

German High Tech Company Fights Philippine Customs Corruption-- For More Than 30 Years

Written by Bob Snyder
06 October 2016



In the age of internet, every company is urged to "tell its story." Recently at IFA Berlin, the German consumer electronics company, Unimex, told us its story fighting theft and corruption, a story that spans three decades and several regimes in the Philippines.

The moment Stephan Finta hit the bottom of the stairs, he knew what he had to do.

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He looked up at the two bulky guards from the Customs Office in Manila who had just thrown him down the stairs. Both had guns drawn and one said, "Never come back here, Finta."

When Finta finally had his chance to tell this story in court, no one was surprised. In the Philippines, violence and corruption were the norm at that time.

Usually a consumer electronics manufacturer (video computers, cartridges, game accessories) from Germany was not a target. And certainly this was not the message the Philippines wanted to send abroad to the international business community.

So when Finta took his case to a Philippines court, it took from five years before the court first agreed Finta and his company (Unimex Micro) had indeed endured an injustice and declared in their favor. Finta thought that would be the end of the story, an end to years of stress, legal expenses, appealing to government officials.

Had the story ended there, it would have been a worthy story, a story of persistence and perseverance that many high tech exporters would understand and perhaps nod their heads with some sympathy.

But Finta's story would go on and on, in a marathon of endurance and fortitude that few others have experienced or even witnessed.

Winning in court was only one point on a 30-year timeline that even today takes Finta back to the Philippines, back to Manila, back to a new government, a government swept into power in 2015 on an anti-corruption ticket.

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[Unimex Micro](#)