

**THE NEW
TALENT
PLAYBOOK**
Podcast

Action Kit

**The biggest HR
mistakes businesses
don't realize
they're making**

Featuring Joel Greenwald

Episode 2 - Season 7

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You just listened to Joel Greenwald remind that strong companies do not treat compliance as a burden separate from culture. Instead, they use clear rules, values, manager training, and fast escalation paths to create a workplace that feels fair, humane, and well-run. The takeaway: **prevention is not bureaucracy; it is leadership.**

1. Build a Culture-Friendly Compliance Foundation

Joel's core message is that compliance should never feel like a penal code. Rules and boundaries are necessary, but they work best when they fit your mission and values instead of fighting them.

Your Compliance-Culture Audit

- ☐ Our policies are easy to understand
- ☐ Employees know the basic rules and boundaries
- ☐ Managers apply rules consistently
- ☐ Our handbook feels human, not punitive
- ☐ Values are visible in how we make decisions

Short answer:

2. Use Values as a Code of Conduct

The episode highlights a tough but common leadership problem: high-performing people can still be toxic. Company values give managers a fair, consistent way to evaluate behavior, not just results.

Toxic Superstar Reality Check

- ☐ We would address poor behavior even from a top performer
- ☐ Our values include behavioral expectations
- ☐ Managers can point to values when giving feedback
- ☐ Peer relationships do not excuse misconduct
- ☐ We are willing to lose a high performer if needed

Short answer:

3. Train Managers to Document, Decide, and Escalate

Managers often get into trouble by trying to handle legal or sensitive issues alone. Joel emphasizes documentation training, regular feedback, and knowing exactly when to bring HR into the loop.

Manager Readiness Checklist

- ☐ My managers know how to document issues
- ☐ They give feedback regularly, not just annually
- ☐ They know what must be escalated to HR
- ☐ They understand accommodation issues are not theirs alone to decide
- ☐ They know how to avoid “friend” conversations that create confusion

Short answer:

4. Make the Handbook Friendly, Targeted, and Useful

A handbook should protect both sides and guide behavior. The episode stresses that remote and multi-state teams need tailored addendums, but the document should still feel welcoming and aligned with company values.

Handbook Rewrite Exercise

- ☐ Put your values at the front of the handbook
- ☐ Only include addendums that actually apply
- ☐ Use plain language instead of legal clutter
- ☐ Make expectations easy to find
- ☐ Review whether any section feels unnecessarily intimidating

Short answer:

5. Create Clear Escalation Paths and Ongoing Learning

The best systems are fast and clear: employee to manager, manager to HR, HR to legal. That only works when roles are mapped, communication is open, and learning never stops.

Escalation Path Map

- ☐ Employees know where to raise concerns
- ☐ Managers know what they own versus what they escalate
- ☐ HR knows when to involve legal
- ☐ Problems are addressed within 24 hours whenever possible
- ☐ We invest in continuous education for managers and HR

Short answer:

"Values are the foundation of a culture."

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