

JON OLSON SHARES HIS LIFE LESSONS

“Be Humble and Paranoid about Success. It is Fleeting.”

Interview by Barb Frank - Written By Gell Gellman



Jon Olson retired as Director of Finance in 2005 and talks about what he learned at Intel to help with his “second act” as Chief Finance Officer at Xilinx. Read about his life and life lessons.

While Jon Olson retired from Intel in 2005, in 2014 “real” retirement is still ahead of him. While at Intel, all of Jon's Intel time was spent in Finance. He started in Accounting and quickly moved into Operations Finance. In his 26-year career with Intel, he had several Controller and Group Controller positions supporting business units and factories. Jon spent his last two assignments as TMG Controller for five years and then Director of Finance for his final five years, responsible for all of Operations Finance.

In his positions at Intel, Jon's challenges ranged from making factory investment decisions, to cutting billions of dollars per year during the down times, to integrating acquisitions. “One of the most important responsibilities (and I consider it an accomplishment) was the people development aspects of the job, particularly when I was Director of Finance,” Jon shares. “Maintaining a strong financial voice across the company when key decisions are made requires a dedicated focus on how to make correct decisions, as well as knowing how to influence a technology company when a typical Finance employee is not a technologist.” Jon also takes pride in developing the university sourcing strategy where Intel Finance grew from 20 RCGs per year to over 300 in Intel's peak growth year. Growing the talent has been a key strength of the Finance function.

One of Jon's career goals was to become CFO of a public company. When the opportunity arose to join Xilinx, the leader in programmable logic devices, it seemed like the right time to make the move. Eight years later, Jon is still the Xilinx CFO. Find out more about [Xilinx](#).



Jon, comfortable at work

Jon misses the people he worked with at Intel from two different perspectives. “Working with people you have shared many fun and difficult times with, and working with some extremely bright people. You always learn more by working with the best and brightest.”

There are a few things Jon finds relevant from his 26 years at Intel to “Life After Intel”. These insights he considers to be life lessons to be applied in both his business and personal life.

To name a few:

“BE AGGRESSIVE, BUT
BE HUMBLE AND
PARANOID ABOUT
SUCCESS. IT IS
FLEETING.”

“PERSONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND
DEVELOPING YOUR
TEAM WILL MAKE
YOU MORE
SUCCESSFUL THAN
THINKING YOU
KNOW IT ALL.”

“BE PREPARED TO
SUPPORT YOUR
VIEWS WITH
DATA AND
ANALYSIS.”

It will probably be awhile before Jon “really” retires. He looks forward to golfing "all the time". Originally planning to retire to their place near Palm Springs, that is currently being rethought since his golfing buddies have moved away.

Jon and his wife do not yet know where they will settle their family for their retirement years. But no doubt, like Intel retirees everywhere, it will be with a solid foundation.

If you would like to catch up, Jon welcomes you to contact him at jon.a.olson@sbcglobal.net.



Pebble Beach, 7th Hole, Par 3 - Jon teeing off