

GCA Newsletter - Edition 8



Meet the CCO – Steve Butts, Code Compliance Officer Wm Morrison plc

Question: Tell us something about yourself and your path to becoming a Code Compliance Officer.

I lead Morrisons' corporate responsibility programme. Part of that is management of the application of the Groceries Code to our business. I'm a commercial lawyer by profession, so the Code Compliance Officer role is a good blend of my broader retail business experience with my legal background. You can find out more about both at morrison.co.uk/cr and morrison.co.uk/gscop

Question: What are the most challenging aspects of your CCO role?

The main challenge is awareness and ensuring the business and suppliers have a good understanding of how the Code operates. There are training providers who suggest that The Groceries Code should be used as a negotiation tool. I think that emphasis is wrong and both suppliers and retailers can benefit more from gaining a good practical understanding of the Code. We should be aiming to use it constructively so that together we get to a mutually agreed position on Code related issues.

Question: If you could change one thing about the groceries market, what would it be?

The common theme of my work is to encourage the business and our stakeholders to have more of a long term view. It's the nature of our industry to constantly innovate, develop and evolve as we track what our customers need and want to buy. We've made a lot of progress here, but if we can further embed sustainable procurement as a fundamental part of how we operate it will benefit the sector and resources in our wider supply chain.

Question: What achievement as CCO are you most proud of?

I've shouldered the CCO role at Morrisons for some time and developed our approach to support the Adjudicator's call to operate collaboratively and within the spirit of the Code. We suggested an annual meeting of Chairs of the respective audit committees with Christine Tacon and similarly recommended the voluntary agreement on limiting profit recovery claims. Both of these suggestions were adopted by the Adjudicator.

Question: What 3 things do you want to achieve in the next 12 months?

We've widening our internal training to also include tailored sessions for our supply chain colleagues and key managers in finance to grow even greater awareness of the Code. I aim to support our new senior trading leadership team as we simplify our trading relationships with suppliers to increase transparency and support each others business for growth. Finally, I'm going to continue to work on the Adjudicator's Top 5 Issues as there are always improvements that can be made.

Question: Is there anything else you would like to share with reader of New from the Adjudicator?

I would just reiterate what I said when I've spoken publically about engagement between suppliers and CCO's in general. I think there is a real desire to pick up matters referred to us and find a solution. It's better to do that openly and directly with your retailer in order to resolve matters. Raising an issue in a positive way with a mindset to solve an issue, in my experience, often leads to a quicker solution and is usually to everyone's long term benefit.