Matteson Ellis Interviewed on Attitudes Towards Anti-Corruption Efforts in Latin America by The Anti-Corruption Report

“Regional Risk Spotlight: Matteson Ellis of Miller & Chevalier on Maturing Attitudes Towards Anti-Corruption Compliance in Latin America”
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Matteson Ellis was interviewed regarding changing attitudes towards compliance in Latin America and how companies should be adjusting their programs as the level of enforcement increases and enforcers become more sophisticated. Some countries are more advanced in their anti-corruption attitudes than others, Ellis said, listing Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico as examples of more mature compliance jurisdictions. “In those countries, companies have adopted compliance policies, are vetting their business partners for integrity issues and are training their employees and third parties. There are compliance associations and conferences being held and those conferences are packed. And the local governments are passing and modifying laws to make them more effective in preventing corruption,” he said. Ellis gives companies, international standards, and governments credit for the increased emphasis on corporate compliance in the region. “The [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] OECD working group on corruption and other groups are taking steps to prevent corruption and promoting those efforts. Having agreed-upon international standards is making a difference in what laws individual companies have on their books. ISO 37001 is certainly playing a role, too,” he said, adding, “the fact that governments are now holding the companies and businesspeople who pay bribes accountable rather than just trying to prohibit public officials from receiving bribes has fueled companies to institute rigorous compliance programs. These programs then, in turn, expose issues and companies are incentivized to self-report and cooperate with governments in the hopes of a better outcome.” Companies can also gain a competitive advantage from building strong compliance programs in the region. “It is more and more the case that having a strong compliance program is a business advantage for Latin American companies. Companies that can position themselves in the market as being competent at compliance are going to be more attractive business partners because they don’t bring the same kinds of collateral risks that other possible partners do,” Ellis said.