

The Accidental Compliance Professional Lesson 16. Fighting Groupthink with Diversity



My farewell speech at the 2018 Compliance & Ethics Institute

(Photo courtesy of the SCCE/HCCA archive)

At the 2018 CEI, I gave my goodbye speech to the members of one of the associations I helped build. I was so lucky to have this opportunity to be a cofounder and CEO. However, having to say goodbye was a bit much. It was a surreal moment. What I did to get past the emotion of the moment was to focus on the bigger picture. So I crafted an important message that I could send to those in attendance about the profession and our organization. I wanted to thank everyone involved, but especially paid tribute to the diversity of our board, organization, and profession as a whole.

“The entire organization and all of its accomplishments have been made by women and men,” I said. “We haven’t just checked the box of involving women in this organization, which many boards are still struggling to do. We have taken it a step further and taken advantage of all of the intelligence of the entire population, not just those with a deeper voice. It has been a huge advantage to us.”^[1]

Diversity strengthens any organization. At SCCE and HCCA, women are equally responsible for why we are where we are. Women haven’t just been on our board, they have played key roles on our board. In the last 20 years, eight

of our presidents have been women, including our current president Lori Strauss. My right-hand man for the past 15 years is not a man—April Kiel is the most unknown accomplished person this organization has ever had. She perfects our conferences, certification, customer service, publications, and much more. Our current immediate past president, Margaret Hambleton, has and will continue to be the star of the CEO transition process and is one of the most incredible leaders we have ever had. Debbie Troklus, senior managing director at Ankura, is a cofounder of our organization and has chaired the Compliance Certification Board since its inception. Debbie and many others have created the most respected and prolific compliance credentials in the world.

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