

Managing Anxiety in a Remote Audit Environment

Quality
Support
Group

Derek Churchill

**Senior Consultant, Leadership Development
Advisor, Program Manager
at Quality Support Group**

The logo for Quality Support Group is located on the right side of the image. It consists of a blue square containing the words "Quality", "Support", and "Group" stacked vertically in white, bold, sans-serif font. A thin white vertical line is positioned to the left of the blue square.

Quality
Support
Group

**You absolutely can
accomplish your goals
with a remote audit.**

1

Anxiety and Auditing

**High level of anxiety
triggered by a variety of
concerns.**

Audits may be deferred

Audit activity doesn't stop

Multiple standards call for Contingency and Continuity Planning

low Self Awareness

high Apprehension

incorrect Conclusions

Learning Objectives

- **Causes of Anxiety with Remote Environment**
- **Challenges with Remote Auditing**
- **Actions for Mitigation and Success**
- **The Future of Audits**



Auditor's Anxiety and Auditing

1

Certifying organizations are concerned are their ability to comply with auditing requirements while still meeting safety concerns.

2

They don't want to see their client's certifications put at risk.

3

There is concern that not all activities they need to accomplish can be complete remotely.

4

Auditors are experiencing anxiety in learning new technologies and processes for conducting remote audits.

5

There is concern about the accuracy of findings if there is a limitation on normal audit “walk arounds” and observations of processes.

6

COVID-19 outbreak has added a level of health risk concerns for auditors in the event a site visit becomes necessary.



Consultant's Anxiety and Auditing

1

Consulting companies are concerned that their client's certifications may lapse.

2

Consulting companies may be anxious that their customers will not feel adequately supported.

3

Consulting companies are concerned about how and if they can support their clients if they cannot meet with them onsite.

4

Consultants are experiencing anxiety in learning new technologies and processes for conducting remote audits and other client support.

5

Some companies are not allowing any visitors including consultants which can hamper support efforts.

6

COVID-19 outbreak has added a multiplied level of health risk for consultants with multiple clients having required site audits at the same.



Company's Anxiety and Auditing

1

Regulated companies are concerned that their certifications may lapse.

2

Failing to maintain compliance or losing customer-mandated certifications could put their business at risk.

3

Concerns about being assigned new auditors who are not familiar with their businesses.

4

Companies are experiencing anxiety in learning new technologies and processes for conducting remote audits.

5

Lack of observation for process audits may lead to incorrect audit findings.

6

COVID-19 outbreak has added a level of risk to the health of company staff in the event a site visit becomes necessary.

2

Challenges with Remote Auditing

Uncertainty and lack of Communication

1 Change is not easy. People struggle with change.

2 Companies stick to their routines and processes and auditors hold tight to their checklists.

3 Access to hard copy documented information.

4 Learning curves with new virtual meeting technologies.

**Current circumstances require
companies and auditors to
adapt and be creative to
accomplish their goals.**

3

Success in a Remote Audit Environment

1

Plan

Plan for all audit activities early. Involve all interested parties in the process to reduce anxiety and risk to the audit process.

2

Communicate

Communicate the plan with all audit process stakeholders including auditors, consultants and companies. This will reduce confusion and anxiety, as well as potential unforeseen challenges to the audit process.

Auditors

- Engage companies early and often.
- Engage with companies at their comfort level.
- Be creative in achieving goals, rather than sticking with how they have always done things.
- Be patient.

Auditors

- Audits with existing clients are easier.
- Expect the activities to involve more conversations.
- More advanced preparation.
- More time conducting the audit.

Consultants

- Bring companies up to speed with the technology, equipment and processes.
- Inform companies about applying cybersecurity measures with video conferencing.
- Conduct mock audits and request the same documentation that the auditors would require.
- Help to identify gaps and challenges for remote audits.

Consultants

- Help manage last minute audit changes and hiccups.
- Serve as a secondary management representative.
- Review and refresh on procedures.

Facilitating Opportunity

**Significant Anxiety Reducer for Clients
and Auditors**

Consultants

When Facilitating Remote Audit:

- Schedule remote meetings.
- Train stakeholders.
- Manage breakout rooms.
- Manage meeting transitions.
- Liaison with staff outside remote audit.

Companies

- Strategic planning for internal and external audits.
- Look at audit deferment if needed.
- Conduct gap assessment for electronic documentation access.
- Set up shared drive for audits.
- Sign up for and train on video conferencing platform.
- Train on applicable cybersecurity regulations.

Companies

- Agree on virtual meeting platform with auditors.
- Test virtual meeting equipment.
- Prepare mobile device for remote tours.
- Review your procedures.
- Setup pre-audit meeting with auditors, consultants and company stakeholders (including IT).

Go Soft Today

**Go Soft Today
with your Documentation**

Companies

- Start scanning hard copy files into a drive by process area.
- Ensure key stakeholders and process owners have and know how to access this drive.
- Use this as an opportunity to go paperless for documentation.
- Maximize your ERP systems.

For Everyone

- Confidentiality, Security and Data Protection requirements may not allow for remote auditing.
- Assess Risk with remote audits.
- Zoom.gov
- Screen shot alerts.
- Check your bandwidth.
- Have IT on Call.

For Everyone

- Beware the Dual Monitor Dilemma.
- Wifi dead zones.
- Dry run with mobile device.
- Ensure the mobile proxy can hear the auditor.
- Identify any mobile device restrictions.
- Don't rely on free platforms.
- Take breaks often.

For Everyone

On & Offsite Audits

- State & Local safety laws.
- Out of state travel rules.
- Site Safety rules.
- IAF Rules

For Everyone

- Understand your Remote Audit restrictions.
- May only be able to conduct a percentage of audit time remotely.
- Initial certifications likely require some onsite audit time.
- Risk analysis may be used to offset this.
- Examples: Food safety and Automotive do not allow remote audits.

4

The Future of Audits

Some level of remote audits are likely here to stay.

- 1 Increased scheduling flexibility.**
- 2 Reduced travel costs.**
- 3 Greater auditor availability.**

1.

Confidence

Experience will increase confidence levels with remote audits and turn people into advocates of the opportunities it presents.

2.

Learn

As audit cycles are completed in this virtual environment, determine which audits are best conducted on site and which ones can be conducted remotely.

3.

Apply

Use these learning experience to build a new, more efficient and effective audit strategy for the future.

Be creative – think outside the box.

**You absolutely can
accomplish your goals with
remote auditing.**

Additional information:

<https://committee.iso.org/home/tc176/iso-9001-auditing-practices-group.html>

Qualitysupportgroup.com

Thank you.

Acknowledgements:

<https://committee.iso.org/>

Conducting Audits Using Remote Technologies Roderick Munro

Questions?