

The “C” Word

Reframing Compliance

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Language shapes the way people think. What thoughts come to mind when you hear the word, “compliance?” More importantly, what attitudes, behaviors, and institutional cultures take shape when compliance is the word used to frame behavioral expectations? The “C” word, compliance, tends to have a negative undertone meaning to obey, typically in a subservient manner. When compliance is raised as a training topic, it is typically framed as a matter of understanding rules and the consequences of violation.

This poses a challenge for our leaders who need all employees to understand the regulations that govern our sector of higher education, but who also want to transcend the meaning of the “C” word beyond simply the adherence to those rules and regulations. How does one move beyond the mindset of being compliant to avoid penalty toward doing the right things for the right reasons with compliance being the byproduct or result?

This is a paradigm shift, but how is it achieved? Robert Starks Jr., Vice President of Learning Initiatives at MaxKnowledge, has initiated a discussion on this topic in the Compliance Journey group in the Career College Lounge – a place to share your thoughts with your peers. Here is the group’s direct URL: www.ComplianceJourney.com. Since we often hear bad news about compliance violations, the Compliance Journey group is a medium to share the good news - our compliance success stories.

In fact, the Compliance Journey group was formed to provide a platform for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and discussion regarding best practices, great ideas and success stories in regulatory compliance. For example, a PowerPoint presentation from Dr. Michale McComis, the Executive Director of the Accrediting Council of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC), shares thoughts on enhanced partnerships between state regulatory agencies and accrediting bodies. Elise Scanlon, renowned higher education advisor, and her colleagues at Radio Higher Ed, provide highly informative podcasts covering a variety of topics on postsecondary education policies and their implications. Sherry Bomberger, Senior Vice President of Education & Regulatory Affairs at YTI Career Institute, outlines the critical elements of a strong compliance plan. And, Linda Walinsky, Senior Vice President of Operations at Delta Career Education Corporation, shares insights on the impact of an effective compliance plan. These are just a few of the posts on the group site.

In addition to the blogs and discussions, the Compliance Journey group hosts an impactful video that reframes what compliance is truly about and thanks career college professionals for their continued commitment to doing the right thing. This video is freely available to career colleges and universities to help institutional leaders promote a compliant culture in their organizations.

Given negative press from the media, I encourage our leaders to focus on the positives to energize the dedicated professionals working in our sector. “C” denotes Compliance, but it also represents

Commitment – the commitment we share to do the right thing, in the best interest of our students, as we continue to honor our mission of educating and training adult learners in employable skills so that they may accomplish their career goals!

Dr. Amir 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 school 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.