

Audit Mentoring

Effective auditing is the lifeblood of any compliance system (quality, occupational health & safety, environmental management, Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), food safety programs).



But auditing can wither away into a dry, nit-picking monotonous routine.



P-E Handley-Walker, have been conducting audit mentoring over recent years in a variety of organisations, large and small. We have found through experience that *audit training* is an essential ingredient as a foundation, but sometimes it is not of itself enough. Audit mentoring carries on where away-from-workplace-training leaves off.

The Background - Training

The **P-E Handley-Walker audit skills course** is competency-based and Nationally Recognised Training. The course is appropriate for quality, health and safety management, food safety, Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and other business areas where *compliance* needs to be effective. It equips participants with knowledge on the intent and theory of auditing and it gives them hands-on experience in preparing for and conducting an internal audit.

Trainees often return to a workplace culture where auditing is an established and effective tool, valued as much by the management team as by the auditors. However, sometimes this is not the case. The trainees may face an uphill struggle if they are the only audit-trained staff, or if work pressures have driven the organisation's audit program off course.

Other audit staff may have become defensive, losing the essential element of teamwork between auditor and auditee. Symptoms of the problem may be:

- too little time to plan and conduct the audit thoroughly
- excessive focus on detail

poor morale, due to lack of support, with audits viewed by managers as, at best a nuisance, at worst, an expendable distraction.

Audit Mentoring

Audit mentoring can help you establish, or re-establish, an effective, cooperative audit program which will ensure that your system and practices comply and improve, as below:

Audit Mentoring - the P-E Handley-Walker Approach

- observe, and reinforce techniques used which are good (builds confidence and helps auditors to develop)
- suggest improvements in technique or method in context with what is being done in practice (this a very effective form of training)
- guide in areas where the auditor is struggling, or perhaps simply not confident
- review the structure of the Audit Schedule and auditing procedures to ensure that they are effective, given the finite resources available (some procedures are more complex than necessary)
- assist the auditor to identify opportunities in the broader sense (seeking broader benefits to the business overall)

Audit Mentoring - the Benefits

Typically, our clients find the following benefits:

- improved productivity in preparation, conduct and/or writing up of audits
- improved effectiveness of audits, ie more valuable things are found which contribute to improved process
- a broader perspective on overall business effectiveness is developed.



An example of a very effective approach in the past has been the consultant leading an audit team in a comprehensive program of audits.

Audit Mentoring is best done with at most three auditors at any one session. In this way the guidance provided will be more effective and economical.

If preferred, the mentoring service can include a written report which serves as a record of what has been done. It can also serve as a training record for those involved.

for more information contact Will Ray 0412 439 334 / (03) 9708 8809