

The 2022 State of Employee Compliance Training



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INTRODUCTION

The last word likely anyone thinks of when they hear “compliance training” is “exciting.”

“Required,” “necessary,” and “chore” are words much more likely to come to mind.

While “chore” is a matter of opinion depending on the way training is presented, evolving regulations and industry standards continue to prove the necessity of a robust compliance training program.

Country to country, standard to standard, sometimes it seems like you can’t throw a rock without hitting a new regulation (and that rock you just threw is probably against policy, too). A survey from legal technology firm Thomson Reuters Legal [found that 78% of respondents think regulatory information will increase in the coming year](#), while “Keeping up with regulatory change,” was ranked as one of the top challenges faced by compliance managers.

Ultimately, employees are the ones doing the complying. At the very least, they need to know the basics of whatever regulations and standards their organization must abide by.

Challenges to maintaining compliance abound, but organizations simply cannot afford to ignore this important work. Another report from software firm GlobalScape found that organizations [lose an average of \\$4 million in revenue](#) due to just one non-compliance event. You may have great policies and procedures, but if they are sitting in a drawer and no one is trained or educated on them, they’re of no value whatsoever.

So where does employee training fit in? Ultimately, employees are the ones doing the complying. At the very least, they need to know the basics of whatever regulations and standards their organization must abide by. The “basics” are often accomplished by

expensive once-per-year, old-school compliance training framed around “don’t do this, don’t do that.” Such training often becomes little more than, you guessed it, a chore.

But a comprehensive, new-school approach to a compliance training program should go beyond simply “checking the box.” It should be designed to make compliance concerns top of mind for your employees by weaving compliance best practices into your very organizational culture. This approach, though, brings with it its own challenges. A comprehensive initiative can’t build itself, meaning organizational commitment is needed to build, deploy and manage such a program.

About This Report

With this much to consider when it comes to compliance training, we wanted to take a pulse check on the state of compliance training to provide a resource for our customers and the industry at large to help gauge where their compliance training program stands.

We surveyed 157 people at companies of all sizes who are responsible for managing corporate compliance (the majority of whom were KnowBe4 security awareness training customers). We asked questions concerning how their compliance training content is delivered now, what topics are covered, and what challenges in general they encounter with training management.

We also want to provide some best practice guidance on tackling the most pressing compliance training challenges for our survey respondents. Because just numbers without advice on what to do about them would be pretty useless, right?

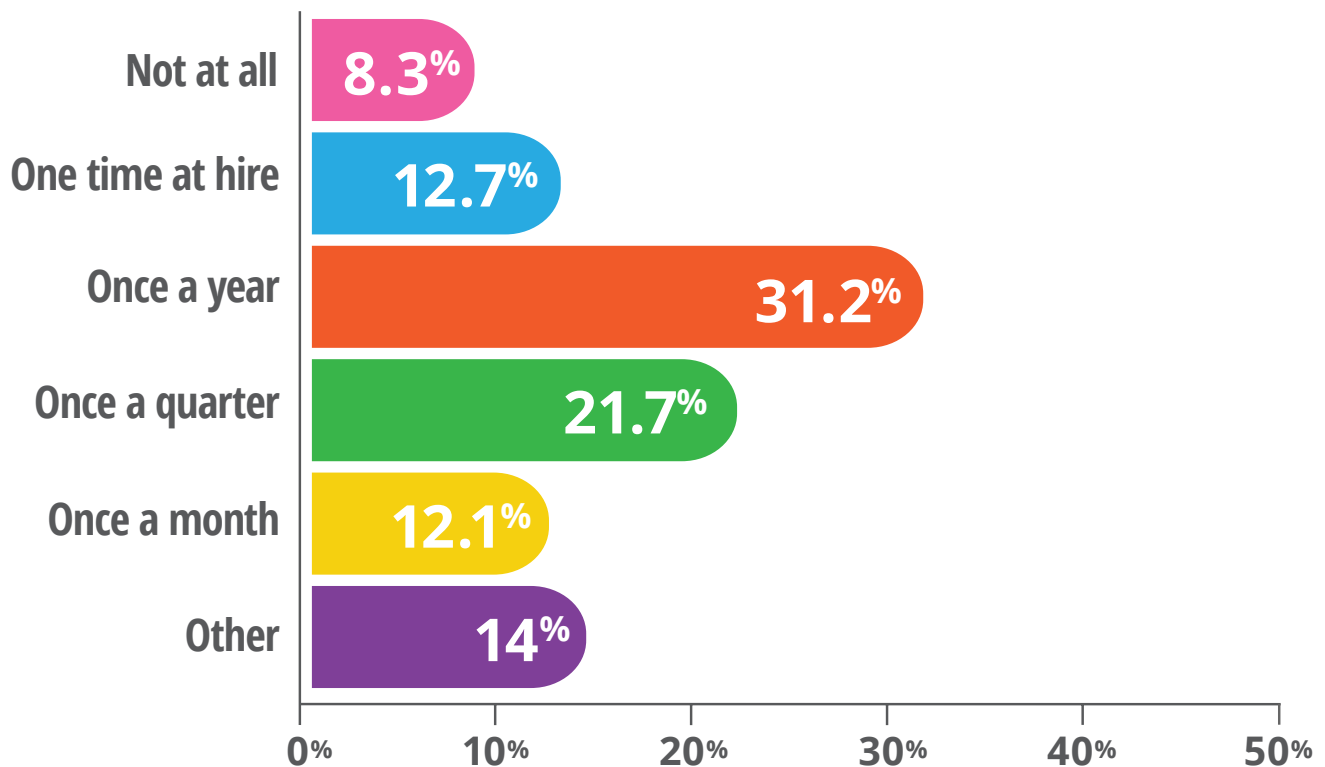
THE STATE OF COMPLIANCE TRAINING

What Training Are Employees Getting?

We dug into the what, when, where and why of compliance training deployment, and here's what we found.

To begin with, we found that the majority of respondents (53%) reported delivering compliance training either once per year or once per quarter. These frequencies of training deployment were the top-two responses, with 31% saying once per year and 22% saying once per quarter.

How frequently during the past year did you or your organization deliver compliance training to employees?



Almost a quarter of respondents saying they deliver compliance training four times a year suggest there is appetite for a phased approach to this type of training (we'll talk more about why this approach is best in the "Addressing These Challenges" section of this report). For instance, 34% of respondents are conducting at least quarterly training (22% quarterly and 12% monthly) making this more than the traditional annual training at 31%. This is encouraging news from our perspective, suggesting that more people are breaking training up across the year and not doing only one big annual push.

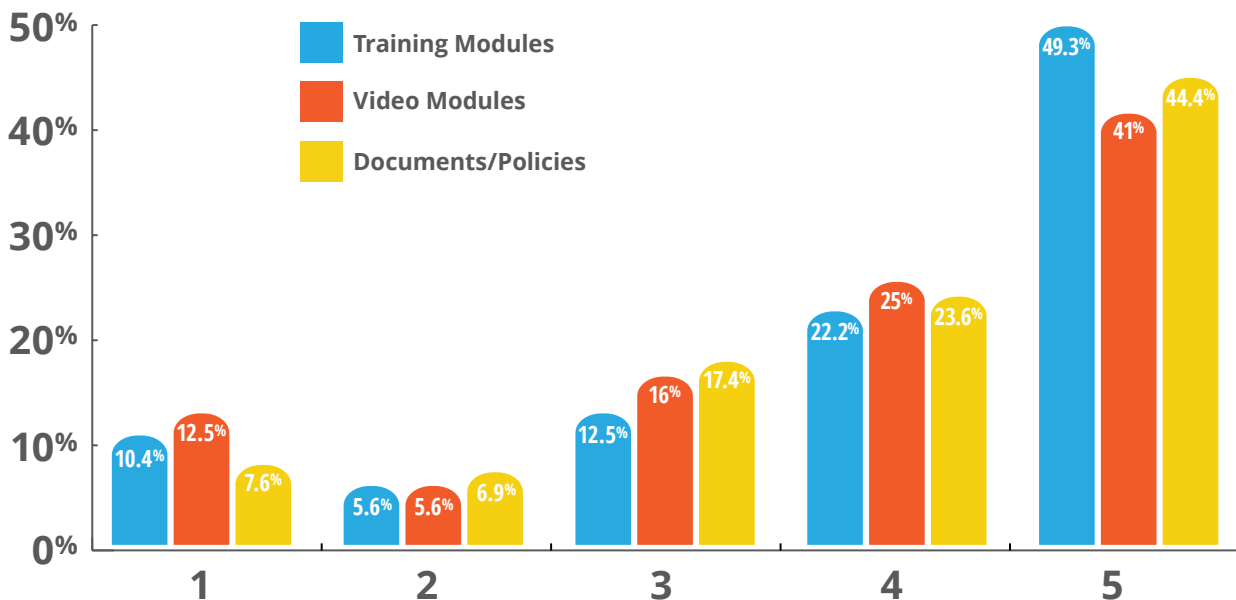
Next comes training delivery. The vast majority of respondents (85%) reported using eLearning or self-paced online training for compliance training; honestly not a shocker for us. Just more than half of the people we asked (56%) also reported using an external vendor to create training, with creating training presentations themselves coming in second at 43%.

Another trend revealed itself when we asked about deployment methods for training.

We asked “On a scale of 1 to 5, to what degree does your organization use the following to deliver compliance training (Where 1 = Never and 5 = Consistently).” Here are the options we presented:

- Assessments
- Documents/Policies
- Games
- Newsletters
- Posters
- PowerPoint
- Training Modules
- Video Modules
- Webinars

On a scale from 1 to 5, to what degree does your organization use the following compliance training (Where 1= Never and 5 = Consistently)?



Almost as many respondents ranked documents/policies being used “consistently” as respondents who ranked using training and video modules “consistently.” Specifically, almost half of respondents (49%) ranked training modules as the most used. Forty-four percent ranked policies and documents as the most used, with 40% reporting they used video content the most consistently.

This mix of “traditional” documents used alongside training and video modules may seem counterintuitive. But, our own training practices have shown connecting more interactive compliance training content with the actual policies the content references (plus digital assets like posters) is essential to drive home the importance of the lessons. More than a few industry

regulations require proof that an employee population has read and signed off on a given policy for compliance, so making the acknowledgement of policies a part of the training initiative makes sense.

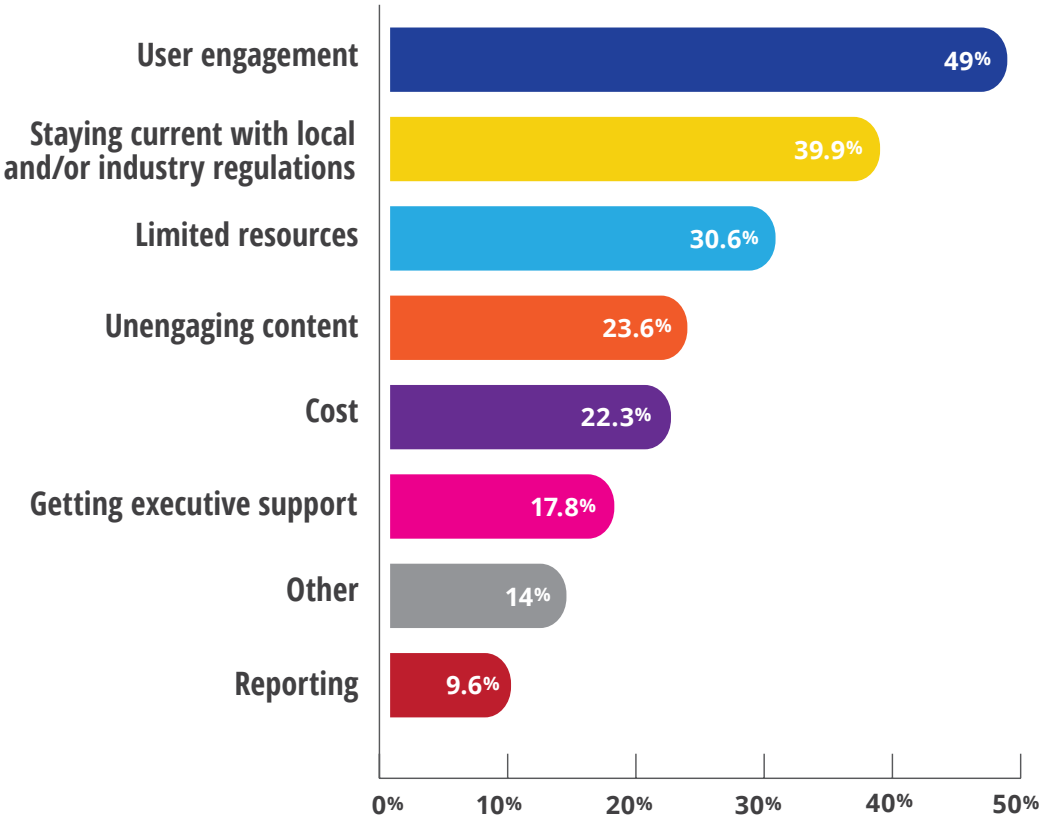
When it comes to the “what” of the training, “data and record protection” topped the list of the most important topics to cover for our respondents. Almost two-thirds (65%) ranked this topic as most important, gelling with the overall increased importance given to data protection and data privacy over the last several years. Ethics and harassment were a close second and third (ranked most important by 34% and 28% of respondents, respectively).

What Challenges Are You Facing?

We also wanted to know what hurdles our respondents came across when delivering training. Here’s what we found.

Almost half of respondents (49%) ranked challenges with completion percentage and employee engagement as the most significant when it comes to delivering compliance training. We presented “training completion” and “employee engagement” as two separate options, and respondents ranked them as their biggest challenges within half a percentage point of each other. This is not particularly surprising, since employees simply won’t want to sit through boring training. If you dislike a movie halfway through, you walk out. The third most challenging issue reported was staying up to date with emerging regulations, with 40% ranking this as the toughest compliance training issue to overcome.

What are the biggest challenges in delivering compliance training in your organization? (Select all that apply)



The next collection of questions did not address challenges specifically, but likely contribute to the overall effort managing a compliance training program entails. Here are some highlights:

- Almost as many respondents reported using between two and four vendors for training as reported using one vendor (37% for two-to-four vendors; 40% for one vendor)
- HR and IT were the departments most often reported as managing compliance training, with the following breakdown:
 - 29% reported HR
 - 24% reported IT
 - The remaining responses were split between compliance and risk specialists, information security and legal professionals
- HR and IT groups own the budget for compliance training nearly equally at 25% and 24%, gelling with the previous trend

Overall, these sections of the survey presented a picture of someone who manages compliance training as a potentially overworked (what with managing multiple training vendors and keeping on top of ever-changing regulations) person wearing multiple hats who can't quite get their employees to engage with the compliance training they're deploying. Does this sound familiar?

ADDRESSING THESE CHALLENGES FOR THE COMPLIANCE TRAINING MANAGER

If you see yourself in any of the respondents who took our survey, we're here for you! First off, know that as someone responsible for compliance training, you're not alone. Many people in your same situation face the same challenges you do. In that way, you're not that special. And that's a good thing!

Since many others have been where you are, it means success is possible. Others have overcome the exact same challenges you have, meaning there are lessons to be learned that you can apply to your work, right now. This next section dives into some best practices and things to consider, gleaned from our own experience and that of our very own customers.

How To Get Employees Engaged

We'll begin with that big scary "E" word: "Engaging." This can mean many things to many people. Sort of like a sense of humor, what's engaging to one person may be boring to someone else. In general, though, the following concepts centering around a new-school approach to compliance training have worked well for many customers and colleagues of ours.

Use a Variety of Content and Formats

The use of variety within the training program allows your users to avoid content fatigue. Even really great training can get stale after a while. The ability to mix it up with different formats such as video, self-paced interactive training modules, compliance job aides, digital signage on the organization's intranet, and examples and case studies can all get great results and make a connection with different types of learners. Accessibility of this content for those with various auditory or visual challenges is also a vital factor to keep in mind. Most, if not all, learning content should be able to be consumed by as many different types of people as possible. This includes but is not limited to the courseware being screen-reader compatible and including captions on all video content.

Train More Frequently

Here we don't mean more overall training time, but breaking training into smaller pieces and doing it more often. So, for example, maybe you are currently doing compliance training two hours per year done in the month of February. Doing monthly training that is 5-15 minutes per month is actually less painful for everyone. We've heard from customers who have had success with moving to monthly training from a big annual push. Completion rates typically go up, while complaints from employees about their time being wasted typically go down.

Making Sure Employees Know All They Need To

Employees need to be able to take what they've learned and apply it to their job function and in their work environment. Think of this as helping employees understand the why behind the why. If all you know is your turn on the widget, that doesn't help. But when you see your turn in the broader scheme of things, you start to care. If people don't care about something, they're not engaged. In practice, this means setting the various policies and procedures discussed in compliance training in the context of broader company-wide impacts. Avoid "Don't do this, don't do that," in favor of "This is what happens when policy X is followed, and this is what happens when it isn't." Such an approach makes it easier for employees to apply the knowledge they've gained and not just store it away in their mental filing cabinet to go unused.

All In One Is the Way to Go

Just more than a third of our respondents said they use between two and four vendors for employee training. We'll be honest, this statistic made our head hurt a little bit. It made us think of a home renovation project where the homeowner is trying to manage the floor installation, new windows, new countertops, etc., all by themselves. There is an easier way!

At the risk of being accused of self-horn-tooting, we'd like to make the case for seeking a training vendor that can be a cost-saving one stop shop for different training needs. Some benefits of this approach include:

All Content Under One Roof

Multiple training vendors means the potential for varying quality levels of training. With one vendor, you can almost guarantee the same level of quality for all the content that vendor produces. Additionally, if some content issue arises, you only have one contact person to communicate with, rather than tracking down the right person across two or three different vendors. All the content in one place also makes it easier to enroll learners, as well as link your compliance training efforts to real and specific outcomes when compliance audit time comes around.

Bundle and Save

It may sound like a cliché, but bundling training content production and deployment under one vendor will most likely save money. If the training is designed to fit the platform, and vice versa, time and money will be saved compared to the potential hassle and person-hours getting it all to work together correctly. Additionally, a savvy vendor will likely offer discounts for the more training and employee seats you sign up for.

Single Source of Truth

The best training vendors often include their own learning management system (LMS) with their training offerings to make delivering the training easier. Relying on multiple vendors while trying to deliver the training can be a recipe for headaches. Either you'd have to rely on one vendor to provide the LMS platform and work to get the other vendors' content uploaded, or introduce a separate LMS vendor and hope all the content plays nice together. A single vendor with a built-in LMS removes the need for all that with content and a platform designed specifically to work together. Bonus points if their LMS can accept any custom learning content you might need to include. Additionally, be careful not to make your job about the LMS since content is the most important thing to engage your learners - not the delivery method. You want something that is easy and lightweight.



To Build or Buy Compliance Training?

Just less than half of the folks in our survey (44%) reported building their own presentations for training purposes. We salute those brave souls for taking that effort on themselves. Whether by choice or necessity, building your own training content can seem an attractive option. But there are some important things to consider that make you lean toward going the vendor route:

Will You Be Able to Keep Content Up to Date?

You know the regulations your organization has to keep compliant with. You also likely know the regulatory landscape, especially when it comes to data privacy and data handling, changes

regularly as new laws and guidelines come into effect. Would you have the bandwidth to keep your training content current with these emerging regulations? What's more, would you be able to ensure any saved elements of training content your employees might have, screenshots for example, represent the most recent updates? With a good training vendor on your side, regularly updated training should come as part of the purchase price.

Could Your Time and Money Be Better Spent Elsewhere?

Chances are training content isn't your only responsibility. Whether in the HR or IT space, employee training is likely only one of the hats you wear. How much time do you think you'd be able to devote to putting training content together? And not just the primary "slide deck," mind you. If a comprehensive training approach is what you're after, then supporting items, such as newsletters or graphics, should also be on the to-do list. Brainstorming, building and updating such content could easily fill a 40-hour work week. A good training vendor will have a large library full of training content to choose from, ideally to match different learning styles and strategies, and available in different localized versions to address compliance topics internationally.

How Will You Track Results?

If you're already using an LMS, tracking training completions will hopefully be easy. But mere training completions should only be one metric to gauge how successful your compliance training program is. Some of the better training programs we've encountered include knowledge assessments to measure how well employees have absorbed the information. Building a sound knowledge assessment to collect usable data could be its own whitepaper topic. Would you have the time to devote to developing and deploying such a resource? A good training vendor would have this expertise in-house or examples of knowledge assessments you could deploy to measure training effectiveness.

The complexity involved in running a new-school, risk-reducing compliance training program on your own should not be underestimated. Often those in this position think they're just making a decision about building or buying a course. The conversation should really be: What does it take to build a *culture of compliance*?

CONCLUSION

In our experience, it can be easy to get stuck in the rut of a compliance training season mentality. That is, the old-school way of rolling it out once per year and simply checking the box so you can say you have trained people when, or if, something happens. This can send an unfortunate message "Let's get this over with," when it comes to training.

We're not saying your compliance training needs to be as anticipated as the next blockbuster movie or bingeable Netflix show. But we need to expect more from our training programs if we are going to get more.

We need to move away from thinking of compliance training initiatives as a season that will pass and begin to think about moving the needle when it comes to a culture that embraces compliance and has it top of mind.

Deliver Fresh New Compliance Training Content Easily and More Effectively with KnowBe4's Compliance Plus

Old-school compliance training typically deployed once a year is far from enough to train your employees effectively or reinforce the important legal and regulatory requirements your organization needs to address for compliance. With a growing library of 200+ items and a constant cadence of always fresh, up-to-date and short content, **KnowBe4's new-school approach to compliance training** allows you to stay on top of current compliance requirements and deliver a variety of training campaigns to your employees on a monthly or quarterly basis.

Just as security awareness training creates a strong human firewall, [Compliance Plus](#) gives your employees the interactive, engaging training they need to ensure that your organization complies with the laws and regulations that apply to your industry sector.

Because Compliance Plus is an add-on training library subscription you can add to the KnowBe4 platform, you have the same robust training campaign and automation features that you use for your security awareness training. Features like branding, certificates, auto-enrollment of employees, tracking learner progress and completion rates, and advanced compliance reporting are all already in place.

With the KnowBe4 platform and Compliance Plus you can:

- Run a best-practice compliance training program with everything you need that will engage your learners
- Easily link your compliance training efforts to real and specific outcomes
- Create tailored compliance training campaigns that target the right employees for the right compliance requirements
- Track results and see trends over time on how your employees' personal risk scores impact your organization's overall risk score

When you combine the power of the KnowBe4 platform with Compliance Plus, your organization can set up a fully automated compliance training program in a matter of minutes for a no-brainer price!



Additional Resources



Compliance Audit Readiness Assessment

Take the first step towards assessing your organization's readiness for meeting compliance



Free Automated Security Awareness Program

Create a customized Security Awareness Program for your organization



Free Phish Alert Button

Your employees now have a safe way to report phishing attacks with one click



Free Email Exposure Check

Find out which of your users emails are exposed before the bad guys do



Free Domain Spoof Test

Find out if hackers can spoof an email address of your own domain



About KnowBe4

KnowBe4 is the world's largest integrated security awareness training and simulated phishing platform. Realizing that the human element of security was being seriously neglected, KnowBe4 was created to help organizations manage the ongoing problem of social engineering through a comprehensive new-school awareness training approach.

This method integrates baseline testing using real-world mock attacks, engaging interactive training, continuous assessment through simulated phishing, and vishing attacks and enterprise-strength reporting, to build a more resilient organization with security top of mind.

Tens of thousands of organizations worldwide use KnowBe4's platform across all industries, including highly regulated fields such as finance, healthcare, energy, government and insurance to mobilize their end users as a last line of defense and enable them to make smarter security decisions.

For more information, please visit www.KnowBe4.com