Rubio’s Takes a Fresh Approach to Ethics and Compliance

“When I looked at examples of all the other companies that have used NAVEX Global, I saw for myself the advantage of what they were doing. I realized we could use the system as a restaurant-wide communication tool, rather than just a hotline.”

- Dennis Kreta, Director of Internal Audit, Rubio’s

Not many companies are born as a direct result of a group of friends camping on the beach and basking in the sun at San Felipe.

After first tasting a fish taco in San Felipe, Mexico, Ralph Rubio returned to San Diego to hand-craft his own recipe and introduced America to the fish taco. Since 1983, Rubio’s has served delicious fish tacos and fresh Mexican food for customers. Rubio’s Restaurants has grown to 200 locations more than 3,250 employees across the Southwest. The company’s commitment to its employees led Rubio’s to expand its partnership with NAVEX Global to strengthen its culture of ethics, integrity, and good ideas.

Can a Hotline Double as a Comprehensive Communication Tool?

Dennis Kreta, Director of Internal Audit at Rubio’s, wanted to increase his understanding of the risks in the restaurant faced. To accomplish that, he started thinking about how to improve the way employees communicate their concerns to management.

As a company committed to its employees, Rubio’s needed a compliance system that would keep employees safe and happy. Kreta knew that he needed greater insight into any possible risk issues the restaurant faced – from employment issues to possible financial misconduct.

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Rubio’s already used NAVEX Global’s Hotline to meet federal whistleblowing standards, but it was intended only for reporting major ethical issues. Kreta began to wonder if the Hotline could be put to more use? If there was a communication tool for reporting anything that might compromise the wellbeing of employees and other stakeholders, Kreta would be more aware of potential financial misconduct, and Rubio’s would have greater insight into risk issues.

He called his account representative at NAVEX Global to see what options were available.

The NAVEX Global implementation expert showed him what he could accomplish using the EthicsPoint case management software that Rubio’s already had in place to monitor hotline calls. Seeing the value in a more structured, centralized approach to managing issues, Rubio’s People’s Services team began promoting the reporting system as an employee feedback tool, and calls started to come in. “The risk issues were out there before, but we didn’t have information about them. Our ability to understand the issues we face is greatly improved.”

Now, both the People’s Services and Internal Audit departments use NAVEX Global’s case management software to handle cases. The structured, centralized database increases efficiency. “Every detail of the report is documented. We have the issue, we have the follow-up and we have the resolution. We are saving time and we are increasing speed.” Kreta believes the reporting system gives employees more confidence that Rubio’s is acting in their best interest, and it adds a new level of transparency to what the organization is doing.

Food for Thought: When is a hotline more than a hotline?

Healthy Results

There is more work to do, but Kreta is keeping the ideas fresh. As a greater variety of reports are submitted, he envisions using EthicsPoint to conduct detailed analysis. “We will look at reports from a company level, to guide our understanding of any issue or area that we need to look at specifically.”

Are you ready to get more results without increasing costs like Kreta did? Contact NAVEX Global.