



DOING THE RIGHT THING

Instilling a people-first culture of trust is everything to **Viv Maza**, and her career to date shows that it's paying off



1992 GRADUATES FROM UNIVERSITY

After seven years of study – during which she had two children – Maza graduated with a bachelor's degree in management from Florida International University. She fulfilled a personal goal by graduating before her daughter's second birthday, with a month to spare

"It was survival – you go to school at night; you do whatever you have to. It was a personal achievement that I wanted for myself"

1992

1998 HIRES HER FIRST EMPLOYEE

Ultimate eventually emerged from the startup years and began creating new departments, and Maza was able to hire the first employee for her team

"As we grew, I realized I couldn't do it by myself anymore. We had to compartmentalize and create the facilities department, a shipping department, mailroom – at one time I was everything; I ran HR and payroll for 430 people by myself, and I realized I needed help"

1998



2016 WINS BEST EMPLOYER IN TECH FROM FORTUNE

Ultimate topped the magazine's list of best employers in the tech sector. Of the many accolades she has collected, this distinction holds the greatest significance for Maza, as the ranking is based on employee feedback

"I know the pulse of the company; I know that our employees are happy and are saying good things about us – but to see that publicly displayed, that means a lot to me. That proved that we've been doing the right thing for our people"

2016

1985 GETS HIRED BY ADP

Maza worked with ADP for a period in the mid-80s, initially in sales administration and later in consulting, but was laid off while on maternity leave. Happenstance was on her side, though – mutual contacts connected her to Ultimate Software founder Scott Scherr, who was looking for a manager to run his nascent office

"He knew my name and knew I was a hard worker. When one door closes, another one opens. It was the best thing that could have happened"



1990 STARTS AT ULTIMATE

Maza was the fourth team member brought onboard at Ultimate, where operations were so embryonic that the company had no logo, the office had no fax machine, and the HR department did not exist – so Maza had to negotiate many unknowns

"There was nothing in place. We did whatever it took; we created handbooks and policies and implemented everything from scratch. Everything is self-taught – I never thought of failing; I was driven to survive"

2004 BECOMES VP OF PEOPLE



In the midst of growth of almost 20% a year, Maza was appointed VP of people. Throughout, she kept her attention on company culture

"A lot of our culture has to do with trust and the core values of doing the right thing professionally and personally. When you build that family, when you have people who believe that mission, that goal – it builds trust"

2010 BECOMES CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER

The year after Ultimate was named the number-one Medium Sized Company to Work for in America by the Great Place to Work Institute and the Society for Human Resource Management for the second consecutive time, Maza was promoted to chief people officer

"Sustaining the culture and making it better is my focus – but being able to sustain this culture with 1,000 people is tough. The awards and rankings speak for themselves, but it's a matter of how can I make Ultimate better?"

