

## Gerry Zack

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### MORE ABOUT ME

#### Pick one cherished item from your office - why is it significant to you?

I love textile art. I have a beautiful piece purchased in South America that is hanging on the wall. It's a reminder of what I love most about travel – learning and appreciating other lands and cultures.

#### If you had a one-way ticket in a time machine, would you go back in time or forward to the future?

Probably the mid-1970s. I was still a little too young to fully appreciate the amazing convergence of music that was taking place. I love music, and the 70s saw the emergence of new genres like punk, new wave, hip-hop, and disco, as well as blends like blues-rock and others, all while some of the great British bands and folk artists from the 60s were still in their primes. It was such a rich time for new music.

#### What is your theme word or phrase for 2025?

Amid all the chaos we are experiencing so far in 2025, I think it's incredibly important to find something that brings you joy every day and focus on it for a little while. Find something that brings a smile to your face each day and appreciate it.

## Asked & Answered

### THE SECRET SAUCE OF COMPLIANCE

#### What is your secret sauce for compliance?

Relationship-building. While a technical understanding of the components of a compliance program is essential, what drives success and ultimately leads to an effective program are the strong relationships that compliance should build with key stakeholders.

This is what builds trust and serves as the foundation in establishing and maintaining a culture of integrity and compliance.

#### What is the biggest misconception about the role of a compliance function?

That it's exclusively an enforcement function. And if the only times that people interact with compliance is when problems are identified, compliance isn't doing itself any favors. Investigating and enforcing certainly is part of the job for a compliance professional, but the priority for compliance is the prevention of problems, and hopefully this is where much more of the compliance function's efforts are directed.

#### Are bonuses based fully (or in part) on a company's financial performance appropriate for compliance professionals?

Absolutely. Financial performance certainly be the only factor, but including it among other factors is appropriate. Compliance adds value to any organization.

The most obvious example is through the avoidance of fines, penalties, and civil suits by avoiding compliance problems. But it goes beyond that to include value added through the role compliance plays in maintaining a positive culture in organizations.

#### How are you approaching AI governance?

Get all the right people at the table from the outset. Too often, a small group begins the effort to address AI and learns the hard way that there are many functions or stakeholders who should be included to properly manage the risk and to properly harness the benefits of AI.

Also, there isn't one absolute right or wrong way to approach AI governance. A lot depends on the nature of its use within the organization. Governance should reflect that.

#### What advice would you give to a new graduate starting in their first Compliance role?

Be prepared for a dynamic role. Things change quickly in compliance. It's not a good place for someone who wants to do the same thing for their next 40 years. Success in this profession requires embracing change. Yet, in spite of this rapid pace of change, compliance professionals also need to have patience. Making positive change to the culture of compliance in an organization is a slow process.

#### What is one question you wish your colleagues would ask more often?

The same question I think risk managers in general should ask – “What needs to go right for us to succeed?” Starting from that point rather than “what could go wrong?” flips the entire risk conversation on its head and focuses on value and success, which makes it easier to address compliance and other risks in the context of success.

#### A code of ethics and conduct is one of the more gray areas of coverage that a compliance officer oversees – should the compliance officer's voice be most prominent? If not then who?

There should be several prominent voices that contribute to a code of ethics. One of those voices should be compliance. But, it's hard to say whether one voice should be more prominent than others, since this should really be a collective effort of senior leaders. Compliance may play a role of facilitator in the development of a code, although even that role could be assigned to someone else. But the code should be a collective voice for the organization.

#### What is a Compliance book/podcast/blog/website that you recommend as a helpful resource?

A book I found to be very helpful is *'Trust in Action: A Leader's Guide to Act. Right. Now.'* by Jim Massey. It's less about compliance and more about leadership and trust, but it's very well written and helpful to any leader, and it builds on Jim's previous compliance experience.

And as a recurring resource, it's hard to beat Tom Fox's Compliance Podcast Network. It amazes me how much content he produces, always focusing on quality conversations with experts on current compliance issues.

## The Poll Results

We asked

What would you take a 20% pay cut in exchange for?

Guaranteed job security	32%
Two weeks of uninterrupted PTO	4%
Flexibility on hours and location	53%
Something else	11%

HIRING A COMPLIANCE OR PRIVACY PROFESSIONAL,  
OR LOOKING FOR A COMPLIANCE OR PRIVACY JOB?

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