

Compliance Today – August 2022 Building trust with compliance one bite at a time

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An important component of every compliance program is encouraging employees to ask questions or report noncompliant activities. With that purpose in mind, how do you build that trust so employees feel safe in reaching out for answers? I like to compare it to the old saying: “How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.”



The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services’ Office of Inspector General Supplemental Compliance Program Guidance for Hospitals states that a benefit of a compliance program is “encouraging employees to report potential problems to allow for appropriate internal inquiry and corrective action.”^[1] I am sure that most compliance departments advocate for employees to reach out to ask questions, but are you actually promoting that practice? Having an opportunity to address compliance issues before they hit the headlines of your local newspaper—or worse—is what we should all strive to achieve.

Our department has always recommended that employees contact us with questions, but several years ago, we proactively launched a campaign to increase awareness and purposefully promote the concept of staff making direct contact with the compliance department. To boost awareness, our new compliance officer made it a point to reach out with the “Better Call Compliance” catchphrase to help with awareness. This slogan is intended to relay the message that, *if you do not know*, then you should reach out to compliance for an answer. Wherever the “Better Call Compliance” catchphrase is displayed, a direct phone number to our office is provided along with compliance and privacy general email addresses. We advertise this catchphrase and the associated compliance department contact information in our monthly newsletter, on our company intranet, and in education presentations and materials.

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