



**Local expertise,
regional teams,
and multinational
compliance**

an interview with
Jonathan Turner

by Roy Snell, CHC, CCEP-F

To “Zack”—The ability to determine what is important

Please don't hesitate to call me about anything any time.

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A skill that is important to almost any job is determining what is important. I am not sure it can be taught. I am not sure it can be easily described. It can be learned; however, it can take a long time. A project can take much longer, and not be done as well, if it is delegated to someone who does not have the ability to determine what part of the project is important. We have many SCCE & HCCA Board members who can do this, and their value to the organization cannot be overstated. Some people have it in one area of expertise; leaders have it in many. More importantly, leaders know how to delegate to the right



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person, based on their ability to identify what is important for a particular project.

You all see it. People are talking, and they are not connecting on what is important. People often don't even disagree; they just blurt out their thought about what's important. They talk past each other, because they are not connecting. They are not connecting, because they don't know what is important about the project. The conversation can get heated and often goes nowhere. Then someone pulls a “Zack.” They use few words, but their point has a beginning, middle, and end. They are calm. They share the facts or other evidence on which they based their identification of what

is important. They weave what has been said by others into their story. And everyone in the room sits up and thinks, “Yes, that's it.”

Why do I call it, to “Zack”? Because, as many of you know, we recently hired an incoming CEO, Gerry Zack, to take over when I retire. We had a list of what we wanted in the next CEO. Gerry checked boxes we didn't have. The excitement of discovering Gerry, by everyone on the Transition Committee, was palpable. But there was much to learn about Gerry after he came on board, as is always the case with any new hire.

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One “surprise skill” he had was particularly important to me. It may be the most important skill he has. He can reach into a complicated set of options and identify what is important. He also knows how to delegate to people, based on their ability to identify what is important. When managing a large organization, you are going to have a lot of people with a lot of ideas. Every project or task has a lot of rabbit holes and, quite often, the project has only one pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Those who can tell the difference are worth their weight in gold. I never found a way to identify this skill succinctly, so now I am going to call it the “Zack.” 🍷