

# Compliance & Ethics *Professional*

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## Meet Casper Venbjerg Hansen

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See page 16

**27**

Ten tips to  
engage your  
Recall and  
Crisis teams

Melanie J. Scheaffer

**33**

Current trends in corporate internal  
investigations, Part 1: Maintaining  
privilege and confidentiality

Vince Farhat, Nicholas B. Melzer,  
and Juan M. Rodriguez

**41**

Export controls  
compliance: The  
often overlooked  
billion-dollar risk

Matthew A. Goldstein

**49**

Has corruption  
given all of  
us willful  
blindness?

Mónica Ramírez Chimal

by Roy Snell, CHC, CCEP-F

# What Jerry Seinfeld might say about celebrating compliance officers

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If Jerry Seinfeld did a skit on compliance officers, I think it might go something like this... *In a high pitched voice...*

"Compliance Officer...now there is a tough job. Their goal is to make sure nothing happens. They are supposed to prevent people from



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setting up 2,000,000 bank accounts against their customers' wishes, covering up data regarding faulty air bags, and writing software to cheat emission testing. They are supposed to catch problems early when they are small, so they can slap someone's wrist rather than have them end up being fired or going to jail. If they are successful, nothing ever happens. They are supposed to make sure nothing happens. That is an odd job that comes with some real problems."

"What does their job description say? Make sure nothing ever happens?"

"How do you know when nothing happened so you can celebrate?"

"How do you celebrate nothing?"

"Do they get a bonus if nothing happens?"

"Who do you credit for getting nothing accomplished?"

"What prize do you give to someone who makes sure nothing happens...nothing or something?"

*\*laughter...applause\** Thanks, Jerry

So there is the conundrum. There are thousands of compliance professionals out there who have prevented a major regulatory or ethical event from ever happening. If someone had prevented the fiasco at Penn State from ever happening, it would be like winning the Super Bowl. There would be a grand celebration. Unfortunately, all of the things that never happened, by definition, were never known by anyone, so were never celebrated. Great things are happening because many compliance officers are making sure nothing happens. It's a very unfortunate situation that something like this can never really be celebrated.

Just to be clear, Jerry never said any of this. But if he ever gets a chance to see this, I want him to know, he can use it to do his thing on compliance officers. There would be few things I would enjoy more than seeing Jerry doing a bit on compliance officers. We could celebrate it. \*