

CEP Magazine – January 2018 A three-year mapping effort: Focus on compliance

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A “compliance program,” especially when combined with ethics, can be all-encompassing and can fall victim to mission creep. Most in our field—by their nature—are engaged, dedicated people of action who are willing to pitch in and help as needed. But that inclination can lead to a lack of focus. Similarly, a newly formed ethics and compliance program can suffer from lack of engagement and understanding: “What exactly do you do?” Finally, many of us are interested in expanding our skills and adding value, but when do we say yes, and when do we say no? Having a 3-year plan can set the guardrails for mission creep, provide a quick response to that question, and clarify where your “next value add” should fall. A plan can push you to stretch your objectives. A plan can help you take your program to higher levels of achievement and help ensure that you, as a compliance professional, remain engaged and learning. Finally, the execution of the plan leads to efficiency in measuring success and reporting.

This article provides a road map for this planning process, starting with the beginning brainstorming through to the planning, metric setting, and execution. It provides tips on how to maintain and manage to the plan, using simple table tools in Word, with examples for clarification. This basic planning process can be adapted (such as for a 5-year plan) as needed to meet programmatic needs.

Start with the big picture and brainstorm

The beginning point is to start with an open mind and the “big picture.” This really works best if you take a retreat with your team, or if you are an office of one, block out at least several hours to focus. This is your opportunity to think outside of the box. Ask open-ended questions. Where do we personally want to be in three years? Where do we want this program to be in three years? Where is our industry moving in terms of change? Where is this organization moving? What are we doing well? What are we not doing well? What are we having fun doing? Where can we make the most impact with the least amount of effort? What can we scale? As with any brainstorming session, keep the ideas flowing. This is perfect for whiteboarding (to coin a verb). Keep the results at hand as you move into the next phase of planning.

Clarify your mission

Put the brainstorming aside for a bit. Now is the time for laser focus: your mission. Your organization probably has a mission, but this is the mission for your Compliance Office. In 30 words or fewer, what are you trying to achieve? Here is an example:

Mission: To be(come) a known and trusted resource throughout the organization, with full awareness by all employees.

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