

## Compliance Today – November 2018 Risk preparedness: The best guarantee for peaceful compliance

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by David Staley, MA and Hannah Gilbert, MS

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How can we mindfully influence what is often perceived as an unrealizable expectation — a peaceful state of compliance? The mere thought can seem distressing. How would we even define a peaceful state of compliance? Defining peacefulness in and of itself is daunting, let alone achieving it. This unsettling feeling, of whether peaceful compliance could be achieved, dramatically alters how we prepare for and confront the ever-unpredictable compliance landscape. So, what might be the answer to calming that uneasy feeling?

Let’s turn to something straightforward yet insightful: a fable. Aesop authored one of his classic fables about a wild boar and a fox. The fable goes like this:

A Wild Boar was engaged in whetting his tusks upon the trunk of a tree in the forest when a Fox came by and, seeing what he was at, said to him, “Why are you doing that, pray? The huntsmen are not out today, and there are no other dangers at hand that I can see.” “True, my friend,” replied the Boar, “but the instant my life is in danger I shall need to use my tusks. There’ll be no time to sharpen them.”<sup>[1]</sup>

Danger comes about regardless of whether risks are mitigated carefully. The compliance landscape is riddled with risks that anchor our minds into a state of worry — a potentially crippling worry. Such uneasiness often engenders hopelessness and avoidance with respect to compliance. Now, we aren’t suggesting that our compliance efforts are in vain; we’re suggesting that we rethink the reality of risks in our compliance landscape. At any given moment, a number of risks emerge — some spontaneously — and hinder our ability to achieve a resourceful compliance mind-set. Risks, like the huntsmen from the fable, can kill our efforts to secure that peaceful state of compliance. Risks constantly threaten our compliance. Just as we react naturally when we sense a threat, so too can we prepare our tools for when the unforeseeable compliance danger emerge. What the Wild Boar so masterfully reveals in Aesop’s fable is that preparedness is the best guarantee for peace. Similar to the Wild Boar, our desire for peaceful compliance relies entirely on our mind-set to prepare for threatening risks. We must sharpen our compliance tusks.

Even if compliance risks don’t attempt to kill us, they still frustrate our desires and objectives to uphold the highest standard of compliance, not to mention how we operate with quality and safety. We aren’t going to eradicate these risks; they exist in the same way the huntsmen do. In spite of this, we can prioritize risks and prepare our tools for when our state of compliance is in danger.

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