

CEP Magazine – October 2020 The everyday, sacred fight against global corruption

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“Law becomes an objective and sterile process that has very little connection to the person [...] Therefore it should not be surprising that lawyers experience this sense of separation from the practice of law, even though they are engaged in it on a daily basis.” – David Hall, Esq.^[1]

As anti-corruption and ethics and compliance professionals, we essentially work in accordance with legal or normative frameworks. We are a weird hybrid of forensic accountant and campaigning politician, sweating the details and using our people skills. We operate in a role that has tremendous value to and impact on those who may initially resist us. We work under pressure, face fatigue, and often work in isolation. Some tasks are repetitive, even mundane, and we may be engaged in a seemingly perpetual fight for resources. At times, we may find it challenging to renew our passion for the position.

We regularly disrupt the status quo and make demands on people to quickly unlearn, relearn, and juggle new rules and standards. But it is human nature to resist change, *especially* when it feels burdensome and arbitrary. Your due diligence program can be perceived as one more bureaucratic hurdle to clear or yet another administrative portion heaped onto an already full plate.

Therefore, to be most effective in fighting corruption, we need to be able to contextualize and articulate our work beyond a mere series of bureaucratic or administrative functions; that is, we need to be able to understand, remember, and communicate the “why” clearly. We do this for ourselves as well as for our stakeholders, as they deserve to know the backstory to our anti-corruption efforts and policy framework(s), and to understand the practical and ethical significance of their own contributions.

More importantly, we must remember that we are more than administrative officers and attorneys. We are in fact agents of organizational and social change; you could say our work is *sacred*. When we fully embrace this, we can, in turn, empower stakeholders to understand the importance of their roles in the greater picture.

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