



## Interview series VCO Advisory Board In conversation with: Mirjam Bakker-Vergouw

Interview by: *Angela Stap*

### Introduction

*The VCO has an Advisory Council that is broad and multidisciplinary in composition. The purpose of the Advisory Board is to provide the board with solicited and unsolicited advice and to take the VCO to the next level with suggestions and to soundboard. In the coming months, you will be introduced to all five members. This month it is the turn of:*



**Mirjam Bakker-Vergouw**, Chief Compliance Officer at ABNAMRO

### How would you describe your role as a member of the VCO Advisory Board?

I enjoy thinking about the direction of the VCO and find it an honour to be a sparring partner of the board. And to challenge you to think 'out of the box' and to be future-oriented.

### What are your biggest motivations for serving on the Advisory Council?

I think the VCO is important for the profession of compliance professionals.

### What is still on your bucket list?

My PhD!

### Which person would you still like to meet?

Professor Sumantra Ghoshal; He has done important research on culture in organisations. His thinking is an important inspiration to me. Unfortunately, he is no longer alive.

### What is your history with the VCO?

I was chairperson of the board. Over 10 years ago.

### Why would you recommend membership of the VCO?

[it is] hugely important that we continue to learn together about the development of the compliance profession and take a position in society. A profession with a solid association is a very nice platform for that.

### You have also been chairman of the VCO. Where do you see the VCO in five years' time? And in 10 years?

In 5 years, I expect the VCO to be the professional association for compliance professionals inside -and outside- the financial sector and also to embrace international colleagues. The professional code we are discussing now will then be fully in use.

In 10 years' time, it will be clear that the VCO represents all compliance professionals in the Netherlands. Membership is at the foundation of every compliance professional's career and functions as a compass for learning together, continuing to develop and make an impact as a profession.

### You have worked in various sectors as a compliance professional, what can the sectors learn from each other?

Be open to knowledge and development from outside the sector; the compliance officer in the financial sector can learn a lot from the more holistic and business-oriented compliance professionals at the corporates. They, in turn, can learn a lot from the structured, partly regulatory-driven, approach of the compliance officer in the financial sector.

### What is a key success factor for a professional in ethics, compliance and integrity?

'Getting in the room is one thing, staying in the room is what makes you successful'. It's all about impact.

### In what position did you start your career and what brought you into the field of ethics, compliance and integrity?

I once started as an international corporate lawyer and contract manager. At one of my employers, compliance became very important due to all kinds of incidents at the time. Based on that experience, I set up and managed a global compliance organisation at another employer. My personal passion for Fair Business has been, and still is, an important guideline in this.

### What do you experience as your greatest success in your Compliance career to date?

That's a tough question. I am proud of having successfully led large compliance-related change projects as a servant leader over the years. And if you then inspire (young) colleagues and are able to offer them opportunities for development, I am actually most proud of that.



This interview is a publication of the Association of Compliance Professionals; the professional association for professionals in the field of Ethics, Compliance and Integrity since 2001.