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Compliance with a smile: Diversity encourages quality and consistent results

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Compliance is a rather harsh-sounding word...like spinach and grotesque and cactus. Its meaning is challenging to express and even more so to understand. Its application is both broad and specific, and it's a rather dry subject to most, unless you truly have an affinity for it. The designation—right there in the word—“to comply,” automatically rolls the eyes of most folks and paints a picture of a harsh rule set with bold, solid lines within which we need to stay. It draws the picture of an innocent child waiting in the principal's office to get his hand slapped for unintended rule breaking. There's probably a reason few children proclaim they'd like to be a compliance professional when they grow up. Truthfully, I doubt there are even many college students who aim to study compliance of any kind. And I'll ask you the question, “Did you set out to be a compliance professional yourself?”

Oftentimes, the profession chooses us in many ways and draws the attention of a certain type of professional who does the role justice—and those few people who, for some inexplicable reason, seem to enjoy it. Usually the “Type A” thinkers, who find comfort and logic in rules and boundaries, enjoy research, encourage change and growth, and lead others not only by example but with buy-in. Like any profession, it takes a certain kind of thinker to succeed in the compliance arena, but as we build our compliance teams, it's important to look not only to compliance professionals as a whole, but to the multifaceted tools and experiences they can bring to the table to enhance a compliance program and, ultimately, the company. In forming a compliance culture, it's imperative to have compliance leaders of different professional backgrounds and experiences and to utilize that variability to grow and bring together those differences in shared team goals.

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