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ABOUT THE STAR RATINGS

Outstanding	4
Very good	3.5
Good	3
Above average	2.5
Average	2
Below average	1.5
Poor	1

TRAINING MEDIA REVIEW provides objective reviews of training content and supporting technologies, advice on media-related training issues, research reports, and consulting.

www.tmreview.com

TOLL FREE 877.532.1838 TEL 617.489.9120

EMAIL tmr1@tmreview.com

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TMR REPRINT

COMPLY—FOR STARTERS

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Compliance Is Just the Beginning, Video, 2005, Quality Media Resources, \$625 – \$1,062.50. Other material: Facilitation guide, PowerPoint slides, Handouts. For more information about this program, contact QMR – The Respectful Workplace Company: email, Info@qmr.com; phone, 800-800-5129; web, www.qmr.com

by Elizabeth Thaler-Barger

In the post-Enron and WorldCom era, thoughtful companies across America are staffing up their compliance and legal departments to crack down on ethical misconduct. Meanwhile, HR professionals are busy creating, re-writing, and producing company policies and ethical guidelines. The invaluable employees of these departments can boast about their job security, but do their roles really go far enough?

That's where *Compliance Is Just the Beginning* can help. Created and produced by QMR, a highly regarded vendor of media-based HR programs, this video and classroom program explores the ethical and moral dilemmas employees face every day. The program asks viewers to employ a simple three-step process for making ethical decisions. In the words of Robert Rosell, program writer-director and president of QMR, the program helps "people sort through the complexities of a tough ethical decision and come up with a solution that is consistent with their personal and organizational values."

The program succeeds on all counts.

SIMPLE BUT RICH

Compliance Is Just the Beginning is divided into two video programs. The first runs 24 minutes divided by chapters to pause for classroom discussion. The three-step process for ethical decision making introduced in program one and reinforced in program two is as follows:

- Compliance Test: Investigate the laws and the rules and understand the spirit behind them.
- Ripple Effect: Evaluate the impact of your decision and always assume that your choice will become widely known.
- Gut Check: Take time to reflect on your decisions, and be sure you are staying true to your own core values. Listen to that inner voice that tells you that what you are doing is right.

Through interviews, dramatizations carefully filmed in a context-neutral environment, and expert opinions, you are confronted with a variety of moral and ethical issues that are sure to hit a nerve. For example, children are asked, “If someone tries to cheat on a test by asking you for the answer, would you tell them?” The answers shouldn’t shock you. Let’s face it, anyone who’s made it through high school can relate to the pressure of giving a friend test answers. Did you cave in or say no? It’s fascinating to hear the older children’s rationales for helping a friend cheat—or not. I found myself wondering how much of what they said was indicative of our larger society. After all, it’s the liars and the cheaters who seem to get lots media attention, for better or worse.



Several well-acted workplace scenarios and a strangely humorous compliance parody—disguised as a game show—illustrate how difficult it is to make decisions that might produce short-term gains and risk long-term disaster. The actors and narrator talk directly to the viewers, effectively nudging us into thinking about our workplaces and the absurd rationalizations employees make to support unethical decisions: “It won’t hurt anyone.” “No one will ever know.” “Everybody’s doing it.” “They owe me.” The game show host offers these pearls of wisdom: “There’s no such thing as a small

ethical decision, only small decision makers.” Getting that message out to corporate audiences and providing them with the three-step process is reason enough to invest in this program.

Each scenario is followed by individual experts who apply the three-step process and suggest what the decision makers must do to escape disastrous consequences for themselves and their companies. These experts are impressive in their honesty, credibility, and breadth of experience. One of the experts is a former Enron executive and whistleblower with obvious firsthand experience in a company’s demise.

The experts’ contributions to the ethics dilemma can be summed up in these statements:

- There are no black-and-white answers to making ethical decisions.
- A single bad decision can have huge consequences.
- Successful workers live by their core values, apply the three steps to ethical decision making, and can comfortably live by their decisions 24/7.

Speaking of core values, I hope you enjoy the interviewees’ responses to the question “What are your core values?” as much as I did. As a culture, we have a lot of work to do in helping our youngsters and fellow workers identify and stick to their values. The fact that people are hazy on this issue and pressured to succeed in their lives hinders their ability to make smart, conscionable decisions.

Program two is reinforcement training for program one. The scenarios have universal themes:

- Playing with the company numbers to impress the shareholders.
- Moonlighting—having a business on the side
- Paranoia about a group of employees’ actions outside of work
- Making a decision that goes against one’s principles
- Copyright infringement
- Whistleblowing
- Conflict of interest
- Accepting gifts from customers



They are well acted and scripted and meet a high standard of realism. With a total viewing time for program two of 32 minutes, scenarios are brief and followed by an analysis of the situation by the same experts who appear in program one.

HELPFUL COLLATERAL

The facilitator guide that accompanies the videos includes straightforward handouts, adequate post-segment discussion questions, and optional breakout activities for deeper exploration of the ethical issues. It is a flexible guide that you can easily expand for a full-blown training session on ethics at your company. Applying the three-step process to cases in your company would create an excellent learning experience provided that confidentiality is a core value of your training session. Be prepared to bring your company ethics guidelines, mission, and values statement to the program. If you don't have these, you can use the session to capture learner suggestions for a company document. Ask members from your compliance, legal, and HR departments to assist in facilitating these discussions for added program credibility.



Program two is meant to illustrate the lessons learned in program one and should be shown at a later date. You can show all eight scenarios or the ones most pertinent to your organization. You will want to review the three-step process presented in program one and discuss your company core values at the start.

A CD contains classroom materials, PowerPoint presentation of the handouts, and video transcripts for reproducing and customizing your training event.

RECOMMENDATION

I can't see why a company would pass on an opportunity to teach ethical decision making in these turbulent times. *Compliance Is Just the Beginning* provides the perfect backdrop to discuss company values, difficult decision making, and ethical issues affecting today's workers. The variety of scenarios and quality of the content will take the sting out of training such a touchy subject. As a facilitator, you will benefit from the structure and flexibility to pick and choose how to conduct discussions and exercises. Your audience will appreciate the credible expert opinions that they wouldn't get in a typical compliance meeting.

Four stars all the way!

COMPLIANCE IS JUST THE BEGINNING PRODUCT RATING	
Holds viewer interest	★★★★★
Acting/Presenting	★★★★★
Diversity	★★★★★
Production quality	★★★★★
Value of content	★★★★★
Instructional value	★★★★★
Value for the money	★★★★★
Documentation	★★★★ 1/2
Overall rating	★★★★★

Elizabeth Thaler-Barger

(liz@CornerstoneLearningGroup.com) is president of Cornerstone Learning Group, a workplace learning and instructional design consulting firm. She specializes in career management, sales development and train-the-trainer.

