

[Letter from the Editor]

Dear Friends:

“Tom” was laid off a few months ago. He was shy, but possessed a positive attitude that had helped him survive difficult technical sales roles for a number of years, although never with much success or compensation. It seemed to be a bad fit, and he admitted that he was doing these jobs mainly for the money. The problem was, he wasn’t making much money, and wasn’t very good. He really wanted to be an artist. After trying on one or two same-but-different positions with other small tech companies, he decided to change his life. He got a job as an artist at a rubber duck factory, and just emailed me a photo of his first duck. It’s a wonderful duck. Some of you may find talking about rubber ducks divergent from corporate human capital management strategies, but there’s a message here: when confronting hard career and life questions, find a novel way to make yourself happy and productive by following your passion.

How did this young man put aside all his “Yes, but’s...” and find his way out of mediocrity? In the last week, I have heard three Silicon Valley leaders explain in great detail why the economy is getting better, and why the stock market will go up dramatically third and fourth quarter. The adage “You can’t cost cut your way to growth” is true. You must work with passion, vision, and with sustained efforts. The higher level the executive, the more he or she will talk about passion. In addition to strategy, PR, and closing the big deals, smart leaders are focusing on executive development, including having the right team players and making sure that the exec team communicates well and cooperates well. These executives lead with the passion, skill, and dedication of a rubber duck artist.

This month I would like to thank Lisa Bennett of Mitsubishi for her friendship, support, and referrals, and to wish her good luck with her upcoming nuptials!

Take Care,
Valerie

ASK VALERIE:

This month's Q&A session covers how to get respect from your CEO, and new ideas for sales compensation.

Dear Valerie:

My CEO doesn’t respect me. He doesn’t even include me in decisions about my department, which is finance and accounting. He seems to think I’m just an over-paid, glorified bean counter. I tell him he needs to respect me more and include me more in his decision-making, but it’s not working. They just made a new Compensation Committee of the board, and I’m not even on it. What should I do?

-No Respect

Dear No Respect:

In the military, they say that respect is earned, not asked for. What are you doing to earn your CEO’s respect? How are you adding value? How much do you even understand the role you’re asking for? Rarely are accounting people on board-level compensation committees, and almost never at start-ups. If you invest heavily in developing your skills and knowledge, you will change your understanding about

your role, and you will learn how to naturally add value and hence earn respect. Good people never have to ask for respect. If this is truly your problem, the solution lies within your control.

Dear Valerie:

I'm taking over a large sales force, and need to totally change the compensation plan. How do you suggest I start?

-New Sales Guy on the Block

Dear New Guy:

You need a program that motivates the entire sales team and has a plan for "raising the bar," even for the bottom 15 - 20% who haven't been achieving their current quotas. Whatever has worked for you in the past may work at your new company with some modifications. If you are planning on ANY type of change, you will need to make sure you have the right decision-makers involved, and the right communications strategy. Our compensation consulting team suggests you start by asking:

1. Is the current program a comprehensive commission program or a compilation of several plans?
2. Are all sales personnel on the same commission plan / percentage regardless of their roles and responsibilities?
3. How will you modify the current sales plan if you change the sales focus, for example, from a straight revenue model to rewarding sales people for "filling the pipeline"?
4. If the sales focus is changing, what percentage of the current sales force will you keep?
5. What's the balance between individual, team, and overall corporate performance?
6. How will you encourage work across other teams and territories?

Current Retained Searches:

We encourage the following qualified candidates to contact us for current and future consideration: Board Director, CEO, IVPHR, VPHR, CFO, Controller, Sales and Marketing, VP of Business Development, VP of Marketing, VP of Engineering, HR Director. Email your resume in MS Word format to recruiting@vfandco.com.

Vice President, Human Resources (Peninsula)

Strategic international human resources executive for rapidly growing, public software company. Must have recent executive-level generalist experience in the software/services industry, plus expertise in compensation/benefits, strategic staffing, strategic employee communications, planning, and performance management. HR Business Partner outlook: to serve the business first, HR second. Email your resume in MS Word format to recruiting@vfandco.com.

Search #602 Senior Financial Executive (South Bay)

Controller or CFO, depending on the candidate. Responsible for management and maintenance of all accounting functions in the Finance/Accounting Department, comprising General Accounting, Financial Reporting, Credit, Collections, A/R and Cost Accounting. Manage direct staff of accounting managers and indirect staff of accounting clerks. The Controller/CFO position reports directly to the President and has the responsibility to keep the President informed as to the company's financial health through accurate financial reporting; as well as being able to bring potential financial problems impacting the company to his immediate attention. BSBA, MBA in Finance/Accounting; CPA preferred. Eight to ten years related experience including five years in management position. Possess management and leadership skills; communicate well with all levels of organization. Detail oriented, aggressive, hands-on, operations focused, and self-starting. Email your resume in MS Word format to recruiting@vfandco.com.

Recently Closed Searches:

Vice President, Sales (South Bay)

Director, HR (San Francisco)

Consulting Assignments:

Corporate HR Manager/Director (Taiwan or Silicon Valley)

Corporate HR Manager/Director-level preferably fluent in Mandarin, needed for long-term consulting project approximately 20 hours a week or more through end of year and beyond. Client is a major global technology firm. High level of sophistication; superb, clear communication skills; experience with either startups or startup divisions and multinational corporations. Navigates well through large organizations; can roll up sleeves and get things done well, on time, and with buy-in. Expertise in labor laws, compensation and benefits, strategic planning, and employee relations. International travel required to Europe and Asia. Email your resume in MS Word format to recruiting@vfandco.com and reference Taiwan Consulting Project.

Collecting Resumes for Pending Searches: New York or Arizona

Director/VP-level HR executive for a large, global technology company. Excellent programs, operations, and management development expertise required, along with collaborative experience working with Europeans and NAFTA organizations. Board-level communications and presentations skills; heavy negotiating; excellent, trained assessment skills. Experience in developing and rolling out executive and managerial development and assessment programs worldwide preferred, along with ease of navigating through large organizations. Travel required. Email your resume in MS Word format to recruiting@vfandco.com and reference National Consulting Project.