



Communication skills for Internal Auditors On-line course 2 days

Why you should attend

As internal auditors, you face complex communications challenges.

The modern IA role is to provide confidence to management, and to generate business improvements.

You have to reach a shared understanding with specialists and managers of what needs to change - and why it matters.

You have to find ways to convince experienced and powerful people to do things differently.

These responsibilities and challenges require a wide variety of skills, competencies and abilities, especially leadership.

Strong communication and presentation skills are essential in today's highly challenging environment, whether this is facilitating workshops, negotiating with management or communicating your ideas.

Who should attend?

- Auditors with more than 12 months experience
- Senior auditors
- Audit Managers
- Other assurance professionals who would like to improve their communication skills

After completing this course you will be able to

- **APPLY** the techniques of effective communications
- **ENGAGE** more positively with senior management
- **DELIVER** proven communication approaches
- **DEVELOP** all your interpersonal skills more efficiently
- **ENHANCE** negotiation techniques
- **INFLUENCE** management more effectively
- **IMPROVE** your presentation skills
- **DELIVER** more successful outcomes
- **APPLY** proven listening skills

Day 1 Effective communication – the goal of all auditors

The importance of effective communication

- Research results from the IIA
- Why communication is inherently difficult
- Why internal auditors need to spend time planning their approach
- The need for regular and consistent communication
- Why communication is successful when the intended recipient takes the desired action.
- How to ensure success
- The need for many and varied communication channels
- The key aspects
 - Encoding – giving the ideas and facts as a message
 - Decoding - evaluating the message
 - Perception - Why the message received may not be the one intended
 - Filtering – picking out the key issues
 - Feedback – to achieve mutual understanding

Exercise 1 Chinese whispers

The benefits of good communication

- Any improvement in communication will improve the overall effectiveness of internal audit
- Stakeholders will better understand the role and responsibilities of internal audit.
- Audit managers and lead auditors will be able to manage engagements better
- Productivity and effectiveness should improve
- Auditors will reduce errors and problems in communications and therefore increase credibility
- The profile and value of the function will be enhanced

Exercise 2 The communication challenge

The need to engage senior management

- Senior management are extremely busy
- Risks and controls may not be top of their agenda.
- The tone at the top will influence everyone else
- The need to demonstrate the positive benefits of managing risk and having effective controls
- Present the benefits of better risk management in ways which management can identify.
- Hold a meeting with the CEO and influential members of the Board (with a clear but short agenda).
- Go prepared with a succinct presentation and some practical recommendations.
- Use the opportunity to argue for the importance of tone from the top.
- Point out the key risks facing the organization, and show how a well-designed control structure can help
- Don't expect everything to be achieved with just one meeting.
- Be prepared to keep going back with the same messages until they are not only accepted, but also acted on.

Exercise 3 The senior management meeting (role play)

Characteristics of effective communication

- Why all communications should be :-
 - Accurate providing facts and evidence
 - Objective - fair, impartial, and unbiased
 - Clear - using simple language; avoiding jargon and technical terms
 - Concise - avoiding unnecessary information or too much detail
 - Constructive - useful, positive, and well meaning
 - Complete - including all significant and relevant information
 - Timely
 - Organised and structured
 - Logically sequenced

Exercise 4 The communication dilemma

Interpersonal skills for auditors

- Diplomacy
- Open -mindedness
- Persuasiveness
- Negotiation ability

- Self motivation and self confidence
- Decision making ability
- Flexibility and ability to co-operate
- Time management
- Flexibility and ability to co-operate
- Self control
- Practicality
- Results focus

Exercise 5 Interpersonal skills

Time management

- The barriers to effective time management for auditors
 - Not receiving information in a timely manner
 - Managers not available to meet you
 - Trying to cover too much
 - Being side tracked by issues identified during the audit
 - Unrealistic fieldwork schedule
 - Staff lacking experience
- Dealing with the issues – tips and advice

Exercise 6 Time management exercise

Day 2 Influencing and convincing management

Influencing

- Influencing styles
 - Directive
 - Persuasive reasoning
 - Collaborative
 - Visionary
- Responses to influencing
 - The customer agrees with your views and commits to promoting it
 - The customer agrees but only because they value the relationship
 - The customer agrees verbally but has no real buy-in
 - The customer opposes your views
- Dealing with the responses

Exercise 7 Influencing exercise

Negotiation

- Why negotiation is much more than persuasion

- The need to reach agreement
- Negotiating during each audit phase
 - Planning
 - Fieldwork
 - Reporting
 - Follow up
- Trying to achieve a win-win situation
- The problems with win-lose situations
- Negotiation strategies
 - Dividing the 'pie'
 - Making 'the pie' bigger
- Determining the objectives
 - What are the boundaries?
 - How long do you have?
 - How will you open and close the negotiation?
 - What might the other party ask?
 - Is the other party empowered to make the decision?
 - What information do you need?

Exercise 8 Practical negotiation

Listening – the most important audit skill?

- Why listening does not just involve the ears
- The 6 elements of listening (The Hurier model)
 - Hearing
 - Understanding
 - Remembering
 - Interpreting
 - Evaluating
 - Responding
- Types of listening
 - Comprehensive (getting as close as possible to the intended meaning)
 - Paying close attention to all the information
 - The words spoken
 - The tone of the voice
 - The body language
 - Critical (forming judgements about what was said)
 - Distinguishing between facts and opinions
 - Evaluating the basis of statements
 - Assessing the logic of arguments
 - Relationship (to help improve the relationship)

Exercise 9 Listening exercise

Presenting your ideas to management

- The need for impact
- Deciding the form of presentation
- Use of visual aids
- How many notes should you use
- Use of humour – is this a good idea?
- Education or decision seeking – the different techniques
- How to combat nerves
- Keeping in control
- How to deal with questions
- Keeping the flow
- Use of simple language
- How to keep the audience's interest
- Use of props
- Anticipating the questions
- Considering what the audience will expect
- Assessing the results
- Getting feedback

Exercise 10 – Delegates prepare and deliver a 2 minute presentation on a subject of their choosing