



# Compliance & Ethics

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Corporate  
Compliance  
and Ethics

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*Meet*  
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# Letter from the CEO

ROY SNELL

## Enabling

We are a society of enablers. We tell people who have bad habits that they have a disease. As parents, we say: "Boys will be boys" or "girls will be girls!" Sometimes we pay thousands of dollars to have outsiders come in and tell us what we want to hear. We hire people who tell us that the regulations are unfair, too complicated, and that the regulators don't know what they are doing. Pointing out the shortcomings of others gives us comfort. Enabling helps ensure that we don't change, which, of course, is OK in most cases, but potentially disastrous in others.

The problem is that enabling is not helpful. Enabling does not encourage action. Enabling does not encourage stepping up to painful and unpopular decisions. We should embrace our bad habits/problems and deal with them. We should not hire people to tell us we are OK when we are not. It's delaying the inevitable. Is it possible that the compliance/ethics profession would not be here today if it were not for enabling? If people would find and fix their problems, would we need a department that ensures that they do?

I struggle with this, like anyone else, but I am winning the battle slowly. After 50 years of criticizing critics, I am beginning to embrace some of it. When people point out mistakes or missed opportunity, I try to view it

differently. I look at it as an embarrassing and tough conversation that could result in ideas. I look at it as an opportunity to change and look good in front of all the people expecting me to perform. I look at it as an opportunity for improvement. When the improvement is implemented, I shamelessly take full credit for it. Despite the fact that it was not my idea, I take credit for it because I endured the criticism. I overcame the temptation to tell them, "I am in charge here. You are not. Get lost!" That is worthy of some credit.



Compliance doesn't tell people what they want to hear. We tell people what they need to hear. We opt for short term pain over long term pain. We step up. We make an effort to eliminate conflicts of interest. We hire people to tell us what we need to hear, not what we want to hear. This is a much tougher road.

Compliance and ethics programs are becoming commonplace in business because there was a feeling that something was missing. What was missing? What was missing was someone whose sole purpose was to stop the enabling and address the issues. Someone who would address the issues regardless of the potential negative impact on their career. What was missing was someone in the organization who was free of conflicts of interest; someone who had no responsibility other than to get it right; someone who would respond to a complaint without bias. That is the heart and soul of the compliance profession. ■

## SCCE'S MISSION

*SCCE exists to champion ethical practice and compliance standards in the corporate community and to provide the necessary resources for compliance professionals and others who share these principles.*

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