Jonathan Marks Tweets and Why You Should Be On Twitter

Yesterday my Fraud Examiner colleague Tracy Coenen posted a blog entitled, "*Why I'm quitting Twitter (and you should too)*". My blog today will set forth the reasons why the compliance practitioner should refrain from quitting Twitter, actively participate and why the greater compliance world benefits from participation from experts like Tracy Coenen. So Tracy, do not quit!

Twitter is an excellent resource for anyone in the compliance community. It provides real time reporting and more importantly excellent resources for the compliance practitioner. AND BEST OF ALL IT IS FREE!

Why should you participate on Twitter? My experience is that it is one of the most efficient ways to get your name out in the field you practice. Whether it is law, forensic accounting, finance or selling flowers, it does not matter. The key is to stay focused on your area of specialty. If you tweet about where you are or that you are the Mayor of some such place it will not assist you professionally.

What did I do? I began my social media journey focusing on Twitter. Beginning in January, 2010, I reposted every tweet I could find on the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). I did not post original content because I was learning the Twitter ropes and was not sure what to do. I stayed focused on the area of the FCPA which led to me being named in February as one of the Top 15 "Must Follows" in the area of Securities Law (FCPA) by Bruce Carton, author of the Securities Docket Blog and his list was posted in Compliance Week.

I then decided to see if I could begin to send articles to different blogs and websites for posting. I always send an email introducing myself and they all come back with something along the lines of the following, "We know who are and thanks for re-tweeting our tweets." To date they have all said yes to me sending in a contribution for consideration. So I was able to make a name for myself through Twitter. Of course I had to follow up with substantive content and perhaps I could have sent blind submissions but Twitter was the tool which introduced me to the wider compliance world.

How else can one use Twitter to meet and develop substantive business? In December 2010, I noticed a tweet by Jonathan Marks where he mentioned that he had developed a 13-step action plan for FCPA compliance programs. I thought that this was an interesting item but there was no link to the document or information, so I took the direct approach and Direct Messaged Jonathan, on Twitter, to ask if he would be willing to share with us the 13-step action plan, which he was willing to do.

I met Jonathan (virtually) through LinkedIn and his hosting of the LinkedIn group 'Fraud Pentagon.' Through his profile I was able to discover Jonathan's interesting professional journey, he is the Partner In-Charge of the Fraud, Ethics and Anti-Corruption practice at Crowe Horwath

and has worked with the US Attorney's office, the FBI, the IRS Criminal Investigation Division and US Customs officials during his career. Jonathan has also served as the Chief Audit Executive at several public companies and is a Certified Public Accountant, Certified Fraud Examiner and is certified in financial forensics.

I spoke to Jonathan to find out how he developed this plan and he told me that from his meetings with clients, on the issue of compliance over the years, he wanted to develop a non-legalistic approach that he could easily convey to clients. After the interview and his sharing of his 13-step program I wrote a blog about the program by which a company could review its FCPA compliance program, assess where the program is in terms of *best practices*, and then use the same action plan as a guide for implementing some or all of the *best practices*.

The response to the blog posting was so great that Jonathan wrote a White Paper on his 13-step program which I assisted him with some of the drafting. All of this happened because he tweeted about his 13-step program. In other words, one little tweet led to all of the above.

How does all of this relate to Ms. Coenen and her pronouncement? I say to Tracy, do not stop tweeting - WE NEED YOU. One other reason to continue to participate in Twitter is the absolute wealth of information that is available to any chosen profession. However, I can speak only to the compliance world and in that world there is significant information available to all AT NO COST. If you are in a company on a budget, and who is not, you can obtain the *best practices* of FCPA compliance, Bribery Act compliance, fraud and forensic accounting compliance by participating on Twitter. Tracy's tweets are substantive and if she retweets someone else's tweets, I am confident that it is substantive as well.

Twitter is but one tool and to any professionals a quiver of tools it is a significant and useful tool (did I mention that it is FREE?) for both marketing and research. I do agree with Tracy that I cannot point to one client I have obtained exclusively from Twitter. It is always some combination of Twitter/LinkedIn/Blogging/Speaking/White Papers and word of mouth. But it is a significant tool and, in my opinion, a tool that you should not forsake.