

Case Study: Severson Environmental Services, Inc.



Headquarters: Niagara Falls, NY
Founded: 1982
Website: severson.com

The Challenge

"I'm impressed with the company, the anonymous hotline system and the professionalism of everyone I've dealt with at Ethical Advocate."

Bill McDermott,
VP and CFO,
Severson Environmental
Services, Inc.

Severson Environmental Services, Inc. (www.severson.com) provides a comprehensive range of services for the cleanup of sites and facilities contaminated by hazardous materials.

As a provider of services to private, municipal and federal customers, Severson works not only with clients, but with a variety of partners, suppliers and subcontractors. Ethical Advocate was specifically recommended to Severson by their accounting firm, one of the largest in the

beltway specializing in federal government contracting. The CPA recommended Ethical Advocate to institute an anonymous hotline service as a best practice to deter fraud and ethical violations, and to demonstrate a leadership position in being compliant with the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) requiring hotlines and ethics trainings.

The Solution

Ethical Advocate implemented a customized, multi-lingual reporting system consisting of a web-based application and a phone hotline, allowing people to make anonymous reports in the manner most comfortable for them. Its FISMA-compliant hotline, providing the maximum in data security, was of particular importance to Severson.

In addition to anonymous reporting, Ethical Advocate provided customized manuals and offsite training for Severson personnel. For its part, Severson undertook the hotline implementation holistically, including tailored and regularly scheduled ethics trainings facilitated by Ethical Advocate for its senior leadership, and opening the system to the Severson partner ecosystem.

"We have a lot of confidence in the Ethical Advocate service," Bill McDermott, VP and CFO for Severson, said. "Once Ethical Advocate was recommended to us, regardless of requirements, we realized their service was a good thing to have and we committed to using it."

Training

"Ethical Advocate facilitated live training sessions on ethical conduct. We have training sessions twice a year which have been very beneficial. It raises awareness of ethical considerations, and we need to do that."

Peace of Mind

"We've had a very good experience with Ethical Advocate. We're pleased with the service and the support. We have a lot of confidence in the reporting solution."

Good Business

"We're the customer. This is one of the requirements we have as good businessmen. We ask our subcontractors to sign an acknowledgement of conduct that includes the hotline — and that we expect them to report issues."

The Results

“We make (this service) available to anyone with whom we conduct business. It’s a safeguard, and we publicize it.”

Bill McDermott,
VP and CFO,
Sevenson Environmental
Services, Inc.

Sevenson can measure the success of its Ethical Advocate implementation in part through what’s not happening: There have not been many ethical incidents reported. Bill McDermott points out that the service provides an aspect of transparency that encourages responsibility, and it includes more than just the employees of Sevenson.

“It’s a solution that’s available to our employees, to our customers, and to our subcontractors and vendors,” McDermott

said. “We make it available to anyone with whom we conduct business. It’s a safeguard, and we publicize it.”

Sevenson understands not only the importance of ethical conduct, but the human factors that influence it. “We have a level of comfort from knowing we have the Ethical Advocate service. We understand that there might be reports that we’d never receive if a person had to reveal his identity,” McDermott added.



Ethical Advocate has delivered a system that gives Sevenson an important operational and procedural check. At the same time, Ethical Advocate has performed at the level that keeps Sevenson a happy customer. “I’m impressed with the company, the anonymous hotline system and the professionalism of everyone I’ve dealt with at Ethical Advocate,” McDermott said.

About Sevenson Environmental Services, Inc.

Sevenson Environmental Services, Inc. provides comprehensive hazardous materials site remediation services. Founded in 1977, Sevenson was the principal remediation contractor for the Love Canal site in Niagara Falls. Since then, Sevenson has completed more than 1,200 environmental remediation projects with a combined value of more than \$2.5 billion, including projects at more than 100 sites on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund list. Sevenson and its subsidiaries have offices in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles and Buffalo, where Sevenson operates a full-service environmental testing and treatability study laboratory.

About Ethical Advocate

Ethical Advocate provides confidential and anonymous incident reporting, meeting Sarbanes-Oxley, HIPAA, and many other regulatory and reporting needs, including being the only FISMA compliant hotline in the country. Ethical Advocate delivers confidential and anonymous reporting 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Persons desiring to report incidents, indiscretions, or suggestions can do so securely with privacy and anonymity, by phone or through Ethical Advocate’s secure website in multiple languages.