

THURSDAY CAREERS CHATS

Date of Session: May 15, 2011 Title of Session: Careers in Corporate Finance

Alumni Presenter: Gordon Wright Class Year: 1983

Title: Vice President, Corporate Finance Employer: Proctor & Gamble

Notes from Session:

Gordon received an MBA from Duke University in 1985 and has been with Proctor & Gamble (P&G) for 26 years. His first seven years were in the US Food and Beverage area, P&G is no longer in this sector, they now focus solely on beauty and home brands. He then spent 4 years in Global Finance focused on short term and long term planning of P&G strategy. Worked on allocation of resources and goals set for business. He then spent 5 years in Europe, 3 in Germany and 2 in Switzerland. For 2.5 of those years he was the Finance Director of Baby Care business and the last part in the sales area. When he returned to the US he spent 4 years as the Global Finance Director for Family Care products. This was followed by 4 years as the overall integration director for the Gillette acquisition. This was the largest acquisition in P&G history. He worked directly with the CEO and CFO of Gillette on the integration of people and business processes.

Gordon is currently the Vice President of Corporate Finance focusing on short and long term strategy and company strategy. He looks at how the business is tracking in the current fiscal year and works with the CEO and CFO and their interaction with the Board of Directors.

He sponsors two recruiting teams at Duke and UNC. That is their primary recruiting approach although people are hired through web site and networking. In the Finance and Accounting sectors, P&G hires people for a career with the company. You could start as a cost or financial analyst. Another area is shared services where you are designing new systems and work processes. You will be in a rotation of experiences over time.

If you are interested in employment in Corporate Finance, you need to think about the industries you want to work in. You have a choice between Financial Services and Corporate Finance, choose one of those and then the industry. On Corporate Finance you are involved in the management of the business. You work with people in manufacturing, sales and research and development. You develop a broader set of skills and learn how to run a business in total. Broad knowledge makes you a better financier. Gordon had an internship in grad school with Chase Manhattan, it really involved a lot of sales, which was not his passion. You need to do your homework and understand where you fit and what fits your passion. Once you have the area down, look at the top organizations, go broad, consider small and mid-sized. Do your homework so you really know the organization.

Additional Advice - Make sure you fully leverage the Career Center for guidance in career choice and connecting to alumni and opportunities. Do your research before interviewing. P&G wants to see interview questions in a CAR format (Context, Action, Result) {This is similar to what the Career Center will teach you with the STAR approach}. They want to see examples of leadership, analytics (with recommendation) and effectively working on a team.

Go where your passion is, if you are passionate about your work you are 50% there. To be successful, move past obstacles and barriers and develop creative solutions.

P&G is a company that is a consumer products leader, it is a company of high integrity, promotes from within, invests heavily in people to reach their full potential and wants people who are able to continue to learn.