

CEP Magazine – March 2022 Meet Alan Dillane: Culture is just one intersectionality

Alan Dillane, FCA, CFE, is Global Remediation Program Manager at Dell Technologies in Slovakia.

Alan Dillane (alan.dillane@dell.com) was interviewed by Adam Turteltaub (adam.turteltaub@corporatecompliance.org), Chief Engagement & Strategy Officer at SCCE & HCCA.

AT: Before we get into a discussion of what you are doing now at Dell, I want to go back to earlier in your career. You have a deep background of work in accounting. What led you to the field?

AD: Following my graduation from the University of Limerick, I pursued accountancy through Chartered Accountants Ireland, which offered the opportunity to study and work simultaneously. What interested me most was how accountancy gives you practicable insights into how business works, helping you understand the bigger picture while honing generalist and transferable skills such as collaboration and influence. The ability to think broadly; gather facts; and conduct insightful, intuitive analysis are foundational for success.

AT: I noticed you worked with financial services firms for a time. They have, as you know, substantial compliance regimes, but they tend to be siloed in that they don't often participate in cross-industry compliance conferences. One negative consequence is that we don't get to learn from them. What do you think compliance teams in other industries could learn from them?

AD: While financial services is indeed a heavily regulated industry, it is rather niche in terms of the regulations firms need to abide by that aim directly at their heart (i.e., their balance sheets). Regulatory reporting needs to be churned out on a regular basis, and they must continuously assess risk while trying to drive growth. Smart risk approach strategies are one area to excel at and in a more structured way than most, which could lead to many insights for compliance teams.

AT: Your career has taken you across Europe, from Ireland, where you were raised, all the way to Slovakia. As I was thinking about that, it struck me that we in the US, when discussing compliance programs, often speak of the difference between the US and Europe, but Europe isn't just one culture or country. It's many. What are some of the differences within Europe that often get overlooked?

AD: With the global nature of my role, I see firsthand not just the differences in Europe but also globally. We could spend the whole interview talking about this topic! Communicating across cultures is often the difference between success and failure, but one caveat is that culture is just one intersectionality of the person you are working with.

From personal experience, the further east and south you go in Europe, the greater the differences from the US corporate culture. For instance, you may find egalitarianism is stronger in Germany and the Nordics—which is similar to the US—and team members are generally more focused on productivity and efficiency. Whereas



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France, Italy, and Slovakia team members are generally more focused on relationships. Ireland is somewhat in the middle, almost an outlier. This concept also applies globally such that China and India generally place more significance on status and are more relationship- than task-oriented.

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