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Eric M. Baim (eric@dovetailcg.com) is Partner at Dovetail Consulting Group LLC based in Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

If you build it, they will come—unless it's a policy or procedure

By Eric M. Baim

We've all been there. Whether due to your organization's evolving needs, changes to the external regulatory environment, or just an opportunity to evolve and improve, you've proudly launched a new policy or procedure. You've previewed it with leadership and engaged business owners in drafting. It is aligned with business needs, and you're confident it will help everyone do their jobs with higher integrity.

Instead, the policy or procedure falls flat. Despite numerous touch points along the way, internal stakeholders are surprised to see it and say they did not know it was issued, revised, or even existed. Stakeholders raise after-the-fact objections you had long thought were resolved or identified issues you wish they had shared much earlier.

We like to think that if we put in the effort, believe in the objective, and keep everyone informed, new written standards will fall into place. Unfortunately, that isn't always the case. What are some common pitfalls when compliance professionals launch new written standards, whether a single policy, a stand-alone procedure, or an extensive code of conduct or policy manual?

1. **Transparency instead of engagement**. While the impending written standards are "socialized," stakeholders are not actively engaged, involved, or leveraged to drive the change.

2. **Going it alone**. The project does not include a diverse coalition of stakeholders from across the organization who could actively contribute and bring their own perspectives and organizational insights.

3. **Complacent end users**. The end users—those charged with adhering to the new written standards—don't understand the need or urgency for the new or updated written standards, so they are disengaged.

4. **Declaring victory too soon**. The project is communicated as "complete" once the written standards are signed off on and acknowledged as "read and understood" by the end users.

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