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# Engagement and Compliance ... A Direct and Critical Correlation

## Perspectives From a Compliance Leader

By Andrew Baron

In a distracted, changing, and evolving world, maintaining the focus and engagement of a team can be a giant task. As a leader, it is critical to understand that people may have new priorities as time passes and an organization's goals are another priority competing for attention. One priority that should be non-negotiable in an organization is compliance with policies and procedures.

Well-written, properly implemented, and clearly communicated policies and procedures can set the foundation for an effective compliance program. These policies and procedures can delineate the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable activities.

The myriad of operational and regulatory requirements governing the insurance business makes the development of, and compliance with policies and procedures especially intricate. At the line of business level, the complexities associated with long-term care insurance, for example, can require compliance with life insurance and health insurance regulatory requirements and compliance with those requirements can permeate internal policies and procedures. I believe the best policies and procedures are only as good as the environment in which they are implemented and used. People in a distracted world may be confused and concerned, and consequently not fully engaged in day-to-day responsibilities and goals. This can complicate matters. I believe there is a direct relationship between high levels of engagement and a corresponding effort to comply with policies and procedures. If engagement diminishes, I believe the risk of non-compliance with policies and procedures can increase.



Leaders need to foster positive engagement in this environment, which becomes a delicate balance. Individuals and teams need time to process this new environment, and that requires the patience, support and trust of leaders.

In more than 28 years in the insurance industry, in a variety of management and leadership roles, the following are three keys I have found to be effective in engaging a team's support, commitment, and motivation.

### RECOGNIZE THE UNIQUENESS OF EACH PERSON

Each person is special. Try to ensure they feel that way. I try to understand each person's interests, concerns, and aspirations. What may seem as a trivial concern to some, may be more challenging for others. I try to empathize with each person and strive to create and foster an environment where people feel valued. This fosters a collaborative and respectful atmosphere where diversity of thoughts and ideas are welcomed, and creatively challenged, and positive results can be achieved.

### ENCOURAGE A BALANCE OF RISK

Individuals may be hesitant to innovate in this changing environment. Be there to challenge and support each person to drive ideas and positive results. Each person owns the work they do and how they do it. If mistakes happen, those are opportunities to learn from. I support well-intentioned risks.

### EMPOWERMENT BUILDS TRUST

I have found that empowerment builds trust between a manager and each individual and within the team. When empowered, people seem more confident to openly share knowledge to strengthen the team.

When each person is empowered, the environment can become collaborative, enthusiastic, and positively engaged, and support an effective compliance program. ■

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