

## John Weber

### Newly Energized

John Weber's career over the past decade has progressed as many only dream. He has moved successfully through a series of increasingly important assignments at companies such as General Electric and Baxter International. Last summer, his hard-driving management style was the subject of a front-page profile in the Wall Street Journal. And, at the age of 42, the father of twelve-year-old twins Mark and Melissa has become president and COO of a \$5-billion energy company.

But dream careers have their price, the highest of which, he says, has been missing out on his home life. "Most of the time I end up sacrificing a fair bit on the family side," admits Weber, who in August resigned as president of Vickers Inc., a manufacturer of hydraulic pumps and motors in Toledo, Ohio, and moved his family to Denver to join KN Energy, a natural gas company. "I still find to be true what I told the Bulletin ten years ago: you can't have it all. You inevitably have to give something up."



Weber, fifteen years ago, and today with twins Melissa and Mark and his wife, Joan.

Weber recalls, for example, missing his children's birthday party because he was in India for the board meeting of a Vickers subsidiary. "I like to be home for those celebrations," he says regretfully. But if Weber occasionally can't make family gatherings, it's not for lack of trying. Consider the events of a Saturday last winter, when Vickers was in the middle of an acquisition deal:

"In the morning I took my son to his hockey game and sat in the stands talking to lawyers on a cell phone," Weber says. "After that, I headed to the office, got tied up with the deal, and unfortunately had to ask another parent to drive my daughter and her team to their basketball game. I made it to the game but had to run back to the office for a late-night negotiating session, which caused me to miss my wife Joan's dinner party. And then, at the end of the whole thing, the deal fell apart."

Although the drawbacks of sitting on top of the corporate ladder may be weekends like this, Weber says one of the benefits of seniority is that he has more control over his own schedule. "Now I am the guy who actually calls the meetings instead of having to be there when they get called," he says. Such control has also meant being able to take time out to recharge his own batteries. Last spring, he went soaring in his sailplane in the Canadian Rockies with some friends and during business trips to India he visited an ashram for meditation.

"I'm excited that the CEO of my new company talks about success in three dimensions: in business, in your personal life, and in your spiritual life," Weber notes. "KN Energy's domestic focus also means I'm no longer so jet-lagged that I don't know what time it is. And I'm not out of the country for birthday parties anymore," he smiles.

by Dun Gifford, Jr.

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