Auditing Tips for ISO Auditors

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Jason is a seasoned Consultant with over 20 years of experience implementing ISO management systems and conducting 2nd and 3rd party audits. He teaches ISO9001 Lead auditor and Internal auditor training for ISO9001, ISO17025, and IATF16949.

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Carrie is the Vice President of Perry Johnson Consulting. Carrie's experience with PJC and ISO9000 goes back to 1987 when the first standard was released. Since then, Carrie has overseen more than 7000 thousand ISO Implementation projects.

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Interviews:

Always ask open-ended questions. The whole purpose of your audit is to gather evidence. That evidence comes from multiple sources, including information verbally stated. If your questions are closed ended (i.e. yes/no answers) then you have not gathered any evidence. You need the interviewee to provide the information you seek.

Do not utilize leading questions. Never ask about a specific document, piece of equipment etc. since you are essentially providing the answer/evidence to the interviewee. Instead make the questions more general (like how do you record those results, what equipment do you use etc.).

When people are responding pay very close attention to their responses, specifically when they reference documents, other personnel, locations etc. Take notes on those key items as they are trails you will need to follow.

Always confirm the response to the auditee. This will ensure that you have accurately captured the evidence presented.

Observation:

Anytime you are moving from one area of the organization to another always keep your head on a swivel. 12 Much of the evidence you gather is also based upon what you visually see.

Take detailed notes of things observed (i.e. serial numbers on equipment, document identification, shelf ID, product ID etc.). This is critical for the reports you generate to capture your evidence.

Always ask to be shown whatever the auditee describes. Visual confirmation of verbal evidence is always necessary.

Documentation:

Always note specific information about documents observed (i.e. title, revision, purpose etc.). This will be critical in validating documented information control.

Verify that documentation is where and when it is needed. If the auditee must leave the work area to access documentation, then it is not readily available to them.

Other General Tips when conducting an audit:

- Use the auditee's terminology
- Audits must focus on audit objectives, NOT on finding nonconformities
- Give benefit of doubt to the auditee where there is insufficient audit evidence. The auditee should be given every opportunity to explain their position.
- The audit report should be complete, beneficial and concise.

Register for an upcoming internal or lead auditor class

You'll learn the Process of completing at audit as outlined in ISO 19011:2018 to include preparing an audit plan and working documents, audit evidence (what constitutes evidence), generating findings and preparing conclusions, and audit report writing. In addition, you will learn how companies manage their internal audits.

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