

MEET THE BOSS

Fred van der Tang

In a world where job hopping is commonplace, tales of chief executives who started in the mail room are few and far between. In this regard, Fred van der Tang is old school.

"It's been a love affair that started 19 years ago," says the CEO of recruitment company Randstad. "Every step of the way I've been offered to do something bigger, bolder and more exciting."

Van der Tang started as a recruitment consultant with Randstad in the Netherlands, but always had managerial roles in mind.

"I've been lucky: usually by the time I've been ready for the next step the company asked me to do something [different]," he says.

In his climb from consultant to CEO, van der Tang has been a boss in numerous and different cultural contexts.

"There are lots of subtle differences," he says. "Australians are quite straightforward, but the Dutch are quite suspicious if you are not. I had to adapt my style a little bit here."

For van der Tang, success as a boss always comes back to staff engagement.

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Curriculum vitae

Name Fred van der Tang.

Current position Chief executive of specialist HR and recruitment company Randstad.

Responsibilities Strategic decision making, advising board of directors, motivating employees and driving change.

Education Economics background; majored in business at Universiteit van Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Additional training/courses Strategy and leadership courses at IESE Business School and IMD, Switzerland.

Professional associations

Formerly on the board of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, London.

Honourable mentions 19 years with Randstad, and counting.

Strength "Lots of drive and pride about who we are and what we do. That rubs off."

Weakness "I sometimes give an answer when [a staff member] is still halfway through the question, as I've already made up my mind. Often it's better to listen."

Management style and tips Hands on. "I know all the people and their roles. I can relate to the challenges everyone faces at all levels of the company."

Work motto "If there's an issue, we can solve it."

