

Stephen Sugrue

CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER

DocGo



MORE ABOUT ME

What is the most interesting thing about you?

I have a clinical background as an EMT, Paramedic and RN in addition to being a Compliance Attorney. I am also a volunteer Firefighter and Paramedic on the weekends with my youngest son.

What is one thing you could not go a day without? (Not including necessities)

Could not go a day without talking to my parents and sons.

What would you love to learn to do?

Golf (when I retire).

Q&A

THE SECRET SAUCE OF COMPLIANCE

What is your secret sauce for compliance?

It's knowing where to look and how to prioritize. There are so many areas to focus on in a best practice Compliance program. Its important to ensure the basics are established and working really well; like a robust risk assessment process, an engaged Compliance Committee, understandable policies and Code of Conduct, calibrated training and education, reporting methods, screenings, and follow through.

The real art is to get to the next level of engagement through employee surveys and strong individual relationships The only way to accomplish all this is with the right Compliance team. Surround yourself with experts smarter than yourself.

To what degree do you feel in-person contact is important for the running of a compliance program?

Essential. Compliance is not a remote position. The offline relationships and informal conversations are much of what builds the trust needed to work with other departments. 'Management By Wandering Around' and visiting departments helps to build an atmosphere of collaboration that will carry forward to the formal work.

What makes a GREAT compliance leader?

Experience. Healthcare Compliance is extremely complicated and the rules are always changing. The most successful leaders build great teams, and then trust them with executing on comprehensive work plans. It's also important to think strategically to be sure that the Compliance department can support the forward momentum of operations.

What is the work achievement that you're most proud of?

I helped build the compliance program at my last employer, a large health system. We were designated one of the "World's Most Ethical Companies" 2 years in a row by Ethisphere. This was an enormous lift that required refinement of our program with hundreds and hundreds of best practice enhancements. We have stated this journey here at DocGo.

Is technology and automation the answer to the understaffed compliance team?

No, they are simply tools. Nothing will replace the dynamic thinking and political savviness needed to run best practice compliance programs. That said, there are systems that allow a compliance department to work smarter.

What does it mean to be an ethical company in 2022?

It means taking the Compliance role seriously - not just the tone at the top, but the tone at the bottom and in the middle. We are all responsible for ensuring ethical business practices and being honest with each other when a mistake is made.

We also need to remain humble, in that the rules change and evolve, and we as professionals need to evolve as well in order to provide the best service and protection to our companies.

Why did you decide a career in compliance was right for you?

I started working in Compliance as part of a large health system in 2005 when federal programs became mandatory. I fell in love with the dynamic pressure involved in constantly having to improve to remain best practice. A career in healthcare Compliance allows for the exercise of legal analysis, compliance and regulatory knowledge, audit skills and business sense; as important however are the people skills and understanding of the social dynamics to be effective while allowing operations to do their critical work.

The challenges of a compliance officer are never-ending – how do you personally stay motivated?

Attending conferences is essential. It is important to touch base with others outside your organization to learn best practices and get a reality check on where you are as compared to the rest of the compliance pack. Being able to report to your board on all of the fantastic things that the department has organization has done is very rewarding.

What unique compliance challenges does your company face?

We operate in many states. Healthcare is challenging as it is – often described as the most regulated sector on the planet. Add to that multiple states, and there is the responsibility to be compliant with another layer of rules, regulations, and laws. We are also a public company so it is even more so important that we operate with transparency and accuracy. Any company that is expanding or in "growth mode" needs to be extra careful in the compliance arena.

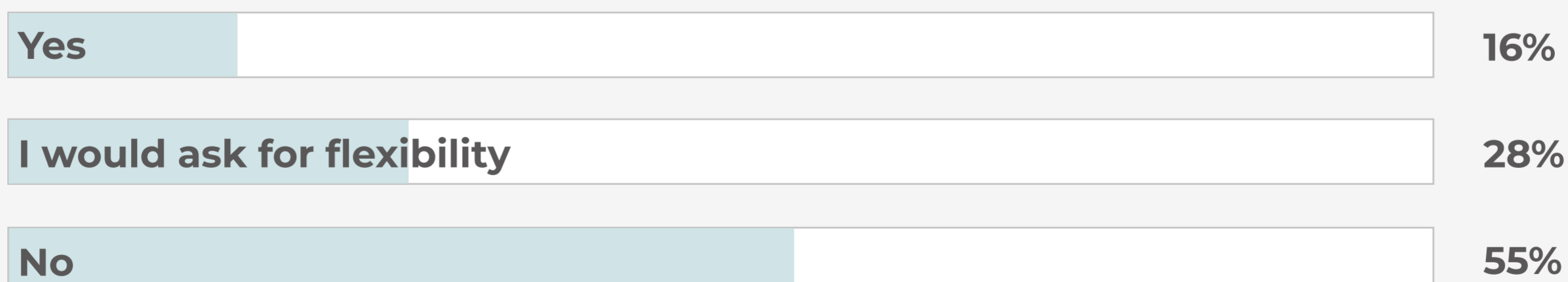
Please share one not-so-secret trick to keeping a team motivated.

It is important that the Compliance team have ownership in the process; either thorough specific functions, or having them chose work plans to complete. Having the team involved in building the best practices is critical, so they all understand how the sum of their parts helps to build the overall program.

THE RESULTS ARE IN

On LinkedIn we asked:

If a job you wanted required full relocation, would you do it?



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