

# Q & A about QA/QM

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## **How the Auditor Should Deal with the Auditee's Expectation**

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## Question:

There are some auditees of ISO certification audits that seem to be expecting the auditor's advice or recommendation on how to take the corrective action for the audit findings. How the auditor should deal with such expectations of the auditee? (From a Member of IQAI)

**See next page for our response.**

## Answer:

At the ISO certification audits, the immature auditee tends to expect the auditor's advice or suggestion how to solve the problem and take the corrective action, from the thought that they can pass the audit easily if they merely follow the auditor's instruction. At the time of follow-up audits, they appear to be expecting the advice what they should do further. It is not explicit, but obvious in many cases. If the auditor gives them any advice, he is not only violating the auditor's code of ethics but also going to take the ownership of the action. It must be avoided. His role is only to record the fact and report it to his boss at the registrar.

Therefore, if the auditor felt the auditee are expecting his advice, he should clearly explain to them that anything except the verification of the fact is outside the scope of his right and responsibility. At the follow-up audit, he just verifies the result and effectiveness of corrective action after determining their corrective action response is appropriate.

Second party auditors and internal auditors should conduct essentially the same way as above. Even in the case that the auditor is at the higher level management and in the position to make instruction to the auditee with the authority and responsibility, he should just record the fact and report it correctly. The advice and instruction to the auditee should be done by the company separately from the audits.

As corrective action involves some changes in corporate management system and procedures, the plan for corrective action must be reported by the auditee to top management for its approval before implementation.

By the way, there were such ridiculous cases of some Japanese big companies. One company blindly followed the crazy auditor's instruction, and institutionalized the procedures for how to make histograms and bar charts, as the "statistical techniques". Another company prepared the procedures for how to put on working clothes, work shoes, and slippers. These are true stories.

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