

Name:

Veli-Pekka Leppänen

Job title:

CEO at Nanocomp Ltd

Career:

I got my master's degree in physics in 1996 and PhD in 1999. My research focused on light-sensitive proteins and it gave me a thorough knowledge in optics. As I felt that I wanted to do more something own and business related, I ended up starting my own business.

Responsibilities:

As CEO, my work entails a lot of administration. I am also responsible for customer relationships and acquiring new customers, so I need to know their premises. Although I do not visit our laboratory very often, I am perfectly aware of what happens there. Since 98% of our products are exported and we have affiliated entities in Hong Kong, Japan and Silicon Valley, I am frequently communicating with foreign customers. This also means business travels across the globe and dealing with people from different cultures. Understanding your business partner's cultural behavior is essential to be successful. Some negotiations require also very technical knowledge.

Essential skills in my Job:

- Cultural awareness
- Positive and entrepreneurial attitude
- Language skills, especially English
- Ability to get along with different people
- Networking to find the right people to solve specific issues

What I need to know in my job:

- Profound knowledge of the industry including technical knowledge
- Knowledge of current laws and regulations regarding our operations
- Knowledge of the culture from where our business partners come from

Nanocomp Ltd

Nanocomp Ltd is manufacturing micro- and nanophotonics related products. Company headquarters, development department and production is in Finland. They also have offices in USA, Japan and an affiliated company in Hong Kong. Optic components are produced by printing them on a very thin plastic film by using a highly efficient reel-to-reel process. Components shaped as rolls are easy to transport to clients, for example to China. The annual revenue in 2014 was 6.5 million euros, number of staff was 35, 8 of them women.



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CEO, Veli-Pekka Leppänen, Nanocomp Oy Ltd

My educational background is in physics. I graduated 1996 and did my PhD in 1999. My research topic was light-sensitive proteins and it gave me a thorough knowledge in optics. I have always been interested in physics, but I did not find the researcher position suitable for me, I have always wanted to do something own and business related. In my family entrepreneurial was appreciated.

My work entails a lot administration. I take care of our customer relationships and acquiring new customers. Occasionally, negotiation phase may require very technical knowledge, so my background certainly is helping. I do not visit the laboratory so often, but I am fully aware what is happening there.

Typical day at the office includes on average 4-5 meetings. Some of them technic related, some administrative issues. Usually, I also have at least one phone conference abroad. We work mainly with foreign customers; 98% of our products are exported. Communicating with our affiliated company in Hong Kong and Japan and Silicon Valley offices is frequent. Occasionally, I need to work abroad. Latest work related trips were in Germany and Switzerland in Europe, also in the USA and China. Japan is often visited, although not lately.

I need to get along with many different kind of people and to be able to understand their premises. A positive attitude towards working is important. General knowledge of the industry and language skills are also important. We are reporting officially in English. I have to be aware of the law and regulations relating to our operations. If problems arise, I have to find proper professionals to deal with the issues. For example, I need lawyers to legal issues and environmental experts in environmental issues. This kind of networking is crucial, nobody is able to do everything by himself.

What makes my job so interesting is certainly the diversity and interaction with people. Challenging are matters relating to cultural diversity and requirements relating to that. For example China. Doing business with them, understanding their traditions or habits and decision-making is challenging.

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