

The ACR Brief

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The Softer Side of Compliance

During my time in private practice, I found helping company executives to think deeply about how to make their compliance programs resonate with employees to be one of the most rewarding parts of my job. So, when VMWare's senior director of ethics and compliance, Gwen Romack, approached me about collaborating on an article highlighting her efforts to re-brand compliance as a kinder, gentler shop, I was intrigued. Our conversation, which we published last week, was fascinating.

Gwen shared her strategies, giving our readers a clear window into her organization. My personal favorite was Gwen's "Get to Know Your Regional Compliance Officer" email. Believing that people are more willing to reach out to a compliance department they perceive as approachable, Gwen sent an email personally introducing herself to the more than 10,000 employees in her region. Rather than jump right into the substance of her job, Gwen opened the email by describing herself as a "level-10 animal nut" and even included a picture of herself holding a baby kangaroo (fortunately, she also agreed to include that amazing photo in this email). Gwen's strategy produced immediate, tangible results. After exchanging a few casual emails about their shared animal obsession, one of VMWare's employees reached out directly to Gwen to report a potential compliance issue.

VMWare is not the only company taking a fresh, human approach to compliance. Our archives are filled with content highlighting how companies approach the less black-and-white areas of anti-corruption compliance. The Further Reading section below contains links to some of our most popular articles. And, as always, we hope to hear from you. Is your company trying to find the softer side? How do you create an approachable compliance department? And, perhaps most importantly, is it helping?

Warmly,
Nicole Di Schino
Editor-in-Chief