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Compliance: Facing up to your responsibilities

A practical guide to simplifying your
compliance risks using an LMS.

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Using an LMS for Compliance

Guaranteeing that the skills and knowledge of your staff is 100% up to date is challenging, difficult even, but not impossible. This paper will consider some key issues around improving your employee skills set.

If the industry or sector you work within demands high levels of statutory and mandatory skills from multiple layers of staff, then monitoring skills-compliance levels will be an activity you recognise.

Whether the compliance you are dealing with falls within health and safety, legal, financial or specific industry regulation it is likely you risk penalties and fines if compliance sinks below a defined standard.

The Compliance Landscape

Compliance is relevant to organisations large and small, in a myriad of industries. Some will be meeting regulations set up by the qualifications they chose to hold, such as ISO 9001, and others will have standards set by professional bodies they align to. Whether you are a healthcare provider audited by CQC, needing to ensure patient care, and therefore staff skills sets are up to date and refreshed regularly. Or a utilities provider managing the skill-set of contractors as well as employed staff ensuring those onsite are safe and skilled. Or a legal firm needing to ensure partner and staff represent your brand appropriately and provide legally sound advice. Ultimately the data surrounding the knowledge of your representatives, and the ability to easily analyse this is likely to be at the forefront of your business operations.

Many industries work within regulatory and compliance frameworks – from skills compliance, process compliance, legal compliance, to health and safety law, and financial regulations. It's imperative for businesses and organisations within these sectors to have confidence that their staff are all compliant – in all the required areas they should be.

The Challenge

The challenge is wide-ranging and as companies fall under ever changing local and global regulations and standards keeping staff up to date and ensuring compliance is a highly complex requirement but one that is non-negotiable. Legal penalties for non-compliance can be huge, whether it be through fines, civil or legal penalties, brand and reputation depreciation or a combination of all these, not being compliant is not an option.

The increased use of outsourcing in all sectors adds an extra layer of complications. As organisations extend their enterprises to third parties, franchisees, contractors or agencies, they increase their risks of contractual non-performance or noncompliance.

Facing up to the problem is the first hurdle. It is unlikely that any of this information comes as a surprise to organisations. Business owners large and small should be aware of the risks they face. Managing those risks effectively and efficiently is the next step.

Once an organisation is used to a certain way of working, implementing any change can present a secondary challenge. Identifying problems with compliance management, suggesting ways to improve it, convincing stakeholders, finding funding, communicating change, and then implementing it... it's a tall order and requires Board-level commitment and agreement. Risk management and gap analysis is the first exercise which in turn will lead to a business case for change.

Creating a Business Case

Once concerns and objectives are more clearly identified, it will be a simpler task to understand how to address them.

You'll need to consider a range of options. When comparing systems, think about:

- Functions: Compare system functions against each other, but also against your organisation's needs. Find out if functions can be tailored, or switched on/off, find out if there are tiered levels of cost relating to function.

- Budget: How much does each system cost? Consider licensing fees, set up fees, development fees, and support fees.
- The Future: Never forget to think about the future. Can the systems you're evaluating evolve at a pace that matches your organisation?
- Engagement: How easy to use are the systems you're assessing? Do they make sense for the end users (both admin and learners)?
- Support: Once a system is implemented, what does the ongoing support look like? How accessible is the system's support team? How responsive? How effective?

Choosing a LMS to manage compliance

A LMS can be a great way of managing compliance and minimising the risk to your business. However, undertaking due diligence on the LMS features and functionality prior to purchase is key. Consider the areas to investigate in line with your own compliance and risk landscape. Functions you may want to consider are:

- The ability to delivery training suited to your audience: Make sure you can get to the right people using the right delivery method. Whether this is elearning, documents, face to face training, quizzes, or a blend of all.
- Conduct assessments and check knowledge: Training Needs assessments and knowledge checks will help you align the right training to the right people and avoid the "sheep dip" approach often provided.
- Report and data analysis: Ensure the data you require is easily accessible. Make sure you can track compliance, trends, and identify potential pitfalls using the data to hand.
- Control audiences and access levels: Employees tend to switch-off when compliance training is on the menu. Therefore the mechanism you use to present to them needs to be relevant and engaging. Additionally you should think about the way your system may control training or documentation, only providing what's relevant to each staff or job role audience. Consider those outside the enterprise and how you include them in your activities.

- Build a culture of compliance: This is a topic we are particularly keen on at Enterprise Study. Ensure your audience is engaged, motivated, understands and take ownership of their own compliance responsibilities. Choose a system that will support this initiative if it's important to your organisation.
- Communication and alerts: Make sure the system communicates appropriately. Whether it is alerting management to expiring certifications, or highlighting gaps in your compliance requirements the communication you receive should be relevant, tailored and appropriate for the audience at hand.
- Automation. Ease workload, paperwork, and unnecessary tasks: Don't let compliance be onerous and make sure whatever system you choose simplifies processes by automation where possible.
- Team and organisational analysis: The competitive nature of your organisation may relish in compliance leader boards and as such you'll want to consider gamification techniques written into the system you choose. Other organisations may simply want to ensure team and department leaders have sight of the individuals relevant to them and can see who those that need extra encouragement are. Whatever your preference make sure you build this into your due diligence.
- Version control and audit trails: Legislation changes all the time, training is refreshed, policies are updated. Make sure your chosen system helps track the areas that are of concern to your business.

The Next Steps

Since 2002, Enterprise Study have made it our business to help organisations with compliance. In our experience, the learning, development and training provided for compliance aren't themselves the challenge – instead, it's how all that is managed, deployed to staff, and recorded. Cloud-based technology offers a neat solution for this – providing a single platform from which to manage it all.

We understand that process can be overwhelming, especially if your organisation has multiple requirements and dependencies. With recent and relevant case studies in Healthcare, Utilities and Legal sector amongst others, we can offer sound advice on many of the issues at play, based on expert industry experience. We understand the lead times, layers of decision making, and concerns around this type of improvement planning.

Give us a call, and see if we can offer advice based on where you're up to today.

Enterprise Study

If you'd like to discuss your compliance challenges with us, arrange to have a free trial of the system, email enquiries@enterprisestudy.com or call 00 44 1242 254 254.