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*Fraud is a culture.*

According to a Washington Post article that appeared in the October 17, 2015 edition of the Miami Herald, the latest hit reality show in Brazil may also be the one that the government wishes would go away the fastest.

In a TV Globo expose, a reporter caught on camera legislative assembly employee Senhora Edinair dos Santos Moraes who, over the course of three consecutive days, was captured logging in to work in the morning only to turn right around and then either head home or go to a park. When interviewed on camera the woman informed the reporter that she was unemployed. The reporter, stating that the film crew had evidence of her reporting to her place of employment and then immediately leaving, sent an obvious shudder through the woman who then immediately ran away, chased by the reporter and camera crew. Too late, unfortunately, as the entire encounter was captured on camera and has been distributed through the media.

Senhora Moraes works for – or by now did work for – Goiás state deputy Marluccio Pereira. She and two other employees have been summarily dismissed for their falsification of work and public service fraud.

So rampant has the story spread that even a video game called “Senhora Come Back Here” – a nod to the request of the reporter as he chased the woman as she ran away upon being exposed – complete with a rock music theme, has been downloaded more than 600,000 times.

Brazil is unfortunately awash in fraud and the citizens are tired of it. From the multi-billion dollar scandal at Petrobras the result is the jailing of high-ranking politicians and executives. Social media postings such as “Who has never paid a bribe?” imply that everyone is cheating and if you are not part of the fraud culture you are the sucker, not the other way around.

In fact on a TV Globo show the week before the “Senhora” incident, studio guests discussed a survey that revealed 69% of high school and higher education students admitted that they had cheated. Amid the audience laughter the guests acknowledged that they themselves had either cheated or helped someone to cheat. This shows that the bad habits in a culture that accepts fraud as a fact of life starts early.

When fraudulent behavior is woven into the fabric of society or business, as can happen due to such complicated and convoluted rules and regulations, illicit behavior becomes the only likely means of circumventing the system and streamlining the processes. The result is that fraud is going to occur because the “black market” operates without regulations, the only rules are either to survive or be eliminated. Government and business executives must take leadership roles: the clean-up starts with the tone at the top.

And speaking of governments stepping in to clean up their culture of fraud, the Chinese Communist Party is now prohibiting all 88 million party members from being golf club members too. The Communist Party believes that golf, along with excessive eating and drinking and “improper sexual relations” is a violation of a moral code issued by the Party’s top Central Committee which is comprised of the nation’s 25 top leaders.

The moral code is part of President Xi Jinping’s goal to rebuild the Communist Party’s tainted image. Golf is viewed as a symbol of Western extravagance and Xi wants to eliminate Western values. Golf courses are also notoriously viewed as venues where corrupt deals are made.

Thank you.

**Norman Katz**, CFE, CFS, CCS, MOS  
 Katzscan Inc.



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