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Make training appeal to the inner child

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For some companies, training has become very pedestrian, to the detriment of the end purpose: to educate and impart knowledge. I have, over my time of being associated with both quality and compliance training, heard the same comments back from employees: This is boring. I almost fell asleep. I didn't learn anything new. Why do we have to do this again?

Over the past few months I have written articles highlighting the training overload imposed on employees^[1] and suggesting some examples that worked for us to recharge our training.^[2] In this article I provide further examples of how training can be recharged by thinking out of the box: (i) introducing personal examples to emphasize compliance principles and (ii) appealing to the inner child in all of us.

Making it personal: A practical example

It is sometimes difficult to explain to employees the relationship between compliance and ethics. For this purpose, if we assume compliance is “adhering to established rules and regulations” and ethics is defined as “doing the right thing,” what examples can we draw on from everyday living to explain these?

One helpful illustration uses driving and breaking the speed limit as metaphors. This example provides employees with a real-life situation that they can relate to and introduces the same philosophy that applies to many different compliance situations in business:

Driving over the speed limit is a traffic offense that receives a financial penalty. It is safe to assume that everyone knows the road rules, including the speed limit requirement, as it is part of the qualification for a driver's license.

There are three types of drivers. The first type of driver speeds on a regular basis and is clearly noncompliant. The second type of driver never speeds. These drivers do not want to break the law and are clearly compliant. The third type of driver sits in the middle. They may occasionally speed over the limit due to a momentary lapse of concentration or because they get side-tracked, but as a general rule, they do not deliberately set out to break the law.

In a compliance sense, only the second type is compliant; those people who never exceed the speed limit—but what about from an ethical perspective?

In this case the second type (those who never speed) is once again clearly ethical. The first type (those who intentionally speed with disregard for the laws and an indifference to the penalties) is clearly unethical, because they knowingly choose to break the law with full knowledge that it is wrong. The third type (those who occasionally and unintentionally break the speed limits) may not necessarily be unethical even though they have broken the law. They have good intentions of keeping within the law (i.e., being compliant) but occasionally make mistakes.

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