

5 Questions with Travis Chester



Travis Chester joined Vixxo as CFO to help guide the organization as we accelerate our growth strategy. We sat down with Travis to learn about his background and what he sees as business opportunities for Vixxo.

1) What professional experiences led you to your role as CFO of Vixxo?

I've held various positions over the course of my career that helped me learn to work with people – and not just numbers. Early on, I worked at General Electric (GE) with their internal audit staff. Every four months, we transitioned to a new segment of the business and had to quickly assess problems and execute resolutions. It was intense training in learning how to get things done and be held accountable. It also gave me an early lesson in defining problem statements and influencing people.

From GE, I went to a small biotechnology company that helped me develop a strong sense of team and conversely, a strong sense of self-reliance. Unlike GE with its deep-rooted corporate structure, there was no one to call for help, so I had to learn how to become a leader.

In this role, accountability was not just the measurement of completed tasks; it was also about the commitment you felt to the people you worked with and cared about. This experience introduced me to the kind of energy that comes from working closely with a dedicated team that is aligned and shares a strong sense of mission.

It was at Honeywell, in the Honeywell Sensing and Control business, that I further learned what a cohesive and functional team could look like. We worked through the 2008 economic downturn and, unfortunately, lost about one-quarter of the business

and had to lay off employees. It was a difficult experience, but I look back on it thankful for the lessons it taught me about: taking risks, speed in decision-making, learning from ones' mistakes, and the value of leading a great team and being a great peer.

In my final stop prior to joining Vixxo, I served as CFO of the Honeywell Aerospace group, where I revisited the power of mission and dedication to making the right decisions – even when you don't have to live with them personally – and applying the skills to scale myself and my leadership operating mechanisms to enable success in a large and complex organization.

Looking back, I see how each experience afforded me the opportunity for growth both personally and professionally. I learned about accountability, worked within successful teams on important missions and built strong relationships with really sharp people – all of which are core to my role here at Vixxo.

2) What do you consider the biggest opportunities for growth in the facilities management industry?

The ability to scale solutions that add value is the biggest growth opportunity for any company. Through our industry-leading technology platform and established network of service providers, we're well positioned to ensure our clients' facilities are operating successfully and scale with our client base across North America. I would also add that effectively using information to better serve our clients' decision-making and providing excellent service each day are two essential growth contributors for Vixxo and our industry.

In the facilities management space, our role is to ensure our clients' assets are operating when they need them. Using the largest data set in the industry with our ongoing investments in technology and a strong team, we are developing analytical decision models to increase the amount of proactive work we do for our clients to save them money and improve their asset outcomes.

Finally, as a former leader used to say, "The trick is in the doing." For Vixxo, that means exceptional service, and replicating results consistently and to the expectations of our clients 1,000 times a day. When we do what we say, we'll continue to grow.

3) What sets Vixxo apart from the competition?

Our established history and consistent execution is what sets us apart in this industry. Our track record shows that we execute on clients' requests with consistent performance every day, and have done so for the past 20 years.

We are very good at managing large distributed portfolios. Our experienced client account and field teams truly understand the complexities of this business and how to run efficient facilities programs. Our robust service provider network serves as an extension of our team, providing deep technical expertise to meet our clients' diverse needs.

More than a facilities management company, we strive to be a strategic business partner to our clients.

4) How can individual employees contribute to helping their company reach its financial and operational goals?

The greatest thing that employees can do to support their business is simply do great work every day. Link daily efforts to overall goals to ensure alignment. Serve effectively and efficiently. Look for continuous improvement opportunities to further increase efficiency and streamline existing processes. If employees are focused on doing the right thing while eliminating waste, it will improve the company's top line and bottom line.

5) What are the key elements to measuring success for Vixxo?

Profitable growth and our great associates are the keys to success. We want our entire team to perform with a sense of urgency for growth – a sense of urgency to win the next deal, deliver compelling solutions, and be responsive to the needs of our clients and colleagues.