

ethikos Volume 33, Number 7. July 01, 2019 Trust + compliance drive ethical leadership and a culture of integrity

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Now that I've spent the past five years working with Barbara Brooks Kimmel's stellar Trust Alliance and think tank, I'm more than convinced that trust, compliance, ethical leadership, and culture have so many key principles in common, and that much is to be learned by sharing best practices among these disciplines. I have long believed in the power of ethical leadership to drive the "ripple effect" necessary to support a culture of integrity, as demonstrated by the example set by none other than Pope Francis (the "Humble Pope"). I've also written that chief compliance officers (CCOs) must embrace their roles as ethical leaders and of the crisis in ethical leadership we have seen in so many recent headline scandals.

From a scientific point of view, I can point to a six-month project at one of my early CCO roles, where we in Compliance spent hands-on time in an ethical leadership task force with top outside HR experts on a groundbreaking ethical leadership project. Aimed at linking 30% of bonus compensation to ethical leadership behaviors, the project was directed at supporting an effective compliance and ethics program and culture of integrity. During this time, we debated and labored over a list of seven leadership behaviors that we wanted to link into our overall performance management system with a view to driving key senior management behavior.

Fast-forward to my time with the Trust Alliance, on which sit the best-of-the-best thought leaders on ethical leadership and trust. A few of those leaders I knew from the compliance field, and I was also delighted to discover on this team the son of one of my all-time heroes, the late Dr. Stephen R. Covey (author of the perennial best-selling business book, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and a host of related titles). His son, the celebrated author Dr. Stephen M.R. Covey, is a member of the Trust Alliance and is carrying on the fantastic work of his father.

I was honored to meet Dr. Stephen R. Covey in London at a networking lunch in 2005, having come fresh from teaching his (then) new book *The Eighth Principle* to my leadership team. As our networking lunch was held at a London Marriott, I was not at all shy about asking our excellent conference room wait staff if they knew the "values" and "goals" of their employer. To my absolute delight, one after the other they pulled out a laminated card that served as a reminder of their shared values and goals, with appropriate metrics reflecting the company's progress (I'll wait...while you order the book on Amazon, but read the others first!). It was a timely moment of fortune and serendipity I shall never forget. Of course, I realized at the time this should not have been a surprise, because Bill Marriott was a very close friend and colleague of Dr. Covey. Then and there, Dr. Covey asked if I could be available to tell this story at his management seminar in London that very afternoon, and the rest is one of my fondest "meeting my heroes" stories ever.

Now, back to the scientific analysis: Imagine my professional pride and sense of validation upon reading Stephen M.R. Covey's book, *The Speed of Trust*, and realizing that *all* seven behaviors we had identified as part of our ethical leadership task force were included in the author's model for "high trust behaviors" (pausing here for another Amazon break). Intersections like this one are the reason that one of my goals this year was to bring

some top thought leaders from my compliance and ethics networks into the Trust Alliance for some valuable cross-pollination of ideas and collaboration. Case in point: Ellen Hunt, senior vice president, AARP Internal Audit, & Compliance, a 2019 honoree of the Trust Across America Lifetime Achievement Award and 2019 Chief Compliance Officer of the Year-Non-Profit (Women in Compliance). I look forward to Ellen’s unparalleled input and collaboration within this context. As Barbara Brooks Kimmel said, she was “thrilled to see someone as deserving as Ellen receive two prestigious awards back to back.”

My readers know that I officially put the phrase “tone at the top” on my “banned list” in 2012, because the phrase has become overused and misused by many non-subject-matter experts (SMEs), including CEOs who think that “tone at the top” means “tone from my mouth” (credit to the great Joe Murphy for that one). But, it’s also extremely important to point out and celebrate companies and management who actually demonstrate authentic ethical leadership that we can all admire in their words and action, as I did upon learning of the standard set by Lockheed, after it had to fire its CEO in 2012.

And it is no surprise that the Lockheed example has a near perfect score against Stephen M.R. Covey’s list of 13 high-trust behaviors. #EthiTweeps, all CCOs and compliance SMEs should add Trust and Ethical Leadership models to their SME toolkits at their earliest opportunity, because these are invaluable and closely linked to our field. For my part, I’ll be tweeting a series of Trust tools this year, the product of the singular collaboration and thought leadership of the extraordinary Trust Alliance. The latest, AIM Towards Trust (a diagnostic for leaders, teams, and organizations) builds off of the Trust Alliance’s own 12 universal trust principles (TAP) which, in less than one year have been accessed by more than 50,000 global professionals, and are available in 16 languages. Stay tuned for more!

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