Quality Auditor Review

Conflict Resolution

Audit Thinking

People are faced with expressed and repressed conflict on a daily basis. Conflict occurs when opposing ideas, thoughts, or actions collide. Most people try to avoid conflicts (disharmony) because of possible negative outcomes. For auditors, conflict is common: auditing by it's very nature invites conflict to some degree, depending on the auditor's actions and the organization's culture. Auditors must be aware that conflict always exists and deal with it to promote effective quality audits.

Conflict may be expressed verbally or in written form. Expressed conflict (ranging from the enraged to the whiner) requires the auditor's immediate action. Attempts to surpress the conflict, used by some auditors to overpower the auditee (i.e. direct/implied threats or ridiculing/ discrediting the issue), are negative and ultimately ineffective. Neither of these techniques promotes continuous improvement and can, infact, result in just the opposite. To foster respect for the audit process, the auditor must address the conflict. Once the conflict is identified all efforts should go to finding common ground.

The auditor should ask the auditees to explain why they disagree. The auditor should listen attentively (don't be defensive) and then either withdraw the finding based on new data or review the observations and standards that apply. The auditor can then either continue the dialogue if progress is being made to resolve the conflict or agree to disagree and advise the auditee of their recourse for dissention or appeal. Dissatisfied auditees may either respond to a request for corrective action or write an appeal letter to the audit program manager authorities using data to support their position to rescind the finding.

Some people readily express their disagreement while others hold back. The auditor must be on the alert for repressed conflict due to organizational culture or individual personality. In many cases, auditees' repressed anger vents itself by delaying action or not responding to a finding or complaining to the audit program manager. If you sense there is repressed conflict, you may want to ask if the auditee has any concerns regarding the observations that were made. I am not suggesting that you create a problem for yourself, but instead, if there is significant repressed conflict or hostility concerning your results, it is better to address it sooner than later.

All rooting out of conflict should take place prior to the exit meeting. The exit meeting is more formal and you will have less freedom to address issues.

Whether expressed or repressed, conflict should al-

> **Conflict must be addressed not suppressed**

From the News Desk

The ASQ CQA certification committee met in August to revise the ASQ CQA Body of Knowledge based on a survey conducted last Spring. The CQA Body of Knowledge was reorganized from 5 parts to 7 parts with added emphasis on corrective action and linking audit results to business values. The revised Body of Knowledge will take effect for the June 1998 exam.

The Audit Guy Dennis Arter

Process Audits

There are three kinds of quality audits: product, process, and system. The second of these - a process audit - is very powerful and generally under utilized.

Think of a process as an action. It is a verb ending in -ing, such as bending, filling, coating, testing, or even loving. A process has an input, an action, and an output. Everything in life is a process!

Generally, a factory uses 6-12 individual processes to make something. As a process auditor, you should choose only one of these processes. The others can wait for the next process audit. This keeps your time short and it also allows you to really focus on the specific task. You can perform an in depth analysis.

As an auditor, you need to measure against some set of requirements. (Remember, the requirements come first. Then the audit may be performed.) When doing a product audit, you would use the specifications as your basis. This is one end of the bases scale. The requirements for a system audit generally come from corporate policies and/or quality system standards, such as ISO or GMP. These are the other end of the bases scale. The requirements for a process audit come from somewhere in the middle of these.

If we are to audit a process, we need to understand the controls associated with that process. Controls are good. They are also hard to implement. When dealing with a process, it is useful to recall the six universal process affectors: methods, materials, manpower, machinery, measurement, and environment. These affectors form the foundation for fishbone diagrams and cause-effect analyses. The concept was originally proposed way back in 1968 by Kaoru Ishikawa.

For each of these process affectors, develop a series of requirements for your checklist. For example, "materials" cover controls associated with material coming into the process. Is there any spec on what comes in? Are materials meeting those specs? Can you even determine the quality of incoming material? Can the operator do anything about incoming material quality? Each of these questions has its basis in a spec, a proce-

dure, a manual, or a standard. They are focused, however on the process affector of "material."

This approach to process auditing will really open your eyes! To perform a good process audit, you must thoroughly research the many requirements for that process. You must read manufacturer's technical manuals. You must understand the instrument maintenance requirements. You must explore every way that process is influenced. This research will probably take you two or three full days to accomplish.

Once you have the checklist, the actual fieldwork should take under two hours. This is because you are focusing on one process and one shift. Next week, you can do the same audit on the back shift. The week after that, you can look at a different product line using that process.

We generally perform process audits in a three month campaign. At the end of three months, you have looked at all the applications of that one process. You have published a report after each audit. Next quarter, audit a different process. You have thoroughly analyzed the first process and don't need to revisit it for at least a year, perhaps two. You have also provided a very valuable service to your organization. Through analysis, the processes will be improved. That's what quality auditing is all about.

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Dennis Arter is the newsletter feature writer and author of the best selling book Quality Audits for Improved Performance.

Dennis has been an independent quality assurance consultant since 1984. His primary service is instruction in the field of management auditing for a wide variety of clients, including government, manufacturing, energy, research, aerospace, and food processing. He is an ASQ Fellow and active in the Quality Audit Division. His home page is at http://home.earthlink.net/~auditguy/ *or he may be*

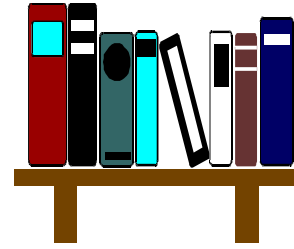**Think of a process as an action**

NEXT

The Audit Boss

Quality Audit Primer
Auditing tips and reminders

Audit Performance: **Opening Meeting Agenda**

Everyone is in place and it is time to start the opening meeting... now what? What is the minimum that needs to be discussed and what are some enhancements? The character of the opening meeting varies depending on the type of audit, who is in attendance, and the purpose of the audit.

First and foremost is to schedule an opening meeting. Even if you have done this same audit several times before and everyone knows you're the quality auditor, there should still be an opening meeting. If the quality audits are a frequent occurrence and everyone knows what to expect, you can keep the meeting short. If it is an audit of a new area or there are new people involved, then expect the meeting to take longer. Prior to the meeting ensure someone is responsible for taking meeting minutes. The following topics should be considered for the opening meeting agenda.

Introductions: Ensure everybody has been introduced and the lead auditor identified. This is an ideal time to take attendance. An auditor can take attendance or pass around a sign up sheet.

Thanks: Thank the person (or acknowledge him or her) who made the arrangements for the audit. This can be anyone who coordinated the audit.

Scope: Reaffirm the areas or groups that will be audited. The scope is normally described as a physical location and/or functions (departments) at a location. If the audit includes the entire site, the functions do not need to be listed individually. Any accessibility limitations placed on the auditors should have been identified prior to the opening meeting, but be prepared to address any last minute issues. The auditor's access to certain areas may be limited due to proprietary information or for safety or environment reasons. These type of limits can be overcome with confidentiality agreements and/or the proper safety-environment orientation/training.

Purpose: Review the purpose that was listed in the audit plan. The purpose may be to verify conformance to internal and external standards. If there are auditors in training, a secondary purpose would be to train auditors by giving them actual audit experience. If there are observers the purpose can include familiarization or evaluation of the audit process by management. For first and second party audits, the purpose may include determination of the effectiveness of the quality system and the supporting processes. What I mean by effectiveness is that even though people are doing what they said they would do, the process/ system is not meeting business objectives for reduced cost, maximization of opportunities, or avoiding risk to the organization. If corrective actions from prior audits are to be verified as part of the audit, this should be in the purpose too.

Methods and Techniques: The review of methods and techniques is especially important for second and third party audits as well as the auditee organizations which are new to the auditing process. Explain how data will be collected based on review of records, observations, and individual interviews. You may need to further explain why certain areas were chosen to be audited and your approach to sampling (i.e. discovery method). If you are likely to skip from area to area using tracing techniques, explain that too. For product/service audits, you should follow established statistically based sampling plans. You may also explain how the results of the investigation will be reported and followed up. The results of an audit may be reported as finding statements drawing conclusions about the system/process or individual nonconformities identified during the audit.

Detailed Audit Schedule: Pass out your detailed interview schedule. Confirm the availability of personnel (interviewees and escorts) and resolve interview schedule conflicts. You may want to consider an auditor meeting after the opening meeting to make changes to the interview schedule. Common schedule issues include: a person is scheduled to be interviewed during their assigned lunch break, they have a doctor's appointment or the interview is scheduled over a shift change. Also, the schedule may include daily briefings and a safety-environmental orientation.

Logistics: Verify home base for the auditors and necessary equipment and services (electrical power outlets, rest rooms).

Confirm Exit Meeting: The exit meeting is very

Shorter is better unless…

Field Reports:
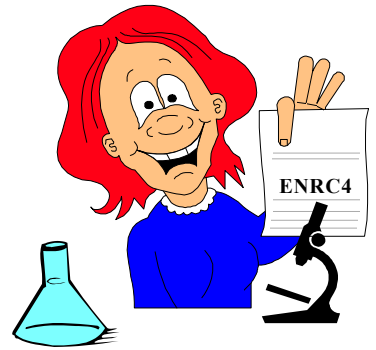### *The Good.. The Bad.. The Ugly..*

ENRC4 =
By Janet Muschlitz

Recently I was performing a follow-up to an audit that one of my colleagues had performed. After looking over the nonconformance statements that my colleague had written, it was difficult to determine what the underlying issues were for many of the statements. Unfortunately for me, this person no longer worked for my company and consequently I could not ask for more details.

This brings up an important point: not only are the nonconformance statements the starting points for the auditee, nonconformance statements serve as a guide to the auditor during follow-up activities. Many times the initial person performing the audit also performs the follow-up activities, but sometimes a colleague has to step in and do the work. I spent basically two days re-auditing the same areas because it was unclear from the nonconformance statements what the issues were.

When writing nonconformance statements, I follow the ENRC4 "formula": what is the Evidence that I looked at, what was the Nature of the nonconformity, what was the Requirement, and is the statement Clear, Concise, Complete, and Correct (C4). Using this "formula" will aid the auditor and the auditee in addressing improvements and whether those improvements are applicable and effective.

Janet Muschlitz is full time quality auditor, an ASQ CQA, and active member of the ASQ Quality Audit Division.

important so it deserves special mention. Confirm the date and time of the meeting and who will be attending the exit meeting.

The above are some of the technical requirements of an opening meeting which can be followed using the enclosed Opening Meeting Record. In a future issue of the Quality Auditor Review we will discuss how you do it, your presentation techniques, and your manner (professional, positive

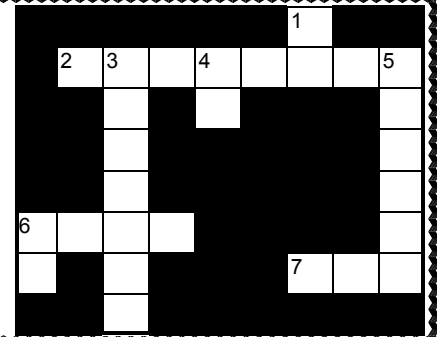Send stories you would like to share, comments or suggestions to our PO Box or the e-mail address.

Quality CrossWord

Across

2. The Good.. Bad.. The Ugly.. fact finders.
6. Something to peruse
7. "Born in _____ USA"

Down

1. I _____ (alter oath)
3. Out of normal realm
4. "__ Had To Be You!"
5. Origin
6. __ George!

Solve the CrossWord and discover

Ans: Auditors Do It By the Book: Source Unknown