

by Candace E. Murray, MSW

Compliance is sweet!

- » Celebrating Corporate Compliance & Ethics Week can be fun and affordable.
- » Planning should be employee-driven, with the support of the compliance officer.
- » Develop an attractive theme and run with it.
- » Plan a variety of activities to increase participation, including group and individual contests.
- » Buy-in from senior leadership is key to a successful week.

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For the third consecutive year, Catholic Charities of Onondaga County and its affiliate, Toomey Residential and Community Services, will celebrate Corporate Compliance & Ethics Week. Both Charities and Toomey are not-for-profit, community-



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based agencies serving youth, families, and the elderly throughout the Syracuse area. Together, we have over 40 programs and nearly 500 employees.

Each year, a small group of members from our Corporate Compliance Committee volunteer to design the activities, contests, and prizes for Corporate Compliance & Ethics Week. As the compliance officer, my main responsibility is ensuring that our committee has a budget to carry out the activities. For 2013, we were able to secure a modest budget of \$3 per employee.

This year, our theme for Corporate Compliance & Ethics Week is "Compliance is Sweet!" This is our way of saying that compliance is rewarding and everyone can enjoy promoting honest and ethical behavior. Our compliance mascot is a duck, homage to the saying, "If it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's a duck." Therefore, this year's logo includes a duck holding a lollipop.

The week begins with a kickoff event. For 2013, members of the compliance committee will visit each program site (nearly 30 sites) and bring an individual gift and message to every employee. In honor of this year's theme, employees will receive a small box of candy. Last year, everyone received a rubber duck which came in various characters. To this day, walk around any of our sites and you will see rubber ducks! Program sites also receive a schedule of activities for the week along with games and puzzles.

A number of contests are held throughout the week. Our biggest event is a video contest. Employees are asked to work in small teams to create a three-minute video with a compliance message. This year, winners of the video contest will receive the "Golden Duck Award" (a plaque

with a duck, of course), a pizza party, and bragging rights for the year. Video entries will be viewed at two lunch-and-learn sessions where we provide pizza and



drinks, play games (i.e., compliance Jeopardy!), and give out prizes. Employees who attend a lunch-and-learn session will vote for their favorite video and receive credit for their annual compliance training requirement.

Employees will receive daily emails with clues as part of our “virtual duck hunt.” The duck will be “hidden” at a local landmark site. For the first time this year, we will host a “compliance haiku” contest for employees who are poets at heart. The week will also include a compliance sudoku drawing and daily emails from our executive directors with an inspirational message. The week ends with a message from me that congratulates the winners and expresses gratitude to everyone who participated in or helped plan the week’s activities.

When we started celebrating Corporate Compliance & Ethics Week three years ago, I never imagined that we would end up here. As the compliance officer, my main goal was to increase employee awareness and, if possible, have some fun. I wanted to communicate that compliance is a serious matter, but it’s something everyone can relate to when approached non-defensively and in collaboration with employees.

Today, our celebration of Corporate Compliance & Ethics Week has taken on a life of its own. It is currently one of the key events of the year where we acknowledge employees for all their hard work and have a lot of fun as colleagues. In addition, we have achieved buy-in from senior management, including our executive directors; this level of support is priceless and has contributed to our success.

I wish I could take all the credit for our activities, but I can’t. The dedicated effort of the corporate compliance committee and the participation level of employees make the week a success and deepen our belief that *Compliance is Sweet!* ☺

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