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Meet Michael Levin

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See page 16



27

The components of strong
cybersecurity plans, Part 2:
Security assessment

Mark Lanterman

33

Don't sing the misprision
blues: A little known
compliance risk

Daniel Coney

39

Get the most out of
your compliance
committee

Steve Shoop

43

Caught
doing the
right thing
Marjorie Maier

by Roy Snell, CHC, CCEP-F

Compliance apologists: Being liked vs. being respected

Please don't hesitate to call me about anything any time.

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I see a lot of compliance articles and presentations that are essentially, "How to get people to like compliance." Some compliance folks don't want to look like cops. They want people to like compliance training. Instead of



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telling people they should be grateful that we found a problem early and they won't need to be fired, pay a fine, or go to jail, some compliance folks apologize for auditing, investigating, and enforcing the rules. We don't make up the rules. Why are we apologizing for rules society insisted be put into place? The very people some of us are apologizing to are the ones who elected the people who created the rules. The very people some of us are apologizing to asked for regulations against bribery, setting up bogus bank accounts, and letting pedophiles run around for 10 years. I am sorry; I don't get it. Why are we apologizing?

You can't have it both ways. You can either stop the problem and not be liked, or you can back off, have big problems, and not be liked. When I was a compliance officer, I was not liked by everyone,

particularly the people whose integrity was a little suspect. But, I was respected by people with integrity. I am now a CEO. I am occasionally not liked because of decisions I make or policies I have. What I am shooting for is being respected in the long run. By the way, if you are respected, you will be, by definition, liked. I just don't think you can get there from here, with any job, if you are constantly apologizing for doing your job.

I am not suggesting being mean. I am suggesting that you do your job and don't succumb to the compliance apologists who are focused on being liked in the short run. Be mature. Be collaborative. Be a good motivator. Inspire people. "Stay calm and carry on" doesn't mean whip out a board game and buy doughnuts for everyone every time there is resistance. Look at the people who are good managers. Managers you respect occasionally do things people don't like. Look at parents who you think are doing a great job raising their children. They may irritate their children on occasion, but they will have their children's respect in the long run. Our jobs are very similar. Apologizing is not how it works. Apologizing is not how any of this works. *