

PHILSME DIGITAL

SEPTEMBER 2026

MAGAZINE



COMPLIANCE RISKS EVERY ONLINE SELLER IGNORES

Until BIR/DOLE Comes Knocking

Atty. Psydi Oatemar
Sprout Solutions, Legal Manager

globalpayments



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Infobuilder

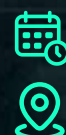


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2026 EDITION

BUSINESS MAGAZINE

HOLDING WHAT WAS BUILT

After loss, leadership did not arrive as a choice—it arrived as responsibility. In stepping into what her husband built, Trixie Esguerra-Abrenilla learned to lead not from certainty, but from continuity.



CHINKEE TAN on financial resilience | **FRANCIS KONG** on courageous leadership | **MON ABREA** on entrepreneurship & responsibility | **STARTING A BUSINESS** — Where Every Business Truly Begins | **DAVID ABRENILLA** — The Builder Behind PHILSME | **STORIES** from founders & industry leaders



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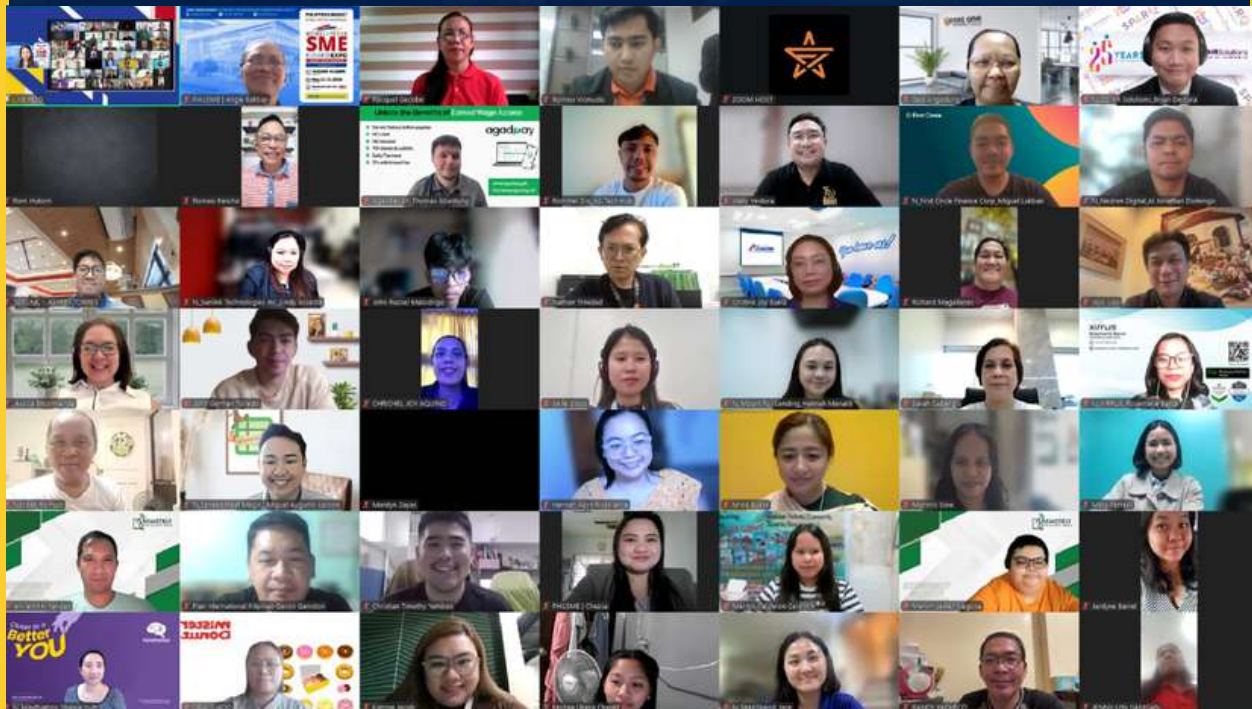


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Making Compliance Part of Your Business Growth

PHILIPPINE
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By: Franchezca Romano

For SMEs, the biggest compliance risk may not be what you're doing wrong but what you can't prove you're doing right.

Business growth usually comes with a familiar checklist: more customers, more sales, more employees, more platforms, and more opportunities. Compliance? Often, it comes later.

But what happens when a regulator asks for a record tomorrow and the document is buried in a Messenger thread, sitting in an Excel file only one person understands, or simply doesn't exist?

This is precisely where growing businesses can find themselves exposed, according to **Atty. Psydi Oatemar of Sprout Solutions**.

Speaking to SME owners at the 43rd PHILSME Business Networking Meeting, Atty. Oatemar offered a practical reminder: **Compliance should not be something businesses scramble to prepare when an issue arises. It should be built into the business as it grows.**

The image shows a presentation slide with a blue background and geometric shapes. On the left, there is a small inset video of a woman speaking. The main slide content includes the Sprout logo, the title 'Compliance Risks Every Online Seller Ignores', a subtitle '(Until BIR/DOLE Comes Knocking)', and the name 'Atty. Psydi Oatemar' with her title 'Legal Manager, Sprout Solutions'. A photo of Atty. Oatemar is on the right side of the slide. In the bottom left corner, there is a logo for the Philippine SME Business Network.

continue to page 12

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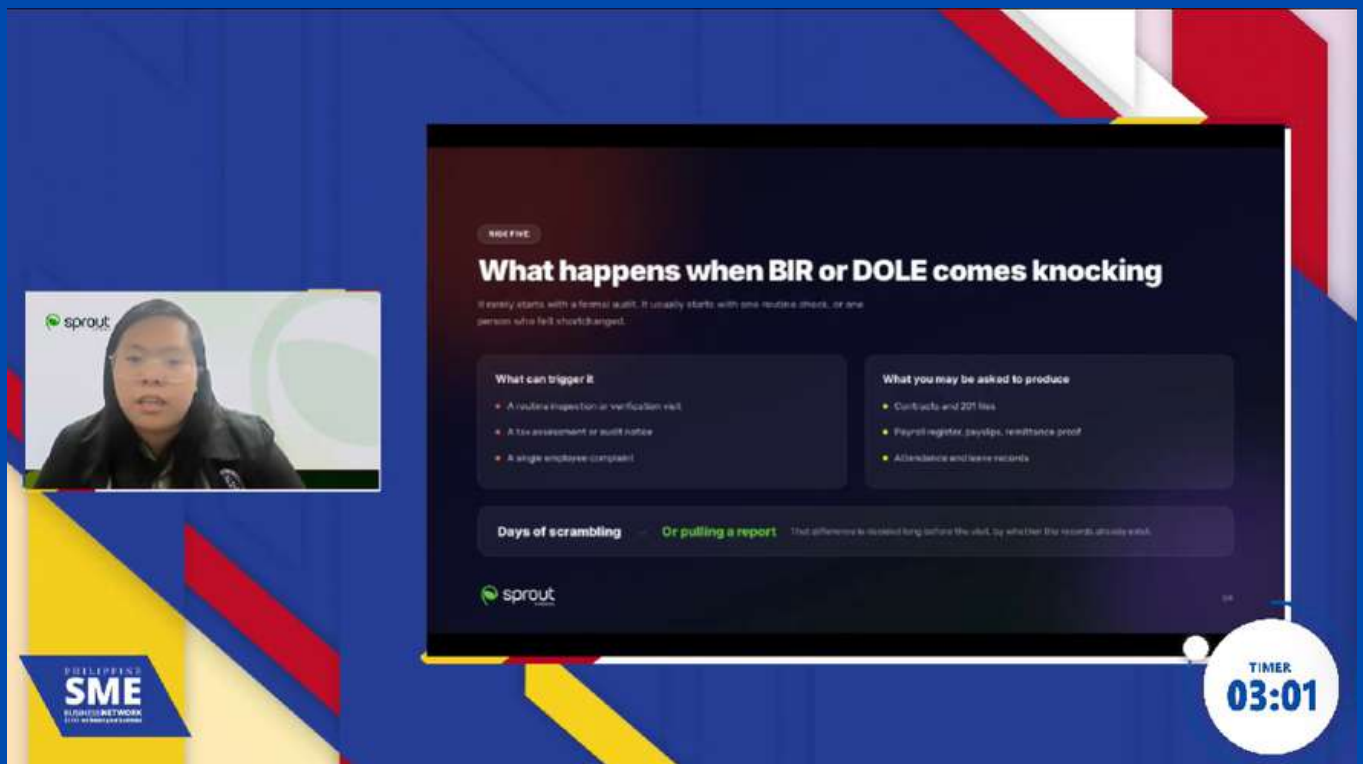
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When Growth Outpaces the Paperwork

A modern business can look highly sophisticated from the outside. Online stores are automated. Payments are processed digitally. Inventory is tracked. Ads run automatically. AI helps create content and communicate with customers. Yet behind the scenes, critical business processes may still depend on spreadsheets, chat messages, or screenshots.

The problem isn't necessarily the tool. The problem is when the business has evolved but the systems managing its obligations haven't.

For online sellers, every transaction leaves a trail from marketplace sales and websites to payment gateways, bank transfers, e-wallets, delivery records, invoices, and receipts. As businesses expand across multiple channels, their registration, invoicing, tax records, and documentation need to keep pace.

The goal is simple: records should be ready before anyone asks for them.

The Five Gaps Hiding Under A Healthy Business

These gaps can remain invisible while sales are growing and operations appear to be working—until a regulator, employee, or business issue requires the records behind them.

1. TRANSACTIONS

Can you trace the money? Growing businesses need systems that allow transactions to be organized, searchable, and properly documented across every sales channel.

2. PEOPLE

Hiring changes your responsibilities. Worker classification is also critical. As Oatemar explained, calling someone an “independent contractor” in a contract does not, by itself, determine the nature of the working relationship. The actual

circumstances of the work matter. “The moment you hire, you become an employer.”

3. PAYROLL

Small errors can become expensive. A minor calculation error repeated across every payroll cycle can accumulate into a significant problem. And if questions arise, simply proving that employees were paid isn't enough. Businesses should also be able to demonstrate how the amount was calculated.

4. RECORDS

Messenger is not your filing cabinet. Whether it involves leave approval, attendance, employment agreements, or payroll-related matters, proper documentation creates a clear record for both employers and employees. The objective isn't paperwork for paperwork's sake. It's having information that can be retrieved when it matters.

5. REACTIVE COMPLIANCE

Waiting can cost more. The cost isn't limited to potential penalties. Reactive compliance can also consume management time, employee time, and professional fees.

From Reactive To Ready

The answer isn't necessarily hiring a large compliance department. Instead, Atty. Oatemar encouraged businesses to make compliance part of their everyday operations.

The real goal is to build a system that makes compliance part of how the business operates.

Your business shouldn't outgrow its compliance systems. Growth brings more transactions, people, responsibilities, and risks. The earlier those systems are built, the less likely business owners are to find themselves scrambling when someone comes knocking.

As Oatemar's message makes clear, **compliance shouldn't catch up with a business after something goes wrong. It should grow alongside it.**

For entrepreneurs navigating the growing digital economy, staying ahead also means continuing to learn, adapt, and build better systems. More practical e-commerce strategies and insights from industry leaders will be featured at the 1st E-Commerce Expo Philippines, powered by PHILSME, happening on November 20–21, 2026, at the SMX Convention Center Aura, Taguig.

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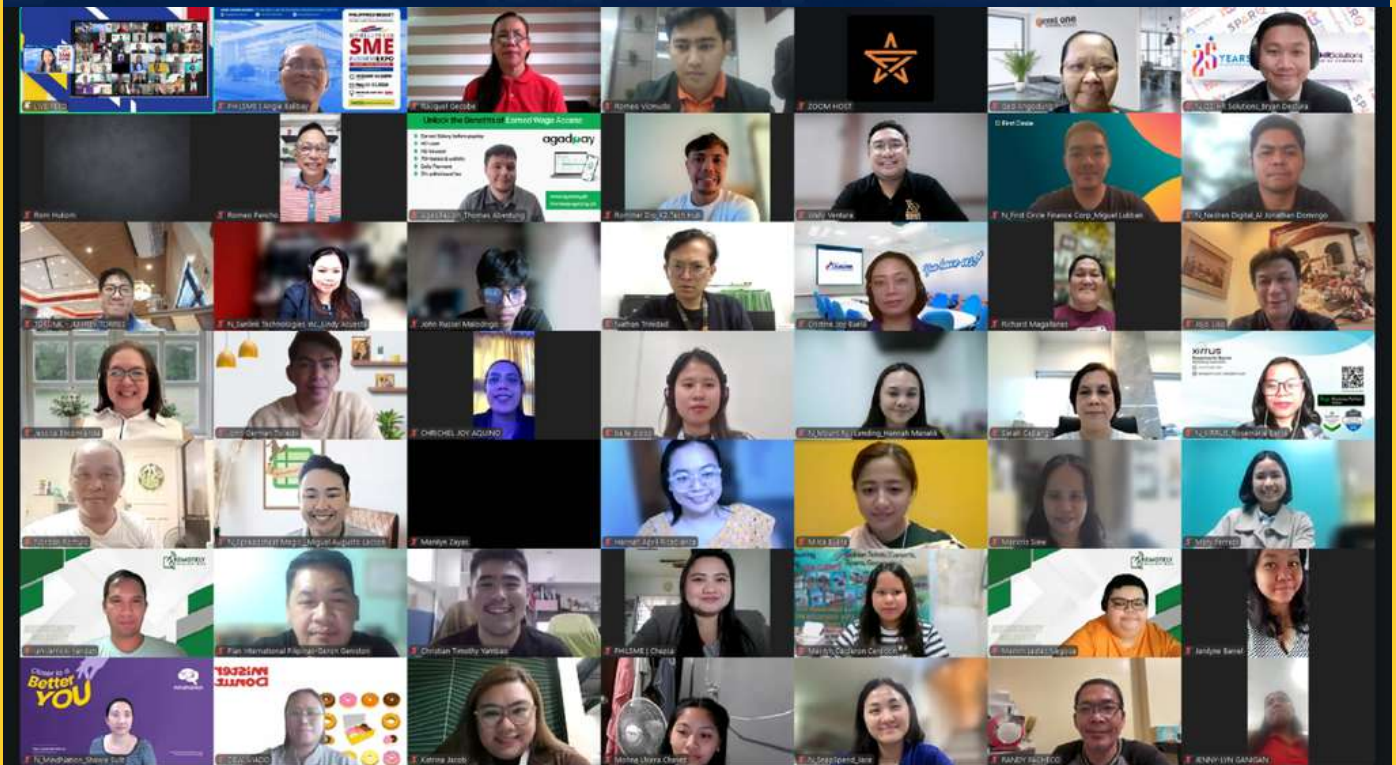
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