



Supply Chain Operations & Technologies
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Since January 1996

As my faithful newsletter readers know I accepted a position as Adjunct Instructor of Information Technology at the Johnson & Wales University (JWU) campus in North Miami this past Spring term. Well the term is over and what an experience it was!

Yes, it was cool to do. I'm regularly complimented after presentations that I'm an entertaining & informative speaker, and I treated my college-age classrooms no differently than my professional audiences. I brought real-life experiences to my students' attention so they could understand the value – and application – of what I was teaching. Overall this helped me to create a very good relationship with my students as I got to know them during the three-month term. I really did enjoy my interaction with the students and I received very nice compliments from many of them.

Teaching is a whole lot of work! Even as an adjunct there were administrative tasks to perform on top of lesson preparation and homework & exam grading. It was overwhelming at times but I made it through just fine. I'll be better prepared the next time – happily JWU has asked me to come back in September for the Fall term – and thus it will be easier overall as I'll already be settled-in to the role.

The classes I teach are a beginner and an advanced course in the foundations of information technology. Primarily they are focused on Microsoft Office® products Word®, PowerPoint®, Excel®, and Access® along with a wide range of various technology concept topics. The examinations require the students to create and manipulate various Office files per a set of instructions. The students are required to create presentations or write essays based on the technology concept lectures.

I think many of my students were somewhat over-confident in their technology skills at the beginning of the classes. As the students learned there are different types of technology, e.g. software versus hardware, application software versus operating system software. Just because they may be fluent in social media those skills do not necessarily translate to being effective at understanding & solving business problems with business software like Microsoft Office. The students simply don't have the experience or knowledge to understand this yet: they simply don't know what they don't know. Being enrolled in university gives them the ability to acquire knowledge and to be introduced to instructors like me who share real-world experiences to reinforce what we are teaching.

The businesses I help often suffer from not knowing what they don't know when it comes to understanding the true problem, identifying the needed outcome, determining the required resources, selecting the right software solution, and implementing the appropriate operations procedures. This lack of knowledge or experience can cause: poor software purchase choices; excessive software customization or modification; underutilization of software; inefficient operations; disappointed customers; frustrated suppliers; excessive operating costs; insufficient or incorrect analytical reporting; etc.

I educate my clients on good business practices, data setup & entry standards, operational procedures, and how to select and implement software. I teach my users technical and operational skills to enable them to take control of their businesses. I instruct on strategies for growth and tactics on how to achieve goals.

The "Professor" is in! :-)

Thanks.

Norman Katz, CFE, CFS
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