

## Compliance Today – February 2022 Meet Patrick Wellens: The building blocks of compliance

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Patrick Wellens, Compliance Manager in the Consumer Health Division of Bayer, based in Switzerland

Patrick Wellens ([patrickwellens@hotmail.com](mailto:patrickwellens@hotmail.com)) was interviewed by SCCE & HCCA CEO Gerry Zack ([gerry.zack@corporatecompliance.org](mailto:gerry.zack@corporatecompliance.org)) in November 2021.

**GZ:** People enter the compliance profession from many backgrounds. Some start out in law, some from individual business units. Your path to compliance began with education in business followed by spending your early years in internal audit. How has this background shaped your approach to the compliance role you currently hold?

**PW:** Education in business at an early age allowed me to get a good understanding of the strategic objectives for each of the various fields of management (human resources, supply chain, marketing, finance, etc.) and how they interrelate. Years in internal audit, reviewing the effectiveness of risk management and controls in various industries and continents, made me an expert in risk assessment, risk evaluation, and risk mitigation actions. Additionally, conducting numerous fraud and white-collar crime cases as an auditor gave me deep insights into how good people do bad things and how employees try to circumvent rules or processes to achieve their business targets. These skills are particularly useful in designing robust compliance processes and controls to prevent and detect misconduct.

**GZ:** Among your many qualifications, you hold a certification in fraud examination, like myself. How have certifications in fraud examination, internal audit, and risk management assurance helped you in your compliance career?

**PW:** Compliance is about creating an ethical culture, communicating, and training employees in doing the right thing, but also implementing processes and controls to prevent, detect, and promptly investigate ethical misconduct. The risk management assurance certification helped me get a deep understanding of risk identification, risk mitigation, and risk management frameworks. The internal audit certification helped me gain expert knowledge of control concepts (i.e., preventive, detective, self-certification) and apply those to various business applications. The Certified Fraud Examiner credential provided me with insights about various fraud schemes, understanding underlying factors that motivate individuals to commit fraud, how to plan and conduct an investigation, what to consider when interviewing suspects, how to conduct digital forensics, and how to write a professional investigation report.

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Gerry Zack