



Welcome to Procurement Zen. The last days, I shared some interesting stuff on how to deal with internal stakeholders all based on the book, *Expensive Sentences* by Jack Quarles. Today, as a highlight of this focus week, I have an interview with Jack, the author himself for you. And he really does share some very interesting insights. We do not only cover *Expensive Sentences*, but how procurement has changed and evolved as well, and we do exchange some proverbs. So, let's go.

Looking to up your negotiation and procurement skills? You're in the right place. Welcome to Procurement Zen with your host, Phil Kowalski.

Phil: Yes. Welcome everyone, to Procurement Zen Podcast. Today, I am happy and very honored to introduce you as the highlight of our *Expensive Sentences* focus week to the author of the book, *Expensive Sentences*, Jack Quarles. Jack, thank you very much for joining our podcast, and welcome to the Procurement Zen show.

Jack: Philipp, it is great to be with you today. Thank you for having me.

Phil: Amazing. Jack, throughout the week we already have covered some insights into the book, but would you mind just telling us, and the audience of Procurement Zen a little bit more about yourself, and your background maybe also in negotiations?

Jack: Absolutely. Well, I started off in expense management after business school. So, I have been to Kellogg Business School in Northwestern University here in the states, and sort of fell into a company that was helping figure out phone bills, and how companies could pay less money on their phone bills. This was long ago when people paid money for a long distance phone calls. And from that, I ended up spending about two decades in various roles in procurement, and expense management, and negotiation, and I enjoyed that field a lot but about half way through, and this is where I was in a role that a lot of your listeners are in, where I was in a big company in a procurement role: a director of procurement for a larger international company.

Jack: And I just realized that something was broken, because I had very good skills in analysis, and I could do the spreadsheets, I could go out and do sourcing and find different vendors, and I could even negotiate pretty well. I was learning to do that pretty well. However, my biggest problem was back in my company with the people I was supposed to help, and it was some of the attitudes, and the assumptions, and the biases that they brought into it. And I realized that everything I did in terms of doing great work on the sourcing and procurement side could be knocked away and made irrelevant with just a few words by a senior leader of my company. And these were these *Expensive Sentences*.

Phil: Okay. That's quite interesting, and I'm pretty sure I have a similar experience, when ... it sounds quite familiar. I'm always thinking, "I am here to help you guys," and therefore, you're reading the book and experiencing, that's obviously not just me, was really an eye opener. So, you already talked a little bit about procurement roles and so, would



you mind sharing you discovered really your first expensive sentences? When it changed from a feeling to some real awareness?

Jack: Well, it was a pretty big project that I was working on. Actually, this is a story that's not in the book, so I wanna share this, because we have some good stories that are in the book, but this one is not. And I probably should have shared it, because it's very central to how I got interested in writing the book, but it was almost too personal in a sense, because this was a huge opportunity that I had. When you are in middle management in a big company, there are a lot of people around there, but every once in a while a big project comes along, and you get an assignment then you say, "Hey, this is good, right? This is where I can make my mark. This is where the higher-up people will notice me."

Jack: And I got one of those assignments, and it was a huge function of the company. It was over a hundred people, and we were looking at whether or not we should outsource that function. Whether we should get a partner to do it instead of doing it ourselves. And this wasn't my only project, but for a year and half it was what I spent most of my time on. And so, I got very into this, right? I did a whole lot of analysis. Actually we'd had external consultants come in the past, and they had said, yeah, it's probably time for you as a company to outsource this, but the company decided, no, no we're not quite ready for that.

Jack: So, now is my turn. I was leading the process, I was looking at the prior analysis, so I was taking in some new data. I talked to several new vendors and of course we got to know these vendors very well. And really, all of the information pointed in one direction. And of course, that direction was, hey, we shouldn't do this anymore. We should get a partner to come and do this. We shouldn't do it in-house, because we weren't doing it very well, we were losing money on it, we were not best in class by any means, and it just didn't make sense.

Jack: So, finally the time came, after a year and a half, and then meetings all over the place where we had the meeting with the president, and the CFO of the company. And again, this is a multi-billion dollar international company, and they were in the meeting. Now, because of this, we split them in different places, so I was at my cube, I was at my little desk on the phone. I was facilitating the meeting, but I wasn't in the same room with everybody because we were in several different rooms.

Jack: And during this process, I got to be pretty good friends with two of the vice-presidents that were leading this. And both of them said, "You're right jack, once we look through this, we should make this change. It's time to make this change. It's going to save money, we're going to have a better product, it'll be better for everybody involved." So, we went through and we presented our slides, and then we got to the point where somebody said, "Okay, it's time to make a decision." And I don't know who it was. It was either the president or the CFO, because they were both on the call, and I couldn't recognize their voice but one of them said, "Yeah, you know, I'm just not sure we're ready for this kind of this change right now."



Jack: And then I waited, Philipp. And I waited for one of these vice presidents that had really become my friends to speak up and say, "No. No. We're good. We can do this. It's time, we have done the analysis, we know that it's time to do this." And they didn't say it. Nobody said anything. Nobody challenged this. And I'm glad I wasn't in the room at that time, because I know my face turned color, right? Because, I almost felt like I'd been betrayed. Because people say don't take your work personally, but I take my work personally. I care a lot about what I'm doing, and when you're in a project, and you feel that well, this is the right and all the data says it's the right answer and we kind of agreed this, and then all of a sudden it goes the other way, you say, "What am I doing? Have I just been wasting my time in the last year and half?"

Jack: So, that was ... even though, as I said, that story is not in the book, that was something that made me feel like, gosh, this is a problem and it's not just a problem about wasting some money here, or hiring the wrong vendor there, this is a problem that's going to make people feel sick about their jobs. Feel like the work they are putting in isn't useful because somebody, may be senior/upper, maybe just a colleague, or even a client or a customer, comes to one of these decisions based on a very lazy thinking, and an Expensive Sentence like, I don't think we're ready for that change.

Phil: That's quite impressive, and I'm absolutely with you when it comes to ... yeah, to a certain extent, taking the job personally because for me, especially negotiating procurement, and it's a creative job, right? It's not just number crunching, but it's read between the lines and all this kind of stuff, and I have a passion for that. And I absolutely can understand your feeling that you're saying. We put so much effort into it. Objectively seen, everything points into that one direction.

Phil: You simply feel betrayed as you said, and I absolutely can understand that, and I am yes, so happy to see that obviously, and maybe our audience is happy as well, that we are obviously not alone because sometimes it feels like an endless fight against windmills.

Jack: And I think one of the good things that's happening in our field, and just in the last few years, I think it's happening a lot more, is we're using ... people like you and I are using words like, I have a passion for this, or I got really betrayed by this. Or I care a lot about this. So, in other words, we are bringing a little bit more emotion into this work of procurement, which I think too often is seen as very clinical. And at the same time, which I think builds right along with it, we are seeing the importance of soft skills and it's not just about the analysis, but it's really about effectiveness.

Jack: And to be effective, we have to have these relationships, we have to do a little bit of sales and marketing, and in this and it's not just this is the right answer, it's no, this is ... how is this going to suit your needs and that sort of thing. So, I feel like it is a good time where this wave is happening a little bit in procurement. Maybe too slowly, maybe overdue, but it's coming, and I really appreciate that you are part of it, with the Procurement Zen and the work you are doing here with the podcast.



Phil: Thank you very much. And I really see your really amazing book, guys if you hear this, you have to get this book. It's so amazing. And with your book, I see things like this happen more and more, where we look not only on hardcore facts, so to say, which are of course important, but we're looking like as you said, relationships. How can we deal with people? How can we ... maybe influence is the wrong word, but how can we come to common understanding, and find ways through this kind of struggle?

Phil: And therefore, I really like it. So, looking at the book, within it, and as we have seen through the episodes of the past few days on the podcast, we have, or you showcased three main, yeah, categories of patterns. So, that is stuck, and special, and scarce. Can you tell us a little bit more about how discovered these patterns? Because I would imagine that that's quite surprising, right? That you're matches in one of these patterns when you discovered this?

Jack: Well, I think that the challenge is that we're surrounded by these little phrases, and I'm so intrigued to talk with you Philipp, and I really appreciate that the book resonated with you, because one of my questions was, well, is this just an American thing, or is this sort of a human thing, a business thing? And how do these little ideas translate? So, in English, we have all these little proverbs that I love.

Jack: Benjamin Franklin, one the greatest Americans, and he had all this wisdom he'd write down. He'd say, a penny saved is a penny earned, and things like that. Early to bed, and early to rise, makes you healthy, wealth and wise, he said. So, I love these little phrases. I've always liked them. And I'm drawn to them, and I think we all are, when they simply kind of sum up a situation. So, a lot of times Expensive Sentences will sound like wisdom. And they'll sound like a proverb. For example, again another English expression is, you can't change horses in mid-stream.

Jack: So, if you are crossing a little stream, and you're riding a horse, you shouldn't change horses, okay?

Phil: I understand.

Jack: Once you start something, stick with it, right? Or stick with it to some sort of degree. Now that's often good advice, that you don't want to change something once you start it, but it's obviously not the case that you never want to change once you start it, right? There are times when something is going the wrong way and you need to change your plan, or you need to change your vendor, or you need to change your product, or you need to change your team, right? There's something you need to change, and I think this idea that once we're going forward, we shouldn't look up and evaluate is, it can be terribly toxic.

Phil: Yes.



Jack: But we have to sort of way these things. When is this good advice, and when is it a bad advice? When is it Expensive Sentences? You get what you pay for, is another english expression, meaning that there is a correlation between higher price and higher quality. Now sometimes that's true, and there are times in the procurement world where you don't want to lower the quality. You don't want to take a risk by paying a little less.

Jack: But at times it's not true. And we know that we can often get just as good a deal by paying less as well. So, another example, so, the challenge that we had is how do you sort out this advice? When somebody says something like that, how do you tell whether it's an Expensive Sentence, or it's helpful? And that's where the short hand of these three words came in. So, scarce, special and stuck. And in a way, it's all the same idea, maybe of being stuck, but just they apply in different ways. So, I will say, is something scarce? Is someone special? Or are we Stuck? Okay.

Jack: Stuck is simple. You don't want to be stuck. You want more than one option. And what I found in life and business is that usually when people think they are stuck, they have more options than they realize. or if not, they need to get busy and create more options. So, whenever anybody says we have to do this, because we are under contract, well, you want to develop and new option but well, hang on a second. Let's look at the contract. What's the termination clause, right? Is it really happening completely? Let's not just say that, or we're stuck.

Jack: We have to do this because we need to launch the product next week. Well, hang on a second, what if we don't want to launch the product next week? What does that really mean? If we delay it two weeks, what does that cost us? What are the benefits? That sort of thing. So, I think we want to really have our radar, have our attention off of this idea of being stuck, and then be people to try to create more options. Very similar with scarce and special. Special, if somebody is special, people say well, they are the only vendor that has that technology. Well, maybe that's true, but what are we trying to do with that technology? And is that the only way to get to that end? Or can we get there through some other ways?

Jack: Of course, we can. If something was scarce, if something is scarce, we hoard it. We pay too much for it. We start making bad decisions based on the scarcity. Now a resource can get scarce, but you think about again, what's the business goal that you're trying to get to, chances are there are a lot of ways to get there, and maybe you don't need that resource. So scarce, special and stuck, I think those are pretty bad words when you're making business decisions, and when you're making purchasing decisions. And I'd love us as procurement professions to be able to be the ones that can guide our senior leaders, our stake holders to a place where they have more options, and therefore can make better decisions.

Phil: Yes. And that's so wonderful because that's exactly how I, to a certain extent see the function or the role of someone in procurement. Yes, negotiation and number crunching, analysis, everything, is one part of it but at a certain point in time, it usually



comes to some consultative approach. Like somebody is turning around and looking at you and saying, what should I do? What do you think? If it works out really fine, what do you think is the best idea right now? And I really liked ... in the book, and as you said it here as well, I really liked the scarce category, because and I'm not sure if you have the same experience, I feel that it's sometimes this artificial scarcity.

Phil: From a vendor's point of view, of course, everything is scarce. Everyone is special. I mean hey, that's daily business, but I usually, when we talk internally, then talk about could be that this resource is scarce, but doing that need, that specific person, do we need this highlighted skill that is in his or her CV, or do we need just a "standard person"? Is that good enough for us? And that is where the consulting approach, so to say, comes into play. So, it was really interesting for me to see that it's obviously also a combination of certain skills that you have to have, when working in procurement here.

Jack: And by the way, I love those questions you ask, yeah, when you're confronted with that scarcity. First of all, just like you said, it's important to remember to some extent, the whole sales function is about creating scarcity, right? And I don't believe that's what it's all about, but that is certainly one of the tools they've used very often, and we should expect salespeople to use that, so then the question is well, do we need that product or are there other ways to get there? So, I love the way you approached that.

Phil: And it's so interesting because right now, I myself, I'm working in an organization that is pretty much hyped within the enterprise, so they have a lot of freedom, and I have two three, four, five examples where we need that yesterday, another of those Expensive Sentences.

Jack: Right.

Phil: And yes, to a certain extent, we make it happen, and I just experienced, and I had to laugh because it was the same time when I read the book. A week later or so, the vendor came to me and said to me, "Yeah, the software that you needed yesterday, and do you need extra support? We can give you some free support with that." And I turned around to my demand owners and said, "Oh, that's cool. Look, they gave us some free support." And they turned to me and said, "We're not sure anymore if it's the right product, so we don't need the support."

Phil: And I said, "Last week, you needed it yesterday, right? And that is your response to that, and your approach to that?" And the book is so amazing because if I remember correctly, one counter measure, so to say, sounds maybe a little offensive, but one counter measure is to say, what happens if we don't get it now? What happens if we wait a few more days? A week or two? What happens then? Can we just play this through? And that's what I also like, that it's not like a situational analysis only. We have these kind of sentences, but here are some things that you can try out, and maybe you can share a little bit more also about your responses, and how to ... right now I call how to fight "these Expensive Sentences".



Jack: No, that's right and of course, I feel like hearing them is very important, and there's a statistic I read, I'm not sure it's true, but of all the business books in the United States that are bought, most of them don't even get read, right? So, something like 10% of people don't even open the ... actually open the cover and read it. So, with that in mind, I wanted to create my cover, so it was useful.

Jack: And so, the ideas, okay, if you just get the idea of Expensive Sentences, and then you see a few of them listed there on the cover, at least you got a little more awareness, and you say, "Oh, yeah, I say that. I say we need a yesterday. Or I say we should do that in-house rather than have somebody else do it, and like, okay, well maybe I can be a little bit aware." So, awareness does help, and I think it's good just to get this term in use on your team.

Jack: Hey was that an Expensive Sentence? Did we really ... does that really service or not? But then obviously the point of the book is not just to raise awareness but to give people some tools to be able to work with that. And so often, the tools, are just what you were saying Philipp. They are just kind of continuing the conversation. I think we have to recognize that ... and we all do this. This is the thing. We have to see in ourselves, because we say things that kind of end the conversations, right? And sometimes it's an expensive sentence like, well that's the only way we can do it.

Jack: Or sometimes we are talking maybe it's socially, or politically, and we'll say, well he's that kind of person. He's just like that all the time, or she's just that way. And that ends the conversation. And so, what we need to be skilled at, especially in our field, is reopening that, or continuing the conversation. And I think that one important to do that, is not to respond by saying, no, no, you're wrong, but to respond by saying yeah, you're right. Meaning that there is some truth as that.

Jack: And even socially, if somebody says, "Well, she's just that way." To be able to say, "You're right. She is that way, but she's not that way all the time, is she?" And maybe this is one of the times she's not. Or more in the context that they were talking about with business, when you here an Expensive Sentence, the one you gave is an example as well. We've gotta do it right away. We need it yesterday. And then to just say, well, we need it yesterday. I understand that. I understand the need is urgent. Let's just talk that through a little bit more. Let's define that urgent need, because if we don't get it, obviously we're not gonna get it yesterday, but let's say maybe we can get it next week, if we got it next week what does that mean? And if we don't get it next week what does that mean. What does it really affect downstream?

Phil: Usually when ... that's my experience. When working strategically, how can I say that? Usually the level you're talking to is not totally junior, may be it's not the top management, but they also want you to address these concerns, and I know a lot of situations where it's like, yeah you're absolutely right, but it's like ... and I had to laugh when you made the proverb with the change horses mid-stream. And we have quite something similar here.



Jack: Okay.

Phil: And I'm not sure if you have that in the US as well, but it's like, why should we throw good money after the bad money that's already lost?

Jack: Yes.

Phil: And it's similar, right?

Jack: And we do have that exact phrase, and I think we got it from the Germans, so thank you. That's right.

Phil: Yeah, and it's really like I absolutely understand where your point is, and especially with some Expensive Sentences that's resonated very special with me, it's like ... my standard example usually when I introduce my role as a strategic procurement person to someone, I say, "How do you deal with the monopoly?" And usually the answer ... that's their special ... the only one that can do this.

Jack: Yes.

Phil: The answer is usually, you cannot deal with them. And I say, "Yes, you can. And that's what I'm here for, right? That's the reason people like me are here." And I that really liked also that it's not ... the book resonated with me so much because it's not us versus them, it's as you said, like the empathy aspect and looking at, how can we overcome this together? And let me help you to see that maybe there some solutions in our protocol or whatever we are talking about.

Jack: That 'us versus them' that you mentioned, I'm glad you mentioned that, because that's a huge concept that we, in procurement need to get past if we really wanna influence and impact. What's interesting, often I speak to groups of sales people and I sort of say, okay, this is a good way to sale into procurement, right? This is a good way to save alliances, or build influence when you're selling to procurement.

Jack: And one of the things I always explain to them, which they usually find very surprising, I say, you as salespeople often feel it's us versus them. Because salespeople generally don't usually like procurement people, right? They are an obstacle to the sale. But I had to explain that so often, it's the very same dynamic inside the company where the procurement people then turn around to their internal customers, and it's the same sort of thing.

Jack: So, what we are all after, is shared value, and long term relationships that make sense for all the parties involved. And I think, going forward with that mindset, it can be very helpful, but I do feel like one of the worst things that happens in our field is, and I've seen it in some way at every procurement conference I've been to, is folks get around, they say, oh my gosh, can you believe those marketing people? They ask for this, and



then we gave them that, and they didn't like that and they were basically complaining about our customers, who are the internal stakeholders and I get it because I've had the same frustration, and I think it's true.

Jack: The discipline isn't valued enough, and there are challenges. But I just don't think that gets us anywhere, to sit around and say, well I wish they'd be like this, or I wish they'd be like that. We are in an amazing place, I believe, in the company as procurement leaders. I love the way that you phrase it and position yourself as somebody who's there to solve problems, and create options, and be of service. And I think along with that attitude, we're right in the middle of profitability, and sustainability, and innovation and collaboration, and decision making, and I mean, really if you took the ten most important things abstract and feel sort of at a company, I feel like procurement's probably got seven or eight of them going right through our [crosstalk 00:26:12].

Phil: Absolutely.

Jack: And now is the time to jump in and really reshape how we are seen, and what we can contribute.

Phil: yes. And it's quite interesting that you say that, because I have ... I'm now ... we have 2018, I'm like 16 years in procurement right now, and I have seen a change that you have described at least a little bit right now: getting away from this. When I started at the beginning of the 2000s, it was like the standard sentence was, 10% off is always possible. Sorry, that wouldn't work anymore in a connected and interactive world like this anymore, for several reasons. And I'm sure our audience also knows that.

Phil: But that is quite interesting, and as you said before, the psychological factor or the mindset factor gets much more important. Therefore, I'm so thankful that we have like from our, let's say, from our brothers and sisters have to say mindsets, so to say, here in procurement, that we also get such great advice from books that you have. One thing that is in this regard quite interesting to me is, when you look back at your procurement history, your procurement career, the past years and in different spend management functions or procurement functions, would you say, there were some major changes? And if so, what changed?

Jack: You mean sort of industry wise, that I've seen on a large level? Or more for me personally?

Phil: Maybe also from a perception perspective, have you always experienced that procurement was seen as a major contributor, or did you see changes in the perception of that corporate function?

Jack: It's interesting. I'm presenting next week to a group, and part of what they've asked me to talk about is sort of trends that are happening in different procurement teams, and what's pretty interesting is, I think any function, you've got a bell curve, where you've



got some organizations that have very progressive procurement teams, they are using this on a cutting edge, and really and some these made pretty far ahead on a few of these trends we've talked about.

Jack: But then you've got the big group in the middle, and then you've got some that are sort of line guards. And I think perhaps with procurement, that bell curve was a little bit wider than it is for some functions. I think maybe for marketing and sales it's a lot faster, and it sort of keeps them between and even for operations, I think things are a little bit more tight perhaps between the top of the field and the back of the field.

Jack: But procurement really varies. I think some companies and some industries are doing things that are very similar to how they did them in the 1960s and the 1970s. And in manufacturing, but I do think there are some changes, and I think a couple of the really important changes that are happening ... just recently, just actually this year, and maybe I'm a little late to it, but I've heard a word used as a procurement goal, that I haven't heard before. And that is disruption, meaning that procurement groups are supposed to help find the disrupters in the industry.

Jack: Now that's of course very similar to innovation, and innovation has been something that has been on the menu for a little while, but the idea that part of procurement's role can really be, being out there and knowing the markets and finding the disrupters, I think that's a great indicator because ... for a couple of reasons: one is that of course that elevates the position where procurement is not just finding the cheapest commodity, but is really understanding the market place at a consultative level, like you said.

Jack: And secondly, because so much value comes out of these things that are changing, so that gives us another level to be top line contributors as well, not just be efficient that it cost down, but really bringing innovation to the company that helps them make better products, give better service, get their message across better, whatever that is. Particularly as company buy more and more services and products outside, right. Pressure spending continues to increase.

Phil: Yes.

Jack: There are wonderful point solutions for everything, so I really like that idea that procurement is, yes collaboration, then yes innovation. That's on there, not just savings, but now you're gonna think of disruption as something that procurement leaders should be seeking out, so that they can make sure their company doesn't get left behind. I love that.

Phil: Yeah. That's something that we see as well. It goes a little bit away from the, can you please show us part A, B or C and more towards like, I want to do X, Y and Z. And can you consult me and help me? How can you approach that? Is there a service provider? Should we do it ourselves? Should we buy, or should we make it, or should we combine



something like this? And that's quite interesting, and that also goes back to the, let's say consultative approach that we mentioned already several times.

Phil: I personally really, really like it. And I also like, again, that we have these great publications like your book here, that we can then use to also train ourselves, and find ways out of some traps at least, and yeah, get back to a common understanding how we can move forward together, and I really like that.

Jack: As you were saying that, and I'm just restating what you just said, but it's sort of like the question has shifted between what do you need, right? We come and say, here's what you need. And we would this procurement what do you need? And now it's changed to what are your goals? What are you trying to accomplish? And then I think the important thing too, is that we take that and we ... again, we talked about the roles, right? There's the internal customer to procurement, then there is procurement to the external market. To the market place.

Jack: So, I think we need to be sure when we are facing the market place, again, not to be limiting their role, but to be asking that same question. So, we should be saying to them, hey, these are our goals, rather than this is what we want. There's so much more expertise in the market place, than there is in any specific category manager, no matter how good that person is, or no matter how long they've been doing the job.

Phil: That's absolutely true, and like a few weeks ago, when we were sitting together with the supplier, we had some very clever sales guys, and during lunch or so, they said, "you've been like 10 plus years in procurement Phil, what do you say ... what is the biggest change? Can you determine anything?" And it was like, maybe it's always the feeling but I really felt like the biggest change is happening right now, because we have on the one hand side, people coming into the companies, that are more open minded, that are more open to ... let's say, psychological aspects. Also, what would you write about, that I'm not sure if that would have been possible like 10, 15 years ago.

Phil: And on the other hand, the technology now enables us to do things that were simply impossible previously. If I just did research that I can do in my browser every day, it really took me to a whole new level, right. And that's something that I discovered, or that I have experienced as well, and therefore, I think we're really in very interesting times, and changing times, and there are some service providers. I mean, services, business, but this may also be true for ... if you buy hardware or parts or whatever, and therefore it's quite interesting and quite challenging times.

Jack: Agreed.

Phil: So, when we look at the Expensive Sentences, to get a little bit more back to that, do you have a favorite Expensive sent ... I mean we don't like them at all, although we try to understand them, and try to work around them, but do you have a favorite one?



Jack: One that I think is ... I can say an area that is still relevant in the US, and I think it's true everywhere, but this idea, of time famine, and not having enough time to do what you need to do. And we've got better technology, more options than ever before, and most of us feel like we have less time than ever before. And then we end up feeling trapped, so I don't have time for that. I just don't have time to do the analysis, I'm gonna decided not to do that. Now, the interesting thing is, I think that that is a strategic skill for a lot of us, to be copying with our world and environment. To say, okay, I'm gonna spend time on this, but I'm not gonna spend time on that, right.

Jack: So, at home, we say well I'm not gonna spend three hours researching my TV provider because I don't care about saving 50 dollars a month or what ever it is, and I'm just gonna buy it. That's just an example. Or, I don't have time to deal with this shopping, so I'm gonna have it delivered to us. And so, I think it's really good to make those judgements on time, as long as we're making them the right way. And I think, a lot of times in the business environment, we need to be challenging where we're spending our time. And again it often just takes a few minutes to sort of back them and say, "Hang on. I don't wanna deal with that, because the time," and maybe there are other reasons. Maybe the time is a little bit of an excuse right?

Jack: Maybe it's sort of some hard questions I have to ask, or an uncomfortable conversation with somebody I'm working with or a vendor, and I don't like that either. But let me just back up, and say, "Okay, what's at stake here?" If this could improve by 10, 15 or 20%, in someway what would that mean? Would that mean a lot more time? One English expression that probably has a german counterpart, it takes money to make money? Do you know that expression?

Phil: Yeah.

Jack: Okay. So, the idea is, you have to invest a little bit in the business to make it happen. And I think we need to remember that it takes time to make time. You often have to invest a little time to get organized, to hire somebody, to delegate, to automate, right? These things happen. So, I think being able to step back, retreat a little bit and say, "Okay, let me take sometime to think about time," and then where am I using that as an excuse, that I don't have enough time, that I probably shouldn't?

Phil: Yeah.

Jack: So, in the business realm, it's where there's a lot of money at stake, Key processes at stake, maybe the quality of the product, maybe the quality of the team. And in the personal realm, we do this too, and where it might affect a relationship or something and we say, Okay, well I don't have time for that but we say, okay hang on a second. I'm investing my time here, that's okay, but maybe I need to invest a little bit more time here because there's something important to attend to.



Phil: Yes. And often times, my personal feeling is that gut feeling as unbusiness-like as it may sound, is often times a good indicator. If the gut says, maybe it makes sense. To spend a few more minutes here, whether it's on personal relationships, or in the business world, it usually turns out that the gut feeling was right, and that is ... it made, as you said, absolute sense to invest a little bit more, or to gain a little bit more afterwards. Therefore, I absolutely see it the same, and we have actually really the same words here in Germany.

Jack: Oh, very good. Yeah, but what you said about the gut, I'm glad you said that, and I think that's really important. Some times we have to slow down a little bit, just so we can listen to our gut even. Are we complicating things so much? Are we so cluttered and so full that were not even hearing our instincts? Because I completely agree with you, and I would underline your encouragement to listen to your instinct, and obey your instincts.

Phil: Yes, absolutely. And I think to a certain extent, that's also at least in a ... if you're working in an, although challenging but positive environment, I feel often times that this is what is expected. What does your gut tell you? And I simply say, well my gut tells me this, and give me a few seconds or a few minutes and I come up with why I think it is like that, and that is often times where we again at consulting, so to say, and yeah, that really, really helps a lot also to position oneself.

Jack: As you say that, maybe that's a new secret weapon. Maybe that's a new tool for procurement and sourcing people to use with their internal stake holder. Say hey, this is our analysis. What does your gut tell you? And you use that as a chance to enhance our relationship, to demonstrate that you trust the judgment, and insight, and experience of the people you are working with, and just to show them that hey, there's another dimension to this, and it's not just all the spreadsheet. We know that. We acknowledge that. So, what does your gut tell you? Because we don't wanna ignore anything that seems important to you.

Phil: Yeah.

Jack: I think that could be a very valuable addition to any procurement process for your listeners.

Phil: Absolutely. And I really like it, because from what I see, and after I've read the books, I think, two times, or three? Two times at least. It is geared towards the internal customers. The internal negotiation, so to say, that we deal with every day in our businesses. And externally, here and there, it maybe possible to simply cut off a certain supply where you think, okay, it is not acceptable anymore, and we have to change here, but that's very difficult internally, and therefore acknowledging someone's gut feeling, is also maybe a very wise move in regards to how we can work together in the future.

Jack: Agreed. Excellent.



- Phil: Excellent. So maybe, I'm coming slowly ... unfortunately slowly but surely to an end. Is there a certain place where people can find you? Of course, people go to Amazon, buy that book. It's a must have for everyone in procurement negotiation. You really need to read this book, read it twice or three times. But is there, besides your local book dealer or a bookstore, is there a place where people can find you and learn more about you? Contact you maybe?
- Jack: Sure. Probably the best place is my website: jackquarles.com. So, that's my name. J-A-C-K Q-U-A-R-L-E-S. jackquarles.com. And if you join me there, and you join my newsletter, I'll send out some news. I send out some new Expensive Sentences that I hear periodically on my newsletter, and I love to hear from others too. I love when people email me and say, "Hey, I heard this one the other day, and I think it's an Expensive Sentence. And a few times I thought wow, that's such a big one. I really should have had that in the book.
- Jack: So I love that, and I'm out speaking, and I have been to Europe a couple of times and enjoy speaking internationally, as well as around the United States, so just stay tuned, and find me on my website which is www.jackquarles.com.
- Phil: And we surely link that in the show notes of this episode at Procurement Zen, and you will have it in all the common podcast platforms as well, so we make sure you can find Jack online, and talk to him. And make sure to sign up for his newsletter. Definitely worth it. I can confirm. So, thank you very much, it was a very interesting discussion, and again, I'm very thankful and happy that you took the time to talk to me, and also to our audience here, for making this possible. Thank you for this great book and ... yeah.
- Jack: Oh, Philipp, I'm honored to be a part of this today, and I know you're gonna have great success as you continue the podcast, but again, thanks so much for having me, calling attention to this, and I loved the conversation, I'm sure we'll have more good ones.
- Phil: Perfect that sounds great. So, this was episode number nine of the Procurement Zen podcast with your host, me, Phil Kowalski. As always, head over to procumentzen.com/009. Again, that's procurementzen.com/009, to download the transcription. I also shared the link, to Jack's website there, and you can download some bonus content to this focus week over there. If you sign up to our VIP club, I also have a short video summarizing this week's content for you. Again, the link is procurementzen.com/009. So, that was it. Until next time, and always, successful negotiations.

Thanks so much for listening to this episode of Procurement Zen with Phil Kowalski. For more great content and to stay up to date, visit procurementzen.com. If you enjoyed today's episode, please review and subscribe and we'll catch you next time on Procurement Zen.