

[A Letter From Valerie]

## **Eight Tips To Help You Deal More Effectively With Your Clueless HR Boss Or, In Some Cases, How To Improve Your Performance If The Problem Is Really You**

Dear Friends:

In last month's letter, I wrote about the debate over whether the Myers Briggs Type Indicator for effective HR executives has changed, and referenced an article my mom had found in the September issue of the *California Psychologist* that offered a spot-on analysis of the personality types and behaviors of successful leaders. Well, it seems "Mom's article" struck a chord, as I received a record amount of feedback from HR professionals around the globe. The most poignant responses came from HR Business Partners and HR Managers who felt that they got it, but their bosses didn't. The funniest queries were from people who wanted to know how to tell if they themselves got it, which reminds me of that old reply you get from the sales ladies at Neiman Marcus: "My dear, if you have to ask the price..." Some people didn't like labels, while others wanted more labels. But the overwhelming majority of the respondents wanted to delve deeper into the issues, asking questions like, "How can I manage my boss more effectively if he's old school and I'm new school?" "What if she's not strategic and is making me look bad?" "How should I deal with people above me who have low Emotional Intelligence (EQ)?" To address these sorts of questions, I asked Mathilde Pribula, our new Consulting Associate with a Masters degree from the London School of Economics, to spend some time researching recent literature on the topic. Then, I layered that with thoughts from our most senior HR consultants and others whose opinions I trust. Here is what we extracted:

1. Look in the mirror first. Subordinates (called "followers" in the literature) are every bit as important to the success of an organization as leaders and must share the same characteristics if they are to thrive and advance. Focus on:
  - Managing your time effectively.
  - Displaying commitment to the organization and to a purpose, principle, or person beyond your own self-interest.
  - Building your competence and concentrating your efforts for maximum impact.
  - Maintaining courage, honesty, and credibility.
2. Know your stuff. Junior HR people have to be extremely familiar with the material they're presented. Don't go into meetings unprepared and planning to ask for advice; instead, present a well thought out solution specifically geared to the business' needs.
3. Be seen as an ally. There's a fine line between being a right-hand man and being a know-it-all who's out for the boss' job. One way to make sure you stay on the correct side of that line is to be seen as knowledgeable in a particular area of expertise, rather than being a generalist, which allows your boss to consider you a "focused resource." Another is to become known as an effective provider of alternative thinking, which could encourage your boss to reach out to you when faced with a thorny problem.
4. Have empathy for your boss. The new school needs to understand where the old-school is coming from. Take a step back and try to get in their mindset.

5. Bridge the gap. Talk about similarities and differences in your approaches. Explain how the environment is changing, and maintain the dialogue by regularly briefing your old-school boss about new research and trends.
6. Craft your message using their terms. Try to speak in old-school language, especially when it comes to technology. Make an effort to explain things in simple terms that anyone can understand. That way, your boss won't get frustrated or, worse, feel threatened as the result of his or her own inability to cope with change.
7. Remain respectful and willing to learn. Though philosophies may differ, there's often no substitute for experience. Respect your boss' hard-won knowledge and look to find compromises that satisfy you both.
8. Show results. Old-schoolers and new schoolers always have one patch of common ground: the bottom line. Remember this and deliver the goods.

Want more specifics? In this month's "Ask Valerie" (below), you'll find answers to the most common questions that arose from last month's newsletter.

This month, we'd like to thank Lynn Ware, CEO of Integrated Talent Systems, for her friendship and referrals.

Hope you enjoy the holidays,  
Valerie

### **Ask Valerie**

Dear Valerie:

How can I focus on improving myself without changing who I innately am?

-Kinda Stubborn

Dear Stubborn:

According to the latest management theory, it might be enough to simply figure out what your strengths are, play to those, and attempt to redesign your job description to emphasize what you're good at. In other words, don't change who you are—change your responsibilities to suit who you are.

Dear Valerie:

How good am I? How do I know if I have the right MTBI or not?

-Wondering

Dear Wondering:

This reminds me of the website [hotornot.com](http://hotornot.com), where you can post your photo and let others decide how cute you are. And, as your mother would say, everyone is beautiful on the inside. Seriously, though, if you haven't used any assessment tools lately or gathered some peer feedback into your strengths and weaknesses, now might be a good time. Start with Myers Briggs, and then add on some others. Your HR or training department should be able to help.

Dear Valerie:

So how does all this affect teams? My sales manager now wants to only hire people of the same personality type, and I'm not even comfortable with testing applicants. I'm worried about ADA issues, among other potential problems.

-Concerned

Dear Concerned:

Certain personality types do perform better in certain jobs, like sales or accounting, but I share your dislike of testing employment applicants. To me, it reeks of Big Brother. Tell the sales manager to screen for actions, habits, patterns, and results, and to not worry too much about the rest.

## **Current Open Human Resources Positions**

### Human Resources Executive Positions

Vice President of Human Resources Global Operations (Santa Clara, CA)

Huge, high-growth tech company needs strong number two. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfindco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfindco.com).

Vice President of Human Resources (Menlo Park, CA)

Private, rapid-growth, bio-tech company. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfindco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfindco.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@vfindco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfindco.com).

Director of Employee Communications (San Francisco, CA)

Famous, rapid-growth software company. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfindco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfindco.com).

Director of Diversity (San Francisco, CA)

Large, highly successful, biotech company headquartered in the Bay Area. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfindco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfindco.com).

Human Resources Manager (Fremont, CA)

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

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

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

Director of Learning and Development (San Francisco, CA)

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

### Compensation Executive Roles

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).

Director of Compensation, Benefits and HRIS (Sunnyvale, CA)  
Growing, global medical device 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 James Holland.

Director of Global Sales Compensation (Austin, TX)  
Leading developer of microprocessors with facilities worldwide. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).

Equity Manager (Stock Administrator) (San Jose, CA)  
Large, global contract manufacturer of semiconductor equipment. 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).

### **Valerie Frederickson & Company Internal Roles**

Contingency Placement Recruiter (Menlo Park, CA)  
Work with our search team to place executives in positions around the world. Background in Executive Search or Human Resources Management a plus. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).

Consulting Services Associate (Menlo Park, CA)  
Due to a 100%+ increase in gross revenue this year, we are once again adding consulting associates (and experienced recruiters) to our executive search team. We're looking for extremely bright, outgoing, literature, verbal, multi-taskers with some strong foreign language skills or an interest or love for international travel. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).

Office and Operations Staff/Project Coordinator (Menlo Park, CA)  
Due to a 100%+ increase in gross revenue this year, we are also adding a number of recent grads to our administration, operations, and project management team so that we can promote some good folks. We're looking for thoughtful, well-educated, outgoing, detail-oriented, verbal, multi-taskers with some strong foreign language skills or an interest or love for international travel, who want to learn the exciting world of international consulting and build their careers as part of a close-knit team. Email your resume in MS Word format to [recruiting@vfandco.com](mailto:recruiting@vfandco.com).