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Code of Conduct Should Be Relatable, Memorable to Engage Employees

By Jane Anderson

Memorable sitcoms have relatable casts and engaging plots, and feel relevant to most people watching regardless of age or life experience. Forgettable sitcoms, meanwhile, fail to stand the test of time because they don't feel unique—instead, they feel generic and forced, and have little of substance to take away.

The same can be said of organizations' codes of conduct, said Asha Palmer, JD, senior vice president for compliance solutions at Skillsoft. The most effective codes of conduct are memorable and engage their intended audience, she said, while the least effective are static with generic content and little to take away.

"Is your code relatable? Is the content generic? Is your code unique? Or does it lack uniqueness? Does your code have takeaways?" Palmer asked at a January webinar sponsored by the Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics.[1] "When we think about how we can bring some of these subject matters and some of these risk areas to light with employees, we have to really think about the way in which we're bringing them."

It's important to start with the code of conduct when determining how to train employees, since "what we train on is largely based on what's in our code," Palmer said.

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