

CEP Magazine – December 2021

Meet Abdul Rahman Al Jaabari: The reality of compliance

Abdul Rahman is Head of Ethics & Compliance for TAQA, based in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Abdul Rahman (aal.jaabari@taqa.com) was interviewed by Adam Turteltaub (adam.turteltaub@corporatecompliance.org), Chief Engagement & Strategy Officer at SCCE & HCCA.

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AT: I'm really eager to talk to you about what you did with the code of conduct at TAQA, but first, I want to go back to the start of your career in compliance. Like most people, you came from elsewhere in the organization. And while there are a lot of people with a background in law, human resources, or general management, your background is in asset management. You served as part of a team developing financial models in the aerospace industry, working on restructuring initiatives and other similar work. What led you into compliance?

AR: At the time, there was an increasing need to set up a formalized export control program for the projects we were developing in the aerospace industry. As one of the few members of the Aerospace team who had a broad understanding of all the initiatives and projects we were working on, I was asked to support the newly formed Ethics & Compliance Office in exploring how best to roll out an export control program. While working with the Ethics & Compliance Office, I also supported them on a number of other initiatives, including some investigations where it was a natural fit for me, after which I made a full move into ethics and compliance.

AT: How has your background helped you be more effective as a compliance leader?

AR: My prior business and financial experience has given me an in-depth understanding of how businesses operate. This has given me an advantage in my current role as a compliance leader, as I am better able to understand the requirements from the business and work collaboratively on pragmatic solutions to ethics and compliance challenges.

AT: You came to the compliance and ethics team in 2013, which was right when we first met. You were at the very first SCCE Academy in Dubai. Back then, compliance was still relatively new to the region and very focused on anti-corruption issues, but you were part of an established ethics and compliance program. What led the company you worked for to invest so early in compliance?

AR: The organization was growing at a tremendous rate. Employees were joining from all over the world, each bringing with them the practices and organizational culture that they came from. This dramatic transformation called for the need to set a unified baseline organizational culture. With no regional precedent to follow on how to set up a compliance program, the leadership of the organization leveraged the relationships that it had with some of its key business partners to learn how an ethics and compliance program—if implemented properly—can be the most effective tool to transform an organization's culture.

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