

December 2017 Spotlight

Member Spotlight: Darryl L. Canfield

Company: High Bridge Partnership

Title: CFO

Length of FEI membership: 28 years

FEI leadership involvement: Served as the President (2 years), Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Rochester NY Chapter, and the President of the D.C. Chapter.

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Tell us a little bit about your career, educational/professional background and how you got to where you are today.

I have a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Clarkson University and an MBA in Finance from the Columbia Business School at Columbia University. I am also a CPA in New York and Virginia.

I started my career with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP in New York City, and moved with them to Rochester, NY, and finally Buffalo. I then left my role as senior auditor at PWC to start my corporate accounting career. I've held various positions over the years and at companies of all sizes – from a start-up with \$200K in annual revenues to a \$1-billion-dollar-a-year packaged food company.

During my career, I've served as CFO for the Systems Company (a division of Fidelity Investments), Genesee Holding Corp., Biophan Technologies, Inc., Pictometry International Corp and High Bridge Partnership – a boutique financial consulting firm. I've also served as Corporate Controller, Treasurer, Chief Accounting Officer, and provided leadership through two IPO preparations and served as the project director of a major Oracle upgrade.

What is one piece of information you wish someone had told you when you first started your finance career?

The extent to which *LUCK* plays a critical role in career progression. Certainly, “you can make your own luck” for some aspects of progression. However, aside from performing at a high level, I found that being in the right place, knowing a few senior people, and finding mentors to offer guidance along the way, were exceptionally helpful in my career progression.

What do you love most about working as a financial executive?

I particularly enjoy two aspects of corporate finance. First, the technical requirements are constantly changing primarily due to SEC and FASB initiatives. I enjoy the intellectual challenges of staying current with the latest updates. Second, I love building lean high-performance teams comprised of smart, ambitious, and dedicated staff members.

I have a simple intellectual contract with each of my team members. In exchange for their best efforts, I will teach them everything I know and will work with them to create a customized career development program for rapid advancement, including promotion outside the company. Embedded in this concept is the notion of having only one standard of performance – high performance. I strive for a very fair, very transparent, very inclusive work environment where we accomplish much and have fun doing it.

Do you think it takes a certain kind of personality to thrive in finance? What traits are most important?

Success in the field of finance requires professional competence and professional integrity. Integrity is the most important attribute, especially in the role of CFO. At times, the CEO and/or others may strenuously object to releasing certain disclosures. Nonetheless, the CFO’s role is to ensure that the Board of Directors, and particularly the Audit Committee, are fully informed of the facts stated as objectively as possible. In essence, the CFO is charged with telling the truth, good or bad, to the Board of Directors.

To be effective in this role, the CFO must be independent in his or her thinking, transparent in their corporate activities, and possess integrity beyond reproach. This requires an intellectual toughness to withstand pressures from numerous sources to “adjust the truth” for a more favorable financial outcome or disclosure.

What personality traits and intangible qualities do you look for when recruiting new talent?

I look for smart, ambitious, and dedicated professionals committed to performing at a high standard. That implies “getting it right” whatever it takes, with no short cuts, or sloppiness; and within the timelines set.

Sponsor Spotlight: John Karas

Company: Kforce

Title: Market Manager, Finance & Accounting Talent Director Search

Length of time you/your company has been an FEI sponsor: 5-plus years

FEI leadership involvement (past and present):
Joined the Membership Committee this year

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Tell us a little bit about your career, educational/professional background and how you got to where you are today.

I graduated from The University of South Florida with a degree in Finance and started my career in the financial services industry. I joined an advisory team with Merrill Lynch, which was not for me. But the position introduced me to residential real estate, which I pursued until the market crashed in 2008. From there, I started my own business within the legal services space catering to attorneys throughout the state of the Florida. The business had great success (and is still running today), but when my son was born in 2011 I wanted to get into a more stable, consistent opportunity. That is when I started my career with Kforce.

I started with Kforce on the Healthcare side and then later moved into Finance and Accounting, which is where I wanted to ultimately be. I was recruited onto the Permanent Search team and never looked back. My first year, I was fortunate enough to earn the Rookie of the Year Award and was a Top-10 producer for the next two years. I was promoted to Market Manager this year and I am happy to say that my team is growing and we are looking to add a new search team members in the first quarter of 2018.

What do you love most about working in the finance profession?

I love what I do because I am able to help people at all different levels of their career. But I also am able to do it in a space I am very interested in, which is Finance & Accounting.

Do you think it takes a certain kind of personality to thrive in your field? What traits are most important?

Executive recruiting definitely takes a certain kind of personality to be successful. The right associate must be patient, career-motivated, outgoing and not afraid to talk to people. With time, they must also be confident in their skill set or higher-level candidates won't trust their direction.

Why does your company sponsor FEI Tampa Bay Chapter?

Kforce is a proud sponsor of FEI because of the great relationships that have been made through the group. FEI is a respected Finance group and we consider it a privilege to be a part of the group.

What are some of your personal hobbies outside of work?

My hobbies revolve mostly around my family. My son is 6 years old now, so he is getting more involved with sports. Outside of the family, I enjoy playing golf and watching sports with family and friends. I'm originally from Chicago, so I am huge fan of the Chicago Cubs, Blackhawks and Bears!!