

A Point of View

Written by Nick Sanders
Friday, 24 April 2015 00:00

When this blog first started, back in 2009, we weren't quite sure how it would work out. We did a test run in early 2008 and, quite frankly, it was a lot of work. It was a lot of work to work a full day and then muster the energy to write a thousand words or so about a topic that we found interesting and (we hoped) would be of interest to like-minded individuals.

Our first model was Bob Antonio's WIFCON news feed, where he linked to current events and news stories geared to acquisition professionals, as well as IG audit reports and GAO reports and Legislative hearings. Accordingly, our early articles (which you can still find if you are so inclined) are little more than links to other stuff. That was okay, but it felt somehow less than fully satisfying. So we quickly moved on from that model and started talking about what was on the other side of the link..

Our position was, and still is, that we want to do more than simply link to other articles or to other topics of interest. We want to express an opinion about those articles.

How boring it would be, we thought, if we only reported FAR Cases or IG audit reports via a link to those items. How boring it would be if we only repeated what was published in the Federal Register or in the current National Defense Authorization Act. How boring it would be if we only linked to new DCAA MRDs without noting what was important about them.

It would certainly be easier on us to post a link and be done with it. We could link to the topic and let the reader do all the work. Indeed, that's what the majority of "bloggers" do—especially those "bloggers" who work for firms where branding is considered to be important and therefore all online content is reviewed and edited to ensure that nothing controversial, which might impair the firm brand, is ever posted. We see it all the time on LinkedIn, where certain practitioners "publish" links to Government reports or Washington Post news stories without offering a single word of commentary.

Yes, that's clearly the easier approach. That's clearly the approach that reduces the risk that something published is going to offend some reader somewhere, perhaps one in a position of power or one in a position to decide which consulting firm gets work and which one does not. That is clearly the prudent course of action and most level-headed businesspeople would counsel it.

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But that was not that path we chose to follow.

Early on we decided to voice an opinion. We decided to add value in the form of commentary. We thought it would be consistent with our consulting philosophy to not just report the events of interest, but to attempt to place them in historical context and to describe what we liked (and disliked) about them. It was perhaps a riskier approach, but one aligned with our philosophy of adding value to our clients.

Sometimes it's worked to our advantage; other times perhaps not so much. So be it.

One more thing: in addition to voicing a point of view about the stuff we chose to write about, we also had to decide how we would articulate that point of view. Or to put it another way, we need to choose the point of view we would use in the blog articles. In this second meaning of "point of view" we refer to the literary point of view, articulated by Robert J. Sawyer in this [brief article](#) for beginning writers of science fiction.

Sawyer asserts that "Over ninety percent of all modern speculative fiction is written using the same POV: limited third person." In the limited third person point of view, the writer uses a lot of third-person pronouns, (*e.g.*, he, she, it). Another approach would have been to write in first-person, which would mean use of a lot of "I" because "I" was expressing the point of view. We've written a couple of first person POV articles, but not very many.

Instead, we've made the deliberate choice to write in the "royal we" – first person plural -- which has been also called the "editorial we." It's been called a "pompous pronoun choice" that is better left unused by authors—unless those authors are in fact members of royalty. Nonetheless, we picked it because the third person felt too impersonal and the first person felt too personal.

Sometimes the use of "we" fools people, such as the news source who quoted one of our articles (without permission but with attribution) and described Apogee Consulting, Inc., as a group of accounting specialists. Well, that part was mostly true—Apogee does have a few

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SMEs on call should the need arise. But most of the work is done by just one person, the Principal Consultant, who is also the President.

And truth be told, every single article ever written and published on this website was written by that same individual. "I" am Nick Sanders and I'm the sole author (and editor) of more than 800 individual articles. Like 'em or hate 'em – it's all on me. Not we. Me.