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MORE ABOUT ME

If you could tell your past self one thing, what would it be?

Prioritize your family and yourself. Time spent with your loved ones is the only constant in your life.

The interview for your dream job ends with a solo karaoke performance – which song would you perform?

Dream on by Aerosmith.

What is the most beautiful place you've ever seen in person?

Switzerland for its natural beauty (my favorite vacation spot); St. Petersburg, Russia for its architecture (where I was born); New York for its energy (where I spent most of my career).

What is your biggest ever extravagance?

I will never regret spending money on travel. Given my international background and education, there is nothing more fulfilling and educational to me than meeting people from other countries and learning about their culture.



Asked & Answered

THE SECRET SAUCE OF COMPLIANCE

What is your secret sauce for compliance?

If you act with integrity, no matter how difficult the situation might be, you will be able to provide the best advice and protection for your client(s) and, as an attorney, remain true to your legal license and career. It is important to set up a solid foundation for your compliance program (comprised of policies, trainings, knowledge of the business, stakeholders and global regulatory environment, effective reporting system and response) that you can tweak along the way depending on the risks that the company is facing and changing laws and regulations.

However, even a state-of-the-art compliance program is going to be ineffective if you do not have a buy in from every level.

To what extent are you concerned about Compliance Officer liability?

I am not as concerned because I follow my "secret sauce" approach from the first question. At the same time, recent court decisions, including 2023 In re McDonald's Corporation decision from the Delaware Court of Chancery, continue to impose heightened duty standards on corporate officers, including CCOs.

As a result, it is imperative for someone in that position to build a robust compliance program, never ignore any "red flags" and make proper and timely reports to the Audit Committee or the Board of Directors.

What new subject matter expertise are you working on to stay at the cutting edge of your practice?

ESG compliance as there have been a number of laws and regulations passed by federal and state authorities recently. In Q4 of last year, California imposed a number of climate related disclosures. In addition, SEC has been imposing similar requirements on publicly traded companies. For a CCO of a publicly traded company, it is an important area to become an expert in.

In the ups and downs of the economy, compliance teams are often under the spotlight for cuts during the downs – why is that and what can be done to prevent it?

Unfortunately, importance of compliance is often overlooked until it is too late and the company is facing serious regulatory consequences. As a compliance professional, you are under pressure to constantly show your worth and value to the business, be resourceful with a very tight budget and vigilant about ever changing regulatory landscape.

What is the ideal relationship between Compliance and Legal teams?

In theory, they should complement each other but at the same time act independently and have clear understanding of their separate duties and responsibilities. Separate Compliance and Legal teams might be common for large corporations operating in highly regulated industries. In reality, most of us, including myself, are wearing many hats and covering compliance, litigation, employment, privacy and many other areas. It is often hard to separate your legal and compliance function but I generally view my role as someone who is charged with minimizing, if not eliminating, significant risks that the company may face. Sometimes it means providing legal advice and outlining the risks and sometimes it requires a more proactive role to eliminate certain unethical behavior or conduct.

To what extent should a compliance and ethics program have coverage of off-channel communications?

As a litigator, I can tell you that nothing good comes from off-channel communications. People tend to be more casual, not thoughtful, and careless in such communications. I do not think many realize that such communications are subject to discovery in a litigation dispute or regulatory action. As a result, discovery of such communications often leads to negative consequences for the company and employees.

From a compliance perspective, there should be clear guidance and training regarding the use of such platforms by the employees. It is also important to train employees regarding proper use of emails, document retention and attorney client privilege.

How can a compliance and ethics team work to prevent political polarization and conflict in the workplace?

By training employees, implementing a fair reporting system, promptly investigating and addressing such reports and taking appropriate actions. This is not just a recommendation but a requirement in some jurisdictions. For example, California recently implemented a number of requirements to prevent violence in the workplace and most employers must comply by July 1, 2024.

Is artificial intelligence a pro or a con to the compliance profession?

It could potentially be both. It could streamline certain compliance functions especially in compliance departments with very tight budgets. At the same time, disclosure of confidential information and trade secrets is a big risk and time will show how AI related disclosure will be treated in litigation for discovery purposes.

THE POLL RESULTS

We asked....

When your company is hiring, is a positive experience for applicants talked about and focused on?

Yes, absolutely	35%
To some degree	32%
Rarely	23%
Never	10%

LOOKING TO HIRE IN COMPLIANCE OR LOOKING FOR A JOB YOURSELF?

Please click on the links below:

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