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US President Trump is attempting to reshuffle the deck with our trading partners and replace the existing multilateral arrangements with bilateral trade agreements. It's easier to negotiate a deal between two entities than having multiple parties all in agreement on the same trading point. There are 195 countries in the world.

Surely, we won't have that many agreements, but we'll certainly have many new ones. This will be done before the midterm elections. Three things will occur: first, confusion; second, clarification; thirdly, job security — not for everyone, but the trade compliance community will find itself in a highly visible and valuable role.



Completely new job descriptions will be created. Regulatory agencies that shift their enforcement focus depending on the business scandal du jour will prompt companies to add very specific trade compliance niche roles seeking subject matter expertise in areas such as foreign trade zones, free trade agreements, the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, transfer pricing, country of origin, drawback, and classification.

The role of the trade compliance professional continues to evolve. Completely rewritten bilateral trade arrangements will perpetuate this exciting trend. Identifying experienced trade compliance talent, particularly export talent, continues to grow exponentially more difficult as companies add head count in this area and there are simply not enough qualified candidates to fill the roles.

While the search for trade talent becomes extremely competitive, a monumental change in the selection process is sweeping the country. Legislation has been passed in Massachusetts, New York City, and Philadelphia that bars employers from asking job applicants about their salary history. Another 20 states have proposed the same legislation. Expect this to be included in every campaign speech during 2018. It sounds good. We'll see. They'll be lots of confusion and clarification on how interview questions can be framed to circumvent the laws.

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