

Ethikos Volume 38, Number 1. January 01, 2024 Going the distance: The four Cs of a career in compliance

by Melanie Sponholz

Melanie Sponholz (msponholz@waudcapital.com, [linkedin.com/in/melaniesponholz/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/melaniesponholz/)) is Chief Compliance Officer at Waud Capital Partners in Chicago, Illinois, USA.

A career in compliance is not for the faint of heart. Responsibility without authority? Check. Receiver of anxiety-filled concerns? Check. Frequent bearer of bad tidings? Check. Reputation as a cost center? Frequently excluded from the room where it happens? Guardian of brave reporters? Master of a constantly changing risk landscape? Check. Check. Check. Check.

So, what character traits allow us to persevere—or, dare I say, thrive—as compliance leaders? This is a question I spent some time pondering in preparation for an annual meeting of our portfolio company compliance leaders. It started with my eager anticipation of our gathering, which led to trying to understand just what it is about each member of the team that makes me so darn fond of them! Then it dawned on me that each quality that came to mind was also a contributor to success in our chosen field: Curiosity, Creativity, Compassion, Courage. The following are my thoughts on why these are the keys to sustained success in a compliance career. Maybe they can be useful, either as hiring criteria or as a pick-me-up on a down day. They are a love note to my team—all our teams.

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