

Communication failures can have ripple effects

Transcript

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Can you share a success story or a cautionary tale based on your years of experience that could be helpful to the audience and to our clients?

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So, I'll give you a tale that was illuminating and part of the reason, in all honesty, why I had the privilege of meeting Jennifer, which is, not in life sciences, but is in, so I'll say, the two companies I was privileged to work at – Cisco and Microsoft. And when I was at Cisco, we were thinking about this third-party ecosystem and how deep it went. And the reality back then was you were cutting-edge if you were looking at maybe the second tier, maybe, maybe like the first. Okay.

And so I was thinking about fourth, fifth and beyond. And we had a poignant reminder. And it's this ... we were talking earlier, all of us about resilience and what does that include? And so, I think it includes security, I think it includes quality. And I think it includes the ability to capture and mine and vast amounts of data to distill it into something meaningful that tells me who I'm actually playing with, whether I know it or not.

And we had a problem with connectivity. You're in the networking business and you don't have connectivity, you have a major problem.

So what I did was I dug and I dug and I dug, and I got to the sixth level, and I found someone that changed an ingredient in the solder. It was red phosphorus, ironically enough. I never quite figured out what dawned on them to put red phosphorus in the solder, but I'm sure made it flow better, it did something. What it also did was it stopped electrical connectivity at its optimum capabilities.

And so with that, I had this challenge. Here was the three challenges. One, took me forever to find it until I found her (points to Jennifer Bisceglie). Two, it took me away, away from my normal “I’m an executive. You do what I say,” to “I have to go six levels. I have to negotiate and navigate with people in this ecosystem in a way that it makes sense. And I have to respect them and their intellectual property.” And better yet, it took me to the place where we still struggle, which is information sharing. And information sharing remains our biggest quandary.

So, I went to them and I said, “I think I figured it out, let’s play with it.” That’s what it was for sure. And I said, “Can I tell others now?” And the answer was, “No. We will determine what we tell others.” And I had to respect that – when they wanted to, how they wished to do it. And I was struggling because there was a whole connected ecosystem that needed to know this information. And yet I had to respect those boundaries.

That’s what I think is the cautionary tale of – we had better get together, start talking, sharing and leveraging the technology more.