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### Challenges of compliance management in medium-sized companies

The relevance of compliance management systems for ensuring conformity with rules in the company seems to be rated as important not only by large corporations, but also by smaller and medium-sized companies in Germany. Nevertheless, the results of quantitative studies indicate that compliance measures are implemented by smaller companies only to a limited extent. The reasons for this were examined in more detail in the qualitative study presented here. The study is part of a research project sponsored by the German Ministry of Economics, which has set itself the goal of developing a standard for compliance management suitable for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Using guided expert interviews with CEOs, various problems and challenges were identified that stand in the way of the successful implementation of compliance in SMEs. Beyond a pure status analysis, the subjective attitudes and motives of the interviewees were of particular interest in this context to identify the reasons for possible implementation deficits. The biggest barrier revealed was that, especially in smaller companies whose corporate culture is characterized by a strong relationship of trust among each other, compliance management can give employees a feeling of mistrust and control. In this context, a sensitive compliance communication has the essential task of promoting employee acceptance of compliance management tools.