

Why more women should consider a career in compliance

By [Tanya van Aswegen](#)

17 Sep 2019

Compliance is an analytical and admin-intensive field. Financial services compliance is even more niche, and attention to detail is key in navigating the rules of the regulator. Managing the operations of a busy compliance practice is a rewarding job utilising my organisational and time management skills, and I get to work with a great network of people, many of whom are women.



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A portion of compliance work relates to implementation and women in business generally tend towards strong administration and delegation skills. These attributes could tie into why the role of compliance officer (CO) is a good career for females specifically. With most of Compli-Serve's COs mirroring this fact, what is it about compliance that is so fulfilling?

"The devil is in the detail in compliance and the implementation of it," says Catherine Cooper, compliance officer and director of Compli-Serve KZN. "I enjoy the interactive working relationship with my clients, effective communication is very much a required skill and an ongoing challenge in the current environment."

Commonalities when chatting to some female COs in our team at Compli-Serve, included meaningful relationships with clients, flexibility around work and family commitments, as well as being an admin-pro.

Anel Naude enjoys the flexibility her role as CO allows, being the mother of a small child. A compliance job in a corporate entity (the alternative to consulting independently as an external CO) may not provide the same perks, but it really comes

down to a stable client base and deeply valuing relationships built over years. “I constantly interact with knowledgeable, energetic individuals who are passionate about their businesses and careers, which in turn motivates and inspires me,” she says.

The career path of compliance, Naude notes, is best paved with the help of a mentor. “Legislation and regulations are but one side of the coin. Industry experience in any form goes a long way.”

A pure legal or compliance background might make it challenging for recruits into financial services, as you must be able to understand your clients’ businesses, and the associated risks. But, says Elzabe Botha, it’s so diverse as every client is different. “I learn something new every day, and the best part is how grateful clients are for the assistance, so you can see and feel the benefit of your efforts.”

Compliance could be a career choice if you’re not scared of a challenge, constant learning and have a thick skin. “This is by no means a job where you’re loved by all,” Theresa van Diggelen notes, but the rewards far outweigh any negative elements. “We are forever learning, which is great. I enjoy the challenge of change, and I also love working with different types of people.”

Catherine Cooper echoes the flexibility of working in compliance as a great career for women, full of professional growth, particularly as a consultant, though it takes a lot of hard work. “You also need to be innovative and intuitive to assess how the requirements of new legislation affect - or even help - an FSP.”

Compliance wasn’t a field for some of our COs when they first joined the industry, but today it is an essential, dedicated resource. As the world of compliance evolves, with innovation a serious consideration within legislation, it is an interesting time to be in financial services.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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