was honest in his reply. 'I can be, I let people know what I expect up front, and aside from that I don't accept excuses.

If people have a problem you want them to come to you straight away so it can be resolved and you can move forward. I always give one hundred percent but try to never forget what's important in life'.

'It was not unusual to be working until 4 o'clock in the morning during development' Adam explained. I asked Adam how he coped with the workload and long hours, 'having always maintained an active lifestyle, it was important to balance my home and work life by exercising, riding my bike and walking my dog'. By 'riding my bike' he means his Harley Davidson!

Adam Holcroft holds a Bachelor of Information & Communications Technology (Business Information Systems & E-Commerce) from the University of Wollongong, He loves his wife, loves his Mum and loves his Harley.

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For more information:
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