

## CEP Magazine – April 2021

# Hosting effective compliance trainings in a virtual classroom

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In today's working environment, employees are unable to walk down the hall and stop by a colleague's office to exchange ideas about a project. As a result, the number of meetings at some organizations has substantially increased. In an attempt to stay connected, management has increased the number of meetings and trainings being conducted, and as such, the potential for lack of interest and participation by some employees have become a common theme in corporate environments. In April 2020, only a month into the pandemic, Microsoft reported a new daily record for meetings held on its virtual meeting platform: 2.7 billion meeting minutes in one day, which represented about a 200% increase from the previous high of 900 million minutes.<sup>[1]</sup>

These same risks are associated with mandatory employee trainings that organizations conduct to give employees the guidance they need to perform effectively and to enable them to comply with regulations and best practices. By including too many people, covering too many topics, and holding prolonged training sessions, companies risk hosting trainings that are not focused or tailored to their goals and do not provide thought-provoking, relevant information that enables employees to achieve established goals and objectives. This article seeks to provide insights on how to conduct more effective training sessions and generate employee engagement, stimulate conversations within an organization, and highlight the importance of providing risk-based content in the era of virtual meetings.

### Know your audience to tailor your training

It becomes even more important for compliance officers to understand their audience and its familiarity with the topics to be addressed when preparing to present virtual trainings. When conducting an in-person training session, compliance officers are able to "feel the audience" and assess its understanding and interest of the topic by paying attention to the nonverbal communication. The emotional and human interaction during an in-person training can be diminished or lost when the training is not well prepared. The use of visuals, presentations, video clips, and even examples to support the importance of a compliance topic being discussed need to be bolder, bigger, and better to keep the audience engaged.

As such, presenters must consider if the audience already has expertise on the topics, or if some audience members are new to the organization and learning about the topics for the first time. With an understanding of the participants and their levels of knowledge, a presenter can lead a discussion in an innovative way that will also engage those who are already familiar. Audience members who are also experts on a topic can be called to provide their thoughts and real-life examples of how they have used the information being discussed to make ethical business decisions.

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