

S4E26. John Sanchez

SPEAKERS

John Sanchez, Peter Margaritis

Peter Margaritis

Hey, welcome back everybody. My guest today is a brother from separate mothers, and his name is John Sanchez. And the reason why I say that is our paths have not crossed until earlier this year, but we do a lot of the same type of communication work in the accounting and finance arena. And I'm looking at him right now. We're identical twins. I mean, he might be a little bit taller than I am but, you know, he's a good looking guy. I'm just saying. But I will say that, you know, I've heard of his name. You know, he said Margaritis is not too hard to forget though unless you have a drinking problem, I guess,. But he stalked me as he said that I was interviewed on his podcast, and he stalked me on LinkedIn, and a 30 minute conversation, initial conversation I had with John turned out to be an hour, and that's always a good sign. So, first and foremost, John, thank you for putting up with my humor, and taking time out to be a guest on my podcast.

John Sanchez

Well, thanks for having me on the podcast, my brother from another mother. Just for your audience I was the one that used the word stalk. He just kept, we kept popping up in all the same places, clients that I was working with or conferences or, you know, things like that.

Peter Margaritis

And I just so I don't forget. Can you tell everybody the name of your podcast?

John Sanchez

My podcast is called On Ramp to Success, which I do with a couple of partners in crime, who are also fellow trainers, and we focus on mostly on self-improvement topics. That's the short answer.

Peter Margaritis

That's the short answer and it's on Apple podcasts, and other podcasts.

John Sanchez

Yeah, all the big ones so we're on YouTube. We typically do a video. So, those are on YouTube. And then, I know we're on, we're putting out all the big ones so Apple podcasts. The Google Play, Spotify, Stitcher, and a couple of other ones that.. You can find all the links that everything go on, OnRamptoSuccess.com. That's just devoted to that, that podcast.

Peter Margaritis

Well, and I had a good time on your podcast. You're very good host. You didn't beat up on me or tell bad jokes, like I just told bad jokes about you. So...

John Sanchez

All my jokes are Dad jokes.

Peter Margaritis

And we're coming to Father's Day.

John Sanchez

They're either Dad jokes or inappropriate, so I'll keep them to the Dad jokes.

Peter Margaritis

So my question is, you, you graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting.

John Sanchez

Go Noles, Yes.

Peter Margaritis

And in looking at your background, I see trainer, podcast strategists, subject matter expert, industrial design, institutional design, and then we get to the communication consultant, trainer, coach. The FPA group which is your organization, which is your company. And I would ask that question but that's kind of the passport for anybody was coming out with an accounting degree. And the other question is, did you wake up one day say, I want to be an accountant or did you just happen to find your way into the profession?

John Sanchez

Actually, the way I came to pursue accounting was, it was a couple of things one of which was process of elimination, but the other was my parents when I was a kid always talk to me about college as a must. And my perception of college was, you go to college, so that you can have a career that has stability, longevity, that pays well, and has good benefits. Right, and I think their model of the world back in their generation. that worked perfectly. And to give you context, my dad was in the army for 30 years. When he retired from the army, he worked for the state of Florida for 10 years and retired from there. My mother worked for civil service for 28 years, so that model of work for a big company like the R&D. Right, just work hard and you retire there and life goes well. So when I started looking at different types of careers, I thought everybody needs accountants. It doesn't matter if it's a big company or small company. Doesn't matter where the business is, or even if it's a nonprofit. All over the world they need accountants. Size of the company, none of that stuff matters, everybody needs accountants. And when I started FSU, the accounting program there had a 90 plus percent placement rate. So, I had no idea what I wanted to major in and I thought, if my only purpose is to get a degree that's going to make getting a good job easier, this seems like a good path. And it did check it checked all the boxes in those regards.

Peter Margaritis

But you're an entrepreneur now.

John Sanchez

Yes.

Peter Margaritis

That's a scary world, right?

John Sanchez

Yeah, so I became an entrepreneur to go back to another commonality we have. So, you're the Accidental Accountant.

Peter Margaritis

Right.

John Sanchez

I was, I sort of became accidentally not an accountant. So, I became an entrepreneur against my will.

Peter Margaritis

Oh okay.

John Sanchez

So, I actually first started working for myself in 97. I was working at Auto Nation. And I was a manager of corporate development, which probably means nothing to most people. Basically, what it meant was I jockeyed a gigantic set of spreadsheets that encompass the five year strategic plan for the used car division of Auto Nation. So think Carmax, right? That's what that division was back then. Carmax did exist back then but they were startup, just like we were. And to make a very long story short, about a year after I started that job, they shut down the whole business unit, and myself in 400 some other people that laid off all at once. And I was like, oh, what in the world like, I've never been laid off before. And luckily, because of the nature of my job, I was having to interface with people from all over the company. I got a call back from one of the controllers, one of the division controllers, and they hired me back to be a consultant. And so, I did that for about a year-ish. And that was kind of my start working for myself. And I kind of thought, this is pretty cool. I'm making more money as a contractor working for them than I wasn't as an employee. For me, the work was easy on that project, and I had tons of control of my time. And I was still able to go out and do other things if I wanted to, which I did, other consulting work, so that I kind of backed into entrepreneurship, if you will.

Peter Margaritis

You're an accountant. What are you doing out there teaching other accountants how to communicate as... accountants don't communicate well, right?

John Sanchez

Yeah, we're not supposed to do that. Right?

Peter Margaritis

Right.

John Sanchez

Don't do that.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah.

John Sanchez

I joke with people that I used to get in trouble in school for talking too much. And so somehow or another I figured out a way to get paid to talk, but it actually that also happened by accident. So, I was doing...after I finished that work for Auto Nation that was all like financial consulting work. And so I just started doing that for other companies, and in, I think it's 2011, someone through LinkedIn, just sent me a message on LinkedIn and said, 'Hey, we were just looking at your background and we do these conferences all over the country. We have one that's focused on budget and forecasting, Would you be interested in speaking at the conference?' But I'd never done it before, but I thought this sounds interesting. Tell me more. So I ended up doing that one it went well, and I did a bunch more for them. And I started thinking....see, you actually pay me just to talk to people, like just get up in front of people to talk about stuff that I know. So I thought, what if I actually pursued this, as opposed to just you know, even when it came to me, I would do it. And so over time between 2011 and I'd say probably a couple years ago, I started shifting to doing more speaking and training and less financial consulting work. And probably a couple years ago I would say I was pretty much just focused on developing and delivery of training, and the communication focus came from, I guess the best way to say it is by my own weaknesses. When I was working at Auto Nation, somebody very directly told me that my communication skills sucked. And they gave me very concrete, specific examples of times that they said hello to me, and I didn't even say anything back, and I didn't make eye contact and all these things which I thought for sure. They had too much to drink because they told me that said a half hour. And then the next day in the office I went to some of the guys I worked with very closely every day. I said wait a bit, they said this, this, that, that's not true, is it? They went, "Ah. Yeah." What? So, I started to realize like I had no awareness that I was doing these things. I was just so wrapped up in work. I just, I just was not aware at all. And so, over the course of years, I just started reading and going to seminars and listening to books on tape and doing everything that I could find to get better at communication and some other things too, but communication was my focus in the beginning because it was such a big weakness. And then, as I started speaking at these conferences, it started out as technical topics. Budgeting, forecasting, things like that. And I started looking at it...I'd be at aa conference it was like two or three days like all day training in various different topics. And I started realizing there's nobody talking about communication skills, and it's the number one skill that people complain about the most with accounting and finance people.

Peter Margaritis

Right. Right.

John Sanchez

So, I came up with like an hour program to propose. And at first, it met with a lot of resistance, believe it or not. I'm sure you can believe because of what you do. But I was shocked at how resistant people were at first. And it's interesting that when COVID hit that completely turned around. And there... I have a lot more people asked me about communication skills and related topics, like emotional intelligence, things like that. That's kind of how I got to that as a specialty.

Peter Margaritis

It's been... a it's been a long haul, because I remember I was do a lot of technical topics. I would put out a communication topic, and five people would show up. I do a revenue rack, I got a full house. But somewhere around 2015-16, I believe, that I started seeing this shift. I started doing less technical and more communication. And I think by 2018, I quit the technical accounting, and focus all on the communication aspect of it. And still to this day I still run into accountants, and they don't still don't get it. And I like the technology, the numbers are being crunched for you. You've got to be able to communicate the numbers. And if you don't do something about that, you're going to be unemployed.

John Sanchez

It's getting even worse too with artificial intelligence and RPA robotic process automation that's starting to automate, even the things that used to be our world. The example I give all the time is my cell phone bill. Back when I worked at Royal Caribbean Cruises and I was a financial analyst, one of the things we did every single month, is we would do a Budget to Actual comparison to a variance analysis and explaining the variances, right? Basic financial analyst 101 stuff. Well, we used to sit down with the financial statements and do that manually. And now my Verizon bill has that. That's automated for me. I pull up my bill, and it shows all the differences between the last bill, the current bill, my usage. All these different pieces of data that just gets spit out. And it's all automated on there. And they don't have some analysts sitting there doing that. So, more and more of these processes are being automated. So, the things that computers can't yet do very well are the things that are becoming more and more demanded. Communicating well is one of those. But still, to your point, I have a section in one of my classes where it's specifically about communicating financial information and other numbers. And the second I put a spreadsheet up, you would think I was throwing money at people. They perk up, because that's my world. They feel comfortable again.

Peter Margaritis

Right.

John Sanchez

You've been talking about all these, you know, communication issues that some of them feel like, gosh, I need a lot of work on that, but boy I know me some spreadsheets.

Peter Margaritis

Get pretty excited over a spreadsheet, you know, I think, part of the challenge is, you know, and I use this analogy, you don't become a leader because you go to a leadership seminar, you know, you have to take baby steps. Practice it every single day. And it's hard. You did the hard work. A lot of people won't do that hard work of okay I've got a communication issue. I've been told to have a communication

problem. I'm going to go fix it, and put in the hours, the days the week in order to become a mastery of it.

John Sanchez

But I think for me it was a couple of drivers of that. One was it made me feel very uncomfortable when somebody told me that. Because I thought, I thought I was a likable person. I always as matter of fact, growing up, I feel like being a likable person was what kept me from bad stuff happening at the hands of bullies. Because I was always just like the smallest kid in class, sometimes the smallest kid in the whole school. Right, when I entered high school I was four foot nine and a half, and I wouldn't let you forget the half. I was a little guy, and I didn't do like you hear these stories about, I was bullied so I started studying martial arts, and I became a ninja black belt in 10 different things. I think my instinct was, I probably learned it. If people are laughing, they're not going to hit you. They're not going to pick on you, typically. So, somebody would start picking on me, and I would just make them laugh, and it's like, it just melted away. Whatever that thing is... the bullying that I experienced was like opportunistic bullying but oh there's a little guy that I picked on him. Right? It wasn't like there wasn't anything in particular, other than I was a little guy that made them want to pick on me. But hey, wait a minute, he's funny. Maybe we should just what else you got kid? So..

Peter Margaritis

Did you ever do stand up?

John Sanchez

No, it's, it's one of the things on my list of things I want to try because the idea of it. I find it terrifying, which means I probably have to do it at some point.

Peter Margaritis

So, I done stand up in my day, and I think I have shared this with you before. I don't memorize. I can stand in front of an audience for an hour, two hours, eight hours, doesn't matter. I love it. I just get jazzed. Five minutes? Are you kidding me? I'm like, to the point, I finally have gotten....But there was one time I was supposed to be at this open mic night, and I was sitting in my car coming up with every excuse possible why shouldn't I even go in there. Even called my son, "Hey, you should only come and pick you up from ski club?" "Dad, just go do your show. I'll be okay. "Something like that 5-10 minutes memorization, would just with paralyzed me.

John Sanchez

Yeah, I've always been perfectly fine talking. But to your point, when it has to be focused and concise, I don't think anyone who's, who's never tried to be focused and concise consistently. I don't think they can appreciate how hard that is. And that expression, what is it a good writing...Good reading is damn hard writing. I think is the quote. And it's, it's so true. I mean, what was it you said earlier? We scheduled a 30 minute call we ended up talking for an hour, hour and a half, Whatever it was,

Peter Margaritis

Yeah. Yeah.

John Sanchez

If you have the time, right, and you're having a good conversation that's great, but in certain settings, not so good. No bueno, right. So,

Peter Margaritis

I didn't know you were French.

John Sanchez

Just on my mother's side. You likea da fries, no?

Peter Margaritis

No. It's interesting that...well, you should go. I will I will say, you should try, stand up. There's a lot that I learned from stand up because we present accounting and finance professionals. They don't really show any body language when we're up there. You can tell it's a humorous story, and you're getting crickets. That's what stand up taught me because I would tell a joke to get crickets. So, but now I know what I can...when I tell usually a humorous story that comes, here comes the humorous part and nobody's laughing. I go okay I know, I know. You're just keeping it all in here. That's we do we left brain accounting people, but you can let it out every once in a while.

John Sanchez

Have you ever pondered though the chicken and egg thing? Do a lot of people get into accounting because that suits their personality that they already have, or once they get into accounting, does the culture of accounting, kind of beat them into submission when it comes to certain types of showing emotion, enthusiasm? As I found a little bit, kind of like the nature nurture thing, which is it? Yes, it seems to be like that kind of some of both. What have you felt?

Peter Margaritis

I agree because I got beat up a lot over the head with a mallet. You talk too much, perform, getting in line. Remember, you walk out of this office, you get on the elevator, you better have your jacket on. It was just this kind of and... But here's what I am finding. There's a lot of us out there. Recovery accidental who are still in the practice of accounting, but they've come from backgrounds of theater, of social workers, because of what you've started off with. Good paying job. It's steady. Benefits. That fiscally responsible piece. And a few of them said, it's like living a double life.

John Sanchez

Yeah, I could see how they could feel that way.

Peter Margaritis

And there are some who are there because I've yet to find one person say, you know, when I was in kindergarten asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, I said accountant. I don't think anybody's ever said that.

John Sanchez

The only two things I can remember wanting to be when I was a kid was I thought I want to build my own business because it always seemed like the rich people I would see on TV, and had their own businesses. They were either some type of an artist, a singer, actor or some something in the arts, but, or they were people running their own businesses. Of course, I had no clue what the heck that meant to own or run your own business, but it sounded good. And then the other one was a totally goofy sort of reason for wanting to be it, but I decided that I wanted to be an FBI agent. Here's why I say it's goofy reasoning behind it. Is one day I was at the BX, the Base Exchange, with my mom and they had this big book of like discount books. And I'm walking through the books and my mom's a big reader she's knee deep pick it out books. And I'm looking around for something that seems remotely interesting, and I see this one book it's called, 'Will.' And I thought Will? Is that about a guy named Will or willpower? What is that? I picked it up but I started reading the description, and it was Autobiography of G. Gordon Liddy.

Peter Margaritis

I've read that! For those of you in the audience that, that don't know who he is, or maybe a little younger than I am. G Gordon Liddy was an FBI agent. He was, I believe he was the only one involved in the Watergate scandal, who actually served time in prison. And my understanding of why he ended up serving time in prison is that he refused to talk. Lots of other people made deals with the government, and got light sentences or whatever. And his, his autobiography, in hindsight was really self serving. He just made him sound like the biggest badass, coolest, toughest guy in the world. You know, he told all these stories about that made. So, if being an FBI agent sounded like the coolest thing in the world. The beginning of the book he talks about how used to be afraid, scared to death of lightning and thunder. So, one day when he was a little boy, he climbed up a tree and he tied himself to this tree in the middle of a thunderstorm. It sounds goofy, but me describing it now, but I was probably 10 years old. And I was like, that dude is bad ass. I want to do that, a gun and a badge. And interestingly enough, when I was at FSU as an accounting major. Beta Alpha Psi always used to have like a recruiter Happy Hour, and various big organizations would come in and they have a guest speaker. They'd talk to the group, and then we would get to ask them questions and mingle and stuff. The FBI Miami office, I grew up in South Florida, they every year, they would have somebody come and speak. And the first time I heard him speak, They were talking about their white collar crime division. And they talked about how, if you're an accounting major, we highly recruit CPAs. So, finish your degree. Study for the exam. Get your CPA. You know, there might be a place for you in the FBI. And I was like, Ahhhhh, maybe the stars have aligned. I accidentally picked the right major, and they're like my last semester they had a giant like federal hiring freeze. So, that was taken off the table, which in hindsight, thank goodness. Now looking back, I don't think I've ever had the personality of somebody carry a badge. I just don't. That's funny because a couple of my students where I was teaching at the Ohio Dominican University, that joke kills here in Columbus, I had two students, they were getting their accounting degree because they wanted to carry a gun and a badge. That was the sole intent. One want to go to the DEA. One wanted to go to the FBI. And when I would talk to first year accounting students or the entry level to accounting orbs, I know yet, it's gonna seem hard seem difficult, but if you can get the accounting degree, it opens you up to a lot more than some of the other majors that are out there. And it's...

John Sanchez

True that.

Peter Margaritis

And yeah, so I just passed the exam because you know why? I'm a really good test taker apparently. But I'm not a practice, practicing accountant. I probably should have never been a practicing accounting because there's way too much detail and digging into the numbers. I could see the.... But then, there's so many different opportunities out there within the auspice of an accounting degree.

John Sanchez

Oh there's tons.

Peter Margaritis

And to your point, I think this is still the same. I was having sophomores in internships at accounting firms and other places, and they were getting offers in their junior year.

John Sanchez

Yeah, I got my offer about six months before I graduated, and I thought I literally, I didn't dream about it but I thought about it constantly. And most of the people that I hung around with in the accounting program had much better grades than I did. I was like a solid B student. I had to sneak into the Beta Alpha Psi, you know, mixers. But, my friends, especially my fraternity brothers called me the Schmooze Meister.

Peter Margaritis

Oh, nice.

John Sanchez

Cuz I knew with that, like a B average that my grades alone we're not going to get me a job with the big companies that I was gunning for. And as it turns out they did not. I had interviews with all of the big six, the big six back then. And I had a Price Waterhouse partner tell me right there in the interview suite at FSU. Picked up my resume, looked at it, and basically said I'm paraphrasing, "Well, we really don't have any place at Price Waterhouse for someone like you, but since we have the time if you have any questions about the firm or the industry, I'd be happy to answer them." And I felt about this big. And luckily, the CPA firm I ended up working for Kenneth Leventhal, they don't exist anymore. They were acquired by ENY in 94-95. Somewhere in there. But they had a totally different focus. I mean, you had to have decent grades. I had a B average. But they were much more focused on stuff that was not on your resume. They looked at my resume, very briefly, but the whole conversation was, they were trying to find out about me as a person. And I think the biggest thing they were trying to figure out is, is this is does this guy have a work ethic? And would I want to work with this guy? Because we work a lot of overtime. We work a lot. And we do a lot of out of town work, so I'm going to be around this person, a lot if I hire him. Is this somebody I want to work with? And it turned out everybody in that firm that I've met from staffers like myself all the way up the partners, they were grinders. They had a work ethic, like, unbelievable work ethic. But they were all like more of a people person, personality than, than any of the other firms that I interviewed with it, and even friends of mine that worked at some of the other

firms. It just felt totally different. I go meet a friend for lunch that worked at Arthur Andersen, yeah. And this guy, mind you this is in Miami, right, the Miami office of Arthur Andersen was in one of the high rises, and they had offices on multiple floors, and they were so I'll use the word stuffy. Their rule was if you left the office, you had to put your jacket on. So first of all it's Miami. I don't care if it's December, it's like 1000 degrees with 1500% humidity all the time in Miami. It's always hot. But you had to wear your full suit when you left the office, but guess what? Leaving the office even meant, if you went to a different floor of Arthur Andersen, because to get on the elevators, we had to go into a common area. So, they literally have to put on their coat jackets to go from floor to floor within the same building. That's how stuffy that culture was. And Kenneth Leventhal was like Nah man, if you work hard, and you do a good job, and their idea of smart was the same as mine, which was, are you willing to learn, and are willing to put in the effort to learn? Because we could teach you all the technical crap. That's not an issue. We've got smart people they can teach you all that. So, as long as you can work hard and you're reasonably intelligent. I want someone that I want to work around.

Peter Margaritis

So, let me ask you this question. As we're talking, and said something about internships, something popped into my brain. And the work that you do currently. What I do currently. I've always thought, well, what is your thought around eliminating the accounting internship, as it stands, today? Where you go to the office and you do all the Hokey Pokey. You put your whole self in. Versus creating an internship program where your typical hire has to spend a year or two during college in the service business at a restaurant, in a hotel, and have to interact with the public. As Ron White would say the public.

John Sanchez

You must be referring to when he was thrown into public.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah, exactly, exactly thrown to the public. Exactly. And I never thought about this but I was speaking at a conference I was doing. No, it was a conference, and a guy comes up to me, he'd been around for a while. He had more miles on him than we both do combined, but he said his gruffly look at me to get rid of the internship program make these kids go out working in a service industry. Wait tables, be bartenders, learn people skills. None of them have any people skills. I'm like that's the most brilliant idea ever.

John Sanchez

I never thought of that. I've never heard anybody suggest that but it immediately sounds like a great idea for a whole laundry list of reasons. The first of which is the obvious, the people skills.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah.

John Sanchez

But I think also the work ethic, like I was talking about, I can remember accounting professors like talking about how, how hard the work... if you're going to work in public accounting... in a program I was in, they focused a lot of public accounting because it felt like public accounting was perceived as the

top of the food chain. Right? And if you work for the Big Six, the Big Eight, before that. Big Four since. If you work for them, then the world is your oyster. Right? And it's true, because I saw people that as a senior or manager, which is, I mean it's a mid-level supervisor to, you know, mid-management role, they would routinely take jobs as controllers or director of accounting at a pretty big company, and leapfrog people who started in private accounting as a staff accountant working for a company with six assets or journal entries all day long. But they... all our professors would tell us all the time about the work ethic, and working long hours, but nothing about the other piece of it, the people side that you're talking about. As a matter of fact, and I'm curious what your experience was. I had never heard of a rubric, until I had, I was probably 6-7-8 years out of college, and I thought I'd always been interested in psychology, and I'd already kind of started taking a lot of these things on my own seminars and reading books and stuff so I signed up for some psych classes, thinking about what to go back and get a masters psych. And on day one of one of these classes they gave us a rubric and I went, "What is this?" For those of you that don't know what a rubric is, it's your recipe how to get an A. It tells you exactly how every, everything in the course is going to be scored. And the recipe is, if you want an A, you need 93%. And this is how much every single thing that you're going to do the entire course is going to be graded. And the professor would literally. Alright, we're gonna have a test on Friday. It's going to be on the last four chapters we talked about. Open your books up to page 23. Those two definitions on page 23 memorize those. Those are going to be on the test. Okay, skip the next few pages. Nothing on there is going to be tested. Okay, on the next page...They'd literally go through and tell you what was going to be tested, right? In my accounting classes here was your brief on the the test. We're having a test on Friday. It's going to cover chapters one through four, know everything. Okay, on today's lesson, but just know it all. And the only explanation I was ever given that, even made any sense was that in the real world, in accounting in business in general, nobody gives you a decoder ring. But you will be given lots of information, much of which is irrelevant, much of which you need to clean up before you can do anything with it. And you need to get good at problem solving, and just figuring shit out. That's the only semblance of any kind of explanation I was ever given for why nobody ever enlighten us about what to study. And so, that idea of giving someone a rubric I thought, why don't these jerks in the accounting program have this for us? Because I could have gotten an A. I'm willing to work for it, but sometimes it felt like it was just an overwhelming amount of information to master at the given time. Anyway, I digress.

Peter Margaritis

Well, I mean I get introduced to the rubric when I was when I was teaching because I was so used in the class but I would never go, Okay, turn to page five. Memorize this. Do this.

John Sanchez

Oh yeah,

Peter Margaritis

You're on your own. I'm giving you a little bit of a roadmap, but I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna walk you through it. And I think that those professors who are walking their students through it. I think they're looking for their evaluations to be better than the actual the event itself.

John Sanchez

But this I find this interesting though it's funny you say that because when I took MIS, management information systems, I still to this day I can't remember her name but I remember the professor that taught the class she was, she got her PhD at University of Tennessee. And everyone thought she was a witch with a capital B, because she gave so much work. She gave tons of homework. And a lot of it was, was really hard stuff. But she gave us... She didn't call it a rubric but in hindsight, she gave us a rubric. She told us exactly what we needed to do to get an A. She didn't do like I was describing with telling you exactly what was going to test it, but there was enough extra credit offered that if you botch the test or a quiz., there was enough extra credit that you can get an A if you're willing to put the work in. And I did. That was one of the first upper level accounting classes I got an A in, and everybody else was like in shock because I was not a straight A student. And I was like, Dude, how could you not get an A. She tells you. You have all these opportunities. I didn't get an A on every test, but there's all that extra credit. They're like that's a lot of work, but I wanted A. I didn't even go the MIS route but I just, if you tell me how to get an A, well shoot I could do that. If all I have to do is work for it, I could do that. But for some people that that's just not enough.

Peter Margaritis

Yeah. So as we begin to wrap up, what advice would you give, let's say someone who's just entering the profession today? What advice would you give them in order to be successful in the profession of accounting and finance?

John Sanchez

Well, something you hit on, you know, getting experience in something that forces you to learn and use people skills. I think would help a lot. I don't know that you have to go out and get a job in the service industry to do that, although that's a great way to do it. But even if it's something as simple as like, when I started trying to improve my skills, it was just like books and seminars and things like that. But figure out what your strengths and weaknesses are. So, I think self-awareness is one of the big ones. When it comes to the technical stuff, I would not give them any advice on anything technical.

Peter Margaritis

Right.

John Sanchez

If you go to any credited university, you're going to get a just fine education on the technical parts of it. And by the way, guess what, none of that crap matters anyway because you didn't go to work, they're gonna send you off the training anyway, to show you how they do show you their process, right? And you're going to be training as you go if you work in public accounting you're doing training stuff all the time anyway. So, it's really not the technical stuff. It is the people stuff. It's problem solving. So I would do something to get some exposure to problem solving, Whether it's working a job in the service industry, whether it's mentoring. One of my good friends, my first job out of college, became a big brother. And I would hear him tell stories about stuff he would do with his little brother, and it seemed like it was this constant series of problem solving, because this, this kid came from his dad was not in the picture and, you know, time and money and resources were always an issue. So, he was always trying to have to help this kid figure out how to find a way to do all kinds of different stuff you wanted to

do. Like if you wanted to be in sports, his mom couldn't drive him. She had two jobs or whatever. So, I know it sounds like a weird way to get to it but my point is, when you're helping other people some kind of a mentoring program, it forces you to think a little bit differently. Put yourself in that problem solving, like helping mindset any kind of service, but even my fraternity which you don't, I don't think most people think of fraternities, as service organizations but we did a lot of service projects, where we would just do volunteer stuff with different charities and different organizations. And a lot of that was figuring out, you know, how do you organize things. Again the problem solving, people's skills, dealing with people from different backgrounds. Anything you could do to diversify your exposure different types of people will pay off in so many ways that you'll never know until you start to see it in action.

Peter Margaritis

That is outstanding advice, I'm just gonna put a little caveat on it. We've been in the profession 10 years and you and you're not a good communicator. Take it, take John's advice. He aimed it at those who are coming into the profession, you've been in the profession. If you heard something in this in, in this conversation that we had, and you went, "Oh my god that's me," go do something about it. Take control of it. Do something about it. Get better at it, and realize it's gonna hurt, initially, and you're gonna fumble and stumble and bumble. And at some point, it changes. Keep that more coming every day. John, thank you so very much for your time. For your stories. For your humor. She was a real witch with capital B. That's was, I caught that that was, that's, that was nice. And I'm looking forward to being at a conference in person and go, "Hey John, I know that dude, I know that dude! Let's go on, let's go have lunch!" So you're in North Carolina. Be safe. I hope that this year will be the year that our paths will cross.

John Sanchez

Me too. Thanks for having me on. I appreciate it.

Peter Margaritis

I'd like to thank John for his time and the stories and how you worked on improving this communication skills to the point where he's teaching other accounting and finance professionals what he has learned. I will conclude this episode with the same improv quote I used the last episode. "There are those people who say yes, and there are those people who say no. Those who say yes, are rewarded by the adventures they have, and those who say no, are rewarded by the safety, they attain." Hope everybody's been vaccinated. Stay safe, be healthy.