



Measuring the impact of **CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING**

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COMPLIANCE WEEK

Compliance Week, published by Wilmington plc, is a business intelligence and information service on corporate governance, risk, and compliance that features a daily e-mail newsletter, a quarterly print magazine, industry-leading events, and a variety of interactive features and forums.

Founded in 2002, Compliance Week has become the go-to resource for chief compliance officers and audit executives; Compliance Week now reaches more than 60,000 financial, legal, audit, risk, and compliance practitioners. www.complianceweek.com



Traliant, a leader in compliance training, is on a mission to help make workplaces better, for everyone. Committed to a customer promise of “compliance you can trust, training you will love,” Traliant delivers continuously compliant online courses, backed by an unparalleled in-house legal team, with engaging, story-based training designed to create truly enjoyable learning experiences.

Traliant supports over 14,000 organizations worldwide with a library of curated essential courses to broaden employee perspectives, achieve compliance and elevate workplace culture, including preventing sexual harassment, DEI, code of conduct, and many more.

Backed by PSG, a leading growth equity firm, Traliant holds a coveted position on Inc.’s 5000 fastest-growing private companies in America for four consecutive years, along with numerous awards for its products and workplace culture. For more information, visit www.traliant.com and follow us on LinkedIn.

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Survey: Measuring the impact of code of conduct training

Respondents to a survey from Compliance Week and online compliance training provider Traliant largely described their organization's code of conduct training as effective, but the opportunity for customized, dynamic courses can take learning to the next level. Story by **Adrianne Appel**.

In the past, compliance training was regarded by companies as optional. Organizations can no longer afford to take that view.

Recent guidance from the Department of Justice (DOJ) puts pressure on businesses to ensure compliance reinforces the values, policies, and procedures of the organization. Yet, "Compliance teams are still typically understaffed and overworked," said Maria D'Avanzo, chief evangelist officer at Traliant. The department must take advantage of opportunities to craft its message to employees in an effective manner.

Enter code of conduct training.

More than 70 percent of respondents to a survey from Compliance Week and Traliant, an online compliance training provider, believe their organization's code of conduct (CoC) training to be effective. The survey, conducted in September and October, received responses from 209 compliance and risk professionals representing both private and public organizations.

Of the respondents, 12 percent described their CoC training as "highly effective." Another 23 percent were neutral on the subject, while only 6 percent described their training as ineffective.

For organizations looking to elevate their CoC training to highly effective levels, online courses are "a great tool that lets compliance, administration, and human resources teams get a head start," said D'Avanzo, a former chief ethics and compliance officer herself. A plus of offering online training is that the door is wide open for customization, allowing compliance departments to exert their influence on ensuring the learning meets its mark.

About 76 percent of survey respondents said their training includes online content, either exclusively or in combination with a live component. Just 10 percent said their training was strictly live.

CoC training is most impactful for employees when it includes real-life, "ripped-from-the-headlines" examples of the conduct or ethical challenges the company is wrestling with, said D'Avanzo. How much their training is linked to the experiences and needs of their organization might account for respondents' differing views on effectiveness.

"A tailored approach to training conveys knowledge in a relevant context so employees can better identify and escalate issues and avoid misconduct," she said.

If your employees have been struggling to understand

What do you consider most important in Code of Conduct training? (Choose one)



why accepting gift cards from clients might pose potential conflicts of interest, pull those examples into your training and use tools like FAQs to explain the situation in a simple way, D'Avanzo said.

It's crucial to customize training to bring it home to employees by including content that reflects their organization's ethical challenges, D'Avanzo said.

Typically, an organization will assess what is important to and specific about it from a risk perspective. Those details will inform its discussion with its training vendor regarding which CoC training topics to focus on, D'Avanzo added.

"You have this code that says be a good corporate citizen, and you have to make sure your employees understand what that means in terms of their day-to-day work and the decisions they make," said Scott Schneider, head of content development at Traliant.

Regarding customization, D'Avanzo recommended looking at the organization's recent investigation track and picking three areas to highlight, such as conflicts of interest, sanctions, and fraud. The company could also include a 3-minute video featuring the chief executive officer to introduce the training and highlight its importance. Its culture and community could be incorporated, along with its branding, logo, and colors.

Another way to go is to include questions from the "run-

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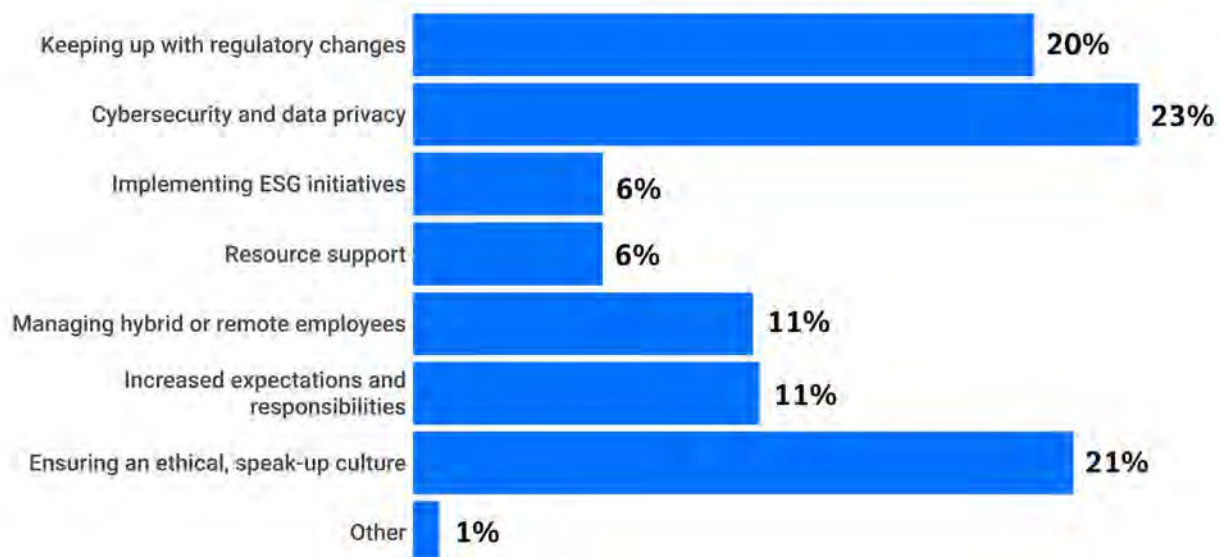
Maria D'Avanzo, Chief Evangelist Officer, Traliant

ning list" compliance teams regularly field from employees, D'Avanzo said.

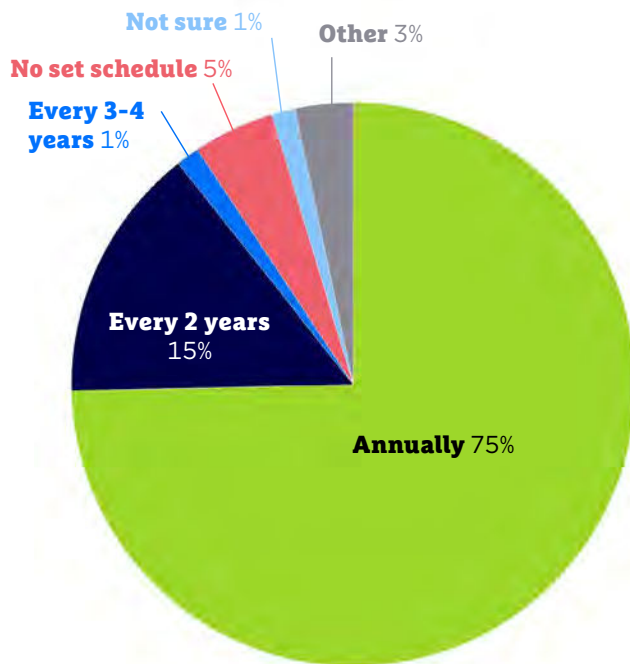
Nearly 14 percent of survey respondents reported offering no formal training at all. These firms are likely smaller and don't train in the traditional sense, D'Avanzo observed.

"They are likely providing CoC training in a format other than traditional online training, such as targeted 'hot topic'

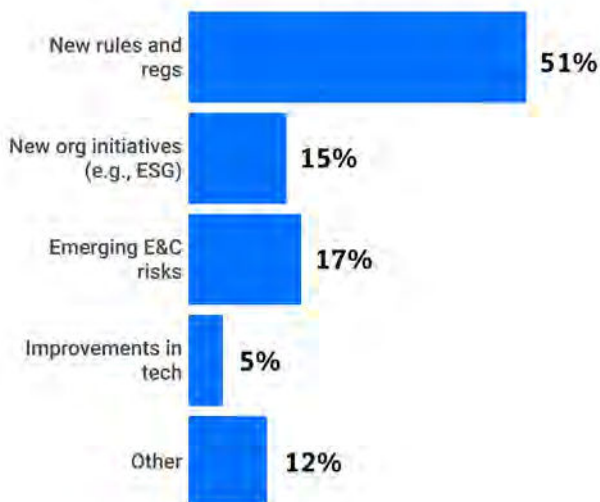
In 2023, what are your biggest concerns or priorities? (Choose no more than three)



How often do most of your employees receive Code of Conduct training?



What factors may motivate your organization to update your Code of Conduct training?



emails, a compliance newsletter, or incorporating CoC messages in business line meetings," she said.

Added Schneider, "Online training can be a great option for smaller companies that may not have the in-house expertise to tackle nuanced topics like privacy, bribery, or harassment."

Meeting government expectations

"The DOJ expects organizations to measure the effectiveness of their CoC training," said D'Avanzo. "One way is to use data from question level reporting to identify knowledge gaps and then send out microlearnings—short videos that are quick and easy to consume—or emails to reinforce that information and change behavior."

"There's an expectation by the DOJ that if you get into trouble, this aspect of your training program is going to be looked at very closely. There's no way around that."

Having an updated training course was not a priority for more than half of the survey respondents. About 54 percent said they are comfortable offering the same annual training course two or three times, while 32 percent said they prefer to offer the same training once only.

Among organizations using a training vendor, 38 percent didn't know when the course was last updated. Organizations should make it a point to know when their CoC training was last updated and how, said D'Avanzo.

Compliance teams at those organizations would benefit from building a strong partnership with their vendors, she said, especially as the DOJ increases its scrutiny on training.

Keeping up with change

It's often difficult to get employees to take CoC training. If an organization isn't updating it and making it fresh every year, employees will notice and might be even more resistant to participating, D'Avanzo said.

About 51 percent of survey respondents said new rules and regulations would be the No. 1 reason to motivate their organization to update CoC training. Emerging ethics and compliance risks were identified as the top factor by 17 percent of respondents, while 15 percent said new organizational initiatives, such as implementing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) changes.

Most organizations are aware of new rules that are implemented, D'Avanzo said, and a good way to keep up is by signing up for free newsletters from law firms that track regulations. Another good source is the compliance community.

"Compliance officers are notorious for sharing freely," and it really pays off for local officers to set aside time to talk once a month, D'Avanzo said. ■

The evolution of the Code of Conduct

Strengthening the connection between the Code, the company and the Employees

Corporate codes of conduct have evolved with compliance program best practices. Early codes tended to be written by lawyers, for lawyers, in a formal and legalistic language. This created a clear disconnect that didn't help employees a lot. However, codes have evolved, and companies are doing a better job of communicating codes of conduct in terms of values and what a company stands for.

Today's codes often include language, realistic scenarios, FAQs and other content geared to helping employees make good choices in a given situation. When employees understand a company's values in a code, they can look at a situation and say, at the very least, I need some help with this. It's at this point a code becomes an infinitely more valuable resource in guiding employees how to make the right decisions – even when a particular situation is not covered in the code. Code of conduct training too frequently puts employees in a position where they must sign something that says, "I read it and understand it, even when I did not." Too often


employees take code of conduct training because they must, and then say, "that's done!" It fails to make the connection between the code, the company and the employees and their work.

While details are often important when providing context and guidance, you don't need to cover every legal detail in code of conduct training. The key to more effective training is understanding what's important, the core messages you want learners to take away and then fill in the things that bring that to life.

We are not training lawyers, we are not training judges, we are training employees. You want to help them understand the context of the issue, with a focus on what they can do.

Takeaways

- Codes of conduct have evolved to become infinitely more valuable in guiding employees how to make the right decisions at work.
- A code is most effective when it clearly connects an organization's values, ethics and culture to the day-to-day business activities and behaviors of employees.
- Modern code of conduct training leverages an engaging, modular design to focus on important topics within the code.
- Code of conduct training that is interactive effectively brings a code to life for learners and helps them understand core messages.



Compliance you can **trust**. Training you will **love**.

The biggest challenge in online compliance training is designing courses that are more engaging and can really change behavior. The secret sauce in terms of engagement is making courses applicable to the environment in which one takes it.

One barrier to engagement is the frequency with which training content is refreshed. Providing static training material year after year impedes employee learning. Regularly refreshing training courses is essential to engagement, learning and knowledge retention. Traliant's training is regularly updated with new scenarios and other content taken straight from the news.

A behavior-based approach to instruction is also important to learning and retention. Traliant's Code of Conduct training and the need to provide real-life scenarios help people clearly understand what is expected of them and allows them to practice how to respond to situations they may encounter at work. To effectively change behavior, training needs to be an experience that employees participate in, not something they read or click through.

To address increasing regulatory expectations, penalties and concerns of reputational damage, organizations are increasingly going beyond traditional course training approaches to embrace online education that is customized to reflect their company, culture, mission and work environment.

Traliant is helping organizations achieve this cultural shift in instruction by making fast and cost-effective course customization available to address their specific business needs.



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Takeaways

- Training has evolved to become more engaging to increase learning and retention.
- Regularly refreshing course content boosts learning.
- A behavior-based approach to training is most effective by enabling employees to practice how to respond to situations they may encounter at work.

Create a meaningful impact

Traliant has compliance you can trust, training you will love and a partnership that makes your job easier.

Traliant keeps your courses continuously compliant with engaging training your employees will truly enjoy. A partnership ensures seamless deployment, unmatched responsiveness and true collaboration — with training that helps you to cultivate a more positive and thriving work culture.



Legal expertise

Our in-house legal team monitors the latest laws, rules and regulations, so you don't have to. You can rest assured that our courses are continuously compliant.



Brilliant training

Take your training from boring to brilliant. With cinematic-quality videos produced by our Hollywood-based team, your employees will love our customizable, interactive, story-based training.



Valued partnership

Our main focus? It's all about making your job easier. We do that with unmatched responsiveness and seamless deployment, dedicated to driving your success.



Meaningful impact

We don't just deliver brilliant training, we help you create meaningful impact by broadening your employees' perspectives, achieving compliance and elevating culture.

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