



Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) / Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)
 Supply Chain Vendor Compliance
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 Business Analysis / Data Analysis / Systems Analysis

Since January 1996

We need more echoes in the canyon.

I recently saw the music documentary film "Echo In The Canyon" (<https://www.echointhecanyon.com/>). If you are a fan of '60s music, this film is a must-see. Hosted by Jakob Dylan – who is the splitting image and replicates the sound of his famous father, Bob – the movie is about the music scene in the Laurel Canyon, California area between 1965 and 1967. Profiling musicians from and bands including The Byrds, The Beatles, The Beach Boys, Buffalo Springfield, The Monkees, and The Mamas and the Papas, the film is a tribute to some of the most iconic music that has outlived the generation from which it was born.

But beyond a celebration of music and the composing musicians, the film is an inspirational lesson or two about so much more.

Listening to the memorable songs sung by current-day performers and hearing the stories by iconic musicians should be enough for any music lover or aficionado. The tales of parties between famous band members and how musicians would freely share musical riffs that they created but didn't want with other musicians who took them and developed them into now-famous songs to create music history is nothing short of sheer entertainment.

It was the openness to free-form collaboration without fear that someone else – a colleague or competitor band – would benefit more that enabled each musician to gravitate to the ideas that truly worked best for them and turn those strums and plinks into hits. It was about the ability to work with – not against – another musician regardless of whether they were in the same band as you were or not. It was this non-musical harmony that resonated throughout the movie and throughout each musician's interview. Any competition, if it could even be called that, was really more inspiration. There was no real one-upmanship. There was cross pollination of ideas that were tailored to individual talents.

As I have written in VAR Insights magazine (<https://www.varinsights.com/search?keyword=%22norman+katz%22>) and as I repeatedly promote in my supply chain vendor compliance consulting (see the June 18, 2019 Forbes.com contribution by Kate Vitasek in which I am profiled: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/katevitasek/2019/06/18/abusive-compliance-practices-hurt-retailers-and-their-vendors/>) there are ample opportunities for collaboration but, I think, rare instances of people and organizations actually doing so.

Software and hardware resellers should be partnering with independent consultants who bring depth, experience, and executive interaction to the table. Independent consultants know how to sell the value proposition rather than selling the technology. Article after article I read implores the reseller away from the commodity sale and towards the value proposition, even recommending direct-hiring of people with the independent consulting experience. But fear of splitting or sharing the revenue and the misguided belief that independent consultants are competitors to resellers prevent this collaboration from regularly occurring.

In my 25 years of supply chain vendor compliance, I have only witnessed the widening gap between the customer/buyer entities (e.g. retailers) and their supplier/vendor sellers. The Internet has leveled the playing field to a great extent, shocking retailers who have finally come to terms with the fact that they have disenfranchised their vendors and cannot fully private label their way out of the disloyalty hole they have dug for themselves. Brick-and-mortar's failure to fully grasp and merge the omnichannel business model has only widened the chasm and created more supply chain chaos within their own companies, let alone the spillover to their vendor communities. With numerous retailers completely out of business resulting thousands upon thousands of stores closed and jobs lost, I am still waiting for anyone to fully address the fact that the lack of true supply chain collaboration is a significant cause of retail distress and failure.

What those hippie-dippy musicians were actually teaching us, decades later, is that success for one equates to success for all, even if it comes at different times and at different levels. The lesson is that collaboration is not a weakness but a core strength. Your bandmates – your teammates – are your driving force, even if sometimes they drive you a little crazy in the process. And if someone else can benefit from something you created but can't use, just let them have it without strings attached.

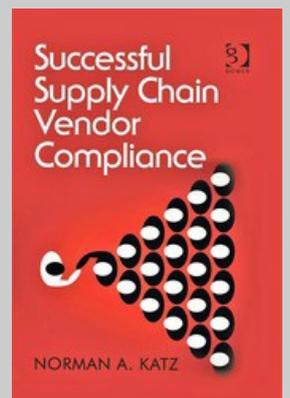
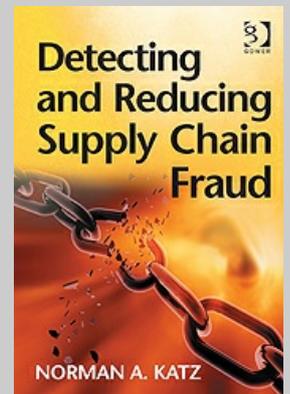


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Even through the quarrels and the fights, the bandmates and musicians never really compromised on their collaborative efforts when it came to the music.

From software projects to operational improvements to supply chain collaborations, these efforts are best solved by creating echoes in the canyon. When it comes to better business execution, what we could use are more collaborative-minded people to join together in the band. The results would be business hits.

Thanks for reading.

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