

## How early childhood experiences shaped a career in Compliance

an interview with **Janie McKinney**  
Compliance Coordinator & IRB Coordinator  
Washington Regional Medical Center

See page 18



**28**

**Current trends in FCPA enforcement in the healthcare industry**

Vince Farhat and David Kirman

**36**

**Ethics, compliance, and retaliation in healthcare organizations**

Joette Derricks

**42**

**Vicarious liability: Frustrating the major policy goals of the Affordable Care Act**

Laura E. Hutchinson, Richard E. Moses, and D. Scott Jones

**47**

**Cracking the ICD-10 code to stay compliant: Meeting the challenge**

D. Wayne Little

by Maggie Perritt, BS, RPh, MBA, CHC

# “Who am I?”—Branding your compliance program

- » A compliance program provides critical support to a company’s reputation.
- » Having a strong compliance program shows that you take “doing the right thing” seriously.
- » Developing a strong positive brand reinforces a strong culture of compliance.
- » Developing a brand doesn’t happen overnight. It takes time and thought.
- » Once established, your brand is your reputation. Take care of it.

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**W**hat do you think of when you hear the word “brand”? For most people, they think of an image similar to the golden arches of McDonalds or the Nike swoosh. Branding is the use of a logo, an image, or a feeling that is conveyed when the image is seen or the name is heard. Branding and maintaining a positive image are associated with that.



Perritt

Although most people don’t automatically associate compliance with a positive image, they should. Most people may associate compliance with something bad, because it could involve a negative situation.

At WellCare Health Plans, we have discovered that the right branding can change the image of a Compliance department.

A compliance program is actually something good, because it provides critical support to a company’s reputation. Instead of looking at a Compliance department as a type of police effort, it’s better for organizations to focus on the value it provides to ensure compliance with requirements. Developing a strong positive brand for your Compliance department reinforces a strong culture of compliance and

facilitates a strong collaborative relationship between your Compliance department and other departments within your organization.

## Where do you start?

Developing a brand isn’t easy. It takes time and thought. Some key questions to ask as you develop the components of your own compliance brand include:

- ▶ Who is your customer?
- ▶ What are your department’s competencies?
- ▶ What value do you bring to your organization?
- ▶ What characteristics distinguish your department, and how does it do business?
- ▶ What message do you want to convey?

You can begin to build your brand concept once you’ve answered those questions. This too is not an easy task and takes time. Ultimately, you want your brand to convey some or all of the answers to those questions in just a few words.

HCCA’s Corporate Compliance & Ethics (CC&E) Week is another great place to start. During CC&E Week, you have an opportunity to educate and celebrate compliance in your organization. HCCA has a number of marketing tools available to assist Compliance departments of any size. And if you have already established your brand, you can capitalize on CC&E Week to promote and reinforce it.

## Our path to branding

Four years ago, we set out to establish our Compliance department brand at WellCare Health Plans. We started by positioning the department as a resource whose function was to help associates and encourage them to take an active role in the compliance of our company. It became clear that our associates were the key, so we developed the tagline “Key to Compliance,” and our brand was born.

Initially, we hosted an event and encouraged associates to socialize with the compliance team. As part of our celebration, we developed a keychain with a plastic key to promote our compliance hotline phone number. We distributed keychains among associates to remind them that they are the “key to compliance.” Also, our internal creative team created a cartoon character incorporating a key. We call the character KC (as in the Key to Compliance). We used KC on collateral and posters promoting the event.

Over the years, we’ve continued to build our brand. Each year as we launch CC&E Week activities, we create events using our brand and the compliance message we want to convey. We tie every event component, statement, piece of literature, or activity to our concept and brand.

In the program’s second year, we introduced a baseball-themed event that featured KC as a baseball player. In our marketing materials, we focused on the compliance team and what we do for the organization. At the same time, we encouraged associates to step up to the plate. We introduced additional signage around HIPAA, compliance and ethics topics, as well as other tools that continued to reinforce our branding.

During the third year, we introduced a superhero-themed celebration and encouraged each associate to be a superhero and identify potential fraud, waste, or abuse. Our very own

KC morphed into Kaptain Compliance as part of the branding effort.

In 2015, our fourth year, we took a different approach and developed the MOCHA—The Museum of Compliance, HIPAA, and Audit. We developed our own art gallery using our beloved KC and showed how compliance has evolved through the ages. In an effort to reinforce the message that associates need to be engaged in compliance, we encouraged associates to show us what compliance means to them. The collateral we developed was tremendous, but nothing is more powerful than having an associate demonstrate what compliance means to them through art.

In addition to CC&E Week activities, we have distributed quarterly compliance newsletters, computer messages, telephone enhancements, and training activities to continue to build on our brand and reinforce our message.

## Parting thoughts

Having a strong compliance program shows others that you take “doing the right thing” seriously. Branding your compliance program clearly indicates the impact your compliance team has on an organization. The branding process is best when it is controlled and deliberate. Think of the brand examples mentioned at the start of this article. They didn’t happen overnight. It has taken most companies years, sometimes decades, to fully develop their brand.

Lastly, it’s important to remember that once you establish your brand, it is associated with your reputation. Be as cautious with your brand as you are with your reputation. As hard as you worked to build it, it only takes one bad interaction to destroy it. Maintain your brand image and what you stand for. Be cautious in how you use your brand. Consider what might occur if it’s misused. And carefully plan and weigh the best time and place to use your brand. ☺