

A BarkerGilmore 20th Anniversary Executive Profile

In conversation with Managing Director Max Gelernter



Luis Kolster



*Chief Compliance Officer,
HF Sinclair*

"Once your role expands and people see you as a leader, not only do your words and actions carry greater weight, but so does your silence and inaction."

The most effective compliance leaders do more than manage policies, investigations, and regulatory requirements. They help organizations build cultures where ethics and integrity guide decision-making at every level. For Luis Kolster, Chief Compliance Officer of HF Sinclair, that mission has been a consistent focus throughout his career.

As part of BarkerGilmore's 20th anniversary, the firm is reconnecting with former placements whose careers reflect leadership at the highest levels. Luis's journey highlights the importance of values-based leadership, continuous learning, and the human side of compliance.

Returning to a Passion

When the opportunity at HF Sinclair emerged, Luis did not view the decision as difficult. The role offered an opportunity to return to what he enjoys most: building and strengthening ethics and compliance programs within publicly traded companies.

"Joining HF Sinclair was an easy decision for me," Luis explains. "I was ready to get back to what I'm most passionate about."

Equally important was the organization's commitment to integrity. Luis was drawn to a leadership team that viewed ethics not as a compliance requirement, but as a foundation for business decision-making. The company's values of Safety, Integrity, Teamwork, Ownership, and Inclusion are closely aligned with his leadership philosophy.

Learning Through Every Opportunity

Looking back on more than twenty-five years of leadership experience, Luis does not point to a single defining assignment or mentor. Instead, he views every role as an opportunity to learn and grow.

"Honestly, every role I've had over the past twenty-five years has felt like a stretch assignment," he says.

His career has spanned multiple industries, countries, and leadership environments. Along the way, he has worked with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, experiences that reinforced the importance of adaptability, curiosity, and respect for different perspectives.

For Luis, leadership development is not tied to a single moment. It is the cumulative result of approaching every challenge with the right mindset and a willingness to learn.

Leadership Through Communication

As responsibilities expanded, Luis learned that leadership carries influence beyond formal authority.

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The lesson reinforced the importance of intentional communication. Effective compliance leaders must be able to connect with people across every level of an organization, from frontline employees to executive leadership and the board. Building those relationships requires constant attention and a willingness to adapt communication styles to different audiences.

Earning Trust

Luis believes trust is the foundation of every successful compliance program. While results matter, credibility is built just as much through the way those results are achieved.

Every Chief Compliance Officer, in his view, must establish a clear roadmap to strengthen and mature the compliance function. Progress against that plan builds confidence among stakeholders and demonstrates the program's value.

"Trust is built by consistently delivering results and sustained by the way you deliver them. Every Chief Compliance Officer needs to design a clear roadmap for strengthening and maturing their program, one grounded in regulatory requirements, best practices, and risk profiles. The ability to successfully show meaningful progress against that plan, even when there are setbacks along the way, builds credibility and earns trust. But ultimately, how you achieve those results matters more than the results themselves," he says.

Even when challenges or setbacks arise, leaders earn credibility by remaining focused, transparent, and committed to continuous improvement.

The Human Side of Compliance

As artificial intelligence continues to reshape business processes, Luis believes the core of compliance leadership remains deeply human.

While technology can review documents, identify patterns, and flag potential issues, it cannot fully understand the motivations, intent, or judgment behind individual decisions. Compliance ultimately revolves around people, their actions, and whether those actions align with an organization's values and culture.

For that reason, Luis believes human judgment, emotional intelligence, and leadership will remain essential components of effective compliance programs regardless of how technology continues to evolve.

A Focus on Fit

Having worked with executive search firms throughout his career, Luis believes the best recruiters understand far more than what appears on a resume.

"The best executive recruiters ... understand how a candidate's experience aligns with the unwritten requirements that truly define a role."

For Luis, the strongest search partners focus on fit. They understand the organization's needs, recognize the qualities required for success, and help align the candidate with the opportunity.

Closing Perspective

Luis Kolster's career reflects qualities that define successful compliance leadership: integrity, adaptability, strong communication, and a commitment to continuous growth.

For BarkerGilmore, his success reinforces a philosophy developed over two decades. The most successful placements occur when leadership values, organizational culture, and long-term goals align to create lasting impact.

A Partner in Leadership

At BarkerGilmore, we believe the right leadership decisions shape organizations for years to come. For over twenty years, we have advised clients and candidates with a focus on fit, readiness, and enduring partnership. Learn more about our work and access additional resources on [our website](#), or reach us directly at [877.571.5047](tel:877.571.5047) or info@barkergilmore.com.

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