

Three Powerful Business Audits

Provided by S4 Consulting - Columbus, Ohio (www.s4consulting.com)

1. The Internal Audit: *A View of Within*

The ultimate goal of an internal audit is to know how you're viewed – individually and organizationally, by both your staff and your customers. Internal audits aim to answer the questions:

- 1.) How do we view ourselves and rate ourselves?
- 2.) How do other people within our company view and rate us? (This applies to both people above and below us.)
- 3.) How do our customers view us? (Note: this is different than customer satisfaction surveys or the customer service someone experiences through an automated phone tree. Customers perceive our brands differently based on a complete set of interaction points.)

2. The External Audit: *The Customer Examination*

Asking customers for their feedback sets organizations apart. Listening to their input is much more powerful than simply delivering solutions; it gives customers a voice. External audits not only start the conversation but enhance the communication process, enabling companies to prioritize what customers are saying and recognizing the opportunities to improve those relationship. Questions include:

- 1.) What things are going well? What parts in our relationship are slowing progress?
- 2.) What small changes can we enact to make us better?
- 3.) How are we compared to our competition? How would you rate us against how our competitors do business?

3. Structural Audit: *Understanding the System*

Lastly, it helps to understand the organizational factors impacting our business relationships:

- 1.) What are the things we have built that interfere with our business relationship? (i.e.: Contracts that are hard to negotiate or operate under. Small changes to a single document can have a huge impact on the operations of a relationship.)
- 2.) Could we change?
- 3.) Will we change?