

“De Omnibus Dubitandum!”

Back in my schooldays, when I was subject to the tender tutelage of the Christian Brothers, it was obvious their preferred vocation for me involved my wearing a funny white collar and a long black cassock! As part of their cunning plan, I endured many painful hours in the pursuit of mastery of the Latin language.

Ultimately their plan failed miserably, for they neglected to get me to the monastery before I discovered the awful truth about a life of poverty, chastity and obedience. You will however be grateful to know that those Latin studies of so long ago now enable me to translate for you the title at the top of this **RAAS Report!**

De omnibus dubitandum translates as “Everything must be doubted” and is said to have been Karl Marx’s favourite motto. Now, Karl and I don’t have much in common, but it seems a healthy dose of skepticism is our one point of intellectual intersection. The quote comes from the famous philosopher Rene Descartes and in its 17th Century meaning was probably offered as an encouragement to develop an independent and inquisitive mind. Today, however, it is a far more immediate warning call.

In business and life today, whether it be a management rights business, a corner store

or a deal on the Internet, there are crooks, spivs and connen everywhere! And for every one of them, there is a sucker waiting to be fleeced. Does it not amaze you that the old Nigerian scam is still raking in millions each year? For heaven’s sake, I received my first Nigerian scam letter in 1989! That is nearly 20 years ago, and the scam is STILL working, almost unchanged.

Those who try to take advantage of you can come in many guises. It may be a prospective tenant whose references don’t quite ring true; it might be a prospective employee with some unexplained gaps in their resume; it might be an invoice for some advertising you can’t remember ordering; it might be a business proposition that seems just too good to be true; it might be a share tip about the next big thing to hit the Stock Exchange!

De omnibus dubitandum!

Are you one of those well meaning souls who, after receiving an email from one of your best friends warning you about some dreadful computer virus that will eat your bank account and turn your hard drive to mush, immediately forwards it on to your entire Contacts register? Chances are you have just contributed to the many billions of pieces of junk mail that clog up the Internet daily!

Before you hit that Send button, go to www.hoax-slayer.com or go to Google and put a couple of key words and the word “hoax” into your search. In 99% of cases the full details and history of the email hoax will come up on your screen.

You will have saved yourself the embarrassment of passing rubbish on to all your friends.

But it is not only in interacting with criminals and hoaxers that Descartes’s advice is valuable. Skepticism is sometimes warranted in many other day to day business dealings. Let’s say you are in front of your bank manager and you are refinancing your management rights business. He looks at you and says solemnly, “The best I can do is 9.25%”.

Look him straight in the eye and say just as solemnly, “*De omnibus dubitandum!*”

At the very least, he will be impressed! At the very best you will throw him so far off balance he will knock another half point off the rate!

If you would like to comment on anything you have read in The RAAS Report please write to us at PO Box 1325 Sunnybank Hills Q 4109 or send an email to mike@raas.com.au.



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