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Meet Deni Anderson: Give training the spotlight to achieve compliance

an interview by Adam Turteltaub

Deni Anderson (danderson@endeavorco.com), Director of Global Compliance Operations for Endeavor in New York City, was interviewed in December by Adam Turteltaub (adam.turteltaub@corporatecompliance.org), Vice President, Strategic Initiatives & International Programs at SCCE & HCCA.

AT: I think a lot of people will likely be surprised to learn that there are compliance people in the entertainment industry. Your career certainly proves people with that belief wrong. You've worked at NBCUniversal, Univision, and now Endeavor. First, can you put into perspective how common it is to find compliance programs in entertainment?

DA: Prior to my in-house roles, I managed programs for companies in multiple industries, including entertainment. They were usually managed by the human resources function or a dedicated resource within the legal department. Although we have made great strides, there is still confusion about the role of compliance. The belief is that compliance programs only apply to certain businesses or industries, and the focus has primarily been on financial, pharmaceutical, or public companies. Many entertainment industry clients I managed in the past developed compliance programs, because it was the right thing to do in order to build a sustainable and successful business.

Entertainment is the same as any other industry; managing a business and its people requires that organizations have the right infrastructure to manage scalability. This forces the need for compliance. Much like growing up with our parents—there were always house rules we had to abide by—companies need to ensure that employees are aware of and follow organizational policies and guidelines.

Compliance professionals exist in all industries, even if the roles and titles differ. As new industry guidelines and laws are introduced, the need for compliance increases. In my experience, compliance as a dedicated function is now the norm, not the exception, for both private and public sectors.

AT: How difficult was it for you to transition from the solutions provider role into your in-house roles?

DA: Although companies initially turned to solutions providers, many began to align efforts internally to streamline compliance and training initiatives. I saw this as an opportunity to further those efforts, leveraging my knowledge of compliance, diversity management, training, and communications. Also, I feel that the entertainment industry has always been a pioneer of new concepts and embraces the diversity of its people and talent, so the transition was a natural one for me.

AT: You have managed compliance programs for some very well-known companies, all with distinct and very strong cultures. What is your approach to bridging different cultures to form a common compliance culture?

DA: There isn't a single recipe for success when bridging different cultures. The approach to forming a common compliance culture needs to begin in-house—understanding our ingredients, what's in our pantry sort-of-speak. First, culture must be approached from within, not from the outside looking in; otherwise, companies will

miss the mark on bridging the culture gap. It is important to gain understanding of the business and employee cultures and find a common ground. Building a compliance common culture takes time and continued refinement. It is in constant revival.

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