OPERATIONS INSIDER

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THE MANAGER'S INTERNAL AUDITS QUICK START CHECKLIST

Score the audit program of one site in one hour, with records you can point at.



PLAN. AUDIT. PROVE.

START HERE

How to Use This Check

One audit program, one hour with the program owner and one auditor, twenty-five statements, one number.

01 LOOK	02 SCORE	03 ACT
Open the real records: the audit program of this year, the last three audit reports, the action list and the auditor qualifications.	Score each statement from 0 to 4. Without a plan, a report or a list you can point at, the score is 2 or lower.	Pick the weakest block and agree one action with an owner and a date before you leave.

The Scoring Scale

POINTS	MEANING
0	Not in place.
1	Happens occasionally, depends on individuals.
2	Partly in place, not consistent across audits or auditors.
3	Mostly in place and visible in the records.
4	Consistently in place, visible, reviewed and improved.

> **WHY INTERNAL AUDITS**
>
> **An audit is the only routine in which the company looks at its own processes on purpose. Done well, it finds the gap between the written process and the real one while it is still cheap. Done as paperwork, it costs real hours and returns a list nobody reads.**

Before You Start

- **Scope:** the internal audit program of one plant or one site, not a single audit.
- **Evidence:** the program, the last reports, the action list with dates, the qualification records of the auditors.
- **Tone:** you check the audit process, not the auditors. Ask what they were given to work with.

THE CHECK

01 Program and Planning

NO.	CHECK	SCORE 0 TO 4
01	A written audit program for the year lists every audit with process, month, lead auditor and scope, and it was agreed before the year started.	
02	The frequency of each audit follows a documented risk view of the process, not a fixed rotation of everything once a year.	
03	The program covers every process of the scope within a defined period, and the list of processes matches the current process map.	
04	Audits that become necessary during the year, after a complaint, a change or a weak result, are added to the program with a date and an auditor.	
05	The program is reviewed once a year against what it delivered, and the next program changes because of that review.	

02 Preparation and Questions

NO.	CHECK	SCORE 0 TO 4
06	Every audit has a written objective, a scope and the criteria it audits against, agreed with the process owner before the date.	
07	The auditor prepares with the real inputs of the process: its figures, its last findings, its open actions and its customer complaints.	
08	The question set is written for the process and its risks, and it asks how the process works, not which paragraph applies.	
09	The audit plan names times, places, people and the records to be seen, and the process owner receives it in advance.	
10	Preparation time per audit is defined and planned into the working week of the auditor, not taken from the evening.	

THE CHECK

03 On Site: Conduct and Evidence

NO.	CHECK	SCORE 0 TO 4
11	Every statement in the audit rests on something the auditor saw: a record, a part, a screen, a measurement or an activity at the workplace.	
12	At least part of every audit happens at the workplace with the people who do the work, not only in a meeting room.	
13	Samples are drawn by a written rule, and the sample size and the selection are recorded with the finding.	
14	The auditor asks open questions, lets the auditee show the process, and separates the note from the judgment.	
15	When an answer stays general or moves to another subject, the auditor asks for the next concrete case and follows it to the record.	

04 Findings and Actions

NO.	CHECK	SCORE 0 TO 4
16	Findings are graded by a written rule into nonconformity, observation and opportunity, and all auditors use the grades the same way.	
17	Every finding names the requirement, the evidence and the place, and it describes the fact without naming a person or guessing a cause.	
18	The process owner hears every finding before the auditor leaves, and a disagreement is recorded instead of argued away.	
19	Every nonconformity gets a cause, an action, an owner and a date, and the cause is examined beyond the single case.	
20	Effectiveness is checked on a planned date against evidence, and a finding is closed only when that check is passed.	

THE CHECK

05 Auditors and Program Value

NO.	CHECK	SCORE 0 TO 4
21	Auditors are trained for the task, their qualification is recorded, and a new auditor audits with an experienced one before leading alone.	
22	Nobody audits the process they are responsible for, and the program shows how independence is kept.	
23	The program is measured: audits done against plan, findings per audit, actions closed on time, days to proven effectiveness and repeat findings.	
24	Repeat findings are counted and discussed, and a repeat finding leads to a different action than the first one did.	
25	Management reviews what the program delivered and what it cost, and decides the resources for the next program.	

Your Result

BLOCK	POINTS	OUT OF
01 Program and Planning		20
02 Preparation and Questions		20
03 On Site: Conduct and Evidence		20
04 Findings and Actions		20
05 Auditors and Program Value		20
TOTAL		100

YOUR RESULT

Read the Number

The total tells you how much of your audit program is routine and how much is paperwork. The weakest block tells you where to start.

TOTAL	WHAT IT MEANS	WHAT TO DO FIRST
0 to 39	Paperwork. Audits happen because somebody asks. Findings come back every year.	Score your processes for risk. Build a program that says why each audit exists.
40 to 59	Scheduled. The program runs, but questions come from documents and actions stop the symptom.	Write a question set from one process and its figures. Add an effectiveness check.
60 to 79	Effective. Risk-based program, evidence behind findings, actions tracked to a date.	Measure repeat findings, days to effectiveness and benefit. Develop the auditors.
80 to 100	Useful. The program is measured, repeats are rare, management uses the results.	Hold the level. More depth where the risk is highest.

Your Three Priorities

NO.	WHAT TO IMPROVE	FIRST ACTION	OWNER	DUE

THE RULE FOR EVERY ACTION

Owner and date, or it did not happen. Repeat the check after six months and compare the blocks, not the feeling.

What to Do Next

NEXT STEP	WHAT YOU GET
INTERNAL AUDITS STARTER KIT	The guide for the first 30 days, plus the Excel planner with risk scoring, the year program, the finding list and a status page.
INTERNAL AUDITS EXCELLENCE BUNDLE	The full playbook, a two-day workshop pack, six templates, the Excel system with program, questions, findings, effectiveness tracker and key figures, and a workshop deck.

Both are available at operationsinsider.com.