

Michael J. Messier

Senior Consultant

Michael Messier's career as a Special Agent with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) spanned 15 years in domestic and international assignments. In 1995, Michael entered DEA after spending 10 years as a practicing, licensed, and certified financial advisor in New York City. His last position with the DEA was as a Supervisory Special Agent stationed at the US Embassy in Mexico City, where he led the DEA's Mexico Financial Investigations Group. In this position, he managed and directed DEA resources and assets in support of bilateral enforcement operations within Mexico and other Latin American countries. His efforts included supervising criminal investigations and targeting US financial institutions for failing to maintain adequate and effective anti-money laundering (AML) programs as per the Bank Secrecy Act (BSA) under USC Title 31. Michael also worked closely with the US Department of Treasury to impose economic sanctions on significant drug traffickers designated as Drug Trafficking Kingpins by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

In 2010, Michael left DEA to join Bank of America as a Managing Director tasked to build out, develop, and lead the Latin American Region under Global Financial Crimes & Compliance. Based in Mexico City, Mexico, he directed efforts to integrate the Bank's AML Enterprise Program with Latin American lines of business to mitigate risks and comply with local regulatory requirements. In this critical position, successes included partnering with stakeholders and senior management to eliminate over a dozen significant audit issues in his first year. Michael was subsequently assigned to lead the Bank's Special Case Management Group. This investigative group handled significant and sensitive AML and Counter Financing of Terrorism (CFT) investigations, as well as investigations involving politically exposed persons (PEPs). He also worked closely with the Global Head of the Bank's Financial Intelligence Unit to enhance transactional monitoring and improve SAR filing metrics.

In 2015, Michael became a private consultant and currently advises and provides counsel to select clients on financial crime and BSA compliance matters, specifically related to money laundering, financing of terrorism, and corruption, along with developing and drafting risk assessments. He has created, developed, and delivered financial investigation and compliance training to law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, and financial regulators in the US and countries in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and Eurasia.

Michael received the 2017 Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA) Volunteer of the Year Award, recognized for his work on AML and CFT projects in the Middle East and Africa. A Spanish speaker, he has spoken at numerous conferences and participated in panel discussions on BSA compliance and financial crime matters in domestic and international venues. Michael maintains a Certified Financial Planner (CFP) designation and attended Financial Action Task Force (FATF) training as a country assessor. He received a BA degree in Economics with a minor in Quantitative Methods from The American University in Washington, DC.

mmessier@straife.com

+1 (202) 945-4944