

Speaker 1:

Welcome to PayTalk, the podcast for payroll professionals, with your host, Nina Talley. In the podcast, we explore the human side of payroll by speaking with global industry leaders who provide their unique insights to help listeners better understand the issues important to them and their careers.

Nina Talley:

Hey, everyone. Thanks for joining us for PayTalk, the podcast that brings you payroll's human side. I'm your host, Nina Talley, and today we're joined by Jon Schausten, CPP, Director of Payroll and HRIS at OneAmerica, and APA's 2020 Payroll Man Of The Year. I'm so excited to have Jon with us today to share his take on getting started in global payroll. Jon, why don't you give our listeners a little bit of your background?

Jon Schausten:

Thanks, Nina. I'm excited to be here, as a fan of the podcast. It makes it more enjoyable to come on and talk to somebody that you've already heard. I've been in payroll for about 24 years. Started off working in a small family owned payroll company. Went from there to a larger company, primarily based in the Midwest, Steak 'n Shake restaurant chain, where I got my education in payroll, learning how to do the nuts and bolts, everything from A through Z getting everything done.

Jon Schausten:

I went to work for a company called Arbonne after that. It's a third-party distributor of cosmetics. That was my first taste of global payroll. Then I went to a company called Vertellus and did more global payroll. Now I've been at OneAmerica. It'll be two years next month.

Nina Talley:

Wow. I think that in the last 24 years, you've probably seen some of the biggest evolutions and revolutions that payroll has had to offer, and I'm really excited to dive in with you. We've had a few guests on that have discussed global payroll practices before, but you're the first with a distinctly American take on these practices. I'm really excited to explore how your experience might differ from, say, Max, who I know that you know.

Nina Talley:

I think that that's incredible that we can show that in global payroll, there is this international network. So let's just dive in. How did you get started in global payroll? Give us a little bit of info about that.

Jon Schausten:

Sure. Like most payroll professionals, you don't sign up to be a payroll professional when you grow up, so it's by accident. And so, the same thing happened with global payroll. I was working at Arbonne here in Indianapolis, and we'd just opened up a distribution center and the VP of HR goes, "Hey, we're getting ready to open up a distribution center in Canada. And do you think you could do payroll for Canada?" I'm like, "Well, how hard can it be?" And so, I said, "Sure, I'll take it on." And boy, jumped right into it.

Jon Schausten:

She was like, "Well, we're going to open up the site in X amount of months." I think it was like three or four months from the time that she asked me to do it. I was on a turbo track to get the payroll set up,

which is a bit challenging when you have to register with government entities, and set up a payroll process and a schedule. And not only learn that, but learn customs and rules that take place in a different country. They're our neighbors to the north, but there's quite a bit of differences between just doing payroll in United States to Canada. So it was quite an education by baptism of fire.

Nina Talley:

I love that. I think that that might be a common misconception for people working in national and maybe state payroll here in America, is that, well, it's very easy to branch out into Canada. It's North America. It can't be that different. I'd love to dive into those specific challenges and differences that you faced as you cracked in.

Jon Schausten:

Yeah. With Canada, obviously, the first thing you notice is that they don't have states, they have provinces. Each province operates uniquely from the rest of the country. They have their own requirements and laws and regulations. One of the things that we had to do was make sure you have workers' comp registered with the province. We were opening up in Ontario. And so, then I would have to go to the provincial government of Ontario, and not only just set up provincial taxes, but workers' comp on top of that.

Jon Schausten:

For us, one of the funniest things is a CPP stands for Certified Payroll Professional. In Canada, it stands for Canadian Pension Plan. So it's, well, you know a CPP a certain way, it's a little different. So understanding how taxes work, the tax rate's much higher in Canada than it is the United States. They have government subsidized healthcare, so when you have an additional health plan, it's a supplemental plan that a lot of companies offer to entice and get people to employ that offsets the government healthcare plan.

Jon Schausten:

So there's just nuances and differences just from a simple standpoint. And then, we opened up a second distribution center down the road, or on down the line, about a year and a half later in Saskatchewan, and setting up the stuff for the province there was completely different than Ontario. They had different overtime rules. They had a different workers' comp process. Where the United States is pretty straightforward, the differences between provinces were a lot like states, but different enough that it was challenging to learn. But with great resources like using the APA and asking people like, "Hey, how do you do this?" And were networking.

Jon Schausten:

And then, the other great thing is every government has a website. I did a lot of research on the provinces through the local provincial governments and learning through the Canadian Department Of Revenue And Customs is what it's called in Canada. So learning from the provincial government in Canada. You can learn from the province and then from the national government. Every government has a tax agency and they have most of their information out there that you can research and find.

Nina Talley:

Doing that research is so important. I have to imagine also time-consuming because, as you said, each province has its own set of rules and taxes. And then that's just Canada. And so, when you go even further, maybe we start working in the EU, I have to imagine that it gets even more difficult. Is there any global payroll resources that have been organized to help people at least locate this information as they move into these new spaces?

Jon Schausten:

Yeah. When I started doing it, there wasn't any sort of resources. The GPMI that was started by the APA and the Global Payroll Management Institute is a great resource. I still am a member of the GPMI. I still attend webinars. I still do stuff. My current company doesn't have global payroll, but it became a passion for me because it was such a diversity, inclusive thing to do with payroll, just a different background, a different process, a different way of doing things.

Jon Schausten:

So it was exciting because the US, it's pretty straightforward. It's federal taxes, social security Medicare, State. Then you get into some crazy things like Pennsylvania, Ohio that have localities, or the fact like I'm in Indiana, your locality is based off of where you live, not where you work, which is different from the rest of the states. So that part is a little different.

Jon Schausten:

Each country is different and trying to learn that is challenging. But GPMI has some great resources. The website, they provide webinars, they provide resources. You talked about Max earlier. Because of the GPMI, I got connected to Max. Now I have a friend that lives in the Netherlands. It's a big role, but it's also a small role when it comes to what we do in payroll.

Nina Talley:

I think that having that personal network that spans out is so helpful, that if you are expanding our global payroll operations into the Netherlands, or because Max is so passionate about global payroll, probably anywhere in the world, you can call Max up and say, "Hey, buddy, how do I do this?" He just, from my brief amount of time that I've spent with Max, I know that he would be more than happy to help.

Jon Schausten:

Oh, he's a great resource. That's actually how Max and I connected. We were in a GPMI class for global certification for payroll and Max was there. It was an APA event. It was an old event called the Fall Forum, which has now become a different event for the APA. Max was actually here, and it was in Indianapolis, from town where I am. Max was there. I told Max that I did payroll in the Netherlands. And so, he loved the fact that here I am at this conference and he doesn't know hardly anybody.

Jon Schausten:

One, there's another man in the conference for payroll, which is primarily all women. So automatically us guys flock together when it comes to payroll. But here is somebody that's doing payroll in the Netherlands. And so, Max and I connected over that and just hit it off right away. And so, Max is very outgoing, very passionate about payroll, and I share that same enthusiasm that he does about payroll. We just hit it off right away, the connection that we had, great sense of humor. We get along great.

Jon Schausten:

We stayed in touch. We're connected on Facebook, and LinkedIn, and social networking. It's just crazy that I can see stuff and stay connected to Max, even though we're half a world apart. But since then, Max and I get together every time that there's a payroll conference, a payroll congress before the world shut down with COVID. Max and I would figure out when we were each getting into town so we could connect and hang out. So, yeah, it's a lot of fun and it's great.

Jon Schausten:

Because of my involvement with Max and GPMI, I've got some great resources now in UK and throughout Europe. And then meeting other payroll professionals from India and other countries. It makes the world seem small when it's really so big, being connected to people like that through the GPMI.

Nina Talley:

I love that. I love that it's truly about just putting in the work and it's going to blossom for you. Getting involved in the APA, in the GPMI, that allowed you to build this network that is professionally beneficial, but is also personally beneficial. It's an incredible thing what trying to build up your own personal resources can do for your life and how it can blossom out. And so, thank you for sharing that story.

Jon Schausten:

Absolutely. Yeah. It's funny. I started on a small local level, like here at the Indianapolis Chapter and just network locally. Then you get involved with the APA and you get a network that's national. Now through the GPMI and through being at Congress and with the APA, I've got this network of global professionals too. It's the funniest thing. Something you think is just going to be helpful with where you are locally has blossomed into something where I can connect and talk to people that can help me with problems that 10 years ago in payroll, or 15 years ago in payroll, that I never thought I'd be dealing with, let alone having resources to help me solve it.

Nina Talley:

It's excellent. It's true of all things in life, you reap what you sow. And so, that's great. I think that's something that's really interesting. We've talked about, obviously, working in the Netherlands and other provinces in Canada, where French is the main language. How do you manage so many language barriers as you grow your global payroll network?

Jon Schausten:

I think it's you have to partner and you have to have some trust. Being a US-based company, typically, my experience has been with other US-centric companies that open globally. There's resources globally between either the payroll provider or a local HR person, or a local GM that's going to be setting up the facility or the site for distribution. My first three payrolls, I cheated doing globally because I did Canada, Australia, and the UK. So if you're going to do it... I hit all your English-speaking countries.

Jon Schausten:

But even with that, there's still nuances and nomenclature that differs from one country to another. Like doing payroll in Australia, it's customary to get paid every two weeks. While here we call that biweekly, there it's called fortnightly. It was just the funniest thing.

Nina Talley:

Wow.

Jon Schausten:

Yeah. They were like, "Jon, we get paid fortnightly." And so, you learn how things work. And so, it's just completely different, where Canada it differed by province where, A, what custom is for payroll. And then, the UK and typically Europe and most of the world is paid monthly, which is dramatically different than what we do here in the US. If you can think of a payroll cycle, we've come up with it, whether it's weekly, biweekly, semimonthly, monthly. We've got it covered.

Jon Schausten:

But most countries [inaudible 00:12:53] customary. But as far as language barriers, the first language barrier I had was doing payroll for Belgium. Max's neighbors country from the Netherlands is Belgium, and it's primarily Dutch, French, and German, and Flemish. So I would have to rely on boots on the ground, so people that we had at our site, or I had a good relationship with our payroll provider that would say, "Hey, can I do this?"

Jon Schausten:

The other great thing that's evolved over the years is Google Translate or translating tools that you can do it. They don't always work perfectly. But we would get notices in from Belgium when I first started working on the Belgium payroll, and they come in Dutch, and I don't speak Dutch. And so, I would scan the document and then convert it to Word. It'd come in the mail and then convert it over to Word, and then do your translate.

Jon Schausten:

Now, it didn't always work perfect, but it was enough that you could do stuff. But over time, you start learning what words mean. Like, Oh, that's federal tax or that's net pay. And so, you learn after a while of looking at it. But if I called for help or reached out to government agency or my payroll contacts, I would have to right away share that I spoke English and asked for an English resource. The world's small enough that you can get past the language barrier. But the good thing about payrolls, numbers are typically always the same.

Nina Talley:

That's right. Numbers are the universal language. You don't have to be like chained to do a lingo, getting shamed regularly, to work in global payroll. You just have to ask for help. I think that that's something that culturally we're getting better at accepting, is that asking for help is not a weakness. It's actually an incredible strength.

Jon Schausten:

Yeah, it's fine because going into global payroll, I was by no means an expert on it. I've been doing payroll for quite a long time in the US, and the one thing that was constant in everything that I did, you make X dollars, the government takes a huge amount of your pay. And then you get to bring this a little bit amount home. That's the one thing that's constant. Whatever the language is, the governments have figured out how to take their share of the money. And so you bring a smaller amount of home.

Jon Schausten:

So that's the universal that goes on in global payroll, but it's the same challenges regardless if it's US-based or global based, is you don't know how to do something, just admit you don't know and ask for help or say, "Hey, I don't have the answer, but I could find the answer. And there's resources out there between now with GPMI, with the APA. But if you have a local payroll provider, they want you to be successful. And typically, those groups will have someone that speaks both the language of the country and can work with you in English.

Jon Schausten:

I was lucky to have some really great partners and doing that with payroll. I worked with ADP, who's a large payroll provider globally, and worked with them in Europe and that helped quite a bit. They had boots on the ground in Belgium, which Belgium's by far the most challenging payroll that I've done. It's complex. There are rules that govern how you do things. California's probably the toughest place to do payroll in the US. Payroll in Belgium is like California on steroids.

Jon Schausten:

So it's one of those things that you have to know what you're doing, and you have to do it right because there's penalties and interest that can hit the company for not paying taxes correctly and timely, and understanding how the timeframe of where you pay taxes and understanding how that reconciles and making sure that your taxes are paid and caught up. But in Belgium, it's by law that you have to provide a certain amount of time off for associates.

Jon Schausten:

Every month you have to report how much time people took for holiday, which is vacation. And if you make a mistake or someone doesn't, follow along with me here, doesn't report that they took time off, that you have to go back and then reopen the payroll for that month, post the correct amount of days that they took off, close the payroll again, and then update their balance. So by law, you have to report time off that people take and you have to report it in the month where it occurs.

Jon Schausten:

That's just a nuance with Belgium that makes it more complex than most payrolls that you've ever done. From a reconciliation standpoint, you get your payroll reports, and if you had to go back and adjust months for time off somebody took, well, that created a whole new payroll run, basically, for that month and it would open and close the payroll. So your report some months could be three times what it normally was because you bring in typically three payrolls to go back and correct that. So it's being able to ask for help and trying to figure these things out is the only way I think that you could be successful.

Nina Talley:

That's such an excellent point. We've talked a lot about the challenges of global payroll, because that's really what everybody wants to know. How do you overcome those challenges? But I do think it's important to talk about the good side of things. And so, what do you like most about working in global payroll? What's the most rewarding part of it?

Jon Schausten:

The one thing that I found is people are people no matter what language they speak or what country that it is. If people have a payroll question or there's a question about their pay, they want help, and that's universal. That goes far beyond boundaries and languages. It's one of those things that's unique to a company. Everybody's got to get paid. There's a sign up in my office, it says, "Payroll's the reason why people come to work." And that translates to every language. Nobody goes to work just because they love their job. You hope you love your job, but it's a give and take.

Jon Schausten:

I learned early on in my career that I give a fair day's work and I get a fair day's wage in return for that. So that thought process is that there are certain things that go on. Like if you pay a bonus, the tax rates usually higher than it is if it's not a bonus. So questions around that, what benefits come out for certain pays. So people have questions, they want to understand them. But the connection with people, because luckily working for some of these global companies, I actually got to meet the people that I paid globally when they'd come to the US for like a conference.

Jon Schausten:

And so, you know people's names and you know a lot about their information. But putting their voice with that person or a face, that was really rewarding. Hearing the guys, the salespeople that I paid in Belgium, when I first started doing that, I felt like everything I touched was wrong when I first started doing it, because I made mistakes because it was new and I was learning. The first time I met the team from Belgium, when I was at Vertellus, they were all like, "Jon, you do a great job and we appreciate how diligent you are in asking questions and following up with us. You're the first guy that we've ever dealt with, that's outside Belgium, that gets it and does it."

Jon Schausten:

I'm sitting there thinking, "Gosh, they're going to all hate me when they first meet me," because I've made some mistakes with some of their reporting and payroll. But they couldn't have been any nicer if they tried. So that, to me, is the best part and is rewarding, is the people that you're involved with. Plus, it's learning something new. I mean like anything else that you do, it can get stale. I've been doing this for 24 years and it's something new and exciting. It's different.

Jon Schausten:

So the challenges that come with it are challenges, but you could figure them out, and it's problem solving. And so, the people part is probably the best. So like developing those relationships and, like you said, talking about Max, meeting him and other payroll professionals I've met globally. That's the part that makes it great. It's because the one thing we all have in common is that we're people and it's universal that people need to get paid for what they do.

Jon Schausten:

It's a commonality and it's a way for us to be connected and see each other for just what we are as people. We're here to get along and hopefully make the world a better place.

Nina Talley:

That's something that really warms my heart, Jon, is that this is PayTalk's 12th episode. We've been doing this for a year now. Something that comes up repeatedly with our guests is the thing that they like

most about their jobs is that they get to touch other people's lives, and that they have a really meaningful part in their lives, that they cause an actual effect, a measurable impact on people's lives. To hear that over and over, I think that payroll can have this sort of...

Nina Talley:

Because it's numbers, it can seem cold. But truly, payroll professionals are some of the most empathetic individuals who are working really hard to get things right. And like you said, you were fearful that they were going to be really upset with you because you had made mistakes. Mistakes happen, especially when you're getting started in a new field. But they greeted you with warmth because you are having a positive impact on their lives. You're putting food on their table. That's something that really matters.

Nina Talley:

I think that that's something that we can all keep in mind as we move through payroll, that you're having a positive impact. Make sure to remind yourself of that and to take it to heart.

Jon Schausten:

Absolutely. The hard part about being in payroll is you typically only get a phone call if there's a problem. Nobody ever calls payroll up and says, "Hey, it's Friday. I got paid today. My paycheck's perfect. Thanks. I appreciate it." We're overhead for company. We're part of the cost of operating a business. But perfection's expected in everything that we do. If something's not right, it affects people. It affects them in a harsh way. I learned early on in my career working at Steak 'n Shake.

Jon Schausten:

It's a restaurant and people are paid tipped wages. When you make 2.13 an hour and you get shorted \$20, that's a lot of money to somebody that makes 2.13 an hour. So, from an empathetic standpoint, I do everything that I can, empower my people on my team everywhere I've worked, is like, "Let's make sure that we get it right. So it may take extra work on the front end, but let's make sure that we get it right, because it's easier to clean it up before it happens than it is to clean it up after it happens."

Jon Schausten:

I think it's inherent that you're empathetic in what you do because you want to be successful at what you do. But our job requires perfection, and that's universal both in the US and globally. You want to make sure that you do it right. Now, in Australia, they're the best payroll I've ever done because those people were just so laissez faire and laid back. We had an issue, like we had a pay increase, it was getting held up. I would do payroll on Sunday nights at home in the US because it was the only time that I could do it and get a hold of somebody if I needed to, because it was noon the next day in Australia.

Jon Schausten:

And so, if I had an issue, like if I was posting paperwork, I could email somebody, which is funny, like to do a phone call back in the day on my Blackberry. So that's going to date myself, call of them to ask a question. But I'd call them and I'm like, "Hey, we don't have this paperwork here. We're going to get it in on the next payroll. I'm so sorry." "Oh, no worries, Jon. Just throw it on the next payroll. We don't care." And I'm like, "Really?" Because in the US, I'd be drawn and quartered if you messed up with someone's pay increase.

Nina Talley:

I like his vibe.

Jon Schausten:

Yes, it's great. It was just so different compared to what you're used to. And so, it energizes you because you're like, "Oh my gosh. Here's somebody that could have been totally angry with you about a situation, because there's not a pay increase going through for somebody. It was just like, "Don't worry about it. We know you're trying." It's that understanding and empathy that you get back that helps you to be empathetic to help people.

Jon Schausten:

In those situations, I went out of my way to try to make sure that we could get it in and process that pay change in that payroll, because they were so open and understanding to me about, "Hey, this is a situation. Well, you might want to make sure that this person gets paid, but don't kill yourself to do it." It just made me want to work harder to help them, because if they're that empathetic to my situation, it sure creates empathy for me when they need help.

Nina Talley:

Yeah. When you don't have guillotines hanging over your neck, you're a lot more motivated to please somebody.

Jon Schausten:

Yeah. If you're not looking down in the basket because you're [crosstalk 00:24:40], the last thing you see before the world ends. Yeah. I agree with you 100%.

Nina Talley:

Immedis is the leader in consolidated global payroll solutions. Processing payroll in more than 150 countries, the Immedis platform provides a unified view of global payroll operations, real-time data analytics, and advanced reporting capabilities, while ensuring legislative compliance and data security. Immedis's deep integration capabilities with HCM and finance providers dramatically simplifies multi-country payroll obligations.

Nina Talley:

Don't forget global payroll week coming up at the end of this month from the 26th through the 30th of April. Help celebrate with Immedis, a global payroll week sponsor, and all of the amazing professionals in the global payroll industry who help ensure the world gets paid.

Nina Talley:

What specific insights can you share to help somebody else from the United States who might be setting up global payroll operations?

Jon Schausten:

Ask a lot of questions. The best thing I can tell you is you think you know what you're doing, but you don't, and ask a lot of questions. There's a ton of resources out there to find stuff. Between the GPPI,

between the APA, finding resources, networking on LinkedIn, getting connected to people, your payroll provider, if you're going to partner with a... Depending on how you're doing your payroll, if you're going to use an in-country vendor or an in-country resource, ask questions.

Jon Schausten:

Learn from human resources, like, "Hey, what are our policies going to be? How are we going to set things up? Where's the business going to be located?" I mean, I think from the first time I did it, setting up Canada, to the last time I did it doing a payroll in Germany, is I have a list of questions that I still keep and like, "Okay, I need to know what's the requirements of the country as far as taxation? How many people are we going to have employed? Where are they working?"

Jon Schausten:

It's just a litany of asking questions, but it's to make sure that you're doing it right. So having that thought process. I need to think of everything and I need to be sure that I do an exhaustive measure of asking questions to make sure I capture everything and not being afraid to admit when you don't know something or that you're wrong, and finding the resources to help you. But it all comes down to asking the questions and being prepared to make sure that you do it right.

Jon Schausten:

So getting as much information as you can, as soon as you can, the longer timeframe that you have to set up a payroll. It's one thing to register for a government agency in the US where you speak the language, and it's... Every state's different, but there's still some customary things that you're going to be asked with setting up a new business in a state. It's completely different when you're doing it in a different country, let alone it may not be even in English.

Jon Schausten:

So finding those resources, asking the questions, and being prepared to roll up your sleeves and do some work to get it done, because it's not going to magically get done itself and not be afraid to tackle the challenges and know that you're going to have them. So, from my standpoint, is I think it was being open and saying, "Yes." My boss is really good about saying that now. I always used to say that I didn't say no to opportunities. Well, now I tell people I willingly say yes to opportunities.

Jon Schausten:

So being open to saying yes and trying new things and new opportunities. And then going in there and asking plenty of questions to make sure you get it done.

Nina Talley:

I love that. Be open to saying yes, and then be open to being wrong and needing help. There's so much power in that.

Jon Schausten:

It's freeing because you don't have to have all the answers and you don't have to be an expert in everything. I'll be the first person to tell you that I'm not an expert in everything, but what I'm an expert in is asking the questions and finding the answers. So being not afraid to ask the questions and finding the answers sure makes it easier to find the answers and get it done. Because if you put your head in the

sand and bury it and think it's just going to go away, it's not. You're still going to have to deal with it when you pull your head out. So it's better to go on with the attitude, "I'm going to ask the questions and find the answers, and we'll get this figured out."

Nina Talley:

What a simple statement and a life truth, is that you can't find the answers if you don't ask the questions. Now is the time in our podcast for something we like to call Payroll Nightmares. We ask our listeners to send us their payroll nightmares to podcasts@americanpayroll.org, or leave us a comment on the APA's Facebook page. But this month, Jon has two global nightmares to share with us. So, Jon, why don't you share the spooky thoughts?

Jon Schausten:

I have to tell you, this is my favorite part about the podcast, listening to the previous episodes just hearing this because they all ring true for all of us. And when you hear them, you're like, "Oh yeah, I can be in those shoes and do that." My first nightmare or horror story being in payroll was setting up my very first payroll on Canada. I mentioned to you, the great part was they speak English. But we had hired a salesperson in Quebec.

Jon Schausten:

Quebec, for those who don't know, is famous for being very French in Canada. Everything is French driven. There's a lot of French heritage. They celebrate the things about being French and French is the primary language in Quebec. I called the provincial tax agency to ask some questions about setting up the salesperson. And so, I called the number listed on the website and the gentleman who answers the phone is speaking French.

Jon Schausten:

I start off by saying, "Sir, I don't speak French. I speak English. Is there a way you could help me?" Click. The phone disconnects. So I call back again, "Oh, it must have been a bad connection or something like that." Call back again, same person who answers. I said, "[inaudible 00:30:22]," trying to make it easier to ask for help, click again, hangs up on me. I'm like, "I think the guy hung up on me." I called back a third time. Same guy again. I'm like, "Sir, before you hang up on me, I don't speak French. I'm trying to set up payroll in Canada in Quebec. I want to make sure that I do it right. If you can't help me because I don't speak French, can you at least point me in a direction to somebody that can?"

Jon Schausten:

I could hear him breathe for a second, then I hear click. I'm like, "Are you serious? Because I don't speak French, this guy won't talk to me?" I, of course, get on search engine, Google. And like it's customary if you don't speak French, that you need to make sure that you contact the English-speaking number. And so, I finally found a number where somebody would speak English or give you the option and I called and talked to the person at the office and explained my situation.

Jon Schausten:

She's like, "Yes, if you call the French line and you don't speak French, they're not going to talk to you." And I'm like, "Well, that might be something maybe to broadcast on the front page of your website for those of us that don't speak French. I finally got it set up, but was talking about being determined and

looking to find the answers. But I'm like, "I just caught completely off guard because I've got hung up on because I don't speak French."

Jon Schausten:

And so, that part was hilarious to me, is that trying to do that. In Quebec, I've heard that it could be difficult if you don't speak French. I've lived that because I don't speak French and tried to call the department of revenue in Quebec and if you don't speak French, you're not going to get anywhere. So that's my first [crosstalk 00:32:02].

Nina Talley:

You lived that reality. Wow. I love it.

Jon Schausten:

It was hilarious, looking back on it. I mean, it's just funny because you're like, "I think the phone got disconnected." The third time you're like, "Nope, he's hanging up on me." So no, there was pretty much no doubt in my mind what happened. And then, my second story, I was setting up payroll in Great Britain, in the UK, United Kingdom, and we're opening up. I'd already set up payroll in Canada and dealt with the person in Quebec.

Jon Schausten:

I'd opened up payroll in Australia, no problems with either one of those, other than the little Quebec debacle. I'm going to set up payroll in the UK. And so, again, English-speaking country. Everything's run by taxation in the UK through Her Majesty's customs and revenue. So it's with government agency taxation, so there's all sorts of rules out there. I had a global payroll provider that was helping me.

Jon Schausten:

I have a call scheduled with the gentlemen that's going to be the GM of the site in the UK and he wants to talk to me about setting up payroll. And so, I get on the phone with him and I'm like, "Hey, my name's Jon Schausten. I've been doing this for X number of years. I've already set up two payrolls globally. This is my third one. I'm looking forward to working with you." Very politely in his British accent, he goes, "How do you think you know anything about UK payroll because you're in the United States? Are you that conceited that because you're an American, that you think you can just come in here and tell us what to do and get us paid correctly in the UK?"

Jon Schausten:

There's like a Bugs Bunny cartoon where my jaw fell to the floor. Thank goodness it wasn't a video conference call. I'm like, "Well, sir," and I won't say his name, I'm like, "Sir, I said, I have been doing this for quite a while now." I said, "I've researched everything through Her Majesty's customs and revenue website. I have all the [inaudible 00:33:42] rules in place. Here's our payroll provider, which is one of the biggest payroll providers in the UK to pay you. I understand this is what the requirements are. I understand this is how we're going to set things up. I believe I am well equipped to provide you and serve you on your payroll."

Jon Schausten:

And so, he goes, "See," he goes, "A cocky American thinking he knows everything about what we do in the UK." I'm not even going to imitate his accent because we'll strike my ire. But here I've dealt with all these other countries. People were great, [inaudible 00:34:11] Quebec. And then, the GM that works for our company thinks that it's outside my gourd to think of how to figure out and set up payroll.

Jon Schausten:

Luckily that was the pretense that I knew some people just aren't going to be successful at what they do. I was able to set up their payroll. I proved him wrong. People got paid. They never had an issue. My former company lasted longer than [inaudible 00:34:34]. So if you're difficult with people and you're not very nice to them, it's typical that you're not that way with most people. So it's usually a precursor to, you're not going to be successful working if you can't be nice to people.

Jon Schausten:

I definitely believe you get more flies with honey than you do with vinegar. He was very much full of vinegar. I was used to challenging stuff after dealing with Quebec on government agencies, but here's a guy that works at the same company that I do and I'm just trying to meet him, do a meet and greet, let him know, "Hey, this is where I'm at in setting up payroll and get things going." And man, he couldn't have had any more pain points or challenges with the fact that I was American and setting up his payroll. It was not an experience I expected to happen with somebody that I worked with.

Nina Talley:

That's very interesting because, yeah, like you said, with Quebec, it's a government agency which is already its own experience, that's its own bucket of slop. But with somebody who should be your supporter or at least should be accepting of your presence, it's interesting that you faced that amount of ire. But I do appreciate you sharing the outcome. You're right, you do catch more flies with honey than vinegar. I'm sure after your career there, people had stories about you and people had stories about him, and one is a nightmare.

Jon Schausten:

I hope I don't fall in that category.

Nina Talley:

Well, I'm going to make an assumption for both of us that you don't.

Jon Schausten:

Thank you.

Nina Talley:

Well, you're so welcome. I don't want to leave things on a negative note with that nightmare. So I have one more question for you, Jon. What is the best piece of payroll advice you've ever been given, or what is the piece of advice that you wish that somebody had given you?

Jon Schausten:

Good question. Best piece of advice that I ever got working in payroll was don't try to act like you know everything. Don't think that you're above making mistakes and ask for help. So that's why I really take

that to heart about working on payroll and not being afraid to ask for help. I don't know everything. I mean, there's things that you don't deal with everyday.

Jon Schausten:

I've never worked in a hospital or paid a policeman or a firefighter. Their payrolls are different than what we do at my current company, or paying people with tips at Steak 'n Shake. If you've never done that before, it's challenging within itself. So don't act like you know everything, not be afraid to ask for help, and then know that there's resources out there to find it. Probably, for me, the one piece of advice I wish I would have known when I got into payroll, to answer the other question, it was to get involved with the APA right away.

Jon Schausten:

I started off working in payroll, like most people, by accident. I didn't grow up thinking I wanted to be a payroll professional, because most kids don't. You think about firefighter or astronaut. Payroll professional usually doesn't fall in that same category. I ended up by accident, so I had to learn on the job. But once I got involved with the APA first at a local level at the Indianapolis Chapter, and then nationally at APA, it's this whole wealth of knowledge that just opens up to you that, hey, here's resources to help you figure this out. Here's ways for you to solve this. And, hey, we've done this before. Here's a resource or this new tax law came out.

Jon Schausten:

It was just enlightening because I would struggle to find things at first, and then here's a one-stop shop to get answers and solve problems. So I wish that I'd known about the APA when I first started working in payroll because it's a godsend and it's a huge resource to help me be successful in my career.

Nina Talley:

I think that something about the APA that is really great, like you said, it is that one-stop shop. They have done so much of the research, and then they also are constantly updating, which I know that over the last year, things have changed. Keeping up with all of those changes, this rapid fire evolution, has been so hard. And making sure you locate the resources and then you keep them close to you, is both a resource like the APA, but then also a personal and professional network that can help you grow your career. That's such a good point. Thank you for sharing that little slice of advice with our listeners.

Jon Schausten:

No, it's great. I think about, like you said, over the last year. I remember when I thought the worst thing about 2020 was going to be the new W-4 because of all the changes with that, and I longed for the salad days of the old W-4 and not having to deal with Coronavirus and trying to figure out how to work from home and all these law changes, because of tax codes to provide relief to the individuals or people working in different states. The good old days of just the W-4 changing, I dream of those things again.

Nina Talley:

We were all such naive babies in January of 2020.

Jon Schausten:

Yes. We were so full of hope and excitement, and little did we know.

This transcript was exported on Mar 29, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

Nina Talley:

Sweet summer children.

Jon Schausten:

I love it.

Nina Talley:

Well, Jon, thank you so much for joining us today to share your time and your knowledge. I know that this has been such an invaluable conversation for anyone who is looking for a headstart in global payroll. I also want to take a moment to thank all of our loyal listeners out there for being with us for this past year. Without you, PayTalk wouldn't be possible. Make sure you like and subscribe, or if you're feeling particularly moved by our content, leave us a rating and a review on your preferred podcast streaming service.

Nina Talley:

That is the best way to support this podcast and ensure that we can continue to bring you the human stories that make payroll so personal. Until next time, folks, this has been your host, Nina Talley, with PayTalk.

Speaker 1:

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