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Faulty formatting fouls federal funding.

An Associated Press piece that ran in my May 10, 2017 Miami Herald newspaper initially just struck a raw nerve about the typical mindset of government types, but as I re-read the article there is a lesson to be learned for those involved in supply chain relationships too.

Apparently the Department of Education rejected dozens of university and organization applications for federal funding due to formatting errors such as incorrect line spacing, incorrect margins, and using the wrong font. The program affected is called Upward Bound which received \$263M in 2015 and helps over 62,000 high school students. The Department of Education this time received 1,592 applications for the five-year grants of which it accepted 1,222 for review. Seventy-seven applications were rejected for formatting inconsistencies to the guidelines established under the Obama administration, a rejection rate many times higher than in previous years.

I did a brief search on the Department of Education web site for the Outward Bound program to see if I could find any submission guideline information. While I did find the Outward Bound program information I could find no grant guideline formatting information. I was directed to www.grants.gov, a general web site for all thing government grant related, but this web site did not seem to have any grant format information on it either.

I recalled that when I was writing my two books, my publisher provided both an instruction document with formatting directions on how manuscript should look and Microsoft Word templates for use. I chose the latter option of just using the templates provided instead of recreating the proverbial wheel to ensure my manuscripts were formatted exactly how my publisher needed them to be, and I had no issues or problems whatsoever either time.

As an expert on supply chain vendor compliance, and the author of the first (and I think still only) book on the topic, one of the consistent points of disruption and avoidable cost is the poor job customer/buying enterprises (e.g. retailers) do in documenting their requirements to their supplier or vendor community. The lack of clarity, the lack of direction, the lack of schematics, the lack of templates, the lack of forethought, the lack of review are all factors in causing confusion to the reader.

The more confusion, the more delay. The more delay, the more disruption. The more disruption, the more costs incurred to both trading partners.

This shouldn't be that difficult. Yet from the private sector to the public sector there are just an increasingly growing number of egregious examples of top-level supply chain partners who are bypassing, skipping over, forgetting, or just plain unaware of these details and how they intrinsically affect the execution of core supply chain initiatives.

Instead of pointing the finger of failure at those on the receiving end of supply chain specifications and those who are trying to comply, enterprises and entities should take a good long look at the information – or lack thereof – they are providing to their suppliers/vendors and ask themselves whether or not they have done enough to ensure full execution (preferably without further guidance) of their instructions is possible.

Thanks.

Norman Katz, CFE, CFS, CCS

Katzscan Inc.

954-942-4141

<http://www.katzscan.com>

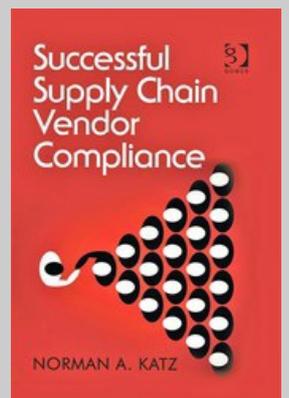
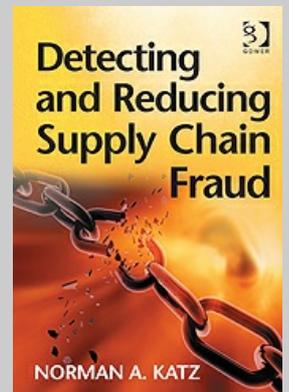


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