The internal investigator dilemma: investigating co-workers

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The great joys of being an in-house investigator

- Being a part of the organization means:
  - Being familiar with the business models
  - Being familiar with the sites
  - Knowing the people
  - Being able to design your own internal investigation process

- But it also means:
  - Sharing the same employer with those you are investigating
  - Interacting with employees on behalf of the organization
Always be prepared!

- Rely on a robust and legitimate investigation approach:
  - Robust: based on best practices
  - Legitimate: reviewed and validated by key stakeholders
- Limit improvisation by already having a detailed investigation procedure/manual in place:
  - Process integrated with the speak up policy / whistleblowing scheme
  - Predefined assessment process and principles to decide what to investigate / not to investigate
  - Agreed upon roles and responsibilities with other functions (Legal, Audit, HR, Security...)
  - Formalized rights and obligations of employees under investigation

The importance of relationships

- Remember that today’s investigation subjects can be tomorrow’s internal client
- Limit the disruption to the business as much as possible
- Be respectful, be professional, be fair
  - Ask questions candidly (even when you already know the answer)
  - Beware of second-guessing business decisions / judgment calls with the benefit of hindsight
- Know and understand the extent/limitations of your investigative “powers”
The importance of internal politics

- Be mindful of organizational charts
- Know who to involve / keep informed:
  - Before, during and after the investigation
- Report both formally and informally
- Beware from undue influence:
  - Investigate the facts
  - Don’t let anyone dictate your conclusion
  - Don’t accept confidentiality as an objection

Experience sharing

- Don’t be only an investigator:
  - Do risk assessments, anti-fraud training and awareness initiatives: meet the people and make sure they know you outside of the (stressful) context of an investigation
- Keep an open mind:
  - People can do wrong things for the right reason
  - Sometimes human error is the explanation
- Share information with internal partners
- Rely on external partners
- Conduct investigative procedures outside of the organization
- Sometimes the investigation is not the solution