

Veritas' Tran Says Growth And Culture Are Not Mutually Exclusive

SEPTEMBER 27, 2016 | BY [LISA BROWN](#) at [GLOBEST.COM](#)



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SAN FRANCISCO—After taking the [CFO helm](#) at **Veritas Investments** last month, **Nina Tran** has laid out a bold set of objectives for the future. Tran will be assisting Veritas on its continued growth path, similar to her roles at **Starwood Waypoint**, **Prologis** and other firms. She recently discussed how growth firms can expand capabilities and institutional reach while maintaining a unique culture in this **exclusive**.

GlobeSt.com: What are some consistent elements in facilitating growth for young companies?

Nina Tran: Veritas isn't really a start-up anymore, with more than \$2 billion in assets, but it still has all the great innovation traits that CEO **Yat-Pang Au** instilled when he founded the company almost 10 years ago. I was attracted by the opportunity to help keep the entrepreneurial spirit alive as we grow to an even larger institutional-partner firm. I love that our executive leadership team is committed to technological innovations, which is great for our customers and also enhances our internal systems. On the consumer side, we continue to grow partnerships with technology-focused service providers such as **August Home Security**, **Pillow** vacation rentals and **Zipcar**. We're now Zipcar's largest provider in San Francisco since developing a partnership a few years ago.

At Veritas, I enjoy being able to make an impact on our culture and organizational infrastructure by elevating our performance to the next institutional level. My objectives are always to simplify, automate, and make processes more efficient and effective. Talent management is also essential to a company's success—you need to recruit top talent and build the right scalable team in order to achieve your growth goals.

GlobeSt.com: What do you feel are the key components to a strong recruitment/retention system?

Tran: Recruiting and talent management will be crucial components of Veritas' growth, and employees need to know they are critical to our success. I think you need to view the entirety of the employee life cycle, which includes recruiting, onboarding, training and development, performance management, compensation review, and off-boarding. Building a culture where our employees feel connected, appreciated, inspired and compensated fairly is key to retention. Our leadership team recently created and rolled out the company's core values and long term goals in a Vision 2020 Plan. I think it's invaluable to provide this kind of transparency and open communication, as well as to help employees identify a career path—because people are motivated by more than just compensation.

GlobeSt.com: How do you maintain the unique culture of a start-up organization, even as a company grows?

Tran: Startups are known for innovation and for a high degree of contribution across the organization. As I've done at prior companies, we are taking the great collaboration and energy already in place and building on it. I recently created and kicked off a Veritas Culture Ambassador Team comprised of volunteers across departments, functions and levels. Our mission is to help create a corporate culture that is cohesive, engaged, collaborative, communicative, charitable, innovative and fun! A few weeks ago, we held our first annual Veritas Summer Olympics with skilled games designed to build teamwork and friendly competition across the organization. Another initiative that we're deploying is a Veritas Shark Tank innovation incubator, where any employee can pitch an idea that helps to improve and further the company. The Shark Tank concept raises the bar so that if any compelling idea is chosen, whether in acquisitions, property management, leasing, maintenance, accounting, or anywhere in the firm, then we will budget to get it implemented. Keeping that open-mindedness, that sense that an idea could come from anywhere, that cross-departmental collaboration—all these are key to keeping a startup-like culture even as we scale.

GlobeSt.com: You talked about helping Veritas build upon its institutional quality of systems and reporting. Why is that important for a private company?

Tran: Large institutional investors usually have specific reporting needs. It's important for their real estate general partners like Veritas to make it easy for these investors to understand our portfolio performance and property operations. As we grow, it's essential to develop best-in-class processes and systems in order to fulfill these reporting needs.

Veritas has done very well through the years to become San Francisco's largest owner and operator of mixed-use multifamily buildings, but as we continue to expand our investor base with new joint ventures and funds, we need to continue enhancing our operational infrastructure. Veritas is highly focused on maintaining the solid investment performance we've achieved to date, while simultaneously refining our internal systems and processes to efficiently meet the needs of our investors. This kind of system refinement, like our partnership with Rentlytics to provide analytical dashboard reporting, also provides employees with the best tools to do their jobs, and optimizes the service we provide our residents and tenants.