



Improving Your Skills as an Internal Auditor

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#1 Lack of Focus

- Illness or tiredness
- Out of their Comfort Zone
- Long time since last audit
- Distractions
- New to auditing
- New standard



Ways to Ensure Focus

- Get a good night's sleep
- Reschedule the audit
- Start fresh first thing in the morning
- Put on your "auditor hat" and don't get sucked into other work



#2 Familiarity

- Auditor is the expert
- Very familiar with the system
- Already has the blanks filled in
- No new discovery



Ways to Combat Familiarity

- Swap with other internal auditors to get a fresh set of eyes
- If that's not possible – force yourself to look at the process from scratch
- Review flow diagrams – fully investigate



#3 Perfection

- In God we trust – all others bring data!
- Trust but verify
- Even mature systems have weak links
- Look for changes, linkage to other processes
- Your job is not to “dig up dirt” but to test the system to prevent risk



#4 The Crutch of Routine

- Use of audit templates results in same results each time
- Too predictable
- No opportunity to follow audit trails or consider changes which result in weakness



Getting out of the Rut

- Challenge yourself to put down the template and use process auditing
- Turtle diagrams, flow diagrams, heat maps all make great audit trails
- Swap areas with other auditors to get a new area to audit
- Swap manufacturing facilities with a sister plant to get a new perspective



#5 Lack of Objective Evidence

Clause/Section	Meets Requirements
4.1 Context of the Organization	✓
4.2 Interested Parties	✓
4.3 Scope of the EMS	✓
4.4 EMS and its Processes	✓

How was this audit conducted? Who was interviewed? Why do they claim it meets expectations?



#5 Lack of Objective Evidence

- May be doing a good audit but no written evidence of it
- Use of checklists and “pencil whipping”
- Lack of guidance on how to best document to support that the processes are working as planned



Example of Objective Evidence

Audit Area: Leadership Clauses: 4, 5 & 6

Expected Outcomes: Involvement in the EMS; Planning to address risk; alignment with business strategies; adjustment when plan isn't met.

Evaluated through: interview with senior leadership, review of management review, discussion of changes at the site, observation through interview of manufacturing areas and site tour.

Expected outcomes were observed to be met.



#6 Lack of Lead Auditor Planning

- Scope, Clauses, Processes aren't fully planned or assigned
- Lack of an audit plan for the system over an extended period of time (to capture the full system)
- Timetables not established
- Lack of follow-up review of audit reports to non-conformances assigned
- Lack of communication to management



Lead Auditor Duties

- Create the infrastructure planning that allows the internal audit team to be successful including:
 - Create the audit plan for 1-3 years
 - Review the performance from past internal and external audits to determine frequency
 - Ensure that all clauses are covered but also include production areas and environmental programs
 - Ensure all internal auditors are trained to the current ISO standard
 - Ensure that internal auditors who may interface with regulatory requirements are familiar with them



#7 Lack of Management Support

- This is the Environmental Manager's System
- We'll help him/her out
- Lack of ownership and leadership
- #1 cause of Major non-conformances in the latest ISO standards



Getting Management Support

- Have 1:1 interviews with the GM, President or top management
- Ask leadership to participate in ISO Leadership training
- Coach your management team that they are expected to be owners and engaged in directing the EMS – ISO requirement
- Having non-conformances issued against leadership (especially by the registrar) will often result in more support



#8 No Experience with Regulations

- The EMS has regulatory and system components intermingled
- Some portions are system only (i.e., leadership, objectives, management review, corrective actions)
 - Could be audited by ISO auditors without EMS program experience
- Many ISO auditors (quality) have zero experience with regulations



Getting Regulatory Experience

- Get regulatory training for your internal auditors
- Schedule regular audits to maintain skills
- Trade EMS internal auditors who have regulatory experience between sister plants
- Offer to trade auditors with a trusted neighboring company
- Outsource internal audits to a professional
- Consider hybrid compliance and internal (systems) audits



#9 Ego

- Scare the auditees to death
- Gloat over non-conformance findings
- Become argumentative with auditees
- Create requirements that aren't based on the ISO standard or the EMS (including programs)
- Use of \$10 words (or terms the auditee isn't familiar with)



Being Humble

- #1 Way to combat ego is to pray for your auditees
- Pray for yourself to be humble, accept other people's way of doing things
- Pray to help them identify risks before they are hurt by it
- Use words commonly used in the facility – scale your vocabulary and speed of speech to the auditees'
- It's not your system – it's theirs!



#10 Lack of Follow Through

- After audits are complete, the lead doesn't review audit reports
- Lack of issuance of non-conformances
- Lack of determination if OFIs are really non-conformances (or vice versa)
- Lack of adjustment to the audit plan based upon results
- Forgetting to communicate the results to management



Closing the Loop on Internal Audits

- Once audit is complete – review reports identify non-conformances, OFIs
- Assign corrective actions, owners, require plan submittals by a due date
- If the lead auditor is downgrading a finding – document the reason and provide objective evidence
- Update the audit plan based upon strengths or weaknesses observed
- Communicate the performance of the EMS to management in management review and other meetings



Other Best Practices

- Read other auditors' reports
- Go to conferences, association meetings to discuss trends in internal audit processes
- Attend webinars to get updated information
- Send your internal auditors to be guides for your registration auditor
- Stop using checklists! Use process flow diagrams – look for linkage
- Management of Change issues make for awesome audit trails!



Your Presenters

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