

[ A LETTER FROM VALERIE ]

## **CEOs with No Kingdom**

Dear Friends:

With all the M&A activity going on right now, a rarely seen breed of job seeker is emerging in droves: the unemployed CEO. And while it's tough for the rank-and-file to muster a lot of sympathy for these top dogs, given that they often leave their posts with golden (if not platinum) parachutes, the fact is that their job searches tend to be tougher than you might think. As Shakespeare would put it, a CEO out of a job has no kingdom, no horse, no players, and no stage. And that's not an easy thing to accept when you're used to wearing the crown.

Typically, when a CEO's firm is bought out, he or she stays on with the acquiring firm for a while, and then leaves and takes a break. More power to them: After all, most have been working 24/7 and really need the time off (or at least that's what their spouses would say). The trouble comes, however, when they're ready to re-enter the workforce. They usually think that a couple of weeks spent making the networking rounds will be enough. But these days, that's not really the case, particularly in technology. As the industry matures and consolidates, jobs that used to be CEO-level positions are morphing into divisional GM roles, while the boards of many younger, venture-funded companies are leaning towards hiring first-time CEOs rather than old-timers, thus narrowing the pool of CEO opportunities and increasing the competition.

When you think about it, a CEO without a company to run is much like a pop star whose fans are no longer willing to shell out for those CDs and concert tickets. It can be disorienting, like Britney Spears trying to go shopping at Target without her entourage. And like Britney, CEOs in this tough spot can make some questionable decisions. Some get desperate and choose a bad company, like when former Apple CEO John Scully joined Spectrum Information Technologies without knowing that it was under investigation by the SEC, which permanently affected how people viewed his judgment. Others, like one former client of mine, get out of the game entirely: This guy decided to buy an ice cream store in a small town on the coast, and later e-mailed out the goofiest photo of himself in his red-and-white-striped uniform, leaning against the counter with a big "Aw, shucks" grin. (I've seen less embarrassing mug shots).

The good ones, on the other hand, are able to get through this difficult stage by summoning the same discipline, professionalism, and inner strength that got them to the top in the first place. One telling trait is the way they refer to the colleagues they've left behind. The differences are downright mind-boggling: I've had one CEO poignantly detail the saga of an IT worker's divorce and her struggles adjusting to life as a single mom, while others don't even mention their employees and act as if they ran their companies single-handedly. In my experience, the former tend to get hired much more quickly than the latter.

In the same vein, the CEOs that tend to be most coveted are those who are willing to share their knowledge and experience for the betterment of others. One of the best we've seen in this regard is Jerry Chase, who last year led the sale of the company he was running, Terayon, to Motorola. Though his job search was harder than most because he had been working in Europe and had to rebuild his network here, he nonetheless found the time to meet with my staff and share with us his perspectives on HR from the corner office. A former Marine Corps officer and Harvard MBA, he exudes discipline and

excellence. And not only did he graciously offer to speak to us, he showed up with a PowerPoint presentation that had clearly taken a few hours to put together, basically as a favor. This is the kind of dedication and professionalism that he puts into everything he does, and helps to explain why, just days ago, he landed another company to run—his fourth—as President and CEO of Lantronix. To borrow once more from the bard, all's well that end's well. ([Click here](#) for Jerry's *A CEO Perspective on the HR Leadership Function at a Publicly Traded Company* PowerPoint, and stay tuned for our panel discussion on the topic this spring, featuring fabulous CEOs including Jerry Chase, Christina Seelye, who sold Elibrium to Avanquest Software SA and is still on their board, and others.)

This month we'd like to thank Linda Kellogg of Start-Up Resources for her friendship and referrals.

Take care,  
Valerie

### **Ask Valerie**

Dear Valerie:

There seems to be a lot more fear in the Valley these days—I keep hearing words like “layoffs” and “recession.” Is this one going to be as bad as the last one? And is there anything I should be doing to prepare?

-Concerned

Dear Concerned:

Yes, the broader economy's troubles are making their way to the Valley, as evidenced by everything from Apple's plunging stock price to the latest VC confidence survey, which registered the first decline in optimism in more than three years. But no, you shouldn't be too worried. All the companies I know are still hiring—they're just making sure to hire the right people with the right skill sets. If you're in HR, you shouldn't have any problems: that shortage is continuing with no let-up in sight. And macro trends like the retirement of the Baby Boomers still bode well for the long-term employment outlook.

Dear Valerie:

What, exactly, is an HR Business Partner? Everybody's talking about it, but no two people seem to use the term the same way. What do HR Business Partners really do?

-HR Unsophisticated

Dear Unsophisticated:

Great question. In fact, I recently overheard someone saying "it's just a fancy title for an HR Analyst," which is like saying "podiatrist" is a fancy title for a "nail technician." HR Business Partners are sophisticated, experienced internal HR consultants who support line executives by developing a deep understanding of their businesses and their goals and providing strategic, real-time solutions to help them get there.

Dear Valerie:

What do you suggest for an old dog who wants to learn new tricks? I've been in management for more years than I can count and am nowhere near retiring. How can I keep my skills up to date and stay marketable?

-Old Dog

Dear Old Dog:

The following may not be a simple answer, but then, consider the source. The Harvard Business Review recently said, "People skills will be more important than ever as we head into the uncertainties of 2008. The threat of recession, global credit squeezes, and political uncertainty will magnify the challenges all businesses will face in the coming. But without emotional intelligence, clear communication, delegation, feedback, giving recognition and celebrating success, companies will fail their employees, their customers, their shareholders and all their other stakeholders. Ultimately, they will probably fail completely." What this means to you is to make sure that you have great people skills. Do an inventory, and fix up what shows up.

-Valerie

### **Current HR Opportunities**

#### Human Resources Executive Positions

##### Senior Director of Human Resources (Palo Alto, CA)

International mobile technology and networking company seeks a highly strategic person for its world-renowned research center. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).

##### Senior Director of Human Resources (Menlo Park, CA)

Rapid-growth, private biotech company. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).

##### Vice President of Human Resources (Santa Clara, CA)

Global, publicly-traded, Semiconductor company needs top HR executive to oversee worldwide operations. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).

##### Senior Director of Human Resources, Americas (San Jose, CA)

8,000-employee semi-conductor company. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).

##### Human Resources Manager (Fremont, CA)

high growth, innovative outsourcing company needs a HR Manager to lead new Northern California location. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).

##### Vice President of Talent and Acquisition (San Francisco, CA)

Large public media company. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).

##### Director of Learning and Development (San Francisco, CA)

Large public media company. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).

#### Compensation Executive Position

##### Senior Director of Compensation, Benefits, and Services (San Francisco, CA)

Highly successful biotech company. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).

Senior Director of Global Compensation (San Jose, CA)

Large contract manufacturing organization. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).

Director of Global Compensation (Austin, TX)

Large, successful semiconductor company with a strong global presence. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).

Director of Global Sales Compensation (Austin, TX)

Large, leading developer of microprocessors with facilities worldwide. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).

Compensation Analyst (San Jose, CA)

Top-global hardware company. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).

### **Industry Events**

Churchill Club "Who Do You Trust?"

February 26th 2008, 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm - California

Speakers include Robert Cialdini, President, Influence at Work and Author of "Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion", Richard Edelman, CEO of Edelman, and Anastasia Goodstein, Founder Ypulse and Author of "Totally Wired: What Teens & Tweens Are Really Doing Online". This highly informative discussion will examine trust and influence featuring new data from a worldwide study as well as who the next generation of business leaders rely on for information and why.

NCHRA "The Nuts & Bolts of Reductions-In-Forces"

March 27th 2008, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm - Santa Clara, California

What resources can help you through the process? How do you calculate severance packages? How can you reduce the risk of litigation? How do you deal with emotional fall-out among survivors? In this highly participatory full day seminar, Valerie Frederickson and a team of specialized consultants will discuss best practices for managing workforce reductions.

The Leavey School of Business "Human Resources Leadership"

March 25-27, 2008- Santa Clara University Campus

Human Resources Leadership is a three-day program that redefines what it means to be an HR leader in today's complex business environment. Develop new frameworks to understand the new Human Capital leader role, the capabilities required for success in that role, and how increased leadership capacity will impact organizational outcomes and competitiveness. Deborah Saks, a senior consultant with VF&Co is co-founder and co-facilitator of the program with Helen Peters. NCHRA members will be offered a significant discount.