Effective Engagement Scheduling

Date February 7, 2017
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Synopsis

The Agency's information security (info-sec) audit team has an obligation to perform inspections on all DSS county offices, County Clerk of Court offices, and a number of contracted partner offices located around the state due to a data sharing agreement with the IRS. These audits are on a 3 year cycle and must be performed for compliance to the agreement. There are currently 150 sites that fall under the compliance regulation and must be inspected once within the allowable timeframe/cycle. The model audit should take a total of 259 days from the time an Initial Contact Letter (ICL) is sent to the site until the site has corrected all deficiencies found during the inspection.

The info-sec audit team, during the time of data collection, is a partnership of four auditors ranging in skill sets and years of service. The inspection is generally performed by two auditors, one taking a lead role and the other adopting a reviewer's role. The team ultimately has the responsibility to ensure inspections are performed, but more importantly that security compliance is met at all of the sites.

The function the info-sec team fulfills is a relatively new function for the agency and, as such, many of the processes and workflows are unseasoned to this team's role. The existing processes and workflow are adaptations from the Agency's financial audit team. The Agency's financial audit team has a great deal of success with its processes and workflow and does well to meet customer's expectations for delivering value to the business unit during and after the audit process. It is our goal to continue to meet these
expectations while tweaking and refining the processes and workflow used by the info­­sec audit team to meet the demand for security inspections.

Problem/Challenge

A single inspection consists of four defined cycle parts, eight significant milestones, and 30 specific tasks. Unfortunately due to the volume of inspections performed by the info-sec audit team, inspections must overlap and often a primary auditor juggles multiple inspections. This leads to an auditor having multiple inspection projects open at different stages with a cluster of tasks assigned for each engagement during any given week. The challenge is to maximize the use of lead-time and wait-time on all open engagements so that the team can minimize deadline conflict or the need to reschedule important dates/events/milestones with the customer (inspection site) because of scheduling/timeline issues on the info-sec audit team’s part. The desired outcome is to have fewer closing conference reschedules due to missed deadlines or tasks not completed on time.

Currently, a list of inspection sites is maintained in Excel. This workbook forecasts two key dates: the inspection date and inspection findings conference (IFC) date. Task and milestone scheduling are calculated from these dates. The team uses an Excel worksheet to populate the task list for the inspection project. Every week, a manual process is used to gather the tasks and compile a collected task list for the team. Tasks not completed from the week(s) before are carried forward to the new weekly task list.
There are a few self-inflicted constraints to the current system. In general, the team goes out for inspections on either Tuesdays or Thursdays and reserves Monday and Wednesdays for closing conferences (IFCs). Fridays are usually considered an in-the-office work day to finish up the assigned weekly tasks. Inspections and IFCs are, as a rule, not scheduled the week of state holidays nor the last two to three weeks of December to reduce scheduling conflicts. However, these are guidelines and any available date may be used when needed to reschedule events.

A successful outcome for renovating the info-sec audit team’s process and workflow will be to provide value to customers by dividing and assigning work segments into manageable fragments, provide timely deliverables in a meaningful format, and schedule project events in a way to stagger project and task assignments to auditors. The primary goal is to reduce the number of Inspection Findings Conferences (closing conference) reschedules due to overdue tasks.

Data Collection

The original idea was to account for inspections conducted in a single fiscal year (July to June)\(^1\); however, due to the audit lifecycle, which on average takes about 2 ½ to 3 months to complete, it was decided to track the inspections that have inspection dates within the fiscal year. This caused the data collection process to take several additional

\(^1\) The fiscal year evaluated is July 2015 through June 2016. Unfortunately, the October 2015 flood impacted scheduling and meeting deadlines. The info-sec audit team was reassigned duties October – December 2015. Additionally, a team member was permanently reassigned during this timeframe. Thus, consideration for this large gap in time and loss of a team member is admitted during data analysis.
months to capture the remaining data elements for the last several engagements started during the fiscal year.

One of the first data elements is the process and workflow for an inspection engagement. A flowchart\(^2\) is created to identify and map the process. In addition, a RACI chart\(^3\) was compiled to identify individual roles and responsibilities for the inspection engagement. The RACI chart is used for guidance during the inspection process. The info-sec audit team compiles a problem analysis diagram\(^4\) for known issues for completing tasks or the need to reschedule events and milestones.

The following data points are identified during the discovery/planning stage of the project. The data is collected from the weekly task lists and by directly identifying dates captured during the engagement. The data is imported to SQL Server and queried against in order to produce summary data that calculates the required data point.

- Determine the average number of open engagements for the team per week
- Determine average number of open engagements per week & per team member: Todd (Auditor1), Sherri (Auditor2), Stephen (Auditor3), and Jonathan (Auditor4)
- Identify the average number of tasks assigned to a team member during a single audit lifecycle
- Identify the average number of tasks assigned during each phase of the audit lifecycle

\(^2\) See the attached "Wilkins - Process Flow Charts" document for further information
\(^3\) See the attached "Wilkins - RACI Chart" document for further information.
\(^4\) See the attached "Wilkins - Problem Analysis Diagram" document for more information.
• Identify the average task time assigned during each phase of the audit lifecycle
• Determine the frequency (how often) a team member is assigned a new audit engagement
• Identify average number of days between all milestones
• Identify all tasks including time to complete and any dependencies or prerequisites to complete during an audit lifecycle

Data Analysis
For the purpose of study, data is collected for 18 months. This period of time is determined by evaluating all site inspections with inspection dates for FY2016 and establishing when the first and last assigned tasks are completed. The tasks under review are the defined tasks that are assigned and tracked by the process in place during the 18 month period. There are a total of 30 unique tasks assigned per inspection engagement: 16 assigned during the Engagement Process, 6 assigned during the Post-Engagement, 6 assigned during the Conference Processes, and 2 during the Follow-Up Process. As a result of the study, additional tasks are identified.
A review and average of the open engagements per week shows the team member's averages 8/9 open engagements at any given time. The high water mark occurs in week 50 (May 23 – 27) with 50 open engagements and the team members holding the following open engagements: Todd – 13, Sherri – 17, Stephen, 18, and Jonathan 2.

The team on average has 27 open engagements during the data collection period. This indicator is utilized as a Key Risk Indicator (KRI) showing how many engagements an auditor has open at any given time. A threshold should be evaluated and applied for effectiveness.

Average Task Assigned per Audit

The next study evaluates each inspection engagement and averages for all tasks assigned to the auditor during the engagement. What this suggests is that although, on average, the three main auditors have an average of 8/9 open engagements at any one time, tasks may stack up due to over assignment of projects or a delay in completing assigned tasks. This number may only
indicate a potential issue and is a Key Risk Indicator (KRI). This needs to be aggregated with other indicators to have more value.

Average Task Assignment per Audit by Audit Cycle

By only evaluating the number of tasks assigned during the audit life cycle, there isn't a clear determination of what may cause the audit project to slow down or cause the number of tasks assigned to lag. Evaluating the task assignment by the audit life cycle begins to show where and when the bulk of tasks are assigned during the engagement. Over half of the tasks are assigned during the Engagement process.

This a cumulative number of tasks for a specific engagement and any other tasks for open engagements. This may indicate that the Engagement process is the most demanding of the processes in terms of juggling projects and assigned tasks. This is leveraged as a KRI, but a threshold must be determined for peak performance. This indicator along with the previous two will provide insight for emerging deadline and timeline collapse.
The most logical stepping stone is to now evaluate the tasks and determine their life-span throughout the audit life cycle. The limitation is that the tracking system tracks by weeks and not days. A task assigned and completed in a single day would track the same life span of a task assigned on Monday and completed on Friday – one week. The first note is that the tasks are in alphabetical order within the proper process. It is ascertained that while the bulk of tasks are assigned during the first process (Engagement), the bulk of time weigh-downs are found in the last two processes (Conference and Follow-Up\(^5\)). This indicator measures performance based on task life-span based on average days to complete.

\(^5\) Knowing the process, during the last two phases the focus of work product begins to shift from the auditor to the inspection site for response and corrective actions. The documented/assigned tasks do not normally take a lot of time, but the communication that takes place between the auditors and the site can consume hours not accounted for within the project.
One obvious place to look for abnormality is the frequency an auditor is assigned a new inspection site. The inspection dates are traced for each auditor respectively looking to determine the number of days between inspections for the auditor. For the purpose of the study, Jonathan’s (Auditor 4) numbers are not a factor for analysis. This chart shows the number of inspections assigned to the auditor and the average number of days between assignments. The number of inspections range from 19 to 26 with 13-19 days between assignments. The rate is roughly every 2-3 weeks an auditor is assigned a new inspection project. This indicator measures the risk of over taxing the auditor with engagements too frequently.

A slightly different view of the task data is to evaluate the milestone completion dates. Unlike tasks, the milestone dates are actual dates when the milestone is reached. This data is manually gathered by reviewing each inspection file to collect dates from emails and other scheduled events during the audit cycle. To conserve space on the graph, the milestones are represented as MS1..MS8. These correspond to the following milestones:

- **MS1** – Inspection

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6 Due to the 2015 flood, all prospective engagement assignments were suspended from October thru December. Most of these sites are assigned new dates within the fiscal year; however, a handful fell over into the next fiscal year.
The greatest deviation appears between Inspection Finding Conference (MS6) and Inspection Findings Report Issued (MS?). However, what is most alarming are the cumulative days between the Inspection Site Review (MS2) and Inspection Findings Report Site Review (MS5). The cumulative average is 26 days. This impacts the overall flow of the inspection project because the inspection report being signed and returned (MS4) closes out the first half of the engagement with all tasks and milestones tied to the inspection date. The second half of the engagement process is linked to the

7 Once the conference concludes, the inspection site begins the process of addressing deficiencies. The first step is for the inspection site to determine the best cost effective and efficient solution to meet the security control requirement. Depending on the site, this process may require escalation to acquire approval for funds and other resources. Third-party sites often run into a delay at this stage which postpones issuing the Findings Report with an agreed upon corrective action. This delay has little impact on meeting deadlines and milestones but does impact the over-all length of time an engagement remains active by pushing the follow-up process further out.
Inspection Findings Conference (MS6). The hand-off between the two halves occur when a signed inspection report is received and the inspection findings report is sent for review\(^8\). This also gives evidence for tasks in the Post-Engagement process lingering and inflating the total number of tasks present during the engagement process for other engagements. Of the indicators used, this risk indicator is the most useful. This KRI measures the most specific and accurate data element available, the actual time between key events of the project.

**Problem Analysis Diagram**
The next step is to analyze all of the collected data including the diagrams created early on in the process. The tasks that linger on and not completed timely generally fall under “Method” and “Man” causes\(^9\). The common denominator of the causes in question boil down to communication and education. The causes that surface are: “Method - Cause: Response time is too long and next steps gets lost between cracks,” “Method - Cause: Our process isn't communicated well outside of audit division,” “Man - Cause: Customers do not understand their responsibility for compliance,” “Man - Cause: Customers are untrained to our processes and tools,” and the top cause is “Man - Cause: Customers do not respond to evidence or approval/sign-off requests timely.”

**Summary**
Evaluating the collected data as a whole and not as individual data points, it appears that the assignment of tasks and expected completion time during the engagement process. 

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\(^8\) Early in the program, the Inspection Findings Report was sent out before receiving the signed Inspection Report and it was discovered that a control mechanism was needed to ensure the report was returned. The signed inspection reports are the evidence submitted to the IRS showing the inspections occur.

\(^9\) By all accounts, Mother Nature causes, specifically the 2015 flood, have the most devastating impact on the engagement process.
process is too restrictive and optimistic. This, coupled with customer’s limited knowledge of their responsibility for completing certain tasks timely, lead to missed deadlines and the need to reschedule key events and milestones. A solution that focuses on enhancing these segments of the life cycle will be crucial for adding value to the overall process.

Implementation Plan

It seems counterintuitive to add more tasks and events to the “Engagement” process because this phase already hosts the most tasks and also has the most tasks carried past expected timelines. However, the plan is to add tasks and events which engage the audit site sooner, add an element for education, training, and communication for the audit process, and allow the audit process to start sooner and end later. The purpose is to raise the site’s level of awareness of the process, actively engage them sooner, and educate them about task ownership.

Action Steps

There are several action steps to implement a comprehensive plan which will increase the communication and education processes of the audit lifecycle. The first step is to consider what aspects of the audit process need further explanation and determine when the appropriate touch points are for the customer. Next, develop a comprehensive Gantt chart which includes the communication and education tasks. All the while, curriculum and souvenirs should be developed with the customer in mind. The curriculum and souvenirs should clearly layout 1) the key dates such as inspection and closing conference, 2) required documentation requested from customer such as
policies, system overview, and user lists, and 3) milestones and deliverables such as final inspection and findings reports.

**Timeframe**

The project time line will take several weeks to define and develop the PowerPoint presentation and souvenirs. Week 1, whiteboard ideas for critical components to communicate. Week 2, prioritize components from week 1, get IAD Director approval, and begin developing talking points. Week 3 – 5, finalize talking points, share with IAD Director and get feedback, develop presentation and souvenirs. Week 6 – 7, finalize presentation and souvenirs, share with IAD Director and get feedback. Week 8, update based on IAD Director's feedback. Week 9, begin using newly created curriculum and souvenirs.

**Costs**

There are no upfront costs to consider other than staff time to develop presentations and souvenirs for the audit process. Office products already licensed will be leveraged to develop needed deliverables. However, the single audit lifecycle is expected to grow to accommodate the communication and education efforts. There may be hidden costs to acclimate the new time line. Additional staff time will need to be used updating currently used spreadsheets and souvenirs to accommodate new lifecycle and tasks.

**Potential Obstacles**

The biggest obstacle based on past experience with customer base will be keeping them engaged in the process and getting them to recognize their accountability and
responsibility for protecting DSS information shared with them based on the contract. The best way to keep them engaged is by including the DSS Business Manager in the correspondence and at times letting the correspondence originate from the business program – used sparingly and only when necessary. The goal for the curriculum will be to help educate the customer of their accountability and responsibility for maintaining security compliance for the information shared and entrusted to them.

**Potential Resource**
There are tools already in place that can be utilized for developing the curriculum and souvenirs. Additionally, there are staff members from the business area already engaged at some level in the audit process. These key individuals may need to be leveraged at critical times to engage and help hold the customers accountable and responsible for maintaining compliance. The contract and the procurement process may be valuable resources for reminding the customers of their legal obligation for maintaining compliance.

**Communication with Stakeholders**
The most visible stakeholder in our audit process is the business area which is held ultimately accountable for the compliance and security of the information owned by the business area. The business area is already aware that the process is being re-evaluated for effectiveness and given an opportunity to provide feedback into the current process. Once ideas are white boarded and prioritized, the business area should be brought into the discussion and allowed an opportunity to shape the talking points to drive home the business goals and values for sharing the information. Other
stakeholders (Chief of Staff and Office of Investigations) will have newly developed timelines, curriculum and souvenirs shared with them via email.

Integration into Staff
The current processes and timelines will need to be adjusted to accommodate the new lifecycle. The main schedule in Excel will need to be re-evaluated to make sure that extending the time frame doesn't impose issues on the scheduled inspection and tentative findings conferences. Next, the generic task list will need to be updated to account for the new schedule and tasks. The templates used for Initial Contact, Contact Questionnaire, Engagement Confirmation, Inspection Plan, Inspection Report, Findings Report, Evaluation Matrix, and Check List will all need to be evaluated for impact and changes. Finally, the shared Outlook team calendar will need to be updated where necessary to accommodate changes to timeline.

Evaluation
This study evaluated several performance and risk indicators which gives a pinhole view into the Info-Sec Audit’s operation. The Info-Sec team “owns” the data and should continue to collect audit project data including the task and milestone data. Moving forward, the task list process should be revamped to collect the date assigned and the actual date completed. An additional administration task will be to compile the task data weekly. In like manner, the milestone data gathering process will need to be defined and assigned. Both task and milestone data will be compiled leveraging Excel\textsuperscript{10}. The

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\textsuperscript{10} See the attached “Wilkins - Performance and Risk” Excel workbook to see how the data collected will be analyzed. Note: dashboard data is fictitious and used only to verify and validate dashboard functionality.
workbook contains project, task, and milestone data pertaining to ownership along with expected and actual realization dates. Power pivots and graphs are used to create a dashboard with visualization of the indicator data\(^\text{11}\).
Appendix

Problem Analysis Diagram
RACI Chart
GANTT Chart
Process Flow Charts
Performance and Risk Dashboard
Problem Analysis Diagram
### RACI Chart

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<th>Team Lead</th>
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<tr>
<td>Respond to IFR</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publish Final IFR</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>R/A</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder Documentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create &amp; Turn In Final File</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>R/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Request Updates on Findings</td>
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<td>Findings</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Send Updates on Findings

Folder Documentation

R: Responsible for doing the step
A: Accountable for the step
C: Consulted with before the step
I: Informed when the step is completed
Audit Gantt Chart

Create Notebook, work folder, update checklist and IIR
Create ICL and ICQ
Send ICL
Send Site Response
Create IIP and ECL
Send IIP
Reserve Car
Set Pre Inspection Conference
Collect Site Documents
Pack equipment bag
Upload evidence (pictures, documents, etc)
Complete Findings/Deficiency Checklist
Make corrections to IIR
Schedule IFC with site
Site sends IIR Approval
Request IIR Signatures (Site)
Review/update schedule for remaining tasks in OneNote
IFR Proof
IFC Send Outlook event
IFR, add notes from IFCC
Send IFR for final site review
Publish IFR to Safeguard Inspections Reports Folder
Summary Update
Site makes corrections
Upload Follow Up Response to OneNote
Inspection follow up, team review (as needed)
Audit Process

Overview → Pre-Engagement

Begin

Get Inspection Date

Open Folder

Create Notebook

Update Tasklists, & Checklists

Accept Inspection Date

Create Initial Contact Letter & Initial Contact Questionnaire

Upload Initial Contact Letter & Initial Contact Questionnaire

Send Initial Contact Letter & Initial Contact Questionnaire

Wait for site response

IA

End
Audit Process

Overview → Pre-Engagement → Accept Inspection Date

Begin

Get Initial Contact Questionnaire Response

Site Accepts Date

YES

NO

Reschedule Engagement Date

Engagement Confirmation Process

Wait for Engagement

End
Audit Process

Ove... → Pre... → Acc... → Reschedule Engagement Date

Begin

Accept Site Requested Date

Call Site to Schedule Engagement

NO

YES

Keep File Number

Schedule Next Fiscal Year

End

Update Current Schedule
Audit Process

Ove... → Pre... → Acc... → Engagement Confirmation

Begin

Create Engagement Confirmation Letter & Internal Inspection Plan

Upload Engagement Confirmation Letter & Internal Inspection Plan

Send Engagement Confirmation Letter & Internal Inspection Plan

Get Site's Documentation

Review & Upload Site's Documentation

End
Audit Process

Overview → Engagement

Begin

Get Directions

Request Car

Pack Audit Bag

Fill out Internal Inspection Report Cover Page

Perform Audit - Fillout IIR, Collect Evidence

Download/Scan, Organize, Upload Collected Evidence

Sync OneNote

Request IIR Proof

Wait for proofer's response

Send IIR to Site for Review & Approval

Wait for site response

IIR Approval Process

IIA

End
Audit Process

Overview → Engagement → IIR Approval Process

Begin

Get Site's IIR Response

Site Requests Change

Call Site for Clarification

Make Requested Change

Make Change

Need Proof

Request IIR Proof

Wait for Proofer's response

End
Audit Process

Begin

Primary Auditor Signs IIR

Request IIR Review & Signature from Internal Audit Director

Wait for Audit Director’s response

Remove watermark & Designate IIR as Final

Send IIR to Site for Signature

End

Ove... → Eng... → IIR... → Request Signature Process
Audit Process

Overview → Post-Engagement

Begin

Analyze Evidence Process

Complete Evaluation Matrix/Worksheet

Draft Inspection Findings Report

IFR Review & Proof Process

Discuss unique findings with Audit Director

Discuss with Director

End
Audit Process

Overview → Post-Engagement → Analyze Evidence

Begin

Additional Evidence = True

Download/Scan, Organize, Upload Collected Evidence

Do While Need Additional Evidence

NO

End

YES

Review & Analyze Collected Evidence

Need Additional Evidence

NO

Additional Evidence = False

YES

Make Evidence Request

Wait for site response
Audit Process

Overview → Post-Engagement → IFR Review & Proof

Begin

1. Request Auditor Review of IFR

2. Second Auditor Evidence Review

   - YES
   - NO

   - Revision Needed

   - YES
   - NO

   - Make Changes to IFR

   - Request IFR Proof

   - Revision Needed

   - YES
   - NO

   - Make Changes to IFR

End
Audit Process

Ove... → Pos... → IFR... → 2nd Auditor Evidence Review
Audit Process

Overview ➔ Findings Conference ➔ IFR Final Review & Proof

Begin

Request Final Review of IFR

Wait for Auditor's response

Revision Needed

YES

No

Make Changes to IFR

Request IFR Proof

Wait for Proofer's response

Revision Needed

YES

No

Make Changes to IFR

End
Audit Process

Overview → Findings Conference → Site's Final Review

Begin

Send Site IFR for Final Review

Wait for Site's response

Revision Requested

YES

Revision Needed

YES

Make Changes to IFR

NO

NO

Remove watermark & Designate IFR as Final

End
Audit Process

Overview → Follow Up Process

1. **Begin**

2. Wait for Follow Up Date

3. Create & Send Site a Summary of Findings
   Request Site for Evidence for Correcting Deficiencies

4. Wait for Site's Response

5. **Analyze Evidence Process**

6. **III A**

7. Clean up working directory - remove unnecessary files

8. Close Notebook

9. End
Performance and Risk Dashboard

Project Overview

Project Assignment Totals

Task Overview

Task In Progress and Complete

Milestone Overview

Sum of Mean Deviation

Milestone
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Auditor</th>
<th>Date Assigned</th>
<th>Date Closed</th>
<th>InProgress</th>
<th>Complete</th>
<th>Validity Test</th>
<th>Validity Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site One</td>
<td>Todd</td>
<td>10/31/2016</td>
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<td>TRUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site Two</td>
<td>Sherri</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site Three</td>
<td>Stephen</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Site Five</td>
<td>Sherri</td>
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<td>TRUE</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Stephen</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Site Seven</td>
<td>Todd</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Eight</td>
<td>Sherri</td>
<td>11/14/2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>FALSE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Nine</td>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>11/14/2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>FALSE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Ten</td>
<td>Todd</td>
<td>11/21/2016</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Effective Engagement Scheduling

Project Submission Due: 6 February 2017
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Synopsis

The agency's information security (info-sec) audit team has an obligation to perform inspections on all DSS county offices, County Clerk of Court offices, and a number of contracted partner offices located around the state due to a data sharing agreement with the IRS. These audits are on a three-year cycle and must be performed for compliance to the agreement. There are currently 150 sites that fall under the compliance regulation and must be inspected once within the allowable timeframe/cycle.

The info-sec audit team, during the time of data collection, is a partnership of four auditors ranging in skill sets and years of service. The inspection is generally performed by two auditors, one taking a lead role and the other adopting a reviewer's role. The team ultimately has the responsibility to ensure inspections are performed, but more importantly that security compliance is met at all of the sites.

The function the info-sec team fulfills is a relatively new function for the agency and, as such, many of the processes and workflows are unseasoned to this team's role. The existing processes and workflow are adaptations from the Agency's financial audit team. The Agency's financial audit team has a great deal of success with its processes and workflow and does well to meet customer's expectations for delivering value to the business unit during and after the audit process. It is our goal to continue to meet these expectations while tweaking and refining the processes and workflow used by the info-sec audit team to meet the demand for security inspections.
A successful outcome for renovating the info-sec audit team’s process and workflow will be to provide value to customers by dividing and assigning work segments into manageable fragments, provide timely deliverables in a meaningful format, and schedule project events in a way to stagger project and task assignments to auditors.

Problem/Challenge

A single inspection consists of four defined cycle parts, eight significant milestones, 30 specific tasks, and typically lasts 40 weeks/280 days. Unfortunately due to the volume of inspections performed by the info-sec audit team, inspections must overlap and often a primary auditor juggles multiple inspections. This leads to an auditor having multiple inspection projects open at different stages with a cluster of tasks assigned for each engagement during any given week. The challenge is to maximize the use of lead-time and wait-time on all open engagements so that the team can minimize deadline conflict or the need to reschedule important dates/events/milestones with the customer (inspection site) because of scheduling/timeline issues on the info-sec audit team’s part.

Currently, a list of inspection sites is maintained in Excel. This workbook forecasts two key dates: the inspection date and inspection findings conference (IFC) date. Task and milestone scheduling are calculated from these dates. The team uses an Excel worksheet to populate the task list for the inspection project. Every week, a manual process is used to gather the tasks and compile a collected task list for the
There are a few self-inflicted constraints to the current system. In general, the team goes out for inspections on either Tuesdays or Thursdays and reserves Monday and Wednesdays for closing conferences (IFCs). Fridays are usually considered an in-the-office work day to finish up the assigned weekly tasks. Inspections and IFCs are, as a rule, neither scheduled the week of state holidays nor the last two to three weeks of December to reduce scheduling conflicts. However, these are guidelines and any available date may be used when needed to reschedule events.

Data Collection

The original idea was to account for inspections conducted in a single fiscal year (July to June)\(^1\); however, due to the audit lifecycle, which on average takes about 2 \(\frac{1}{2}\) to 3 months to complete, it was decided to track the inspections that have inspection dates within the fiscal year. This caused the data collection process to take several additional months to capture the remaining data elements for the last several engagements started during the fiscal year.

One of the first data elements is the process and workflow for an inspection engagement. A flowchart\(^2\) is created to identify and map the process. In addition, a

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\(^1\) The fiscal year evaluated is July 2015 through June 2016. Unfortunately, the October 2015 flood impacted scheduling and meeting deadlines. The info-sec audit team was reassigned duties October – December 2015. Additionally, a team member was permanently reassigned during this timeframe. Thus, consideration for this large gap in time and loss of a team member is admitted during data analysis.

\(^2\) See the attached "Wilkins - Process Flow Charts" document for further information.
RACI chart\textsuperscript{3} is compiled to identify individual roles and responsibilities for the inspection engagement. The info-sec audit team compiles a problem analysis diagram\textsuperscript{4} for known issues for completing tasks or the need to reschedule events and milestones.

The following data points are identified during the discovery/planning stage of the project. The data is collected from the weekly task lists and by directly identifying dates captured during the engagement. The data is imported to SQL Server and queried against in order to produce summary data that calculates the required data point.

- Determine the average number of open engagements for the team per week
- Determine average number of open engagements per week & per team member: Todd (Auditor1), Sherri (Auditor2), Stephen (Auditor3), and Jonathan (Auditor4)
- Identify the average number of tasks assigned to a team member during a single audit lifecycle
- Identify the average number of tasks assigned during each phase of the audit lifecycle
- Identify the average task time assigned during each phase of the audit lifecycle
- Determine the frequency (how often) a team member is assigned a new audit engagement
- Identify average number of days between all milestones

\textsuperscript{3} See the attached "Wilkins - RACI Chart" document for further information.
\textsuperscript{4} See the attached "Wilkins - Problem Analysis Diagram" document for more information.
• Identify all tasks including time to complete and any dependencies or prerequisites to complete during an audit lifecycle

Data Analysis

For the purpose of study, data was collected for 18 months. This period of time is determined by evaluating all site inspections with inspection dates for FY2016 and establishing when the first and last assigned tasks are completed. The tasks under review are the defined tasks that are assigned and tracked by the process in place during the 18 month period. There are a total of 30 unique tasks assigned per inspection engagement: 16 assigned during the Engagement Process, 6 assigned during the Post-Engagement, 6 assigned during the Conference Processes, and 2 during the Follow-Up Process. As a result of the study, additional tasks are identified.

Average Open Engagements

A review and average of the open engagements per week shows the team member’s averages 8/9 open engagements at any given time. The high water mark occurs in week 50 (May 23 – 27) with 50 open engagements and the team members holding the following open engagements: Todd – 13, Sherri – 17, Stephen, 18, and Jonathan 2. The team on average has 27 open engagements during the data collection period. This indicator is

Average Open Engagements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Todd</th>
<th>Stephen</th>
<th>Sherri</th>
<th>Jonathan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>8/9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
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</table>
utilized as a Key Risk Indicator (KRI) showing how many engagements an auditor has open at any given time. A threshold should be evaluated and applied for effectiveness.

Average Task Assigned per Audit

The next study evaluates each inspection engagement and averages for all tasks assigned to the auditor during the engagement. What this suggests is that although, on average, the three main auditors have an average of 8/9 open engagements at any one time, tasks may stack up due to over assignment of projects or a delay in completing assigned tasks. This number may only indicate a potential issue and is a Key Risk Indicator (KRI). This needs to be aggregated with other indicators to have more value.
Average Task Assignment per Audit by Audit Cycle

By only evaluating the number of tasks assigned during the audit life cycle, there isn’t a clear determination of what may cause the audit project to slow down or cause the number of tasks assigned to lag. Evaluating the task assignment by the audit life cycle begins to show where and when the bulk of tasks are assigned during the engagement. Over half of the tasks are assigned during the Engagement process. This a cumulative number of tasks for a specific engagement and any other tasks for open engagements. This may indicate that the Engagement process is the most demanding of the processes in terms of juggling projects and assigned tasks. This is leveraged as a KRI, but a threshold must be determined for peak performance. This indicator along with the previous two will provide insight for emerging deadline and timeline collapse.
The most logical stepping stone is to now evaluate the tasks and determine their life-span throughout the audit life cycle. The limitation is that the tracking system tracks by weeks and not days. A task assigned and completed in a single day would track the same life span of a task assigned on Monday and completed on Friday – one week. The first note is that the tasks are in alphabetical order within the proper process. It is ascertained that while the bulk of tasks are assigned during the first process (Engagement), the bulk of time weigh-downs are found in the last two processes (Conference and Follow-Up\(^5\)). This indicator measures performance based on task life-span.

\(^5\) Knowing the process, during the last two phases the focus of work product begins to shift from the auditor to the inspection site for response and corrective actions. The documented/assigned tasks do not normally take a lot of time, but the communication that takes place between the auditors and the site can consume hours not accounted for within the project.
One obvious place to look for abnormality is the frequency an auditor is assigned a new inspection site. The inspection dates are traced for each auditor respectively looking to determine the number of days between inspections for the auditor. For the purpose of the study, Jonathan's (Auditor 4) numbers are not a factor for analysis. This chart shows the number of inspections assigned to the auditor and the average number of days between assignments. The number of inspections range from 19 to 26 with 13-19 days between assignments. The rate is roughly every 2-3 weeks an auditor is assigned a new inspection project. This indicator measures the risk of over taxing the auditor with engagements too frequently.

Average Days between Milestones

A slightly different view of the task data is to evaluate the milestone completion dates. Unlike tasks, the milestone dates are actual dates when the milestone is reached. This data is manually gathered by reviewing each inspection file to collect dates from emails and other scheduled events during the audit cycle. To conserve space on the graph, the milestones are represented as MS1..MS8. These correspond to the following milestones:

- MS1 – Inspection

---

6 Due to the 2015 flood, all prospective engagement assignments were suspended from October thru December. Most of these sites are assigned new dates within the fiscal year; however, a handful fell over into the next fiscal year.
The greatest deviation appears between Inspection Finding Conference (MS6) and Inspection Findings Report Issued (MS7). However, what is most alarming are the cumulative days between the Inspection Site Review (MS2) and Inspection Findings Report Site Review (MS5). The cumulative average is 26 days. This impacts the overall flow of the inspection project because the inspection report being signed and returned

---

7 Once the conference concludes, the inspection site begins the process of addressing deficiencies. The first step is for the inspection site to determine the best cost effective and efficient solution to meet the security control requirement. Depending on the site, this process may require escalation to acquire approval for funds and other resources. Third-party sites often run into a delay at this stage which postpones issuing the Findings Report with an agreed upon corrective action. This delay has little impact on meeting deadlines and milestones but does impact the over-all length of time an engagement remains active by pushing the follow-up process further out.
(MS4) closes out the first half of the engagement with all tasks and milestones tied to the inspection date. The second half of the engagement process is linked to the Inspection Findings Conference (MS6). The hand-off between the two halves occur when a signed inspection report is received and the inspection findings report is sent for review. This also gives evidence for tasks in the Post-Engagement process lingering and inflating the total number of tasks present during the engagement process for other engagements. Of the indicators used, this risk indicator is the most useful. This KRI measures the most specific and accurate data element available, the actual time between key events of the project.

**Further Analysis Diagram**

The next step is to analyze all of the collected data including the diagrams created early on in the process. The tasks that linger on and not completed timely generally fall under “Method” and “Man” causes. The common denominator of the causes in question boil down to communication and education. The causes that surface are: “Method - Cause: Response time is too long and next steps gets lost between cracks,” “Method - Cause: Our process isn't communicated well outside of audit division,” “Man - Cause: Customers do not understand their responsibility for compliance,” “Man - Cause: Customers are untrained to our processes and tools,” and the top cause is “Man - Cause: Customers do not respond to evidence or approval/sign-off requests timely.”

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8 Early in the program, the Inspection Findings Report was sent out before receiving the signed Inspection Report and it was discovered that a control mechanism was needed to ensure the report was returned. The signed inspection reports are the evidence submitted to the IRS showing the inspections occur.

9 By all accounts, Mother Nature causes, specifically the 2015 flood, have the most devastating impact on the engagement process.
Evaluating the collected data as a whole and not as individual data points, it appears that the assignment of tasks and expected completion time during the engagement process is too restrictive and optimistic. This observation, coupled with customer’s limited knowledge of their responsibility for completing certain tasks timely, lead to missed deadlines and the need to reschedule key events and milestones. A solution that focuses on enhancing these segments of the life cycle will be crucial for adding value to the overall process.

Implementation Plan

It seems counterintuitive to add more tasks and events to the “Engagement” process because this phase already hosts the most tasks and also has the most tasks carried past expected timelines. However, the plan is to add tasks and events which engage the audit site sooner, add an element for education, training, and communication for the audit process, and allow the audit process to start sooner and end later. The purpose is to raise the site’s level of awareness of the process, actively engage them sooner, and educate them about task ownership.

Action Steps

There are several action steps to implement a comprehensive plan which will increase the communication and education processes of the audit lifecycle. The first step is to consider what aspects of the audit process need further explanation and determine when the appropriate touch points are for the customer. Next, develop a comprehensive Gantt chart which includes the communication and education tasks. All
the while, curriculum and souvenirs should be developed with the customer in mind.
The curriculum and souvenirs should clearly layout 1) the key dates such as inspection and closing conference, 2) required documentation requested from customer such as policies, system overview, and user lists, and 3) milestones and deliverables such as final inspection and findings reports.

**Timeframes**
The project timeline will take several weeks to define and develop the PowerPoint presentation and souvenirs. Week 1, whiteboard ideas for critical components to communicate. Week 2, prioritize components from week 1, get IAD Director approval, and begin developing talking points. Week 3 – 5, finalize talking points, share with IAD Director and get feedback, develop presentation and souvenirs. Week 6 – 7, finalize presentation and souvenirs, share with IAD Director and get feedback. Week 8, update based on IAD Director's feedback. Week 9, begin using newly created curriculum and souvenirs.

**Costs**
There are no upfront costs to consider other than staff time to develop presentations and souvenirs for the audit process. Office products already licensed will be leveraged to develop needed deliverables. However, the single audit lifecycle is expected to grow to accommodate the communication and education efforts. There may be hidden costs to acclimate the new time line. Additional staff time will need to be used updating currently used spreadsheets and souvenirs to accommodate new lifecycle and tasks.
Potential Obstacles
The biggest obstacle based on past experience with customer base will be keeping them engaged in the process and getting them to recognize their accountability and responsibility for protecting DSS information shared with them based on the contract. The best way to keep them engaged is by including the DSS Business Manager in the correspondence and at times letting the correspondence originate from the business program – used sparingly and only when necessary. The goal for the curriculum will be to help educate the customer of their accountability and responsibility for maintaining security compliance for the information shared and entrusted to them.

Potential Resource
There are tools already in place that can be utilized for developing the curriculum and souvenirs. Additionally, there are staff members from the business area already engaged at some level in the audit process. These key individuals may need to be leveraged at critical times to engage and help hold the customers accountable and responsible for maintaining compliance. The contract and the procurement process may be valuable resources for reminding the customers of their legal obligation for maintaining compliance.

Communication with Stakeholders
The most visible stakeholder in our audit process is the business area which is held ultimately accountable for the compliance and security of the information owned by the business area. The business area is already aware that the process is being re-evaluated for effectiveness and given an opportunity to provide feedback into the current process. Once ideas are white boarded and prioritized, the business area
should be brought into the discussion and allowed an opportunity to shape the talking points to drive home the business goals and values for sharing the information. Other stakeholders (Chief of Staff and Office of Investigations) will have newly developed timelines, curriculum and souvenirs shared with them via email.

Integration into SOP
The current processes and timelines will need to be adjusted to accommodate the new lifecycle. The main schedule in Excel will need to be re-evaluated to make sure that extending the time frame doesn’t impose issues on the scheduled inspection and tentative findings conferences. Next, the generic task list will need to be updated to account for the new schedule and tasks. The templates used for Initial Contact, Contact Questionnaire, Engagement Confirmation, Inspection Plan, Inspection Report, Findings Report, Evaluation Matrix, and Check List will all need to be evaluated for impact and changes. Finally, the shared Outlook team calendar will need to be updated where necessary to accommodate changes to timeline.

Evaluation
This study evaluated several performance and risk indicators which gives a pinhole view into the Info-Sec Audit’s operation. The Info-Sec team “owns” the data and should continue to collect audit project data including the task and milestone data. Moving forward, the task list process should be revamped to collect the date assigned and the actual date completed. An additional administration task will be to compile the task data weekly. In like manner, the milestone data gathering process will need to be defined and
assigned. Both task and milestone data will be compiled leveraging Excel\textsuperscript{10}. The workbook contains project, task, and milestone data pertaining to ownership along with expected and actual realization dates. Power pivots and graphs are used to create a dashboard with visualization of the indicator data\textsuperscript{11}.

\textsuperscript{10} See the attached “Wilkins - Performance and Risk” Excel workbook to see how the data collected will be analyzed. Note: dashboard data is fictitious and used only to verify and validate dashboard functionality.

\textsuperscript{11} See the attached “Wilkins - Performance and Risk Dashboard” document for a screen shot of the dashboard.
Problem Analysis Diagram

Minimize deadline conflict or the need to reschedule important dates/events/milestones with the customer (auditee) because of scheduling/timeline issues

- Cause: Analyzing evidence and artifacts consumes too much time
- Details: Reading paper, analyzing (fuzzy) pictures
- Cause: Report generation/writing is complex, convoluted, and time consuming.
- Details: An integrated approach with word and excel using mail merge and an assortment of copy/paste boilerplates.
- Cause: Response time is too long and next steps get lost between cracks.
- Details: Requests that should take a day or two can take upwards of 3-4 weeks.
- Cause: Evidence collected from multiple people at site can sometimes contradict making analysis more difficult.
- Details: Interviews, evidence and artifacts collected during the inspection often are contradictory. Determining which “truth” is reality can take time to death.
- Cause: Multiple findings will overlap a single deficiency,
- Cause: Our process isn’t communicated well outside of audit division.
- Not enough or right evidence collected to appropriately analyze compliance.
- Cause: Floods and Snow
- Cause: DSNAP - Disaster recovery efforts
- Cause: Reports don’t make sense to customers.
- Cause: Attachments can’t be opened (PDF or XPS)
- Cause: Findings matrix difficult and time consuming to use
## Task Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Administrator</th>
<th>Team Lead</th>
<th>Primary Auditor</th>
<th>Secondary Auditor</th>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Work Force</th>
<th>IRS</th>
<th>DSS Exec Management</th>
<th>CISO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create 3 Year Calendar</td>
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<td>R/A</td>
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<td>Assign Auditors</td>
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<td>Create &amp; Send Initial Contact</td>
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<td>Folder Documentation</td>
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<td>Respond to Initial Contact</td>
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<td>Reschedule/Set Inspection</td>
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<td>Create &amp; Send Confirmation</td>
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<td>Request Site Information</td>
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<td>Request Car</td>
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<td>Prepare for Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send Updates on Findings</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

R: Responsible for doing the step

A: Accountable for the step

C: Consulted with before the step

I: Informed when the step is completed
Audit Gantt Chart

Create Notebook, work folder, update checklist and IIR
Create ICL and ICQ
Send ICL
Send Site Response
Create IIP and ECL
Send IIP
Reserve Car
Set Pre Inspection Conference
Collect Site Documents
Pack equipment bag
Upload evidence (pictures, documents, etc)
Complete Findings/Deficiency Checklist
Make corrections to IIR
Schedule IFC with site
Site sends IIR Approval
Request IIR Signatures (Site)
Review/update schedule for remaining tasks in OneNote
IFR Proof
IFC Send Outlook event
IFR, add notes from IFCC
Send IFR for final site review
Publish IFR to Safeguard Inspections Reports Folder
Summary Update
Site makes corrections
Upload Follow Up Response to OneNote
Inspection follow up, team review (as needed)
Audit Process

Overview

Start

I
Pre-Engagement Process

II
Engagement Process

III
Post-Engagement Process

IV
Pre-Findings Conference Process

V
Findings Conference Process

VI
Follow Up Process

Stop
Audit Process

Overview → Pre-Engagement

1. Get inspection Date
2. Open Folder
3. Create Notebook
4. Update Tasklists, & Checklists
5. Create Initial Contact Letter & Initial Contact Questionnaire
6. Upload Initial Contact Letter & Initial Contact Questionnaire
7. Send Initial Contact Letter & Initial Contact Questionnaire
8. Wait for site response
9. Accept Inspection Date

IA

End
Audit Process

Overview → Pre-Engagement → Accept Inspection Date

Begin

Get Initial Contact Questionnaire Response

Site Accepts Date

NO

YES

Reschedule Engagement Date

IA1

Engagement Confirmation Process

IA2

Wait for Engagement

End
Audit Process

Ove... → Pre... → Acc... → Reschedule Engagement Date

Begin

Accept Site Requested Date

Call Site to Schedule Engagement

YES

Schedule Next Fiscal Year

NO

Keep File Number

YES

Update Current Schedule

NO

End
Audit Process

Ove... → Pre... → Acc... → Engagement Confirmation

Begin

Create Engagement Confirmation Letter & Internal Inspection Plan

Upload Engagement Confirmation Letter & Internal Inspection Plan

Send Engagement Confirmation Letter & Internal Inspection Plan

Get Site's Documentation

Review & Upload Site's Documentation

End
Audit Process

Overview → Engagement

1. Get Directions
2. Request Car
3. Pack Audit Bag
4. Fill out Internal Inspection Report Cover Page
5. Perform Audit - Fill out IIR, Collect Evidence
6. Download/Scan, Organize, Upload Collected Evidence
7. Sync OneNote
8. Request IIR Proof
9. Wait for proover's response
10. Send IIR to Site for Review & Approval
11. Wait for site response
12. IIR Approval Process

End
Audit Process

Overview → Engagement → IIR Approval Process

Begin

Get Site’s IIR Response

Site Requests Change

YES

Call Site for Clarification

NO

Request Signature Process

IIA1

Yes

Make Requested Change

Make Change

NO

Need Proof

YES

Request IIR Proof

NO

Wait for Proofer’s response

End
Audit Process

Begin

Primary Auditor Signs IIR

Request IIR Review & Signature from Internal Audit Director

Wait for Audit Director's response

Remove watermark & Designate IIR as Final

Send IIR to Site for Signature

End

Ove... → Eng... → IIR... → Request Signature Process
Audit Process

Overview → Post-Engagement

- Begin
  - Analyze Evidence Process
    - IIIA
  - Complete Evaluation Matrix/Worksheet
    - Draft Inspection Findings Report
      - IIIB
        - IFR Review & Proof Process
          - Discuss unique findings with Audit Director
            - YES
              - Discuss with Director
              - End
            - NO
              - End
Audit Process

Overview → Post-Engagement → Analyze Evidence

Begin

Additional Evidence = True

Download/Scan, Organize, Upload Collected Evidence

Do While Need Additional Evidence

NO

End

YES

Review & Analyze Collected Evidence

Need Additional Evidence

NO

Additional Evidence = False

YES

Make Evidence Request

Wait for site response
Audit Process

Ove... → Pos... → IFR... → 2nd Auditor Evidence Review

Begin

Got Questions = True

Do While Got Questions

End

Review & Analyze Collected Evidence

Need Answers

Follow Up With Primary Auditor

Got Questions = False

Analyze Evidence Process

Follow Up Wrth Primary Auditor

YES

NO

YES

NO

III A
Audit Process

Overview → Findings Conference

Begin

Update IFR with Site's Response

IFR Final Review & Proof Process

Document Conference Call

Site's Final Review Process

VA

Send Site Final IFR

VB

Publish Final IFR

Update OneNote

Update Final Folder

Close Folder

Update Tracking Logs

Turn in Final Folder

End
Audit Process

Ove... → Findings Conference → IFR Final Review & Proof

Begin

Request Final Review of IFR

Wait for Auditor's response

Revision Needed

YES

NO

Make Changes to IFR

Request IFR Proof

Wait for Proofer's response

Revision Needed

YES

NO

Make Changes to IFR

End
Audit Process

Ove... → Findings Conference → Site’s Final Review

Begin

Send Site IFR for Final Review

Wait for Site’s response.

Revision Requested

- YES
  - Make Changes to IFR
- NO

Revision Needed

- YES
  - Make Changes to IFR
- NO

Remove watermark & Designate IFR as Final

End
Audit Process

Overview

Follow Up Process

Begin

1. Create & Send Site a Summary of Findings
2. Request Site for Evidence for Correcting Deficiencies
3. Clean up working directory - remove unnecessary files
4. Wait for Site's Response
5. Wait for Follow Up Date

End

• Create & Send Site a Summary of Findings
• Request Site for Evidence for Correcting Deficiencies
• Clean up working directory - remove unnecessary files
• Wait for Site's Response
• Wait for Follow Up Date

III

I

End

Close Notebook

Audit Process

VI
Performance and Risk Dashboard

**Project Overview**

Project Assignment Totals

**Task Overview**

Task in Progress and Complete

In Progress Tasks with Over Due In Progress

Completed Tasks with Over Due Completed

**Milestone Overview**

Sum of Missed Expectation

Milestone

SC DSS
Todd Wilkins

Date January 4, 2017