



5 Questions with Nate Breier



As Vice President of Commercial Finance for Vixxo, Nate leverages financial data to help clients better understand the performance of their stores, how to achieve goals and drive growth.

1) How did your education and career path lead you to your current role at Vixxo?

There are a few people who have influenced me every step of the way, both with my education and throughout my career. My dad's career was in public accounting, with a specialty in real estate. He is one of my biggest role models, so when it came time for me to choose a direction, I pursued an education in accounting and finance, too.

Once I graduated college, one of my managers right out of school had me join him on a facilities management assignment. That opportunity was my first exposure to the industry. I loved it, and eventually took my first position at Vixxo as a Sr. Analyst, working with a Chicago-based client—where my father-in-law worked for 30 years!

When I first came to Vixxo, I didn't know if it was a stepping stone in my career or where I'd find my home. I did leave Vixxo for a short time to gain additional experience, but I couldn't come back fast enough. The culture we have here, the enthusiasm we have for our clients, and the excitement of working for a company poised for growth, drew me back. All of these influences brought me to where I am today.

2) **Why is data analysis important in the facilities management industry?**

Truthfully, performing analysis on its own isn't all that important. The magic doesn't happen until you use the insights generated to create and drive meaningful actions.

A lot of companies get trapped in cycles of performing analysis for the sake of analysis, and they never do anything with it. Putting action around analysis is challenging because you need to make sure you are examining the right data at the right level. You don't want to boil the ocean, but at the same time, if you aren't looking deep enough into the data, you can't gather insights that will drive actions. So we have to be committed to finding that sweet spot that provides the most value and benefit for our clients. In other words, analysis is most important in facilities management when we use the data to glean insights that lead to actions, and ultimately drive positive business outcomes.

3) **Consultants, detectives or storytellers? How would you describe the role of your commercial finance team?**

It's difficult to pick just one because we often end up wearing each of those hats at various times. For example, when the commercial finance team is in front of a client, we're acting in a consultative role. As financial analysts, it's really our duty to bring thoughtful recommendations to the client that show them ways to improve their business.

Then when we are back at our computers, "nerding-out" and doing the heavy lifting in financial analysis, we're detectives. For me, one of the best parts of working in commercial finance is the forensic nature of the job, trying to figure out what's working, what's not, and what the client can do differently to reduce spend and grow revenue.

Lastly, we can come up with creative and impactful analysis, but if we aren't able to get a compelling story across to the client, they aren't going to listen. So we become storytellers. We really need to be all of these things for our clients.

4) **How does Vixxo use data to problem solve and support clients?**

Data is one of Vixxo's greatest competitive differentiators, and we use data in a lot of different ways. We use it to ensure that when a service provider arrives at a client site, they're as prepared as possible to make a successful repair. Then, we use data to make sure clients are paying a fair price for that repair.

We also use it to help our service providers understand what parts they purchase most often so they can improve their efficiency. They can know which parts break most often and be better prepared with inventory on the trucks and the knowledge to make the necessary repairs. This high degree of preparedness, in turn, keeps the client happy because they don't have to wait for a part to come in, and it improves the experience for their end customers.

Also, we have a top-notch analytics team who is using data to help guide clients not only in decision-making, like whether they should repair or replace equipment, but also in identifying stores and equipment that are starting to show trends that indicate the store will have high repair volume and spend. We then use that data to drive proactive actions that can curb those trends before a small issue becomes a big one.

5) **Where do you see the future of the facilities management industry headed?**

Everyone in the facilities industry is trying to become as predictive as possible. We've all heard the concept of a "break/fix," meaning something goes wrong and we go take care of it. A perfect world for me is moving away from "break/fix" into "about to break/fix," or "about to break/replace."

In an ideal situation, our analytics team leverages data to notify clients when a repair or replacement is needed to avoid equipment downtime. This approach improves efficiency for that piece of equipment, and the overall experience for our clients and their customers.

The hardest part of facilities management is when a store manager calls into Vixxo because something is broken and they need it solved right away because their customers are counting on it. Vixxo wants to be the reason things get back on track. Whether that means we have engaged a service provider to make a quick repair, or we have predicted a potential issue, we use analytics to help make somebody's bad day a good one.