COSMOS
Navigate the Compliance Universe

The Accidental Compliance Professional
Lesson 6. Building Compliance Ambassadors through Influence

Let's start this lesson with a little compliance quiz. First think of the most impressive compliance professional you've ever met. You have five minutes to think and then answer the following questions. *Now go!*

1. Why do you think this person has the right stuff?
2. What kind of relationship does this person have with his/her leadership?
3. Why do you think this person is so effective?
4. What does that person do that is impressive?
5. What does this person do that others don't do as well?
6. What does this person have that others don't have?
7. Did you select this person because he/she knew the rule of law well, could audit like no one else, or did great risk assessments?

Do not proceed until you have a name in mind and answers . . . . Now look at your answers. Do you see a pattern?

I've given this quiz during several presentations and noticed a definite pattern to people's responses. No one ever told me that they picked someone because they knew the rule of law well. No one said the person picked had excellent auditing or risk assessment skills either. What was it that people valued most in a great compliance professional? People skills and the ability to influence others. Nearly everyone said that the person they respected had strong interpersonal skills, had a high emotional IQ, and could negotiate and collaborate well with others.

Being able to influence others is critical in compliance. Just look at what happened at PSU and MSU. Their advisors were unable to influence leadership and sexual abuse continued at these organizations for years. Sexual predators were allowed to be around children and young adults. The harm those predators caused affected dozens of young people and their families. Yet, it could have stopped if the right person influenced leadership. Many major organizational failures occurred with a building full of technical experts—experts in law, audit, and risk. These organizations knew about their different problems for years. What finally made the organizations act? Society. The public found out and crushed these organizations for letting their issues go on for so long. What was missing? Technical skills? I think not.

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