



Compliance Training and Learning Styles

Companies often struggle with the hardship of ensuring all employees complete required training modules or attend seminars to be in alignment with regulations. But sometimes the one-size-fits-all approach for this overlooks personal learning styles and turns compliance training into a check-the-box activity. How can companies ensure that not only goals and requirements are met, but employees truly learn the material needed to manage and mitigate risk every day in their roles?

Compliance should be a company-wide state of mind for not just the good of the consumer and client, but because abiding by laws is the right thing to do. Finally, it just makes good business sense to avoid costly fines that can add up to the millions for not adhering to required training.

Not everyone learns in exactly the same way. While one person might understand a concept best by reading about it, another may need to break the information down into summaries or even try it for themselves. Some individuals are visual learners requiring graphs and diagrams, or auditory learners who do best in a lecture setting. Finally, if someone is training a cross-cultural team, there are other items to take into consideration to ensure that the material is understood and expectations are aligned. These differences in learning styles aren't about intelligence or capability—they reflect the unique ways our brains process and retain information.

Most large financial companies have outsourced their compliance training to web-based modules about the relevant regulations for the industry and some specific position. These are often a cost-effective choice but the level of retention tends to fade dramatically after the lesson is completed, and many employees confess to not actively participating or completing them while performing another task due to the large workload already under their responsibility.

Based on these constraints, what must a company do to ensure that not only the required courses are completed in a timely manner, but that the message of the training remains

relevant and risk is truly mitigated at all times? This paper will work to address this question.

- **Learning Style** – offer the training in a variety of ways and in an appropriately repetitive manner to truly drive the message home. Aside from traditional webinars for auditory and visual learners, also integrate a quiz component throughout each section to allow the employees to work through each section and rework their answer until the lesson is learned. For those regulations or areas of heightened risk, add communications via emailed newsletters or weekly meetings to quickly discuss and remind employees to remain vigilant. Some firms have internal IT associates design fake phishing emails to mimic what a scammer or social engineering attempt in the workplace would look like, with rewards or punishments based on how the attempt was handled by an individual employee.
- **Repetition Cements Learning** – Anyone studying a foreign language or for any major academic subject knows the value of flashcards. This is because the repetition and heightened focus on those answered incorrectly will yield a high level of success in adding subjects to many individuals' long-term memory.
- **Tone from the Top** – It is important the leadership underscore the importance of how following company best practices, policies and external regulations are the main expectations. Leaders must remain aware that someone is always watching all interactions and this can be the topic of much discussion. Seemingly small indiscretions can be spread throughout the company's informal communication system and cause the team to lose trust and motivation in leadership and greatly reduce morale – which can have a measurable impact on productivity and the bottom line. Consequently, aside from not using the company credit card for purchases a lower-level employee would be fired for, leadership also needs to continuously highlight their support for the compliance training program and highlight behavior in line with the company's ethics statement and mission. For executives, this means allowing the employees enough time to complete the training without distraction. This also means fixing an audit issue about a lapse in compliance swiftly, rather than spending weeks fighting it solely for selfish and egoistic purposes.
- **Highlight Actionable Daily Functions**- Managers should be aware of the regulations affecting their scope of control, and be continuously monitoring their processes for any lapse in compliance with internal policies and regulations. Managers should be constantly coaching and educating their staff around the importance of compliance and managing risk and encourage a meritocracy where all levels of staff feel able to speak up and share observations and concerns. This focus, repetition and inclusion

will create a culture in which the team is rewarded for managing risk and remaining engaged.

- **Employee Feedback** - Regular feedback allows employees to express their thoughts and concerns about business effectiveness, fostering a sense of involvement and ownership in their learning journey.: When employees feel heard, they are more likely to engage with business objectives and apply it to their daily functions, reinforcing the lessons learned through compliance training. These open channels for feedback build trust between employees and management, creating a collaborative environment that values continuous improvement and shared success.

While learning styles are deeply personal, employing multiple methods for required compliance training modules creates not only a more inclusive learning environment, but results in higher rates of success in actually utilizing the material learned. This gives everyone the opportunity to grow, understand and succeed while also protecting the company and enforcing a culture of compliance.

This article is part of a Veritas monthly series focused on compliance best practices. Stay tuned for future installments that will explore various aspects of learning styles, best practices, and innovative strategies to enhance workplace compliance.