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How to ensure your compliance training program stands the test of time

by Asha Palmer, JD, CCEP, LPEC

Have your favorite '90s sitcoms aged well? More likely than not, some of the shows you remember watching 30 years ago may make you cringe today. From now-irrelevant cultural references to insensitive jokes and outdated delivery techniques, what our society views as “appropriate” has certainly evolved with time.

The same is true at work, where compliance professionals have adapted and enhanced how we communicate the expected behaviors of employees, partners, vendors, and others via our global code of conduct. To put it frankly: when you know better, you do better. And the healthcare industry is starting to make strides in building—and sharing—more effective codes of conduct that reflect the values, behaviors, and expectations of today . . . not five or 30 years ago.

Why does this matter? Not only does outdated and unrelatable content cause problems for your organization by setting unclear expectations, but it also correlates with a drop-off in employee engagement. According to Gallup, a mere 34% of workers said they feel engaged at their jobs.^[1] When employees don't understand how to behave at work or what matters to their company or organization, they will not be engaged in the mission or vision, and this number may drop even lower.

So how do you build compelling, effective code? What topics should your code address? According to recent research, trending compliance topics in 2022 included information security and privacy, anti-corruption, professional conduct and anti-harassment, and cybersecurity.^[2] That is, learners wanted to learn more about these topics, so they looked to their employers to educate them. Does your code and compliance training program do that?

If not, it may be time to take another look. There are many ways to update and elevate your compliance training; however, you must start by updating your global code of conduct with what your organization believes in and what it expects from employees—today. And, quite frankly, leave the rest out.

Once your code reflects these ideals, your compliance training and environment, social, and governance (ESG) initiatives can also be up leveled to tie back to the guidelines and company values you've outlined in your code.

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