

## Managing Compliance Staffing Shortages

[Richard P. Kusserow](#) | October 2023

### Tips to address staff shortage challenges

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was significant disruption in the labor market, with millions of employees quitting their jobs, which has been coined as the “Great Resignation”; over **3.6 million Americans retired**, which is more than twice the usual rate. The healthcare sector was particularly hit hard, extending to compliance offices. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that last year job openings in the U.S. were at 11 million, which has been growing. The result has been widespread staffing shortages, resulting in the workloads for many compliance officers and their staff rising to untenable levels.

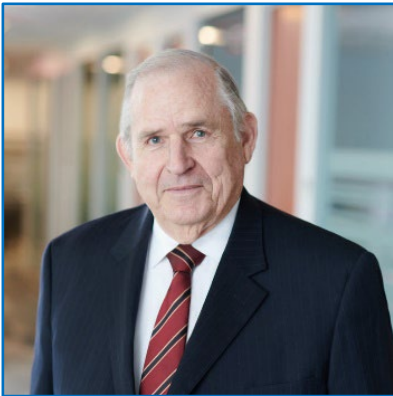
It is important to implement process improvements, prioritize core responsibilities, and reassess current project priorities. Failure to do this can undermine staff morale and may lead to missing deadlines, providing substandard work, and additional departures. Aggravating the situation is that all programs and operations in the host organization are likely facing similar stresses that may increase compliance risks. There is also the problem that many employees may be operating remotely. Having a **compliance program effectiveness evaluation** may be something to consider to assess the status of compliance and assist in charting a course to move things forward. Armed with this kind of information, plans can be developed to address the situation.

### Recommendations for Handling Staff Shortages

1. Analyze current, most important, and urgent tasks and projects against available resources.
2. Rethink priorities and timeframes on scheduled projects and tasks.
3. Evaluate staff skills, experience, and capabilities to see if they can be used in other capacities.
4. Develop a plan of action to prepare and organize your team for the workload ahead.
5. Assist staff in developing skills for different roles and duties (training, webinars, conferences).

6. **Engage a part-time consultant** to address tasks and projects the current staff can't handle.
7. Determine if any function can be outsourced (e.g., hotline, sanction screening, training programs, assessments, internal auditing, etc.).
8. Give consideration for engaging interns to help with task work.
9. Discuss openly with staff about meeting the challenges and gaining their input to help boost morale and prevent departure.

You can also keep up-to-date with Strategic Management Services by following us on [LinkedIn](#).



### About the Author

Richard P. Kusserow established Strategic Management Services, LLC, after retiring from being the DHHS Inspector General, and has assisted over 2,000 health care organizations and entities in developing, implementing and assessing compliance programs.