



Becoming friendly with CMS

Top Proven Tips for Communicating



Health Care Compliance Association
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Bios

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Goals

Try not to think of your relationship with CMS as a relationship with the IRS

- They're not there to "catch you" doing something wrong – if it feels like that today, you can turn it around
- It takes work on your part to turn it around, though!

Why work toward a strong relationship?

- Quid pro quo – the more you share, the more you'll benefit
- Priority access to issue resolution
- Over time, you'll spend less time worrying about the specific wording on a response, and more time on things that matter

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How to improve your day-to-day with CMS

1. Building a relationship
2. Relationship credibility and respect
3. Don't argue
4. Remember the rules
5. Be transparent

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Compliance is not a job, it's a mission



Compliance Mission Statement:
"Uphold the highest level of ethical standards, and do the right thing at all times to protect our members."

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Building a Relationship

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Building a Relationship

- Relationships take work, especially if it starts one-sided
 - We've all heard of "friendly" CMS RAs – that may be an exception, not the norm
- You need to prioritize *quality* interchanges
 - Use the time before a meeting starts
 - What personal details do you know about each other?
 - Focus on shared interests
- Find ways to make them more successful
 - How is their success measured by their boss or department?

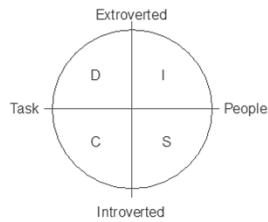
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Building a Relationship

There are a variety of tools that can help

One tool - DISC

- D – be direct, brief, to the point
- I – build rapport, let them verbalize
- S – don't be pushy; give specifics
- C – pay attention to details; don't generalize



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Relationship Credibility and Respect

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Relationship Credibility and Respect

Conduct internal monitoring and talk about it. Hiding is the worst decision a plan could make!



Keep CMS informed on what you're doing. Rolling out a marketing campaign, launching a member touch initiative, or developing new processes? **Let CMS know!**



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Relationship Credibility and Respect

Be authentic and personal

- Small talk – not too personal but not cold – think small talk with an alum or an ex-colleague
- Don't send mass emails – if most of your emails aren't 1:1, it may be an area for improvement
- Can you find ways to be in-person?

Being vulnerable can payoff

- Ask your RA for input on the draft audit protocols
- Sometimes, as you learn about a topic, your CMS contacts do too

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Don't Argue

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Don't Argue



It is not uncommon for an executive to get frustrated and want to argue a rule or decision CMS has made. Don't do it!



Instead, be thoughtful and ask questions if something doesn't make sense. In the end, the rules are the rules.

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Don't Argue

State the situation

- Put yourself in their shoes – they need background and context to understand

Communicate the facts, but also your concerns

- Your concerns, when honest, add depth and sincerity

Deliver the bottom-line

- Clear, memorable, actionable

Use open-ended questions

- A request expressed as a question—one that cannot be answered by a yes or no—is less threatening. How do you feel about this? How can we solve this problem?

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Remember the Rules

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Remember the Rules



Be accountable



Test



Over-communicate



Validate

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Be Transparent

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Be Transparent

Don't hide issues or questions, it will come back around!

Include CMS in the situation to help with a resolution.

What do you gain? Confidence, trust, and respect.



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Be Transparent

(AT THIS POINT, WILL PULL UP LIVE INTERNET POLL)

- How many times did you give CMS a “heads up” on any issue in the last year?
 - 0 – 2
 - 3 – 6
 - 7 – 10
 - 10+

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Summary

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Summary

- Work at building an authentic relationship with your CMS contacts
- Keep CMS informed about what you're doing
- Use disagreements as learning experiences
- Be transparent – lean toward over-sharing than under-sharing

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Questions?

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