

COMPLIANCE AND RESILIENCE:

More compatible
than you
might think...



“Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.” - Thomas Edison

In many aspects of life, the difference between obstacle and opportunity is often simply a matter of perspective. One of the core lenses through which we view the business of financial services is that of risk management and mitigation. And this is only right when we are dealing with the assets, life savings and financial legacy of millions of people and organisations.

Look beyond the surface

However, this orientation runs the risk of blinding us to the inherent opportunities lying just below the surface. We all know that the growing complexity of the regulatory environment in our industry and the often onerous focus on compliance means that we begin to view these responsibilities as an expense layer rather than an opportunity to increase our resilience.

I would argue that by refocusing executive attention beyond the regulations themselves to their actual intent, we can use this insight to build competitive advantage within our organisations.

Use compliance as a toolkit

Rather than viewing the outcomes-based approach of Treating Customers Fairly (TCF) as a box-ticking exercise, we could interrogate the intent behind the regulatory approach to improve the experience our customers receive, along with our competitive advantage. Practically, the regulatory framework provides us with a useful toolkit by which to examine our own business and perhaps highlight blind spots that were missing from our initial thinking at a purely commercial level of planning.

Looking at compliance as an obligation, we could, for example, view regulatory

implementation projects as swallowing large parts of IT budgets, time and resources. This mindset runs the risk of simply adding layers to an already muddled legacy systems environment.

Alternatively, we could use the opportunity to enhance the system, the functionality, efficiencies and the customer experience.

Clean up dirty data

A FAIS requirement for more robust record keeping processes could be seen as an opportunity to clean up obsolete and dirty data, standardise content and establish clearer, more accessible records. The resultant internal efficiencies and improved customer experience could make us more resilient as a progressive commercial enterprise, rather than simply a compliant business.

It would be remiss to talk about resilience without referring to the unique and intense pressures placed on all businesses through the COVID-19 crisis and ensuing national lockdown.

As with all businesses, Fedgroup has had to navigate through the challenges of ensuring ongoing operational capability, while looking for new areas of opportunity.

Our strength in people, processes and robust systems ensured that we were well-poised to maintain operations and high levels of customer service throughout the lockdown. However, we have now reached a new phase where many businesses will be re-entering the marketplace and returning to physical premises.

The challenge of adhering to stringent workplace restrictions and precautions as we

enter Level 3 lockdown is not unique to our business. However, rather than viewing the workplace regulations as simply an issue of compliance, we looked to their intent and to our own capabilities.

Intelligent monitoring

We realised that effective measurement, monitoring and consolidated reporting on people and buildings was critical to mitigating the risk of operational shutdown, due to poor employee health or lack of compliance with COVID-19 regulations. We had the expertise in combining systems, emerging technology platforms and administration processes in new-age products like those found in our Impact Farming app, to do it more than capably ourselves. We therefore rapidly developed an intelligent and predictive monitoring and reporting solution that could be used not only by ourselves but could also be offered to other businesses to help them keep their employees and customers safe. And thus, the SmartPlexus.io solution was born.

We had looked past regulatory compliance as a burden, to seeing within it an opportunity for a new product solution, and one that extends beyond the realm of financial services at that.



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