

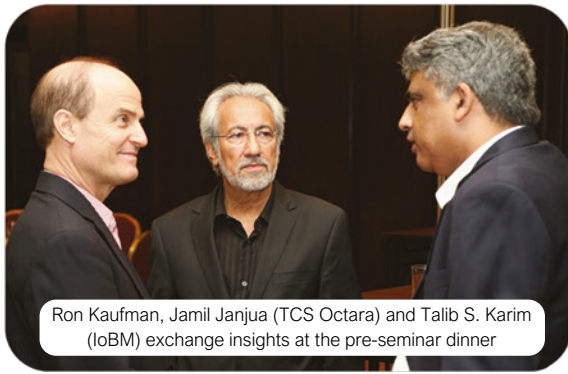
Service is taking Action

to create value for someone else

RON KAUFMAN

(Interviewed by Adil Ahmad, during the lunch break of the Ron Kaufman Seminar on Uplifting Service at the Sheraton Hotel on 21-4-12 organized by TCS Octara and the Institute of Business Management. Ron's a master navigator of the back passages through the pantries of five star hotels, as indeed all celebrities are who get whisked in and out, evading the glare of public scrutiny and paparazzi. In this case, enroute to a private part of the hotel lobby, we skirted the hotel foyer where 375 seminar delegates were having lunch and where Ron would certainly have been buttonholed, losing precious time in the 15 minutes window for the interview. The walk through the Sheraton back passages brought memories of Hollywood thrillers in which the President of the United States of America gets evacuated out of hotels by the Secret Service! Ron is a regular columnist at Bloomberg BusinessWeek, and the author of 14 books on service, business and inspiration that have been featured in The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and USA Today.)





Ron Kaufman, Jamil Janjua (TCS Octara) and Talib S. Karim (IoBM) exchange insights at the pre-seminar dinner

OCTARA.COM:

On behalf of Octara.com, welcome to Pakistan!

RON KAUFMAN:

Thank you!

OCTARA.COM:

You having a good day Sir?!

RON KAUFMAN:

Phenomenal day! We have 375 people here in the Ballroom of the Sheraton Hotel for a Service Leadership Workshop. The mood and the learning are fabulous!

OCTARA.COM:

That's very good to hear! Given the economic downturn, and the dismal business conditions in Pakistan, there are increasingly fewer and fewer people who can afford things. Service gains more importance in such a scenario, doesn't it?

RON KAUFMAN:

Service is important in every scenario, especially so in difficult economic times, service becomes more important than ever, and for so many reasons. Customers have more choice, there are fewer customers, you have more competition, and when people do finally make a choice to spend their money they are often more nervous about whether they have actually made a good choice. So, the service you provide your customers, both during and after the purchase, makes a big difference to give them the confidence that they have made the right choice by going with you.

OCTARA.COM:

What is the essence of the message that you're delivering here today?

RON KAUFMAN:

The essence of the message is really captured in my definition of the word service. Service is taking action to create value for someone else. So the essence of the message is that what you do in life and what you do at work, it's not about what you do, but what someone else gets FROM what you do. It's not about the following of procedures. It's about whether the procedures you followed created value for someone else, whether a colleague or a customer. The whole focus of our attention should be on who is it that I am doing this for rather than what is it that I am doing.

OCTARA.COM:

Have you found the audience interactive and responsive?

RON KAUFMAN:

It's very interactive! Pakistani culture has at its heart a tremendous warmth, kindness and generosity towards other people. So the spirit of my message and the practice of my message is resonating very well with my audience today.

OCTARA.COM:

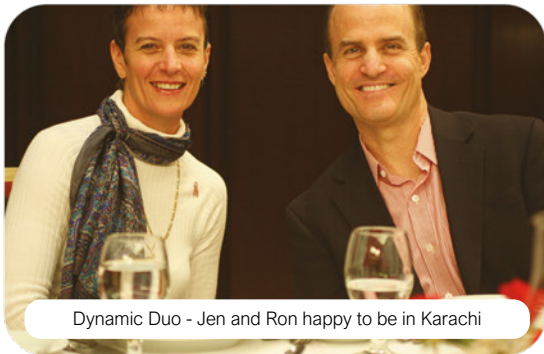
Would you like to take us down memory lane and tell us how you got into the training business?

RON KAUFMAN:

That goes way, way back! I was a Frisbee aficionado when I was in College. Frisbee is that flying plastic disc if you recall, and it is one of those games that you cannot do alone. You need another person to actually play the game with. I got involved in organizing Frisbee festivals and tournaments, and international tours all over the world. The whole point is to teach people new ways to engage with and enjoy their time with other people. So when I got involved with the corporate world, I carried that same theme along. I discovered that service is about people taking care of and creating value for other people. This was true in my youth, and now in my more mature days, I am doing the same thing which is teaching people to get along with and have a good time with others.



Stimulating conversations



Dynamic Duo - Jen and Ron happy to be in Karachi



Closing ranks in support of corporate excellence



From Pakistan with love - Sabina Mohsin presents Jen and Ron with a gift on behalf of IoBM and TCS Octara



OCTARA.COM:

What kind of academic route did you take in life?

RON KAUFMAN:

I went to Brown College which is an Ivy League school in the USA, and I studied for two years in Europe, and in my post graduate period, my focus was on international political history. I was interested in how countries come back together after a war, and in particular what is the role that sport can play in bringing countries back together. Take for example when Pakistan and India play cricket, it is a fierce competition, but there is still the camaraderie of sport over any political conflict or disagreements, they can still get out and literally play with each other for the joy of it. When I went into the corporate world, engaging with one another is still at the core of what ever we do with human beings.

OCTARA.COM:

What career did you start out life with?

RON KAUFMAN:

In the corporate space, I started out with designing conferences where there would be workshops and presenters, and the topics would change from time to time whether it was sales or innovation or service.

Then, when I moved to Singapore 22 years ago, it was to raise the service standards throughout the entire country. It was the Singapore government and Singapore airlines that were collaborating on raising the quality of service in the nation, and then that became a regional base, and now I serve the world.

OCTARA.COM:

What was your first job?

RON KAUFMAN:

My very first job was delivering newspapers when I was about 10 years old, and before that I was shoveling snow off the neighbors' sidewalk when I was 7 and 8 years old in West Port, Connecticut, where I grew up.

OCTARA.COM:

That does not classify as child labour, does it?!

RON KAUFMAN:

No, it does not! I learnt a very interesting lesson delivering newspapers. Once a week, I would knock on the doors of my customers to do the collection of the money. I discovered that if I was in a very good mood and was friendly and smiling then they would give me better tips! And if I went to collect the money minus the smile then all I got was the money I was owed. I learnt at a very early age that if you were nice to other people they'd be nice to you as well. What you send out comes right back.

OCTARA.COM:

Your wife Jen, when did she appear in your life?

RON KAUFMAN:

We met eight years ago in Australia where I was on vacation, and scuba diving to meet the whale sharks of Western Australia. Jen was running the scuba diving shop. She was the service provider and I was the demanding customer! I realized very quickly that this was someone I wanted to spend more time with, so I asked, and she said yes, and we have been together ever since.

OCTARA.COM:

She appears to be fully integrated in your work.

RON KAUFMAN:

More than integrated, she runs a big part of the business, the finance, and the logistics, and the backend to ensure that everything is running smoothly. We travel a great deal. On the third day of meeting her I asked her if she had a passport! And now we have been on hundreds of flights together.

OCTARA.COM:

Do you have a favorite food?

RON KAUFMAN:

I am very careful about food. I was a vegetarian for 26 years, and then I met Jen, and now she is a vegetarian and I am not! It's quite interesting. I don't really eat spicy food, specially not on the days that I am teaching. On the days that I am not teaching I do like to indulge. There are very few such days given that I am teaching so much!



Diamond Sponsor		 National FOODS SINCE 1970	
Gold Sponsors			
 The Legend Leads...	 askaribank	 Express & Logistics	 STATE LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF PAKISTAN
Supporting Partners		Media Partner	
 map Management Association of Pakistan	 Marketing Association of Pakistan	 Jang Media Group	

OCTARA.COM:

Aside from Frisbee, what other sports have excited your interest?

RON KAUFMAN:

Scuba diving certainly. Often Jen and I go scuba diving in the Maldives. I used to do snow skiing when I lived in North America.

OCTARA.COM:

Do you have a favorite movie star?

RON KAUFMAN:

I watch movies in airplanes and hotel rooms. Jen is quite partial to the TV Show 'Bones' and 'CSI'. My favorite movies are which ever ones she enjoys. Paul Newman, old blue eyes, was one of my favorite movie stars. I remember his 'Cool Hand Luke' in which he famously says 'what we have here is a failure to communicate!'

OCTARA.COM:

And on the books front?

RON KAUFMAN:

I recently read a fascinating book that speaks of the situation in Pakistan. The book is called 'The Age of the Unthinkable', and it was written by a man named Juan Carlos Ramos who is the managing director of Henry Kissinger's consulting firm. He lives half the time in New York and half the time in Beijing. In this book he talks about how this world is more volatile, more interconnected, and more unpredictable than ever before. In a world like that, he says that resilience is one of the most important features of successful people and societies. Here in Karachi it is extraordinary, because you're one of the most resilient people in the world. I was talking to people at Habib Bank, one of our clients, and he said that there could be a blackout and everyone would still be at work on time. There could be a huge traffic jam and all the children would still be in school on time. The only way that happens is if one has been exposed to such situations so many times that one builds up resilience. So my message to the people of Karachi is that you're doing very well, and carry on!

OCTARA.COM:

Thank you very much Ron! It's been a real pleasure ■

Here in Karachi it is extraordinary, because you're one of the most resilient people in the world

The screenshot displays the Octara website homepage. At the top, the URL www.octara.com is prominently featured above the word "REBORN" in large, bold, white letters. Below this is a navigation bar with links for Home, Trainings, Conferences, Portfolio, Blog, Contact Us, and Pro Support. A search bar is also present. The main content area features a large banner for an event titled "UPLIFTING SERVICE" on "21 April 2012, Karachi". The banner includes logos for MEC and Octara, and a photo of Ron Kaufman with the text "Ron Kaufman LIVE & IN PERSON!". Below the banner are sections for "Training Workshops", "Customized Programs", "Events & Conferences", and "Global Alliances". A "Blog Highlights" section shows a post by Ron Kaufman titled "Ron Kaufman - In Challenging Times: Service Matters Most! In difficult economic...". A "Photo Gallery" section displays several small images. At the bottom, there is a "Quick Connect" form.

Octara turns a new corner in developing its web presence with the all new home baked www.octara.com. Designed with a fresh innovative appearance, the new website has a plethora of features to assist visitors in accessing information about our services and our knowledge hub featuring articles by leading industry practitioners and handpicked collection of expert reviews.

The new website enables Octara to lead the way in how we communicate with our customers, through regular updates and innovative technology interventions. Keeping in touch with social media, www.octara.com has been integrated with feeds and bridged interactions from our Facebook, Twitter and Youtube profiles. 'Live Support' plugin on the website enables real-time support for our visitors and minimizes the time required in getting their queries addressed. The area specific 'Course Catalog' features more than 250 technical to core skills improvement programs from our archives and serves as a great resource for Training and OD professionals.

We hope you enjoy exploring our new website, for we certainly have enjoyed putting it together. Your feedback is valuable to us! Help us make www.octara.com a better experience for you. Please share your thoughts and suggestions via 'Quick Connect' form at the bottom of homepage.