

Leading and Managing an Effective Team

This article is the first in a series of four that will discuss leading and managing an effective team.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

- Margaret Meade

We may not be trying to change the world, but sometimes our task can seem as formidable. At its core, the challenge of our roles as compliance and ethics leaders is to inform and inspire each individual in the organization to take responsibility for minimizing potential noncompliance and unethical behavior. Whether it is a “carrot” or a “stick,” a detective, corrective or preventive measure, each element of our compliance and ethics program is, ultimately, focused on addressing that challenge in an atmosphere of competing distractions.

We must capture their attention and influence their decisions and behaviors in the context of ever-changing business and regulatory environments. There will be shifting financial motivators, expanding global footprints, more sophisticated technologies and endless new ways for individuals and organizations to stumble into trouble. We try to find innovative ways to get out ahead of these issues. Doing our job requires a broad palette of expertise, insight and ingenuity, though most of us are equipped with limited resources and small (but committed) teams.

As we discussed in [“Encouraging Candor—A Critical Element of ‘Effectiveness’ \(Part 2\).”](#) a recent global study of CEOs and senior executives noted that they highlighted **creativity** as the most important leadership quality for operating in a world that is substantially more volatile, uncertain and complex. We can learn from their leadership.

Those who are already fostering creativity to drive change:

- Practice and encourage experimentation and innovation in how they lead and communicate.
- Benefit from the diversity of ideas each employee can contribute by encouraging a new mindset of questioning; and invite employees at all levels to challenge assumptions based on past experiences and scrutinize “the way we’ve always done things.”
- Avoid the old command-and-control style of leadership, instead exercising collaborative influence and demonstrating strong team leadership.

Are we following their lead with our own teams to facilitate the creative and innovative approaches we need for the challenges we face in the compliance and ethics arena?

For the purposes of this series, let’s assume we have staffed our teams with a diverse mix of expertise, talent, skills and perspectives, so we have the basic building blocks in place. Strong team leadership requires more than just getting the “right” people in the room and saying, “Here’s your mission, go collaborate!”

Much has been written, researched, taught, tried and proven to provide guidance in leading and managing effective teams. We will discuss some of these considerations as they can be applied to the work of the compliance and ethics function during the next two weeks. For a sneak peak at the coming content, check out the key highlights below. Thursday we will discuss the case for focusing on team dynamics.

Key Highlights of the Series

1. Investing in building healthy team dynamics can pay off exponentially in productivity and creativity.
2. Overcoming the “Five Dysfunctions of a Team” requires developing and reinforcing certain

behaviors.

3. Two practical considerations for laying the groundwork:

1. Setting up the team with clarity—avoiding the confusion that comes from ambiguity.
2. Nurturing healthy team dynamics—avoiding erosion by political undercurrents.

About the Author

Debra Sabatini Hennelly, president of [Compliance & Ethics Solutions](#), is an experienced lawyer and compliance & ethics practitioner with more than 20 years of experience (including 10 years in-house) building and improving compliance & ethics programs with Fortune 500 companies. She counsels businesses on driving program effectiveness and advises general counsel and compliance & ethics officers on leading high-performing teams.



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