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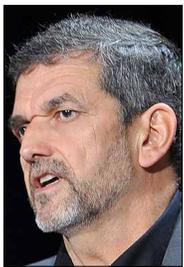
Business attorneys discover Dead Sea Scrolls of compliance in DC

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Snell

As a professional association, SCCE is asked by its constituents to go out and convince the C-Suite folks, general counsel, outside counsel, or board members to better understand or be more supportive of compliance. You could spend a million dollars doing that, and you would get thousands of dollars of results. It just doesn't work that way. They have to find out the value of compliance programs on their own. For example, if the press, public, and politicians drag a few more John Stumpfs into the street and beat them senseless with no due process, we just might hit a tipping point with CEO support of compliance programs. It's a shame people have to learn that way...but it's just how human beings are.

Progress is being made, however. For some reason the compliance profession could not convince all general counsel and outside counsel to understand or support compliance programs. Some are supportive, most aren't supportive enough. Then along comes the Department of Justice's "Evaluation of Corporate Compliance Programs" document, which says exactly what the Compliance

profession has been saying for 20 years. Everyone in the legal community's hair burst into flames and their arms started flailing uncontrollably. Law firms, pundits, commentators, news outlets, etc., can't write enough about it. In fact, as I write this post more than a week after the announcement, two more Google alerts just came in about new articles regarding the DOJ compliance document. It's like they discovered the Dead Sea Scrolls of compliance. They take the DOJ way more seriously than they do the compliance community. Frankly, I think they take the DOJ more seriously than their own professions. What they are doing is understandable; we all have a blind spot and theirs is compliance programs.

Everyone will eventually figure it out and come around. The press, public, prosecutors, and politicians will not go away until organizations get a handle on ethical and regulatory missteps. So in 50(?) years implementing an effective ethics and compliance program/department will be as natural as implementing HR, audit, and marketing departments are today. It is what it is. It's how people are. It's how things work. *