Introduction:
The survey responses show an increasing understanding of the importance of ethical behavior as a long-term differentiator. While challenges remain, this is unquestionably good news for the compliance professional seeking to move beyond mere cost-center status and to establish their contribution to the business as a market advantage.

Methodology:
The survey was open from January 3, 2017, to March 22, 2017. The survey produced 335 complete and partial responses. Nearly half (48%) represented organizations that have had a dedicated compliance and ethics functions for at least seven years; while 6% have had a dedicated compliance and ethics function for fewer than one year. Several interim stages of program maturity are also represented in the data set. Nearly all of the organizations operate in North America (88%), followed by Europe (53%), Asia (43%), South America (37%), Latin America (37%) and the Middle East (36%).

Forty-eight percent of respondents held the title of compliance and ethics officer or chief compliance officer, followed by general counsel or chief legal officer (13%). A wide range of other titles trailed closely behind, all of them related to compliance or anti-corruption activities and very few below a senior or C-suite level title.

Respondents represented a wide range of industries; the largest industry group was healthcare (17%), followed by manufacturing (14%) and energy (9%). Several dozen other industries were represented in the data pool.

The median worldwide employee headcount of the qualified respondents was 8,200, while the majority of organizations’ revenue segment was between $1 billion and $8 billion.

Conclusion:
A successful company is built on financial goals, but if goals aren’t tied to fundamental values and ethics, the risk of brand-damaging lapses significantly increases. The connection must be intentional and highly visible to all employees from top to bottom, publicly rewarding ethical behavior, anonymously when appropriate, and clearly and transparently taking corrective action when lapses occur. When employees know that the company values an ethical culture and are confident that incident reports result in follow up and not retaliation, they will embrace that culture as an authentic expression of the values of the organization, which in turn will enhance brand value and financial performance. To achieve this outcome, CECOs require a solid, integrated, real-time platform that eliminates data silos and supports analysis and visualizations to provide leading indicators, which allows them to leverage their increased inclusion in the strategy and leadership of the organization into meaningful impact.

Full Report