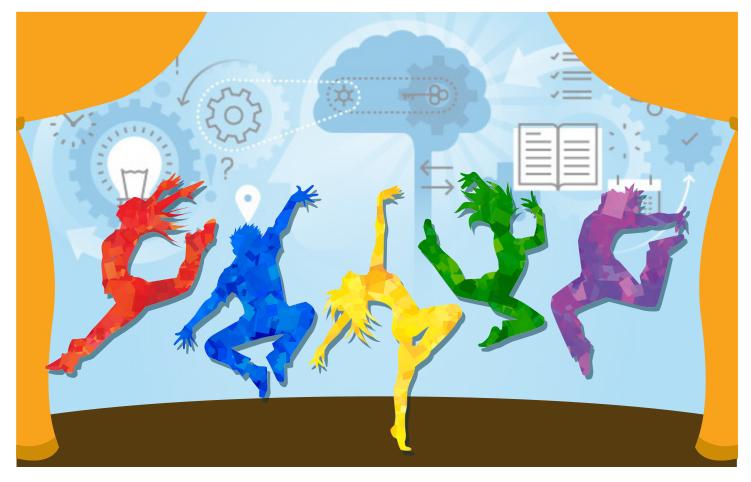# COMPLIANCE EDUTRAINMENT
Too Much of a Good Thing?

These days, the standard airline safety presentation is delivered via video on most aircraft. Somewhere along the way, airlines decided this approach was an opportunity to express their creative spirit, and a bit of a competition developed, with the imagined spoils going to the company that produces the most entertaining safety video. That competition reached a new level when Virgin America rolled out its Safety Dance video. It boasts talented singers and dancers (and one Olympian) delivering the FAA- required safety information. If the objective is simply to entertain, then mission accomplished. However, if the objective is to educate passengers about safety protocol, we're not sure it hits the mark.

The world of compliance training has thankfully evolved beyond the "death by PowerPoint" approach that dominated the life sciences landscape years ago. Those charged with developing compliance training now look to create programs that are more engaging and entertaining. In the case of eLearning, a number of tools and techniques can be applied to deepen engagement and learning, but if overused, or misused, the same tools have the opposite effect and distract from the learning. We call this the *Edutrainment Trap*.

All good adult learning starts with objectives, answering the question, "What do I want the learner to know and be able to do by the end of this training?" Enamored with the latest tools and ideas, losing sight of objectives once we start to design and develop the learning is easy. Here are five tips to help keep your compliance organization from falling into the *Edutrainment Trap*:

1. **Use Interactivity Intelligently:** The interactivity itself is often overused in online compliance training. Of course, a well thought-out level of interactivity is important, but overloading the interaction on every screen only serves to distract the learner from the salient points. When covering critical topics like off-label marketing and privacy, interactive exercises and games need to be integrated intelligently, and in a manner that doesn't cloud the learning with unnecessary messages. Interactive elements should serve a purpose, and not just be included for the sake of entertainment.

2. **Include Targeted Imagery:** Images and graphics are sometimes misused or overused in a way that distracts from the core objectives. There is truth to the phrase, "a picture is worth a thousand words" and well-placed imagery is certainly more engaging than an overabundance of text on screen. But when the objective is to ensure the learner can "demonstrate an understanding of the payments that need to be reported under the Sunshine Act," pretty pictures only go so far. Relevant images and graphics that reinforce key concepts and support learning objectives are needed.

3. **Mind the Bandwidth:** Video and animation offer exciting opportunities for compliance training, but like any new tools, they need to be utilized judiciously and with the objectives in mind. In this time of high-speed corporate networks, we can forget that bandwidth is sometimes an issue for third-party vendors. An overabundance of video

or complex animations may cause problems. Think carefully about geography and access when developing that global transparency module for deployment around the world.

4. **Remember that Acting Counts:** If live actors are being used, make sure the subject matter remains the star of the training. Oscar-quality acting isn't necessary for the training to be effective, but there is a fine line between amusing amateur acting and just plain bad acting. When the goal is to communicate the seriousness of a topic like the Anti-kickback Statute and its implications, amateur acting will derail any hope for effectiveness, as the learners start to pay more attention to the acting, and not the learning. Similarly, the more conversational the dialogue, the better. If the narration sounds like someone is reading a law journal or compliance policy, learners will tune out.

5. **Be Mindful of Cultural Differences:** Making cultural references or using humor can be a fun way to interject life into training, but it has to be included carefully. Jokes can lessen the importance of the message. Cultural references that the audience may not understand can frustrate and ultimately distract the learner, leaving them saying "huh?"

> " make sure the subject matter remains the star of the training "

instead of "I got it." This safety video by Delta is a great example. The video is entertaining, funny, and clearly communicates the required safety information – all good things. However, if the learners are not familiar with the nature of viral videos and the Internet's obsession with funny cat videos, the humor is lost.

Avoid the *Edutrainment Trap* of loading training with every bell and whistle imaginable in the effort to make the learning fun and engaging. A good balance of imagery, text, and interactivity keeps training interesting and flowing and is a necessity in today's complex regulatory landscape. Understanding which techniques are most effective and appropriate for the learners and the subject matter is the key to developing effective and highly-engaging training.

Thanks for reading!

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