

Katzscan Newsletter

Supply Chain Operations & Technologies ~ Vendor Compliance
Good Governance ~ Fraud-Fighter ~ Turnaround Help



I admit that as the conference in India was approaching I was wondering how my sense of humor -- spontaneous, observational, sarcastic without being truly mean-spirited -- would be accepted by the attendees. My sense of humor plays out very well to both American and British audiences -- I have a very good blended balance between the two styles -- and I regularly use humor during presentations to keep the audience's attention. It's not that I feel that my material itself can't hold an audience's interest but I make sure the delivery maintains its professionalism without boredom.



My keynote presentation was the first one on the first morning of the first day. I delivered it just as I had numerous times before and the audience sat quite stone-faced even through the humorous bits. Granted, morning presentations can be tough if the audience isn't awake yet, but I felt something else was amiss. Not too far into my presentation I was thinking that it was going to be a long conference.

I finished my presentation and opened the floor to questions. One of the first questions to be asked was prefaced by the attendee with what almost amounted to an apology: the gentleman effectively stated that business practices in India were ripe with fraud, known for fraud, that India was behind the times in addressing fraud, and it was of little wonder that India was not viewed as a peer among other global leaders such as the United States despite its status as an emerging economy.

As I listened I quickly realized that it was very likely the audience perceived me to be an arrogant American who came half-way around the world to tell the attendees how things are (supposedly) done -- and to perfection -- in the United States where, in the minds of my Indian audience, fraud had been all but completely eradicated, and how less-advanced nations like India need to do better to be taken seriously as true business partners.

Having a revelation and seizing the moment, I prefaced my answer by first leveling the playing field: I literally told the audience that, likely contrary to their perception, the United States had not just basically perfected fraud -- probably inventing many of the ones plaguing the world today -- but did it bigger and more extensively than anyone else in the world. I continued that the monetary impact of frauds in the US is measured in billions, not merely millions or thousands, and that emerging countries like India were merely rank amateurs when compared to the professional fraudsters we have in the United States.

The audience burst out loud with laughter and I knew at that moment we had connected with each other.

Throughout the rest of the conference I enjoyed chatting with the attendees and other speakers on personal and professional matters, joking back-and-forth as freely as I would with people I've known for a whole lot longer period of time. The attendees knew that I was there to share my experiences and information to help them do better and not to tell them how good or bad a job had been done to-date in fighting fraud in India.

I truly believe that my success & longevity in part stems from the ability to effectively

communicate, knowing when to listen and when (and what) to speak. Messages can get mixed as they pass through organizational layers -- let alone across nations & cultures -- and often this is a root cause of the chaos I get involved in correcting.

Poor or otherwise ineffective communication results in disconnects that can equate to wasteful activities and lost opportunities. If you know of a company -- maybe your own -- that's having troubles understanding the different meanings of what everyone is individually saying then they should contact me. I'll correct the communication conundrum and get everyone speaking the same language, moving towards a common set of goals.

Thanks.

Norman

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Do you know of a company, *maybe your own*, suffering from disconnected dots?

www.disconnecteddots.com

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