

Internal Audit Client Survey Report

BACKGROUND

In late fall of 2021, Internal Audit undertook a complete overhaul of its Internal Audit Client Survey. We reviewed the questionnaire, revised and expanded the depth of many of the questions, and added some comment sections in order to procure more useful and detailed feedback from our audit clients.

The main goal of our survey is to provide an opportunity for auditees to evaluate the audit work conducted by Internal Audit, assess the value derived from that work and offer any suggestions for improvement. The survey also serves to fulfil requirements under the Institute of Internal Auditors' IPPF (International Professional Practices Framework). The results of the survey help us to understand our clients' perspective on the services we provide, and to review any constructive criticism in order to improve our service quality and increase the value we add to our clients' businesses.

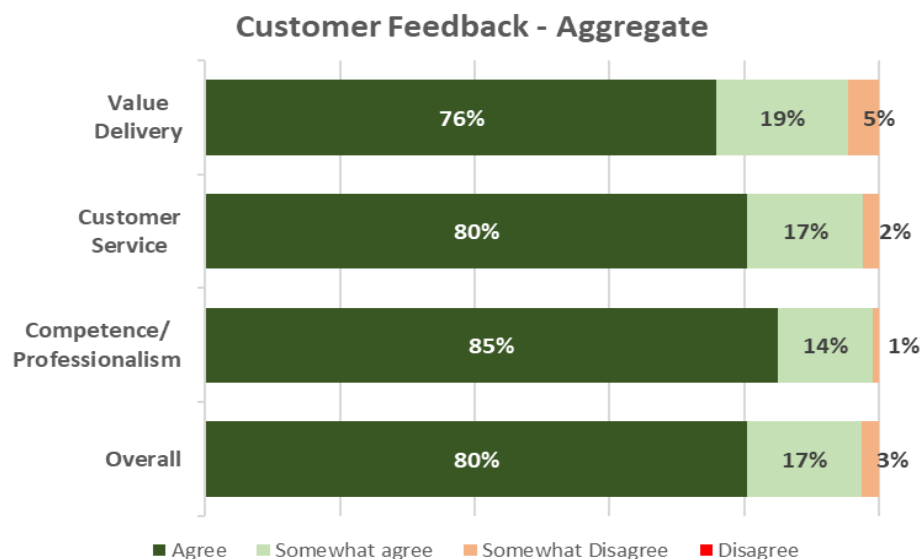
HIGHLIGHTS

Surveys were issued to Action Plan owners, audited area main contacts, and audited area leadership (up to Director) for all audits performed in 2021. Out of a total of 22 surveys issued, we received 18 responses, which is an 82% response rate. Responses were received from four departments; Corporate Services (11), Community Services (3), Transportation & Works (2), and Planning & Building (2), and eight divisions.

Results overall were very encouraging; positive feedback received in all areas of the survey exceeded 95%. Some positive points which clients touched on included our risk-based approach, quality of recommendations, and professionalism and attitude of our auditors.

Opportunities for improvement concentrated on clarity of scope from the start of the audit, and time management during the audits.

The chart below shows aggregated feedback overall and for three areas measured: value delivery; customer service; and competence/professionalism.



Important: Questions were phrased so that "Agree" means a positive quality or outcome.

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The table below provides some of the specific comments from the survey respondents (slightly edited for flow and clarity). As the survey was not anonymous, and therefore, there is a risk of bias towards positive feedback, the comments provided demonstrate that this effect, if any, was limited. Some sample positive comments (in green), as well as suggestions for improvement (in orange) included:

Comments on Value Delivery:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Internal Audit added value by improving awareness and understanding of risks, controls and/or governance. ➤ The experience assisted greatly in validating the importance and effectiveness of existing operational controls. ➤ The auditor did an excellent job of focusing on the risk areas that were outside of those traditionally audited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The audit began at a good pace, but was rushed towards the end. ➤ It took a bit of time to understand scope.
Comments on Customer Service:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The timelines to reach the audit process milestones were clear and reasonable. ➤ The auditor has been wonderful work with, is reasonable and understands the intricacies of the City. ➤ The auditor was super patient and always available. ➤ Good communication – I was in the loop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I didn't feel a clear path and approach was provided by the external audit team (ie. timelines, next steps, etc.). ➤ Scope creep occurred.
Comments on Competence and Professionalism:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The auditor understands the business unit needs, communicates effectively, and delivered valuable insights in this audit. ➤ The auditors maintained a high level of professionalism and displayed exceptional communication skills. ➤ The auditor did an excellent job of understand what's already a highly technical subject. Her awareness of the risks was great. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The audit was condensed over a shorter period than previous audits. ➤ It took some time for auditors to align with the functions of the City.
Other General Comments:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Went beyond routine transaction reviews and focusing on the overall oversight of the program as a whole. ➤ The risk-based approach is an important advancement for Internal Audit, if used properly. ➤ The empathy and understanding shown by the audit team who understood the pressures helped me meet the various deadlines. ➤ The audit was conducted across all units and the recommendations were at the Division level – will help with elevating maturity across all teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some audits may require more time to get into the appropriate depth in complicated subjects. ➤ A discussion regarding the verification audit process or time frames to complete audit recommendations could be beneficial.

In addition to the above, one of our clients has shared some useful training options which will help expand and support our team's knowledge of public procurement.

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Based on other feedback received, we are also improving our clarification of goals and context of the audit right at the start of each risk workshop. This increased two-way communication will help avoid going out of scope, make the risk workshops easier to understand for our clients, and will assist them in accomplishing their tasks.

Finally, a client commented that our internal team was good, but the auditors from an external partner did not communicate the process clearly and would provide too short notice when requesting documents. As a result, we will examine and clarify expectations and standards with/for our auditing partners with regard to internal auditing assignments.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The overall results of our survey are positive and suggest that Internal Audit's risk-based approach and enhanced communication is being positively received by our clients. For example, a client emphasized the value brought by the audit and informed us that one recommendation which was directed at a specific group of employees was so useful that it has now been expanded to include the whole team. This is an example of the kind of positive impact which we are aiming to achieve.

Internal Audit will continue to solicit feedback from our clients following each audit engagement, and all feedback will be reviewed carefully and used to continually improve our processes and increase the value we deliver to the organization.

Prepared by: Karen Hobbs
Administrative Coordinator