

by Maggie Perritt

# Putting some fun into compliance fundamentals

- » Be thoughtful. With careful thought and planning it's possible to communicate the compliance message in a fun and engaging way.
- » Begin with the end in mind. Establish what the takeaway message to accomplish is, and let that drive the process.
- » Be practical, prudent and efficient. Have each component mean something and tie the overall concept together to make the most of the message.
- » Preparation is critical. Begin preparing early enough to account for all the components such as printing, delivery, etc.
- » Don't forget your audience. Account for the needs of the target population when considering the message and how it's being delivered.

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An effective compliance program is built on a foundation of solid compliance principles—you could call them “fundamentals.” Compliance professionals are challenged with increasing awareness of these fundamental compliance principles and getting people to learn these concepts across any organization, because the ability to gauge the effectiveness of compliance is often intangible. Organizations develop, implement, and re-engineer training programs designed to increase this awareness.



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Learning is aided by motivation. Remember the old adage, “You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink.” That saying is a perfect example of how motivation can drive a process. The horse is only going to do what it's motivated to do. The same applies when it comes to learning. Adult learners need motivation to learn. Motivation can be as simple as an incentive or more complicated, such as a promotion opportunity. Motivation to comply with policies and procedures is even more

complicated. Traditional compliance messages and information mention consequences, such as fines or penalties, which aren't considered motivational. A more positive approach for compliance messaging and training is to engage the associate and drive motivation that way, putting some *fun* into the fundamentals!

## Implementing Compliance Week

One opportunity is to participate in Corporate Compliance and Ethics Week. In 2011, I created the strategy for Compliance Week as an educational tool. I wanted to create an awareness about compliance in a fun and engaging way, so people would remember important concepts. In 2012, we hosted our first event. This was no simple task for an organization with multiple locations and facilities. To be truly effective, the activities had to apply to everyone and touch all areas. We created a slogan, “Key to Compliance” and sponsored several interactive events. We also gave away a custom keychain to remind associates they were the “key” to compliance. We also introduced a “Commitment to Compliance” banner that encouraged associates to demonstrate their commitment to compliance. The event was an overwhelming success, and now, more than a year later, associates everywhere still have those keychains.

Having laid the ground work for the first year, we were excited to plan the 2013 event to build upon that success. Similar to the first year, we wanted a learning opportunity that tied back to our compliance program. We decided on a baseball theme and introduced our new slogan, “Swing into Action.” As a follow-up to the previous year’s focus on compliance tools and associate responsibilities, this year’s concept challenged associates to take action when they needed to. Once we had the concept down, the execution needed to be mapped out.

We again planned an interactive event that allowed for fun and learning at the same time. We also had to determine how to move more than a thousand associates effectively, so they could participate in a series of games and the event in a limited time period. This was no easy task. The event and activities planned needed to meet certain criteria. They had to be:

- ▶ consistent with the theme,
- ▶ educational in nature,
- ▶ challenging enough to get associates thinking,
- ▶ engaging enough to have everyone want to participate,
- ▶ diverse enough to facilitate participation from those who might not normally participate or were short on time because they came from remote facilities,
- ▶ simple enough to keep participants moving, and
- ▶ organized to allow time for individual work schedules.

As a ramp-up to the event, the week before Compliance Week included communications and promotional materials driving the interest

in the event. Each person received an envelope containing a custom lanyard with a compliance message on it, a series of promotional materials, and a ticket to a baseball-themed compliance celebration.

The event itself included another “Commitment to Compliance” banner that all participants were again asked to sign and show their commitment to compliance.

### **Then there were the games!**

A team of 20 people worked for more than five months developing plans, discussing the functionality, and executing the final strategies. For the larger sites, there were three live interactive games. For the smaller sites, there was an

electronic, self-sufficient interactive game. Each game had simple concepts around compliance, and was educational and fun.

Here is an example of one of our games: The Compliance Choices ball drop game. A 2-foot wide by 5-foot long area was taped off with masking tape on the floor. At one end of the area was a bag with numerous balls

inside. Each ball had a statement written on it that is either part of the compliance program (such as our toll-free hotline number) or not part of the compliance program (such as the name of a well-known cosmetics company). At the other end of the area was a board with two holes, one marked “Compliance” and one marked “Not Compliance.”

A player had 30 seconds to select a ball from the bag, determine if the statement was part of the compliance program or not, walk up to the correct opening, and drop the ball in. At the end of the day, the person who got the most correct answers in 30 seconds was the winner.

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Planning this interactive game proved to be more challenging than its description may convey. In addition to creating the props, we had to set up the game with the appropriate amount of space, determine how to quickly set up the game for the next user, how to quickly calculate the scores and keep track of them, and how to control the flow of foot traffic. The detailed and thorough planning took time, but when associates played the game and were engaged, it was worth it. They had fun. They enjoyed themselves while learning more about compliance. They actually associated it with something positive.

We gave associates prizes for attending and participating, and the more the associates participated in events, the more they increased their chances to win prizes. Even months later, people still ask about and comment on the event.

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## Conclusion

Our goal was to put the fun back into the fundamentals of compliance and still make it an educational opportunity, and we succeeded. In keeping with our baseball theme, we hit it out of the park!

You can too. Just because compliance is a challenging concept and is usually associated with regulatory implications, that doesn't mean it can't be engaging and sometimes fun.

- ▶ Think about what your goals are and what you want to accomplish.
- ▶ Don't have activities just for the sake of having activities.
- ▶ Make it a learning opportunity and make it count!
- ▶ Take the time to plan, coordinate, and execute a thorough, educational activity.

As a compliance professional, you owe it to your associates, your organization, and your compliance program. With the right planning and strategy, your associates will benefit and so will your compliance program. ©

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