**SMARTtools for Leaders™**

**Screening Interview for the role:** VP of Sales

**Candidate:** Karen Tan **Interviewer:** Kim Jacobs

**Date:** 8/3/2016  **Recommendation:** Proceed

**Rating and Comments (A,B,C):** A+.

1. **What are your career goals?**

I really just want to help people be successful. When I was little I wanted to become a teacher or a guidance counselor. But in high school I discovered software and decided I really wanted to make my mark by helping people be more successful through software.

I’ve been working at this very large company, a $200m division of a $12 billion corporation. I sort of miss the buzz of working in a smaller, more entrepreneurial environment. That’s why I’m interested in joining your team. Also the way in which you are planning on winning customers, by converting them over from the consulting side, is exactly what I just spent 4 years doing—very successfully I might add

1. **What are you really good at professionally? Please give me some examples.**

I’m good at selling! (Laughs). Specifically major account, enterprise sales. I like to immerse myself in the prospect—know who the buyers are, what they really are trying to achieve, what obstacles exist. I work with my team to create solutions that specifically achieve the goals of the buyer—I don’t over-scope a sale. And as a result, I have a track record of beating my sales targets and getting promoted to lead bigger sales teams. An example is at TLY Consulting Group, I inherited a sales division that was doing $72m per year, and had been flat for two years. We grew it to $200m over 4 years. It was considered a huge win for the company.

Hiring people is a strength. I have a sort of huge following of colleagues from my jobs I stay in touch with, and it’s never been hard for me to hire up a great team relatively quickly. In my last three jobs, I built my team within the first year, and then had two or three years to run the horses and hit the numbers. My turnover is sub 10% in an industry with 20%+ turnover.

What else? I work hard. I love working, so I don’t mind working what other people seem to consider long hours.

1. **What are you not good at or not interested in? Please give me some examples.**

Doing analysis till I’m blue in the face is not what I want to spend my time doing. I like to make decisions and go. So don’t ask me to do some big sales analysis, or marketing analysis. I’d rather rely on other people for that.

Finance. I am good at the “revenue” line, but don’t really know my way around the rest of a financial statement. I’m not an accountant.

I’m not a programmer. I understand what technology can do, but I don’t write code.

Sometimes I get criticized for giving away the store when I’m pricing a deal. I don’t like to scrape for every last dollar—makes for bad relationships with the customer. So I instruct my teams to go easy on pricing. Once a customer really values the software, I am more comfortable taking the pricing up to target levels.

1. **Who were your last 5 bosses, and how will they each rate your performance when we talk with them (1 is low, 10 is high)? Why?**
   1. Jamie Canon. 9.9/10. He’s my current boss. He knows I’m looking to leave. I told him after he gave me my last performance review, and 100% bonus, and an award, that I was likely to go do something more entrepreneurial in the coming year or two. He’s been my boss at two companies. He took me with him to TLY. He has told me I’m the most focused and ethical sales executive he’s ever worked with; and I make the cash register ring. He’d ding me for not selling all the features; but some of the features don’t work, so I won’t sell them.
   2. Randy Jones. 9/10. Randy would give me a 9/10 because I was promoted three times in three years, through marketing into senior sales management. I got results. Other people at that job just talked a big game. I kept my head down and didn’t grand stand, but I got the outcomes he wanted.
   3. Sheila Rodriguez. 8/10. Sheila didn’t like me because she was shifted laterally in the organization and I was given her job. I didn’t lobby for this. But my revenue and marketing metrics were top of my peer group of 5, so I was moved up, and she was moved over.
   4. Dustin Jacobsen. 10/10. Dustin was one of my biggest mentors. He sent me to business school and paid for it out of the company’s professional development budget. He said I was destined to be the CEO of a software company. I still don’t know what he saw in me back then, but I felt great about his encouragement.
   5. Shelley Anderson. 9.5/10. That was a brief job out of college where I was selling ad space for an industry trade publication. That was only 6 months, but I got up to speed quickly and hit my numbers.