

# Gina Nese

COMPLIANCE AND PRIVACY OFFICER AT ALIGN TECHNOLOGY

## MORE ABOUT ME

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

A few years ago one of my team members gave me a Gilbert & Sons magnetic compass with the quote "A leader is one who knows the way, shows the way, and goes the way. Thank you for being an exemplary captain and mentor."

This gift inspired the theme of our program – the North Star. And it inspires me when I feel lost, adrift in my thoughts or challenges, I pick this up and recenter on true north.

### Where would you most like to live when you retire?

A coastal town with a vibrant community - where the ocean reminds me of perspective and possibility.

### What is your theme word or phrase for 2026

"People matter." There is a great deal of worry about jobs and technology. My crystal ball is broken so I don't have a prediction on this question, but I have made a career supporting leaders who care about people and empower people to drive change for good. I believe that bringing people and technology together will be the path of the most successful businesses during this time.



## Asked & Answered

### THE SECRET SAUCE OF COMPLIANCE

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

Quickly assessing and understanding the need, then supporting the need with a range of compliant business accelerators, and finally igniting the talented people to drive the solutions. My assessment process involves research into the macro and micro culture around the leader, company or team, applying my deep experience with the regulations and risks indicators to eliminate high risk solutions and providing guidance in the form of guardrails.

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

That governance slows down business. In reality, an agile and automated governance program that aligns to the company's risk tolerance (as determined by the C-Suite), ensures that each employee knows the rules to be the best at their job and delivers the value a company has promised to its customers, shareholders, and other stakeholders. The goal of agile governance is to set the framework for employees to make the right decision without having to bring routine business decisions to legal or compliance – in short, it empowers employees who already have good integrity.

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

I wish my colleagues will tell me what they really want to do and why it matters to the business. I can't think of a time where I was asked if we can do something unethical or illegal, rather, the colleagues I work with in medical device and technology want to make a difference, they want to be creative, they want to build trust with customers and stakeholders.

When they tell me what they want to do or accomplish, I am able to focus on the how and simple governance. Through open communications, we unlock value while safeguarding integrity.

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

Be authentic and bring your knowledge to your role. You have a perspective that is different from your peers and I want to hear it. You are the future and I am excited to see what our early career professionals will do with their vision, passion, and drive!

#### What will be the greatest challenge in compliance for 2026 and beyond?

The greatest challenge ahead is keeping pace with rapid change – particularly at the intersection of technology, data, and global regulation. We're entering an era where technologies like artificial intelligence are evolving faster than the regulatory frameworks and this raises uncertainty for companies and investors.

For compliance leaders, that means we must navigate a lot of grey areas and moving targets with scaffolding and not brick and mortar style solutions. Ensuring we use AI, data analytics, and other emerging tech in an ethical and compliant way is critical. We have to interpret new regulations (or the absence of them) and establish our own internal guardrails in real-time. Not to mention, cyber risks and data privacy concerns are growing every day, so compliance has to be deeply involved in information governance and security as well.

#### 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?

The company's Code of Ethics and Conduct is the cornerstone of the company's conduct expectations. The most prominent voice is that of the CEO and at the companies that I have had the privilege of working for, the Code's each have an opening message from the CEO. As the Compliance Officer, my responsibility is to support the Board and Audit Committee by enforcing the Code, implementing other conduct policies to guide our employees, and escalating concerns or questions that arise to the C-Suite or Board.

#### What is one productivity hack that you love and others should try too?

I have two. First, I look at my priorities for the week and make a list. Then each day, when I wake up, I ask myself, "what is the most impactful thing I can do today". That is what I do.

Second, I was at a point in my role where I was overwhelmed by emails and that was not an efficient use of my time. So I gave clear email communication rules to my team and fully delegated work – this both created opportunity for my team to have more exposure on stretch work and reduced my email volume.

## The Results

### We asked....

#### Why is your calendar *actually* full this week?

I'm really that busy	29%
Too many needless meetings	50%
Calendar blocking (sanity)	21%

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