

Internal audits play a critical role in identifying opportunities for continual improvements. In addition, internal audits help companies with risk control and mitigation, reducing costs, and achieving a more robust, overall effective auditing process. As a company holding certifications in ISO 9001, 27001, and 20000, OnPoint undergoes internal audits at least once a year to ensure compliance with best practices and standards. Internal audits help OnPoint continue to evolve into a company that is process-focused with the outlook of moving towards continual improvement while saving costs. So, how do you integrate the auditing process into your Quality program in a way that is both cost-effective and efficient?

There are multiple approaches to the internal auditing process. Solutions differ based on the size, needs, resources, and structure of the company. One approach could be working with the third-party consultant who conducts the audits on an annual basis for your Quality Management System and provides feedback during these audits. If your company holds multiple certifications, it may be cost-effective to request these as an “integrated audit” versus an individual audit. By having integrated audits, you will see the commonalities among different standards which will then help you align your processes among multiple standards, thus resulting in time and cost savings. The feedback from these audits can be used as a mechanism to improve the areas that lack focus. The third-party consultant can bring fresh ideas and a new outlook to address vulnerabilities and to enhance the current practices. Strengthening the identified areas during these audits will help the company mitigate risks and advance capabilities.

Another way to approach internal audits is through the company’s strategic goals. By focusing where your organization is struggling with meeting goals or is underperforming, the auditor can hone into those areas to outline the weaknesses and opportunities to revamp. In addition, it also gives the auditor an opportunity to highlight the company’s strengths, which can provide encouragement and motivation, and boost morale within the organization. These audits can be done externally (by a vendor) or the company can leverage its employees within the company to do these audits. These audits may provide a different perspective into the strengths and weaknesses and can help organizations approach the issues in new ways, such as by establishing metrics or identifying new metrics associated with the goals, developing techniques to adhere to the best practices, or making recommendations that optimize the processes.



Empowering your Quality department and providing it with the resources, training, and tools necessary to deliver an internal audit is another solution. While this could present tremendous cost-savings in the future, immediate training may be needed to build competencies and understandings around the standards, as well as your company so that someone conducting the internal audit is able to see company weaknesses and turn them into strengths. With this solution, the company benefits from having the in-house expertise, saves on the expenditure of bringing in an external vendor, and has an opportunity to grow the employee(s) conducting the audit. Having employees who understand these standards and certifications inside and out empowers your employees, increases employee motivation, and develops niche skillsets within the company, which can all lead to increased employee retention rates. With the Quality department having the oversight function, validating and verifying adherence to the processes, and also understanding the corporate goals and mission can result in very valuable and actionable feedback from these audits.

Regardless of what approach you take, internal audits can play a vital role in your company's growth in increasing efficiencies and working towards continual improvement. Internal audits provide an organization the opportunity to validate and verify adherence to established processes and therefore institute an environment of structure and standardization. By understanding and evaluating these different approaches and solutions to internal audits, you can optimize the benefits from these audits which results in reduced cost and effort, increased motivation, added skillsets for your organization, a reduction in corporate risk, and advancement of your company's capabilities.

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About OnPoint

OnPoint Consulting, Inc. (OnPoint) delivers cybersecurity, strategic communications, and marketing, secure IT infrastructure, enterprise systems, and program management solutions for the U.S. federal government. Our specialized strategies and capabilities are changing the way our clients improve performance, effectively deliver results and manage risk. OnPoint holds ISO 9001:2015, ISO 20000-1:2011, ISO 27001:2013 certifications, and a CMMI Maturity Level 3 rating in both service and development.

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