

Top-10 Business Ethics & Compliance Risks

(plus recommended topics for employee communications and other risk mitigation efforts)



Ethical Company Culture

A commitment to ethics, compliance, and values should be reflected not only in individual conduct but in company policy as well. Appropriate codes, structures, and procedures are critical in building and maintaining a culture of ethical behaviour and compliance.

Competition & Unfair Selling Practices

Consumers are entitled to a marketplace free of collusion between producers, abuse of market position, and other unfair business practices. Anyone who attends trade conferences, interacts with competitors, manages resellers, or conducts sales and marketing campaigns can find themselves on the wrong side of competition law.

Bribes, Gifts & Conflicts of Interest

Employees are free to pursue their company's best interests with vigour. But some forms of persuasion are strictly regulated. Personal gifts and incentives to decision-makers (public or private) are frequently forbidden. Conflicts of interest should be carefully avoided and promptly disclosed.

Financial Integrity & Controls

Financial wrongdoing is never "victimless"; the true victims are often simply unseen and unheard (e.g. the company's shareholders and the company itself). Most laws regulating financial integrity and controls exist to protect the rights of companies and the investing public.

Recordkeeping & Reporting

Company records must be administered strictly in accordance with applicable law and company policy. Companies should preserve all records required to be kept by law, retain them for as long as required, and disclose them to the authorities when appropriate. Employees must be made aware that altering, disguising or concealing company records and information can have serious – sometimes criminal – implications.

Intellectual Property, Personal Data and Business Information

A company's intangible assets (such as its trademarks, patents and other intellectual property) can be very valuable – sometimes even more valuable than its tangible assets. Steps must be taken to protect the company's intellectual property, and ensure proper respect for the intellectual property of others. Sensitive personal data must be protected, and processed strictly in accordance with applicable regulations. Many kinds of business information are protected under confidentiality rules, policies, and agreements.

Employee Rights & Working Conditions

Companies must show due regard for the individual and collective rights of employees, and employees must treat one another with respect in the workplace. Employers and employees are subject to a host of requirements designed to foster good working conditions for all.

Consumer Protection

Companies must not produce or distribute goods or services that pose unreasonable dangers to consumers. Consumers must be shielded not only from design and manufacturing defects, but from deceptive sales practices and misleading marketing claims as well.

Health, Safety & Environmental Protection

Products and services (including manufacturing processes and by-products) should not be injurious to public health, safety or the environment in which we live. Offices, factories and other workplaces must be safe for employees as well.

Government Investigations & Controls

Government agencies possess broad powers to investigate, regulate, control and even prohibit commercial activity. Government is entitled to cooperation in its lawful exercise of these powers. Company managers and employees must know how to respond to government agencies and how to handle themselves during investigations.

For more information on Integrity Interactive and managing your business ethics and compliance risks, please contact us at:

Integrity Interactive

Rond Point Schuman 6,
Brussels, 1040 Belgium
tel: +32 (2) 234 7880
email: eurinfo@integrity-interactive.com