

Compliance Today – April 2022 Meet Samantha Kelen: Perfect your people skills

Samantha Kelen is the chief compliance officer at Stellar Health, New York, New York.

This interview with **Samantha Kelen** (sam@samanthakelen.com) was conducted in January 2022 by **Adam Turteltaub** (adam.turteltaub@corporatecompliance.org), Chief Engagement & Strategy Officer, SCCE & HCCA.

AT: You've been working in compliance for 13 years now. What drew you to the field?

SK: I actually ended up in compliance totally by chance. I didn't even know the profession existed all through high school and college, and certainly didn't want to be a compliance officer when I grew up. I spent much of my youth horseback riding and competing and took some time off during college to pursue it more seriously. I quickly realized it was much more fun as a hobby than a profession, and I returned to school to finish my degree. But at that time in my life, I also needed to start earning an income. I started temping during the day and attending classes in the evenings. My second temp assignment was to support the general counsel and chief compliance officer for a local nonprofit. I was eventually hired by them full time, and the rest is history. Once I was exposed to compliance, I loved the variety of work, the commitment to integrity and ethical conduct, and the relationships built across the organization. I've been here ever since.

AT: Your career has been an interesting one in that you worked both in healthcare and outside of it in the energy and utilities industry. First, what drew you to healthcare?

SK: That first nonprofit was a healthcare organization that provided services to individuals with developmental disabilities. And while I didn't really choose healthcare, since the temp organization selected my assignments, it was definitely an intentional choice to stay for a few reasons. First, I believe in the general mission of healthcare to improve quality of life, and I believe in the inherent service to mankind as part of that work. Second, I come from a healthcare family. My father was a cardiologist, and my mother was a hemodialysis nurse by trade who has spent decades in the pharmaceutical and clinical research industries. I sort of understood and spoke the language of healthcare from an early age. And lastly, healthcare is one of those industries that seemed reliable and longstanding because individuals will always need those services. It seemed like a good industry to build a long-term career.



Samantha Kelen



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