

Creating a Compliance Culture

Career college professionals are eager to learn and want to be compliant with regulations

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As institutions look at different ways to ensure compliance at every level of their organizations it has become clear that sharing regulations with employees and asking them to comply is simply not enough. Employees need to learn and understand the regulations with the goal of providing the best possible service to students. This requires institutions to provide effective compliance training for their employees in a positive and enjoyable environment. Compliance training should be provided in the context of improving quality and service with “prohibited acts” being a natural result of ethical behavior and processes.

Employees want to be compliant. A perfect example is the new admissions staff training requirement by the Ohio State Board of Career Colleges and Schools. Participants have posted hundreds of blogs in The Lounge (a learning community of career college professionals powered by MaxKnowledge) as to how the training has helped them in their jobs. Another example is the recent admissions compliance training required by the Florida Commission for Independent Education. Similarly, hundreds of participants have posted positive comments expressing their satisfaction with the training. In fact, the only complaint from both Ohio and Florida participants is that they wish their states had established the training requirements sooner!

Leadership focus on ethics and integrity, combined with effective employee training, helps to create a compliant organization. In fact, all employees of an organization need to receive compliance training, especially regarding communications with students. All school personnel, including administrators, staff and faculty, are in contact with students and must be aware of the relevant rules and regulations to avoid possible misrepresentation. Indeed, I am pleased to see that several leading career college systems have implemented compliance training for all their employees.

Additionally, internal audits and mystery shopping help to identify areas of non-compliance and provide the opportunity to create more effective employee training. Plus, sector-wide areas of non-compliance reported by regulatory bodies and accrediting agencies continue to provide valuable information for establishing training objectives. At MaxKnowledge, in addition to our ongoing partnerships with career colleges and educational associations, we have partnered with the National Association of State Administrators and Supervisors of Private Schools (NASASPS) to better understand the issues related to regulatory compliance and to help develop effective training programs to address typical areas of non-compliance.

NASASPS is non-profit organization whose mission is to improve and promote effective state regulation of private postsecondary education. NASASPS membership includes state boards, commissions, agencies or departments that are engaged in the administration, regulation, or supervision of private schools, colleges and universities.

In partnership with NASASPS, we recently launched an online training course to help career education institutions comply with the Department of Education's Program Integrity Rules. *Raising the Bar - Compliant Communications with Students* is designed for employees of all roles and levels at private sector institutions. The online course focuses on aspects of the Program Integrity Rules that address compliant communications with students. Emphasis is placed on areas of misrepresentation related to advertising and recruitment activities, interactions with prospective students and appropriate communication of disclosures and other publications. The course covers the requirements which must be adhered to in order to maintain good standing with both state and federal regulations, and provides an awareness of prohibited acts which could adversely impact operations. Course participants can select specific state(s) to customize the training content to their needs.

I believe this is an exciting time for our sector. We will thrive and become even stronger as our institutions embrace a culture of compliance at all levels of their organizations. Career college professionals have been, and continue to be, dedicated to student success and welcome the opportunity to learn and comply with the rules and regulations that ensure the best possible service to our students.

Dr. Moghadam is the founder and CEO of MaxKnowledge, the leading employee training company for the career college sector of higher education. He has over 20 years of experience in career education, serving in many capacities including professor, director of education, academic dean, director of student affairs, campus director, college president and owner. Moghadam earned his PhD in Engineering from the University of Cambridge at the age of 22. He is a recognized leader in career education and has been selected as a Top Innovator by the Career College Central magazine. Moghadam can be reached at amirm@maxknowledge.com.