

CFI SPOTLIGHT INTERVIEW

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In this edition of the CFI newsletter, we're spotlighting Ray Cotton, Chief Compliance Officer, Lumber Liquidators



Tell me a bit about yourself?

I am a Michigan native who has had the fortune of living all over the country during my career. I have worked in the technology sector for the last few years running everything from executive protection and law enforcement response at Facebook to Top Secret programs at Riverbed Technology in San Francisco.

After taking some time off, I returned to the workforce to help my current company navigate a legal response pertaining to the Department of Justice and the FBI. I now lead a team comprised of 6 Directors in 3 countries and approximately 70 folks under them that span from DNA labs in Australia to QA and QC teams working factory lines. My current position is the most challenging and rewarding of my career and every day I get to learn new things and then act on them.

How did you begin your interviewing career? Do you remember your first interview?

I was 17 years old and working in Loss Control. I interviewed the electronics associate for stealing monies that were supposed to go to a 3rd party photo processing company. The interview was horrible and I am relatively certain that the individual only admitted to embezzlement out of boredom or pity of my performance.

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When did you receive your CFI designation and what did you find about the course beneficial?

In the interest of full disclosure, I had to cheat and ask... I could not remember. It was March 17, 2006. The course work was gratifying in terms of forcing me to learn about interview and interrogation outside of the Loss Prevention constructs that I had learned it in. Generally speaking, when someone is asked to work outside of their comfort zone and learn things that are unfamiliar, I think it's a benefit and a service to the individual.

What has the CFI done for you in your career?

I think whenever someone invests time and money into educating themselves, it pays dividends. In the case of the CFI designation, it gives additional credibility pertaining to your ability to facilitate a potentially high-risk discussion in a low risk, uniform way.

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Have you seen a big change in interviewing over your career?

When I began my career, the company I worked for at the time only provided interview training for folks at District Level or higher. Therefore, interview training was really what you could observe or get from on-the-job-training. Those days are gone given the nature of our highly litigious society and the propensity to sue people who operate without defined legality or guidelines.

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In your current position, you are responsible for Global Compliance...tell me a little bit about what that means?

Depending on the company, Compliance can mean a lot of different things. In this role, The Compliance team incorporates Directors of Import and Export, Quality Assurance/Quality Control, Loss Prevention, and Attorneys (teams) in China and South America. Given how much the team touches, the span of concern is everything from legality harvest procedures in Europe to ensuring the safety and security of our associates in our stores. It's a large, challenging job that is meaningful and really fun because I work with really passionate and dedicated people. I have a direct report relationship in to the CEO and our Board of Directors and that helps to keep risk and its mitigation front and center, and in the company's conscious.

How does your scope of work change or influence Lumber Liquidators?

A recent adage states that, "an effective compliance program means the company cannot operate". That phrase is a funny way of saying that the world is full of risk, and if you try and mitigate all of it, then it's likely the company could be paralyzed or cease to exist. The calculus of my position is trying to balance all the global compliance aspects (legal/ethical) while not wearing away at margin, suppliers or distribution networks. We are currently engaging cutting edge processes and oversight, which will be the gold standard in this market segment.

Why would you recommend that a person obtain their CFI certification?

The CFI designation tells people that you take your discipline serious enough to gain additional training and education around a potentially high-risk action. As an employer, I want people that are not afraid to learn or be challenged, and view their position as a long-term career. The CFI designation helps demonstrate that commitment and says a lot to me even before I meet the individual. That speaks volumes and is a real jewel in the crown of serious Loss Prevention folks everywhere.

Do you look for the CFI designation when you are looking to fill positions?

During the Loss Prevention hiring process, I look for a degree from an accredited college and/or University and the CFI designation. Both denote to me a level of maturity and skill needed to be successful in this or any industry.

A promotional poster for a CFI networking event. The background is a scenic view of a beach with waves and a blue sky with clouds. A large yellow sun-like circle is in the upper left, containing the event title and date. To the right of the circle, the event details are listed. At the bottom, sponsors are acknowledged.

Join us for the
CFI
Chat & Chill

Wednesday - June 11
from 9 - 10 p.m.

What: A CFI networking event
Where: Sopranos
17 S Ft. Lauderdale Beach

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