



The Institute of
Internal Auditors

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INTERNAL AUDIT TODAY

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNAL AUDITORS INDIA



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From the Desk of the CHIEF EDITOR

Rupanjana De
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Dear Members and Readers,

Regulatory environment worldwide is becoming more intricate and demanding. Organizations face a web of rules and regulations that vary by jurisdiction, making compliance a formidable challenge. Internal auditors play a critical role in ensuring that their organizations remain compliant with ever-evolving laws and regulations, thereby avoiding costly penalties and reputational damage.

Internal audit has a vital role in safeguarding trust and transparency. In an environment where stakeholders are increasingly vigilant, the work of internal auditors serves as a powerful signal of an organization's commitment to transparency and accountability. Their reports, recommendations and assurance activities help build and maintain trust

with shareholders, customers, regulators, and the broader public.

In recent years, the role of internal audit has taken on a newfound significance on the global stage. From a simple compliance-focused function, internal audit has emerged as a strategic partner in helping organizations navigate the complexities of the modern business landscape. As we find ourselves in the midst of unprecedented global challenges, the need for internal audit to adapt and evolve has never been more critical. There are multiple reasons behind this enhanced role of Internal Audit worldwide, and in this editorial, I would like to delve into some of those.

Traditionally, internal audit focused on compliance and risk management. While these elements remain integral, internal

audit has expanded its scope to provide strategic insights. The modern day internal auditor is not just a gatekeeper but a trusted advisor, helping organizations identify and seize opportunities for growth. This shift from a compliance-centric approach to a strategic one is a significant milestone in the profession's evolution.

In an era defined by rapid change, increased complexity, and heightened scrutiny, internal auditing is not limited to any one industry or region but transcends boundaries, industries, and sectors. In a world that has just recovered from a deadly pandemic and is still reeling with uncertainty, safeguarding trust, needless to mention, is an important function.

Digital transformation has been a game-



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changer for internal audit. Advanced data analytics, artificial intelligence and automation have empowered auditors to analyse vast datasets quickly and efficiently. This, in turn, enables auditors to detect anomalies, identify emerging risks and provide real-time insights to management. The threat landscape for organizations has expanded to include not only traditional fraud but also sophisticated cyberattacks. Internal auditors are tasked with developing strategies and controls to prevent, detect and respond to these threats. Their role in protecting sensitive data and safeguarding the integrity of financial systems is paramount in an increasingly digital world. Technology has become the cornerstone of internal audit's effectiveness. But while technology is a powerful tool, the human element also remains irreplaceable in internal audit. Building relationships, fostering a culture of trust and effective communication are essential skills for auditors. The ability to translate complex technical findings into actionable insights for senior management is a hallmark of the internal auditors that has given the profession continuous success.

Internal audit is no longer confined to financial and compliance audits. It has extended its reach to areas like environmental, social and governance (ESG) auditing, cybersecurity, and culture assessment. This expansion reflects the growing recognition that non-financial risks

can have a profound impact on an organization's performance and reputation.

Further, talking once again about the global pandemic, it has increasingly been felt that in navigating the new normal, the Internal Auditors have a major role. The COVID-19 pandemic tested the resilience of organizations worldwide. It accelerated a shift in the way organizations operate. Remote work, digitalization, supply chain disruptions, and changing customer behaviours have all posed new risks and opportunities. In response, internal audit has risen to the occasion, embracing innovation and resilience. Internal audit played a vital role in helping organizations adapt to all these. It spotlighted the importance of having agile audit plans that can quickly pivot to address emerging risks and challenges.

In today's data-driven world, informed decision-making is essential for organizational success. Internal auditors are not just risk assessors, they are also data analysts who provide valuable insights to senior management. By analysing and interpreting data, they help guide strategic decisions and drive efficiency and effectiveness within organizations. To remain effective in the ever-changing business landscape, internal auditors must commit to continuous learning. As we look ahead, internal audit's role will continue to expand, and its importance in safeguarding organizational integrity

and promoting growth cannot be overstated. Hence, staying updated on emerging risks, regulations and industry trends is essential.

Professional development and certifications should be a priority for internal audit teams. Internal auditors must embrace change, invest in their skills, and remain agile in their approach. By doing so, they will not only navigate the challenges of today's business environment but also shape the future of their organizations. To this effect, various branches of IIA-India keep holding capacity building workshops, seminars and conferences all across India. Through this bi-monthly newsletter also, we keep bringing to our readers various articles from erudite authors that present different perspectives on the profession of Internal Auditors. In this issue we have as many as 11 articles, including those in the 'Out-of-the-box', 'Legal Updates' and 'Students' sections. All of these articles present a new dimension of internal audit and bring fresh foods for thought. As much as we, the Editorial Team, have enjoyed putting the issue together, we would hope it will bring equal satisfaction to our readers.

My best regards

Rupanjana De
Chief Editor



PROGRESS THROUGH SHARING



President Communiqué

Uma Prakash

President, IIA India

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Dear Members, Internal Audit & Risk Professionals,

It is with mixed emotions that I write to you today as I pen down my final letter as the President of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) India. Serving this esteemed organisation and its dedicated members has been a profound honour and privilege. It has been an incredible journey with IIA over the last 23 years (I joined IIA as a BOG member in 2003). In this long relationship with IIA, I have acquired not only knowledge but great friends too. This institution has been my extended workspace and home.

Reflecting on my tenure as the President, I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude for the unwavering support and commitment displayed

by all the Board Members, the valiant volunteers and the indefatigable staff.

Over the years, IIA India has achieved remarkable milestones, from expanding our membership base to fostering excellence in the profession through world-class training and certification programmes. I have been fortunate enough to witness this. The clarion call for the indispensability of internal audit, echoing through policy corridors and resonating across industries, is a testament to our tireless advocacy and propagation of best practices.

I had the opportunity to represent India at the global strategic meet in the Netherlands and Washington. I am delighted to share that IIA India occupies one of the top 5 positions amongst the 120+ affiliates.

It was an incredible experience to connect with the other affiliates of IIA and share the best practices. I am sure this will help in improving our ties with other affiliates and other institutes in India.

Team IIA India had an action-packed year, starting with IIA India's National Conference in Chennai, which brought together more than 300 participants from all over India and abroad. We also had the opportunity to host the ACIIA conference in Delhi, with the ACIIA President inaugurating the mega summit. The delegates experienced work, knowledge and fun in all the above events.

*Recently, in July 2023, we **onboarded two new Learning Partners**, i.e., Netrika Consulting in Mumbai and*



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Skills DA in Chennai, for imparting training for the world-renowned certification of IIA, CIA and IAP Exams.

The Internal Audit Magazine, a flagship publication of IIA India, has been instrumental in disseminating knowledge, sharing insights, and showcasing the exceptional work of our members. This platform has not only connected us but has also elevated the discourse around internal audit practices, trends, and innovations.

As I pass the torch to my capable successor, Mr. Sidheshwar Bhalla, I am confident that IIA India will continue to flourish and make significant strides in the coming year. Our incoming leadership team is driven by a passion for the profession and a vision for the future that aligns with our shared goals.

IIA India has a new CEO who will be working full-time with great passion and commitment. I am sure IIA India will fly high with the new Executive Committee under Sidheshwar's leadership and the new CEO.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the IIA India community, including our Board of Governors, Chapter Leaders, volunteers and the dedicated staff working tirelessly behind the scenes. Their dedication and commitment have been the driving force behind our achievements.

I also take this opportunity to thank all the committee chairs and their teams for making this a very productive, satisfying and fulfilling year.

I would also like to encourage all of you to remain committed to the principles

of excellence, integrity and continuous improvement that define our profession. As members of IIA India, we have a unique opportunity to shape the future of internal audit and contribute to the success of the organisations we serve.

It has been an incredible journey, and I am grateful for the trust you placed in me to lead this esteemed organisation. The next chapter unfurls with anticipation, as I look forward to witnessing the continuing crescendo of growth and accomplishment for IIA India under its new leadership.

Wish best regards,

Uma Prakash

Uma Prakash
President, IIA India (2022-23)

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Message from the Chairperson

Arijit Roy
Chairperson,
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Dear Esteemed IIA Members and Professional Colleagues,

I am delighted and deeply honoured to address you again as we unveil the July-August 2023 issue of the "Internal Audit Today." The current issue has been compiled with many thought provoking articles, which, we think, would be to the liking of our readers.

The Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) India continues to achieve recognition from the IIA for "Elevating Impact" once again this year. The Bangalore Chapter brilliantly hosted the Annual Conference on July 27, 2023. Equally impressive was the flagship event, the Joint Audit Conclave, hosted by the Calcutta Chap-

ter on July 21 and 22, 2023.

As always, the current "Internal Audit Today" issue is power-packed with enriching and captivating articles contributed by our distinguished members and professional colleagues. This edition features the regular 'quiz' segment. Interestingly, the 'out of the box' section has two unmissable and unconventional thought-provoking articles on the Internal Audit of Health and the use of Astrology for Internal Audit in a Digitised World. To help our readers with a quick reference for keyboard shortcuts, there is another informative article. Additionally, a 'leadership interview' delves into the expectations from the new-age CFO in

driving efficiencies. We have multiple articles exploring trending concepts across a spectrum of topics viz. Internal Audit in Geo-political Developments, in reporting Net Zero commitment, an analogy between fashion shopping and information gathering for Internal Audit, using return of security of investments in Internal Audit, ESG reporting for a sustainable future and an article on CARO 2020. The 'student section' deals with data risk in a third-party ecosystem.

I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the authors for their contributions, which have enriched this publication with innovative perspectives.



The strength and efficiency demonstrated by Internal Audit professionals across the globe today is nothing short of astounding. We all have embarked on a relentless journey of continuous improvement and an unwavering commitment to fostering stakeholder trust and confidence. The future of Internal Audit lies in our ability to innovate and adapt, harnessing the vast potential of technology to enhance efficiency and performance while remaining steadfast in our dedication to ethical practices and the public interest.

Relevance and resilience have emerged as twin objectives for the Internal Audit function today. Our ability to remain relevant and resilient will depend on our commitment to perpetual learning and professional growth. In this increasingly digitised environment, the Internal Audit profession can retain its relevance by embracing technology and broadening its knowledge horizons.

I would like to earnestly thank the President of IIA India for her gracious patronage, members of the editorial team behind "Internal Audit Today", and all the members of the Publications Committee for their unwavering commitment and relentless efforts put in this exciting journey of advancing the Internal Audit profession.

With warm regards,

Arijit Roy
Chairperson



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Beyond Traditional Metrics: ROSI's Crucial Role in Internal Auditing



Raman Narasimhan

*Chief Risk Officer,
Sundaram Finance Limited*

Shifting Sands of Security: Unpacking Finance's Emerging Cyber and Compliance Challenges

In a world increasingly dominated by digital concerns, multiple surveys have crowned Cyber Incidents as the foremost global risk,

followed by business disruptions, natural catastrophes, pandemic outbreaks, ESG issues and the looming threat of climate change.

Security in the industry has become complex, influenced by a torrent of new emerging technologies over the past half-decade. There is also an increase in compliance requirements, introducing another layer of challenge to the risk owners, managers, and auditors. The overall security landscape has rapidly transformed, with ransomware and phishing attacks picking up speed and high-profile vulnerabilities hitting the headlines at an alarming pace. As the new oil, data needs to be rigorously protected, classified and secured, and strict compliance with the applicable laws must be ensured to benefit the organisation.

The ABCs of ROSI: Breaking Down 'Return on Security of Investments'

Meeting compliance standards as a Financial Services organisation (including Banks, NBFCs and Fintechs) can be incredibly time-consuming and expensive if not understood properly.

These regulations exist for good reason and benefit the organisation after overcoming the initial challenges while implementing controls to address the regulation requirements. Even beyond being requirements to operate, meeting compliance standards helps Financial Services companies gain customer trust, adhere to the golden values that avoid reputational damage, and protect themselves from unnecessary or unprofitable risk. The best is always to be on the right side of compliance.

Financial Services organisations must embrace the complex relationship, and more so, with the increased need for cloud security and compliance, it is the only way to survive and thrive in a world where the cloud is the go-to method of innovation. Risk and Audit should work closely with the Information security and technology teams to make this happen. The ROSI (Return of Security Investments) - a modified ROI calculation, where the net benefit is the annual cost of security breaches avoided compared to the prevention cost incurred may be considered by the Internal Auditors to evaluate the effectiveness.

Taking steps for continuous improvement in each applicable area will help financial services organisations to be dynamic in facing the VUCA/BANI/RUPT world. (Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity-VUCA, Brittle, Anxious, Non-linear, Incomprehensible – BANI, and Rapid, Unpredictable, Paradoxical and Tangled-RUPT).

The concept of Return on Security Investment (ROSI) involves evaluating the effectiveness of security investments by measuring the value generated in relation to the costs incurred. It aims to provide a quantitative understanding of how cybersecurity expenditures contribute to overall business objectives, helping organisations optimise resource allocation for their security strategies.

Charting Risk Waters with ROSI: Its Crucial Role in Modern Times

In today's increasingly risk-prone environment, ROSI holds significant relevance as it enables organisations to make informed decisions about cybersecurity investments. As cyber threats continue to evolve, understanding the tangible benefits and potential risks associated with security spending is crucial for prioritising measures that enhance resilience and safeguard critical assets.

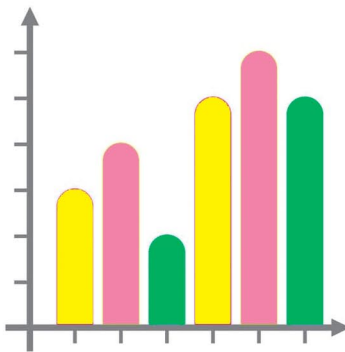
Role of Internal Audit

Senior Management may look at the Chief Audit Executive's (CAE) action on key areas such as innovation, automation and risk awareness to secure in this "Risk-aware" world. An essential requirement for Internal Auditors is to review how the organisation perceives and accepts controls for all the applications and the supporting infrastructure. Scoping out a few applications as part of internal audit in a disruptive-risk world may not assist the organisation as risk incidents can get triggered anywhere. With interlinked applications and databases, the enterprise risk rating may get moved from low risk to medium or high risk if the IA team becomes incapable of visualising risks, talking

to the key stakeholders and measuring the risks using models.

Assurance and Consulting Role of Internal Auditors

Internal auditors play an essential role in ROSI evaluation. They assess the effectiveness of cyber-security strategies, validate the accuracy of ROSI calculations and ensure that security investments align with the organisation's risk appetite and business objectives. By providing independent



insights, internal auditors help organisations make well-informed decisions regarding their security investments and strategies.

Benefits and Considerations of the ROSI Model

Transform Culture: Risk awareness should always be central to the security and compliance strategy. The awareness created by holding risk champions responsible for driving education and consistency across teams can facilitate the continuous requirement of upgrading compliance strategy. Due to the regulatory needs, the CSuite and Senior Management will require a strategy for continuous monitoring.

The functions within the

organisation should understand the "why" behind the security best practices and the reflective models (Rolfe) like 'so what' and 'now what' to prevail through the attack environment.

The organisation should also look at end-user level (customer) education and low level of literacy on risk awareness. This can lead to financial loss and the organisation's risks of reputation loss, penalty / regulatory actions and a significant loss of trust and morale. All these are part of the ROSI model.

Innovate Quickly: Innovation is crucial in today's financial services landscape. Financial Services organisations are competing for attention, which requires continuous digital transformation. The cloud allows these innovations to happen fast, but the CAE must ensure a secure environment for advancements to occur effectively. "How do we strike the right balance between innovation and safety?" This is a classic question that arises for organisations to succeed in this ever-changing dynamic environment. The bottom line for a ROSI or ROI model is the quality of data that exists and the processes through which the organisation ensures that the data is secure. Digital transformation can become a value-added initiative only when IA can facilitate the awareness of data completeness, awareness and quality. It is otherwise a simple garbage in, garbage out (GIGO) activity.

Automate Aggressively: Security teams should ideally look for tracking through automation as the current environment hosts several data points in a multi-cloud environment. Independent internal audits can be made easy using automation best practices. The cost of cyber security should always be compared with the potential cost of cybercrime. ROSI analysis can assist the internal auditors in going deeper into the factor if the investment is justified with respect to the regulatory, customer and employee requirements.



It is time that proactive reviews from IA facilitate the organisation to build a sustainable integration of risk, finance, operations and cyber security to understand the benefit of investment in technology and security.

How ROSI Can Help Internal Audit

1. Cybersecurity Breaches: ROSI can help quantify the financial impact of potential data breaches, ransomware attacks and other cyber incidents. It assesses the effectiveness of security investments in mitigating the risk and reducing the costs associated with breaches. The notional impact, loss, including reputation damage can be well captured.

2. Regulatory Non-Compliance: ROSI can evaluate the financial implications of failing to comply with industry regulations and data protection laws. It assists in making informed decisions about investing in compliance measures to avoid potential penalties and legal consequences.

3. Operational Downtime: ROSI aids in estimating the financial consequences of system failures, disruptions and downtime caused by security incidents. It guides investment decisions to minimise operational disruptions and maintain business continuity.

4. Reputation and Brand Damage: ROSI can help measure the potential impact of security incidents on an organisation's reputation and brand value. Companies can safeguard their image and customer trust by investing in security measures.

5. Intellectual Property Theft: ROSI assesses the financial risks of intellectual property theft, including trade secrets and proprietary information. It guides investments in protecting valuable assets and maintaining a competitive advantage.

6. Fraud and Insider Threats: ROSI can

help quantify the financial impact of fraud incidents and insider threats. It supports investments in detection, prevention and response strategies to mitigate these risks.

7. Supply Chain Disruptions: ROSI evaluates financial consequences of supply chain disruptions caused by security vulnerabilities in vendor relationships. It informs decisions about investing in securing the critical supply chain.

8. Competition and Innovation: ROSI can aid in assessing the financial value of safeguarding innovative ideas and proprietary technologies. It assists in making informed investments to protect intellectual capital and stay ahead of competitors.

9. Third-Party Risks: ROSI helps organisations measure the potential financial harm from third-party breaches and security incidents. It supports investments in due diligence and risk management strategies when collaborating with external partners or outsourcing agencies.

10. Customer Data Privacy: ROSI assesses the financial risks associated with breaches of customer data privacy. It guides investments in securing customer information, enhancing trust and avoiding regulatory penalties. The absence of security investments leads to a typical potential privacy violation, leading to huge penalty + reputation + business impact.

Challenges in Implementation

Implementing ROSI models can pose several challenges, including accurately quantifying the benefits of security measures, collecting relevant data, predicting potential breach costs and accounting for intangible factors like brand damage. Additionally, the dynamic nature of cybersecurity threats makes it difficult to forecast outcomes with certainty, impacting the accuracy of ROSI calculations.

Available Models of ROSI

Various models exist for calculating ROSI, including quantitative methods that assess factors such as reduced breach

Challenge	Description
Data Availability and Quality	Gathering accurate and relevant data to quantify both the costs and benefits of security measures can be complex. Incomplete or inaccurate data can lead to unreliable ROSI calculations.
Complexity of Factors	Determining the direct and indirect factors that contribute to the ROI of security investments can be intricate. Intangible benefits like reputation preservation are often challenging to quantify.
Dynamic Threat Landscape	The rapidly evolving nature of cyber threats can affect the accuracy of ROSI calculations. Predicting future breach costs and estimating the impact of emerging threats is a significant challenge.
Subjectivity and Assumptions	ROSI assessments often require making subjective assumptions, such as estimating the financial impact of potential breaches. These assumptions can introduce bias and uncertainty into the calculations.
Measuring and Comparing Benefits	Different security measures may yield benefits that are difficult to compare directly. Balancing short-term and long-term gains, such as operational efficiencies versus reputation protection, can be challenging.

In today's increasingly risk-prone environment, ROSI holds significant relevance as it enables organisations to make informed decisions about cybersecurity investments. As cyber threats continue to evolve, understanding the tangible benefits and potential risks associated with security spending is crucial for prioritising measures that enhance resilience and safeguard critical assets.

impact, operational efficiencies, and improved incident response. Qualitative approaches consider reputation protection and customer trust. Common models include cost-benefit analysis, risk assessment and maturity models tailored to an organisation's specific industry and risk profile.

Trends in Measuring ROSI:

1. **Data-Driven Analysis:** Organisations are increasingly relying on data analytics and quantitative methods to measure ROSI accurately. This includes using historical incident data and financial metrics to assess the impact of security investments.

2. **Automation and AI:** Automation and artificial intelligence are being utilised to streamline ROSI calculations. Predictive analytics can model potential outcomes and simulate scenarios, enhancing the accuracy of ROSI assessments.

3. **Integration with Risk Management:** ROSI is being integrated into overall risk management frameworks. It is about measuring return and aligning security investments with an organisation's risk appetite and strategic goals.

4. **Dynamic Assessment:** ROSI calculations are becoming more dynamic, adapting to changing threat landscapes and technological advancements. Regular reassessment ensures that investments remain effective over time.

5. **Industry Benchmarking:** Organisations are comparing their ROSI against industry benchmarks to gauge their security posture and investment effectiveness. This trend aids in understanding where they stand relative to peers.

Overall, it is time that Internal Auditors pick up the concept, challenges, benefits and current trends in ROSI to find out where they stand and how they can reap the benefits.

***Views expressed by the author are personal

Model	Description	Approach and Focus
Cost-Benefit Analysis	A quantitative method that compares the costs of security investments against the expected benefits they provide.	Focuses on monetary gains and losses, accounting for both direct and indirect costs associated with security measures.
Risk Assessment	Evaluates the potential impact of security incidents and breaches, assessing the financial implications.	Examines the likelihood and consequences of security threats, aiming to estimate potential financial losses and risk reduction through preventive measures.
Maturity Models	Measures an organisation's security maturity level and identifies improvements that can lead to better ROSI.	Focuses on enhancing security practices over time, increasing effectiveness and decreasing vulnerability, contributing to improved ROSI.
Quantitative Metrics	Employs specific metrics like Mean Time to Detect (MTTD) and Mean Time to Respond (MTTR) to calculate ROSI.	Concentrates on quantifiable data related to incident detection, response times, and damage reduction, providing a clear numerical assessment of security investments.
Reputation Protection	Evaluates the impact of security measures on preserving an organisation's reputation and customer trust.	Considers the intangible benefits of security investments, such as maintaining brand value and customer loyalty, indirectly contributing to the organisation's ROSI.
Operational Efficiency	Measures the improvement in operational processes resulting from security investments.	Focuses on how security measures enhance business operations, reduce downtime, and optimise resource allocation, leading to increased efficiency and ROSI.
Real Options Theory	Applies financial concepts to cybersecurity investments, considering flexibility and adaptability.	Accounts for the value of having the option to adjust security strategies based on evolving threats and technologies, thus allowing organisations to optimise ROSI by making informed decisions.
Risk Reduction Model	Calculates reduction in potential financial impact based on the likelihood of security incidents.	Requires accurate risk assessment and probability data.
Compliance and Regulatory Model	Compares costs of compliance against potential non-compliance penalties and legal actions. (e.g., Privacy)	Relies on regulatory knowledge and potential legal costs.
Time-Saved Model	Quantifies time saved for employees, IT staff, and customers due to preventive security measures.	Requires accurate time measurements and efficiency gains.
Scenario Analysis Model	Analyses different scenarios to estimate the financial impact of incidents and benefits of preventive measures.	Relies on accurate data for multiple scenarios.
Qualitative and Quantitative Risk Assessment Models	Combines qualitative risk assessment with quantitative valuation of risks.	Requires robust risk assessment methods and data.



Role of Internal Auditor in Reporting Net-Zero Commitment



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Climate Consciousness: Embracing Green Initiatives for a Sustainable Future

Being sensitive to climate change now seems part of business and everyday life. There is a buzz about how everybody must contribute to preserving the planet and try to undo the damage already done. The government and

various agencies are working towards this end. Moreover, businesses are now taking initiatives towards managing affairs more responsibly and in an eco-friendly manner. The focus now is on how to be 'green' and economically relevant in the broader space, including being committed to society and good governance (ESG). Whether it is the annual reports of the companies, the management's speeches at various forums, or media coverage, there is a lot talked about commitments by the company to achieve 'net-zero' meaning; "a target of completely negating the amount of greenhouse gases produced by human activity, to be achieved by reducing emissions and implementing methods of absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere".

More about 'net-zero': The concept of achieving 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) was first introduced in the Paris Agreement – United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 21) to limit the impact of GHG, wherein close to 200 countries signed the treaty. The treaty principally dealt with reducing global warming by 1.5°C from the pre-industrialisation era, cutting 50% of GHG by 2040 and Net Zero globally by 2050 at the latest. So, there is a concerted effort from various agencies to put their best foot forward to contribute to reversing global warming. Some countries, like China, have announced plans for carbon neutral-

ity by 2060, and India has promised to cut its emissions to net zero by 2070. India also committed to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 45% by 2030.

India's Commitment: The Government of India has committed and has set renewable energy targets, including increasing the utility of Solar energy, Hydrogen gas as fuel, voluntary scrapping of old vehicles, full electrification of railways in the near future, the announcement of Perform, Achieve and Trade Policy, remodeling of various schemes to promote electric vehicles, etc. The above policy is trickling down to corporate houses and other institutions to bring out their own plan of action for Net Zero to help India meet its commitments. This would require corporates to realise how they function independently and as Team India. The following article attempts to summarise the Role of IA at various stages identified at the macro-level.

Lifecycle of Commitment and Role of the Internal Auditor

Stage 1: Board of Directors makes pre-assessment on making a statement based on regulatory guidance or as good corporate governance or could be industry or peer pressure as well: Internal Auditors having knowledge of the business and the industry should support the Board of Directors in preparing the groundwork



on their stand to commit to the 'net-zero' initiative.

The Internal Auditor can support in the following manner:

- Doing groundwork (financial and operational feasibility) would include due diligence on the current working environment of the company and similar businesses and expectations of the stakeholders who have their own expectations and possible costs to the company and benefits that may accrue.
- A report to the Board of Directors by the Internal Auditor would help in decision-making as to the feasibility of commitment, the challenges that the entity may have to counter, timeline, availability of resources including finance and operational, etc.,
- The Internal Auditor should critically review as to how the targets are expected to be set and if there is a scientific basis for it. With help from subject matter experts, ensure that science-based targets are set. (Science-based Targets would help companies to ensure they have a roadmap to reduce emissions in line with the Paris Agreement goals. Targets are considered 'science-based' if they align with what the latest climate science deems necessary to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement – limiting global warming to well below 2°C pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C.)
- This would mean involving specialists or subject matter experts for their feedback and opinion. Benchmarking with other entities in similar businesses is an essential exercise to be carried out broadly in sync with industry norms. The entity may have a different view amongst its group or peers, considering its unique business proposition and other factors, but benchmarking would help to measure such difference and gives better insights to those charged with governance to decide suitably.

Stage 2: Board's decision to make a commitment for 'net-zero' with a plan of action and not a mere statement: The Board's decision to commit to 'net-zero' would either be a public statement or part of the corporate reporting which would make stakeholders and others

come to notice the entity's participation.

The Internal Auditor would have to:

- Prepare a due diligence report and study the stand taken by other entities, and the regulatory or government expectations would also be the factors that the Board would have to consider. At this stage, the Board reviews the action plan that would be required to be approved and make necessary approvals to execute the same.
- Advising the Board on how to ensure that the 'net-zero' initiative is integrated with long term business goals from the point of procurement, manufacturing, logistics, etc.
- Review the existing processes, practise and align with the management initiatives.



- Consider the impact of the cost of products and profitability on the business.

Stage 3: Delegation of the execution of strategy to the management to achieve the targets: Once the commitment is made, it is time for the management's action plan. The management would have to prepare a detailed work plan to adhere to the Board's direction.

The Internal Auditor to support:

- Critically review the action plan with constraints within which the project must be carried out and possible bottlenecks or constraints to execute.
- Ensure that the management's action is aligned with the Board's direction with proper controls in place.

- Ensure Segregation of Duties is appropriately carried out and designed to meet the project's objectives.

- Ensure that the consequent impact of the decisions is appropriately taken at the lower management level.

- When reporting Green House Gases (GHG), especially Scope 3 wherein GHG from purchased products and services are to be computed; it would require immense input data, data analysis and validation. Hence, the internal control surrounding the reporting requirement lifecycle needs to be constantly reviewed, and risks of misstatements or data inaccuracies should be mitigated. Further, the way the data is sourced and used should also be reviewed to determine whether it is the most efficient way to handle it and whether there are any automation opportunities involved that could be explored.

Stage 4: Review and monitor each milestone and make necessary course corrections: At this stage, management would report to the Board on interim results and achieving the milestones.

The Internal Auditor to:

- Review the progress and critically examine the achievement of milestones which the Board would rely upon. The Internal Auditor's review will lend credibility to the internal reports for further action or course correction.

- Applications could be used to monitor different parts of the project, and hence, a review of the information technology application controls is also important at this stage.

- Periodic review or testing of the operative effectiveness of the controls and report on any breach and recommend action to mitigate any deficiencies.

- Review the provision created under respective financial reporting framework and security regulation guidelines for the commitment made, including disclosures under 'capital and other commitments' or 'con-



tingent liabilities or provision required as per constructive or statutory obligations.

- Ensure new risks are identified early and appropriate mitigation plans are implemented to ensure that they do not have a material adverse impact on the project's functionality.
- Review the procedures relating to data being sourced from third parties and controls surrounding it to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the data being used for reporting.

Stage 5: Management Reporting: The Management would require periodic (quarterly / annual) reports to be used internally and for the stakeholders' consumption on various initiatives taken by the entity and how they are able to achieve the commitments.

The Internal Auditor to:

- Review the progress and critically examine the achievement of milestones which the Board would rely upon. The Internal Auditor's review will lend credibility to the internal

reports for further action or course correction.

- Consider the form and format of reporting and whether this follows any recognised or accepted reporting standards.
- Ensure consistency in reporting amongst other sections of the corporate reporting, including validating the reporting's consistency, uniformity, completeness and accuracy. Further, where the reports would impact the financial statements of the entity, the same is given effect either in accounting or as a disclosure as appropriate.
- External Assurance or limited review is yet to be in place in various geographies for reporting on sustainability reports, ESG Reports or such matters. In this regard, there are directions / proposals by various government and regulatory agencies which are expected to be applicable soon. The internal auditor's report would play a pivotal role when the management or the Board must rely upon the information being reported. Even if there is an external agency reporting, say on a voluntary basis; it would be specific to certain parameters or the scope given in the regulation. Whereas the internal auditor could go beyond the scope and have matters relating to risk management, fraud risk assessment, and other aspects in their report.

- Ensure the input data provided to specialists or subject matter experts are evaluated for appropriateness, and the reports provided are reviewed to ensure factual statements are made free of material misstatements.
- Assure the various compliance requirements that the regulatory agencies would need.

Climate Change reporting is one sub-set in the whole reporting of sustainability and ESG, which is gaining importance both from the statutory perspective and expectations of the investors and stakeholders. These reporting requirements would also have to comply with international standards, which are already in existence, like the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), etc., or upcoming standards by the International Sustainability Standards Board, coupled with specific requirements of local regulatory agencies. The risk of reporting incorrect information is increasing, and an internal auditor surely has a role to play in ensuring that the reports provided to the management are credible, as they could have legal,

reputation, and other risks to which the business would be exposed.

Stage 6: Project Completion: Typically, net-zero projects take a very long time to achieve, as indicated in the introductory paragraphs; it could even take decades before it is to be achieved since there are efforts to change the way we live, the behavioural pattern would change, and there are significant investments in costs of infrastructure that would be required including abandoning or responsibly disposing the existing one.

The Internal Auditor to:

- Review the report of project completion and observe for any deviations from the set objectives.
- Ensure all incentives or benefits provided by the government, if any, are claimed and accounted for.
- Review the corporate report, which carries the details of achieving the objectives.

Conclusion: The Role of the Internal Auditor is crucial in every phase of an entity making a 'net-zero' commitment. The 'stages' are only at a macro-level, and there are various micro-level challenges that the business may have in ensuring it meets the commitment. In my view, this would add a new arena to the scope of internal audit.

Reference Material:

- Climate Assurance: The role of Internal Audit by ICAEW* (<https://www.icaew.com/-/media/corporate/files/technical/audit-and-assurance/audit-and-assurance-faculty/webcasts/climate-assurance-presentation.ashx?la=en>)
- Laser Focus on ESG – Role of Internal Audit* (<https://bvssonline.org/laser-focus-on-esg-role-of-internal-audit/>)
- Net Zero Commitments – Role of Internal Audit* (<https://www.iaa.org.uk/resources/technical-blog/net-zero-commitments-role-of-internal-audit/>)
- ESG – Sustainability: A Risk or an opportunity for Internal Audit?* (<https://iiabelgium.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ESG-sustainability-a-risk-or-an-opportunity-for-Internal-Audit-10.pdf>).

Footnotes:

- <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-59125143> (last seen 3 June 2023).
- <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/how-it-works> (last seen 5 June 2023).





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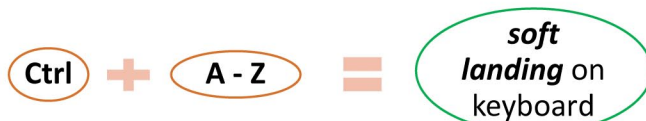


**PROGRESS
THROUGH
SHARING**



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As a proud Indian for witnessing the soft landing of Chandrayan-3 on the south pole of the Lunar, sharing short-keys for soft landing on keyboard in day-to-day working. Short-key is a combination of Ctrl & an Alphabet from A to Z as depicted below



A	Select All
B	Bold
C	Copy
D	Default Font Set
E	Center
F	Find
G	Go to
H	Replace
I	Italic
J	Justify
K	Hyperlink
L	Align to left
M	Indent

N	New document
O	Open
P	Print
Q	Add space after paragraph
R	Align to right
S	Save or save as
T	Left indent
U	Underline
V	Paste
W	Close
X	Cut
Y	Repeat
Z	Undo



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Direct Tax

Taxability of maturity proceeds of high-premium life insurance

The CBDT has formulated new rules for the taxability of income (maturity proceeds) from life insurance policies having premium more than Rs. 5 lakh. The relevant provisions under section 10 (10) of the Income Tax Act are not to apply to such high premium policies with effect from April 1, 2023. (Circular No. 16/2023-Income Tax Dated 19th Aug. '23)

Value of perquisite – Residential Accommodation

The CBDT has notified amendment in provisions relating to the determination of the value of perquisite of rent-free or concessional accommodation provided by employers depending upon category (population of city) and perquisite rates. (Notification No. 65/2023 dated 18th Aug. '23)

S. No.	Previous Category & Rate		New Category & Rate	
	Population	Perquisite Rate	Population	Perquisite Rate
(i)	More than 25 lakh	15%	More than 40 lakh	10%
(ii)	Between 10 lakh and 25 lakh	10%	Between 15 lakh and 40 lakh	7.5%
(iii)	Less than 10 lakh	7.5%	Less than 15 lakh	5%

Timeline Extension:

The CBDT has extended the time limit to 30th Sept. '23 (from 31st Jul. '23) for submission of TDS and TCS statement for Qtr-I of FY 2023-24 (Circular No. 9/2023-Income Tax Dated 28th June'23).

TCS of usage of Overseas Credit Card:

The CBDT has relaxed certain provisions of TCS under LRS (Liberalised Remittance Scheme), including usage of overseas Credit Card (Circular No. 10/2023-Income Tax Dated 30th June '23).

Applicable TCS rate:

S. No.	Nature of Payment	TCS rate up to 30.09.2023	TCS rate w.e.f. 01.10.2023
(i)	LRS for education, financed by loan from financial institution	(i) Nil upto Rs 7 lakh (ii) 0.5% above Rs 7 lakh	(i) Nil upto Rs 7 lakh (ii) 0.5% above Rs 7 lakh
(ii)	LRS for medical treatment/ education (other than financed by loan).	(i) Nil upto Rs 7 lakh (ii) 5% above Rs 7 lakh	(i) Nil upto Rs 7 lakh (ii) 5% above Rs 7 lakh
(iii)	LRS for other purposes	(i) Nil upto Rs 7 lakh (ii) 5% above Rs 7 lakh	(i) Nil upto Rs 7 lakh (ii) 20% above Rs 7 lakh
(iv)	Purchase of Overseas tour program package	5% without threshold	(i) 5% upto Rs 7 lakh (ii) 20% thereafter

Goods & Services Tax (GST)

GST on Online Gaming, etc.

- The GST Council has decided to levy GST @28% on the face value of all bets made in casinos, horse racing, and online gaming.
 - The Parliament has cleared necessary amendments to the Goods and Services Tax laws. States will have to make necessary legislative changes to their respective GST Acts for the effect.
- These changes may be applicable w.e.f. 1st October '23, subject to issuance of necessary notification to this effect. Further, the Govt. may review impacts after six months of implementation.

Foreign Trade Policy/Customs

Amnesty Scheme

DGFT has extended the time limit upto 31.03.2024 for opting Amnesty scheme for one-time settlement of default in export obligation by Advance and EPCG authorisation holders (Public Notice No. 20/2023 Dated 30.06.2023).

"Any authorisation holder choosing to avail this benefit must complete the process of registration as mentioned in para (iii) above on or before December 31, 2023, and payment of Customs duty plus interest with the Jurisdictional Customs Authorities concerned shall be completed by March 31, 2024".



SHAPING TOMORROW: ESG Reporting for a Sustainable Future



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ESG transcends routine corporate tasks, positively impacting business and our world. It helps companies achieve long-term success and growth while reducing the risk of failure. ESG ensures that companies focus their investments on the right things, protecting the environment and supporting society. It encourages innovative thinking and finding solutions that go Beyond the present, creating a better future. It involves developing a strong strategy that brings about real and impactful changes in operations, culture, and finances to make the business resilient in the future. Today, success is no longer measured by financials alone. Stakeholders want a more holistic view of the business and its exposure to risks and opportunities related to ESG.

Cracking the ESG Code: Decrypting its Essence

ESG stands for Environmental, Social and Governance, a trio of pivotal dimensions to assess the sustainability and ethical impact of a company. It surpasses the confines of financial figures and delves into the far-reaching effects of a company's actions on the environment, society and overall governance. The purpose of ESG is to comprehensively examine the non-financial risks and opportunities that arise from a company's day-to-day operations. Each

component of ESG represents a different aspect of company's behaviour and performance, collectively shaping its impact on the world.

Environmental

Greening the Path: Environmental Imperatives for Companies

Environmental mindfulness is a crucial aspect for companies to embrace. It involves several factors like emissions of greenhouse gases, air, water and land pollution, depletion of resources and usage of energy and resources - whether they are new or recycled. Waste management, deforestation and the ripple effects of climate change emerge as significant considerations in this paradigm. Companies exhibiting progress in environmental stewardship allocate prominence to sustainable protocols, champion conservation endeavours and diligently curtail their adverse imprint on the ecosystem. By doing so, they can gain long-term advantages in business. Instead of seeing environmental harm as an unavoidable consequence of their operations, companies are now realising the importance of being part of the solution. While reporting, the environmental facet frequently unravels as the most



intricate, demanding deftness in weaving quantitative measures with qualitative narratives.

Social

Building Bridges, Not Just Business: ESG's Social Dimension

The social dimension of ESG extends beyond simply making products or services available to different groups in society. It goes beyond providing employment opportunities to individuals regardless of gender, race, religion and other characteristics. Its essence lies in the adept management of its relationships with various stakeholders, encompassing employees, customers, suppliers, communities and society at large. It entails various considerations, including

compliance. It includes factors such as corporate transparency with the public, use of accurate and transparent accounting methods, efforts to promote diversity in leadership while avoiding conflicts of interest, compensation of executives and its alignment with the company's sustainability performance, accountability to shareholders, protection of shareholder rights, the establishment of internal controls and measures taken to prevent corruption and ensuring ethical conduct within the company.

The Power of Purpose: Unraveling the Importance of ESG

The last couple of years, with the pandemic and its cascading effects on

consequently, the investment decision-making process. Businesses prioritising ESG are more likely to secure capital and maintain investor confidence.

3. Regulatory Landscape: Governments and authorities worldwide are implementing new regulations related to ESG. These regulations address issues such as climate change mitigation, social equality and sustainable practices.

Companies with a Robust ESG Strategy Reap Numerous Benefits

Key Benefits include:

1. Enhanced Investor Relations and Capital Attraction: Strong ESG strategy



workplace conditions, labour practices, employee development, equitable treatment of employees (including factors like parental leave, sick leave, vacation time and pay parity), interactions with customers and suppliers, use of animal products in their products, product safety and quality, among other aspects. While the environmental aspect of ESG often claims the spotlight due to its quantifiable impact, the social aspect plays an equally vital role in mitigating risks and ensuring holistic business sustainability.

Governance

Steering Success: Governance's Crucial Role in Corporate Direction

Governance, a symphony of leadership, interlaces with a company's guiding architecture and reins. It encompasses crucial aspects such as transparency, accountability and

individuals and society, climate change occurrences and supply chain disruptions, have provided undeniable evidence of the environmental and social risks that can swiftly affect businesses almost overnight. These disruptions and the growing awareness of environmental and social risks have accelerated the demand for ESG considerations.

Key Motivators behind ESG Programmes, Investment and Disclosure Growth:

1. Alignment with Values: Customers and employees seek organisations aligning with their values and having a clear mission and purpose.

2. Investor Integration: Investors recognise the significance of ESG factors in assessing companies' long-term sustainability and performance,

demonstrates the company's commitment to sustainable practices and responsible business conduct, attracting investors who prioritise ESG factors and seek long-term value. Improved investor relations can unlock access to capital and potential partnerships.

2. Market Expansion and New Opportunities:

Companies can tap into new markets prioritising sustainability by incorporating ESG principles. ESG-driven innovations and products can meet evolving customer demands and preferences, driving market expansion and opening avenues for growth.

3. Cost Reduction and Resource

Optimisation: Effective ESG strategies focus on resource efficiency, leading to decreased consumption of energy, water and raw materials. This results in cost



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savings and operational efficiencies, improving the company's financial performance.

4. Risk Mitigation: Companies with strong ESG performance are better equipped to manage risks associated with supply chain disruptions, climate change impacts, corruption, bribery and non-compliance. By proactively addressing these risks, organisations can minimise potential financial losses, regulatory fines, reputational damage and legal liabilities.

In summary, companies that prioritise and embrace ESG principles are perceived as beacons of sustainability, accountability and resilience. This harmonious integration culminates in enhanced financial prowess and yields better non-financial accomplishments.

Navigating ESG Reporting: A Roadmap for Success

Historically, financial reporting focused primarily on revenues, expenses and financial numbers, captivating the primary attention of investors. However, the scope of a company's impact extends far beyond the confines of its profit, as depicted in the income statement. Today, the canvas of assessment has broadened considerably, encompassing the intricacies of ESG concerns and the corresponding reporting.

ESG reporting entails the transparent disclosure of factual and pertinent ESG data and information regarding commitments, initiatives, policies and progress. It also includes addressing associated ESG risks and outlining how these risks are effectively managed.

Currently, there is no standardised ESG framework. Companies rely on sustainability reporting standards to guide their reporting practices. Reporting is typically done by applying one or more frameworks:

1. The Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD): It is a guidance framework focusing on management

strategies and governance for reporting climate risk.

2. Global Reporting Initiative (GRI): These are global standards for corporate sustainability reporting based on multiple modules that a company can choose from based on the material for the organisation.

3. Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB): These standards are industry-specific disclosure standards to communicate financially material, decision-useful information across environmental, social, and governance topics between companies and investors.

4. International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB): Created in 2021 by the International Financial Reporting Standards Foundation (IFRS) it aims to accelerate the convergence to one global reporting framework for ESG reporting.

ESG reporting is commonly done through the publication of a sustainability report. However, many companies also share their ESG performance data on dedicated web pages alongside the standard sustainability report.

From Choice to Necessity: The ESG Mandate Shaping Businesses

Three letters 'ESG' are growing increasingly important in the business world every day. There is an increasing expectation for businesses to exhibit good behaviour and make positive contributions. Some governing bodies have already enacted or proposed laws and regulations that address specific aspects of ESG, while others are in the process of developing them. Compliance with ESG requirements is no longer a choice but a necessity, affecting businesses across all industries. The adoption of standardised ESG frameworks and continued focus on sustainable practices will drive positive impact, sustainability, and accountability in the business landscape.



Environmental mindfulness is a crucial aspect for companies to embrace. It involves several factors like emissions of greenhouse gases, air, water and land pollution, depletion of resources and usage of energy and resources - whether they are new or recycled. Waste management, deforestation and the ripple effects of climate change emerge as significant considerations in this paradigm.



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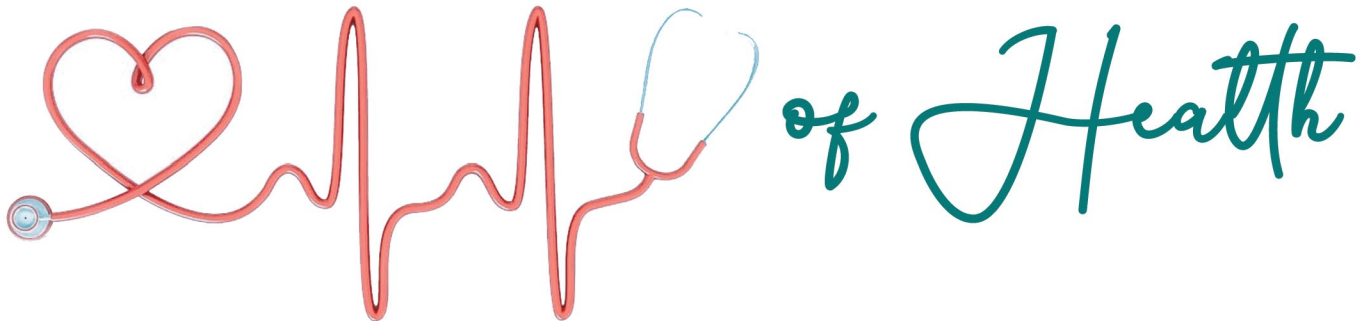


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The irony of our times is that we are inundated with an abundance of health information, innumerable talks and tips on staying healthy, yet the concept of 'health' seems tantalisingly elusive. We all strive for 'health' and well-being. Often, we get stuck in this overload of information. It is confusing and mind-boggling that most of us lack an understanding of our bodies, leading us to rely on healthcare professionals for our well-being.

Listening to Our Body's Whispers: Deciphering Signals of Health and Imbalance

Now is the time to pause, reflect, and take on a sense of responsibility and respect for our bodies. The human body is the most intelligent of divine creations and has the unique potential to heal itself. Ancient systems like Ayurveda and Yoga have extensively explored the science of maintaining the body's health and well-being. This article aims to delve into the fundamental mechanics of body functions and understand and interpret the subtle signals and symptoms they exhibit when things are going awry, creating an imbalance. It is an invitation to take control in our pursuit of "health" and embrace the wisdom that empowers us to establish a relationship with our incredible bodies.

The Healing Power of Connection

Let us go back in time to when people visited the friendly neighbourhood family physicians, who used to first engage in a friendly chat, enquire about the health of the other family members and then, without our realising, would complete their medical examination and diagnose the cause of our malaise. They would make us open our mouth, stick out our tongue, examine our eyes, feel up our stomach, enquire about our bowel movements and bingo; they knew how to set us right! This

conventional approach of visiting friendly neighbourhood physicians who relied on personal interactions and observations can be likened to the traditional internal audit methods where auditors engage directly with employees and assess operations on-site.

Data-Driven Healing: Parallels Between Medicine and Auditing

Cut to the present, where a visit to a super speciality physician, followed by a long list of medical tests, eventually arrives at the diagnosis of our medical issue. In a matter of two decades, there has been a complete turnaround in the way diseases are treated and medical advice is rendered. Similarly, this mirrors the contemporary corporate environment where internal audits often involve in-depth data analysis and specialised audit teams.

It is imperative that we decode a few things for our well-being. If the doctors of the past could understand our health issues merely by looking at our tongue and feeling our stomach, this proves that the intricacies of our body are not so difficult to interpret. Our health status can be diagnosed through our tongue, which mirrors our intestinal health. Any change in its appearance reflects inflammation, nutritional deficiencies and digestive issues. Examination of our eyes would give the physician an understanding of how well

our liver and kidneys are functioning. Therefore, the physician was assessing the state of our gut, which is the root cause of almost all ailments and can disrupt the body's natural balance.

Gut-First Wellness: Your Path to Total Health

Gut plays a crucial role in our overall physical and mental well-being. Professionals, who often experience high stress levels and may have irregular eating habits, can be particularly susceptible to gut-related issues.

These issues can manifest as digestive disorders, weakened immune systems, and mental health disturbances. The gut is the foundation of good health. Therefore, restoring the gut balance and addressing gut-related issues eliminates the root cause of various illnesses.

I share with you a self-diagnostic list (below) to help you assess your physical, emotional, and mental health. I call this the "Internal Audit

of Health". Just as businesses conduct an internal audit to assess their financial and operational health, individuals can conduct an internal audit of their health to understand their well-being better. If the assessment is positive, you are in good health. However, if it is missing, it needs to be worked on.

Miracle of LMNT: A Healing Legacy Rooted in Vedic Wisdom

The human body has the innate ability to heal itself. Ancient Vedic texts espouse self-healing ways to restore the body's health. An indigenously developed therapy, Dr. Lajpatrai Mehra's Neurotherapy (LMNT), has been designed using the learnings of our Vedic wisdom with the findings of modern science. It is the modern avatar of our Vedic wisdom. Dr. Lajpatrai Mehra devoted his entire life to creating this therapy that harnesses the body's natural healing powers, targeting the main source of diseases, which is mostly gut imbalance. The therapy involves no medicine or equipment; it stimulates the body's healing mechanism by applying pressure, primarily on the arms and legs. This improves blood circulation, releases blocked energy, and restores balance in the body's systems. It is a scientific therapy based on the human anatomy and physiology. It has worked as a Sanjeevani (miraculous or life-saving remedy or solution) in many critical illnesses where every other healing method has failed. It is easy to learn and can be self-administered. It has no side effects and provides immediate relief. It has successfully treated all kinds of health issues, including those termed 'incurable'.

Navigating Health and Business Through Internal Audits

To conclude, we have seen a compelling analogy between the "Internal Audit of Health" and its corporate counterpart, the Internal Audit. Embracing a comprehensive "Internal Audit of Health" empowers individuals to gain insights into their physical, emotional and mental well-being. This proactive approach to health assessment serves as a beacon, illuminating potential issues in their infancy, much like the role of internal audits within businesses, which relentlessly seek out irregularities and areas for improvement, thereby providing early signals and acting as harbingers of progress. Both genres of internal audits share a fundamental purpose – cultivating and enriching the landscape of overall health and well-being, whether in the context of an individual's body or within the intricate workings of a corporate entity.

Organ / Body Parameter	Function / Metric / Indicator	Outcome / Prognosis if not Healthy
Tongue	A healthy tongue is pink, with a large surface covered with small bumps, smooth edges and no cuts.	If it is a darker shade – it indicates inflammation/vitamin deficiency/liver issues. Edges with protrusions-constipation/colon issues. Cut on the tongue - intestinal problems, which could be severe.
Skin	Healthy skin is smooth and has a natural glow. It indicates a healthy liver, optimum kidney, and lung function.	Dark patches on the skin – extreme toxicity in the body reflective of unhealthy liver/ kidney. Acne and pimples are due to gut issues/may also involve liver/thyroid dysfunction.
Bowel movements	The body's output is a good indicator of its internal health. Well-formed stool and regular bowel movements indicate good gut health.	Constipation is an early warning and needs to be immediately set right. Modern research finds constipation at the root of all neurodegenerative disorders.
Fingers and Nails	Healthy nails are smooth without pits or discolouration. The skin around the nails should also be smooth and have the same complexion as the rest of the skin.	Change in the shape or quality of nails indicates nutritional deficiency / poor gut health / liver dysfunction/ cardiovascular issues. It could be a symptom of a severe illness.
Eyes	White and bright eyes are a sign of good health.	Vision problems arise due to a weakened liver / thyroid dysfunction. Xanthelasma- deposits around the eyes are due to high cholesterol.
Waist circumference	Ideal waist circumference for men and women indicates good metabolism and, therefore, good gut health.	Increased waist circumference is at the root of all current lifestyle disorders, also called metabolic disorders. Cardiovascular issues / strokes are the outcome.



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Astrologically - Internal Audit in Digitized World



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**The Celestial Path of Internal Audit:
Mercury, Venus and Rahu's Leadership**

Let us reflect on the history of the internal audit profession, and we will find that primarily the expectation was to check / verify financial transactions (astrologically, the influence of

Mercury gets prominent for this Karma). Over a period of time, internal audit started taking the colour of an operational audit and the expectation was also to review the design of processes and systems (astrologically, *Venus signifies design* and the influence of Venus got dominant along with Mercury). Today, and in the future, internal audit is and will be expected to review Robotic Processes (astrologically, *technology is signified by Rahu* and so the influence of Rahu is gaining importance) to perform Robotic / Digital Audit across various business functions.

Here, it is crucial to share that *mundane astrology* (a type of astrology used to predict world affairs and events) influences businesses and professions in an economy. *Currently, India is running the Vimshotri Mahadasha of Moon and from 2032 onwards, Vimshotri Mahadasha of Rahu will be there*

for the next 18 years. Notably, during the Mahadasha of Rahu, we should witness an increased role of technology in the internal audit profession.

Emerging Titans: AI, ML & Metaverse Poised for Dominance

The role of digitisation through Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Metaverse etc., will gain dominance and prominence over the next couple of years.

In organisations, the functions / processes can be categorised into three viz. Strategic, Core and Support. Digitisation of functions / processes will impact the majority areas in support processes, moderate in core processes and low in strategic processes. (Perhaps because the *Moon*, which signifies the human mind and is responsible for controlling the speed of thoughts, does not play a role in Artificial Intelligence (AI). Similarly, *Venus* which signifies



creativity
and enables us
to think 'out of the box' does not play
any role in AI).

Astro-Governance Unveiled: Jupiter's Guiding Light in 'Tone from the Top'

The overall control environment in an organisation is primarily influenced by the 'tone from the top', where the entity / organisation level controls are assessed. The 'tone from the top' comes from the Senior Leadership in the form of '*Corporate Governance Initiatives*' and *astrologically* this is signified by **Jupiter**.

Trinity of Impact: Uniting Saturn, Venus and Rahu in Control Evaluation

While assessing the overall control environment in an organisation, internal audit professionals look at the '**3Ps**', which are:

1. **People (P)**: at large is signified by Saturn.
2. **Processes (P)**: are signified by Venus.
3. **Platform / Technology (P)**: is signified by Rahu.

As expected from internal auditors, they recommend / advise '*Global Best Practices*' for various business processes. **Rahu** signifies '*foreign land*' (Global) and plays an important role here.

Jupiter signifies *advice*. How the recommendation / advice is communicated to the management is extremely critical, and Mercury influences this.

Mercury signifies *how one thinks and speaks*.

We discern the celestial bodies influencing the internal audit profession / professional from the preceding paragraphs.

Astral Navigators: How Key Planets Steer Internal Audit in the Digital Realm

Let us focus on select planets, each casting its unique radiance upon the path of an internal audit professional within the digital landscape.

Mars signifies Data Scientists and Venus signifies Software Developers. The strength of planets Mars and **Venus** is important for natives who are in the development of technology / hardware. The usage of Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and Mixed Reality (MR) is influenced by **Mars** and **Venus**.

Mercury signifies intelligence and when combined with **Mars**, which as a planet signifies technology (machines, computers, digital technology and the digital world), can give a career in Artificial Intelligence (particularly when posited in the Fifth House, which is for higher education).

Mercury also signifies digital technology (new age currency), opposite to planet **Jupiter** (conventional currency). The new-age currency will include cryptocurrency, i.e., Bitcoins. Conventional currency includes barter, currency note (paper), and coins (metal).

Nowadays, we observe huge fluctuations in digital currency (for example, Bitcoin). This is because the signifying planet, **Mercury** and **Moon** for same are the most volatile.



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Rahu is considered to have no barriers (lacks direction) and influences digital currency in today's time. Since most people are clueless about digital currency, we can say it lacks direction. Hence, Rahu controls it until there is literacy about digital currency. **Rahu** also signifies an outcast. Today we can say that Bitcoin is an outcast among all other assets and currencies, given that governments are trying to recognise the same. As long as Rahu rules Bitcoin, it will offer great returns. However, as it stops being an outcast and gets accepted commonly, the role of Rahu will fade away and then Bitcoin will be ruled by **Mercury** and **Jupiter** together. The great returns and the element of gambling will end. As Rahu retires and Jupiter enters, Bitcoin will become more predictable and more like a currency.

Also, since Rahu has no barriers, it signifies online business. In the recent past, we have switched from text and images (3G) to video (4G) to augmented reality (5G). Today we hear businesses extending their operations on Metaverse.

The term "Metaverse" fuses the realms of "Meta" and "Universe." Meta is a prefix meaning



'more comprehensive'. Thus, Meta + Universe (Metaverse) combines multiple virtual spaces by creating an online, 3D universe wherein it allows users to socialise, work, game and transact (buy / sell). To transact on Metaverse, one needs a digital currency (Bitcoin) that replaces paper currency. Moreover, to record the transactions, one may switch to Blockchain, a shared database or ledger wherein a record of transactions is made in Bitcoin or another cryptocurrency across several



computers linked in a peer-to-peer network.

Mercury signifies account-keeping and account-related jobs and planet **Jupiter** signifies the ability to focus. For an accountant, the prime planets are Mercury and Jupiter. In the new age world, as we switch to Blockchain (Electronic) Accounting, **Mars** (Technology) and **Rahu** (which acts like a catalyst and takes the activities to a greater/higher level) will play an important role along with Mercury and Jupiter.

Astrological Odyssey: Navigating Houses for Internal Audit Excellence in the Natal Chart

From the preceding paragraphs, we have discerned the various planets that impact the realm of the internal audit profession. Let us now delve into the distinct Houses within the natal chart that warrant meticulous examination in relation to the internal audit profession/professional.

Vocal Dynamics: Decoding Communication in the Second House

The Second House stands for Speech. As the saying goes, 'it's not what you say that is important but how you say'. The role of the Second House becomes vital in how communication is done, which is an essential aspect of internal audit.

Astrological Algorithms: The Third House's Key Role in Fortifying Audit Communication for Success

The Third House stands for Communication. The internal audit deliverable is communicated to various stakeholders. The strength and planetary influence on the Third House become essential here as it is the 'Karta' for all online activities and communication. Mercury signifies com-

munication, online work, and intelligence. The Position, Aspect, and Conjunction (PAC) of Jupiter on Mercury or the Third House makes the native a good communicator, writer, and expert in online activities.

Celestial Scholar: Illuminating the Fifth House's Role in Cultivating Wisdom, Education and Unyielding Character for Internal Auditing

The Fourth & Fifth Houses signify education, intellect, wisdom and character. The Internal Audit profession demands a solid education to comprehend and value the intricacies of business, along with a robust character that prevents one from being influenced and enables truthful communication.

Metamorphosis in Motion: Navigating the Eight House's Realm of Transformation in IA

The Eight House symbolises Change. The Internal audit profession is expected to recommend system and process changes to bring efficiency. Whether the change will be smooth, successful or progressive is analysed from the Eighth House.

Cosmic Confluence: Unveiling the Harmonious Triad of Seventh, Tenth and Twelfth Houses in Internal Audit

Let us understand the influence of the Seventh House, the Twelfth House (Foreign Land) and the Tenth House (Karma Sthan). A well-fortified Tenth House provides the capability to choose the appropriate profession at the opportune moment and achieve success in it. The mutual interplay of these three houses equips an internal auditor to introduce internationally recognised best practices.

Stars of Innovation for Digital Transformation: Decoding the Zodiac Trio - Aquarius, Uranus and Taurus

For the advancement in digitisation, it is important to highlight specific zodiac signs (Aquarius, Uranus & Taurus). Aquarius signifies new-age technology. Traditionally, Saturn ruled Aquarius (a planet for control and structure). The modern transformational ruler of Aquarius is Uranus. Uranus is the planet of cutting-edge technology, innovation and seeks to break restrictions to develop new patterns. Taurus is for tangible creation, and Uranus in Taurus results in developments in non-fungible tokens (NFTs), Virtual Reality Technology and Metaverse.

Harmonising Position, Aspects, Results and Transits to Illuminate Cosmic Narratives

It is pertinent to note that the natal chart should be seen as a whole to arrive at any firm conclusion. The position of planets in a particular zodiac sign, their aspects, inherent results (malefic or benefic), the planets' strength and combinations they form in various houses in the natal chart has to be analysed and interpreted collectively. Along with this, planetary transit is critical and should be considered.

Drawing from my journey, I can confidently affirm that a comprehensive interpretation by an Astrologer holds profound significance.

***Views expressed by the author are personal

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STYLE AND SUBSTANCE: Exploring the Parallels Between Fashion Shopping and Information Gathering in Internal Audit Engagements



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Attaining a triumph in internal audit assignments is contingent upon a multitude of factors aligning seamlessly. Among these myriad challenges, acquiring precise, comprehensive, timely and pertinent data emerges as a fundamental prerequisite for any internal audit engagement. While several organisations establish the appropriate atmosphere by outlining unrestricted access to information in their audit charters and policies, implementing this effectively poses challenges.

Auditors typically receive information that is specifically requested, relevant to the audit scope, and readily available. This places the responsibility of formulating information requests and thinking through the necessary data on the internal audit team. Data collection during an internal audit engagement involves a series of conscious and unconscious choices made by auditors.

In this six-point summary, we will unveil the remarkable synergy between the art of fashion shopping for personal style and the critical task of data gathering for audit excellence.

1. Comparing Readymade Shopping to Custom Tailoring:

The choice between readymade and tailored clothes varies based on personal preference and can differ from person to person or garment to garment. While some individuals may prefer readymade jeans or T-shirts, they may opt for tailor-stitched suits instead.

In contrast, the process of gathering information for internal audits is quite distinct from fashion choices and is not influenced by personal preferences. Auditors should always request readymade information for their review and analysis. In this context,

tailor-made information refers to data that did not exist in its specific format before the audit request and has never been utilised by the management. Such information typically does not align with the audit objective, which involves assessing compliance with existing organisational objectives, regulations, policies, processes, and controls. While the audit team may analyse the information in various ways to identify patterns, the requested information should always be readily available and not explicitly tailored for providing to the audit team.

2. Online Shopping for Tech-Savvy Individuals:

As e-commerce continues to flourish, many individuals, particularly those with a tech-savvy inclination, have embraced online shopping to varying degrees. People generally feel comfortable engaging in online transactions when purchasing familiar branded products from reputable e-commerce platforms.

Similarly, internal auditors should incorporate an online shopping approach when collecting data and information. By obtaining inquiry or read-only access to relevant systems, auditors can directly acquire the necessary reports and information. This method provides a comprehensive overview of all available information, surpassing the limitations of



auditors' imagination or specific requests. Furthermore, it minimises the potential for errors

or manipulation in the received information, ensuring its integrity for audit purposes. Additionally, this approach saves time and reduces reliance on stakeholders, mitigating delays in information retrieval.

3. Traditional Offline Shopping Experience:

One of the reasons people choose to shop in physical stores or offline is the opportunity to see, touch, and feel the products they intend to purchase. They can examine the colours, try on clothes for the perfect fit or overall look, and assess the quality through firsthand experience. These tangible aspects contribute to a unique and often preferred shopping experience compared to the online alternative.

A similar rationale can be applied to the information obtained by internal auditors. Once the data is received, auditors must ensure it aligns with the requested information. They must seek clarification regarding the specific data fields, the period covered, the source of the information, whether it is generated by a system or recorded manually, and whether it has been shared as it is or modified for any reason. It is also essential to identify the users of this information and understand how the management utilises it. By thoroughly examining these aspects, auditors can ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information, much like shoppers who carefully inspect and assess the products they intend to purchase in a physical store setting.

4. Utilising Purchases for Their Intended Purpose and Beyond:

The time and consideration invested in shopping become worthwhile when the products are utilised for their intended purpose. For instance, when we purchase

clothes for a party or vacation, we not only wear them for those specific occasions but also find them suitable for similar events based on our firsthand experience.

Similarly, internal auditors should consider the objective behind the requested information and utilise it accordingly. They should aim to understand the information in its entirety. Even when working on other audit objectives, if the information proves relevant, auditors should use it, even if it was not initially intended for those specific audit objectives. Just as we make the most of our purchases by using them beyond their original purpose, auditors can derive additional value from information by employing it in different contexts, provided it remains pertinent to the overall audit objectives.

5. Avoiding Overspending and Resisting Sales Manipulation:

It is not uncommon for us to purchase more than we initially intended when shopping at grocery stores or garment shops. This results in spending more time and money than planned. While this may not necessarily imply wasted time or money, it can become problematic if there are constraints on time or budget and the additional purchases do not serve an immediate purpose. The reasons behind such overspending can vary from being overwhelmed by multiple options to the influence of persuasive sales staff encouraging us to try more products.

Similarly, internal audit assignments operate within limitations of time and resources. Auditors must prioritise their focus on the audit objectives and relevant information. Attempting to review and analyse every piece of information without considering its criticality, risk weightage, and relevance can divert limited resources and impact the coverage of audit objectives or the timelines of the assignment. Information overload can also occur due to stakeholders who may not

be clear about the specific information the auditor seeks or who attempt to keep the auditors engaged in low-risk items to avoid potential high-risk audit observations. Therefore, auditors must be mindful of not overspending their time and resources by getting caught up in reviewing unnecessary information overload.

6. Providing Genuine Feedback on Inventory and Services:

Most retail stores and online shopping platforms actively seek customer feedback or reviews on their products, services, and overall shopping experience to make improvements. When customers have an exceptionally positive or highly negative experience, they often feel compelled to share their feedback, even without being prompted, by giving a high or low rating respectively.

Similarly, in internal audit engagements, auditors need to form an opinion on the quality of data and information availability, the level of organisation and security in record-keeping, and the timely availability and accessibility of information, among other aspects. When the audit experience meets the highest standards, the auditor can provide positive remarks in the audit report, akin to a 5-star rating. Conversely, when the audit experience reveals significant issues or shortcomings, the auditor must highlight risks and observations in the internal audit report, referencing the criteria and potential consequences. Just as customers' reviews influence the improvement of products and services, genuine feedback from auditors plays a vital role in identifying areas for enhancement and addressing weaknesses within the organisation's internal processes and controls.

Next time you gather information for Internal Audit, think about fashion shopping and enjoy the Internal Audit process. "Enjoy the process. That's where the true magic happens."

Disclaimer: Views expressed in this article are the author's personal views and do not reflect the views of any organisation or institution.



CA Neetu Kashiramka,
Managing Director & CFO,
VIP Industries Limited

In a tea-time conversation between CA Pooja and CA Neetu Kashiramka, an ICAI young leader awardee, on the role of CFOs in this dynamic VUCA world and the role of Internal Audit in the manufacturing industry opened up interesting insights as to how the manufacturing industry is evolving and challenging the role of the present-day CFO.

With over 26 years of multifaceted experience in domains like fundraising, investor relationships, ERP implementation and cost reduction exercises, Neetu is a seasoned professional. She firmly believes that today's modern

Driving Efficiencies - Expectations from the New Age CFO

women can do anything if they are confident in their abilities and have a "never say die" attitude. Perseverance and having a dedicated mentor can work wonders for a woman professional, she reiterates.

The following are some excerpts from the conversation:

Decoding CFO Excellence

"The most-valued CFOs are **visionaries** — they have an eye toward the future, work closely with top leadership teams and are not shy about recommending strategic moves", says Neetu.

Having played multiple roles in her career, she has dealt with a multitude of management expectations and has consistently delivered on them.

"CFOs have the pressure of establishing **greater communication** between internal stakeholders, **balancing and managing** their expectations, and **guiding collaboration** within a wider business strategy framework. In this sense, they establish a **degree of power, holding the purse strings of a business**," she adds.

CFOs can potentially **make or break a business**. While they must balance the direction of funds and investment, they must also be articulate in navigating the differing aims of the stakeholders, Neetu explains.

Balancing Internal and External Stakeholder Dynamics

The role of the modern-day CFO has evolved beyond simple financial management. A deeper understanding of internal stakeholders is crucial, but this understanding must now include external stakeholders and their requirements.

Audit-Powered Dynamic Risk Management: Enabling Boards to Safeguard Success

In today's environment, *requirements for compliance and law* are undergoing rapid changes. There is a continuous need for some external evaluation. Internal Auditors are on the front lines of this endeavour, providing the Board with a steady flow of information and timely updates on the evolving risks that the organisation deals with. Also, Board members use Internal Audit as a tool to make sure that all major risks are being taken care of by effective tools and controls are built in.

Navigating Improvement: IA's External Lens for Internal Process Perfection

Internal auditors are key for the senior leadership team and the management to provide an *independent view* of the company's processes. They also help them *improve their processes* to make them risk-free. Further, an internal audit also serves the purpose of a *third-party or external view* on internal processes, which helps them keep improving.

Detail-Crafted Success: Neetu's Insights for Young Professionals

Neetu believes strongly in young professionals and their emphasis on the significance details in order to be successful.

Unlocking Pro Advice: Here Are Neetu's Expert Tips for Peers

- Think out-of-the-box and be innovative.
- Work smart and effectively rather than only working hard.
- Prioritise Time Management and possess a focused approach.
- Embrace constructive criticism and honest feedback.
- Believe in collaboration and support.
- Cultivate clear life objectives or ambitions



CA Pooja Dharewa

(Member, Publication Committee,
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in conversation with

CA Neetu Kashiramka

(Managing Director & CFO,
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- Strive for a fulfilling work-personal life balance.
- Embrace Humility: Remember, nobody is indispensable.

CA Neetu Kashiramka is the Executive Director & CFO of VIP Industries Limited CA.

Pooja Dharewa is the Director of Internal Audit at KD Practice Consulting.



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Key Changes in CARO 2020



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The Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, commonly known as CARO, plays a vital role in governing the audit process for companies in India. CARO provides guidance to auditors regarding the content and format of their reports, ensuring transparency and accountability. In recent years, CARO has undergone significant changes to adapt to the evolving business landscape and strengthen the role of internal audit. This article explores the recent changes in CARO, focusing on its inception, key changes and relevance for internal audit.

Inception of CARO

The concept of CARO originated with the Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, 2003, which aimed to standardise the reporting format for auditors. Over time, CARO has undergone several revisions to keep pace with changing business dynamics and ensure effective regulation. Subsequent versions, such as CARO 2015 and CARO 2016, introduced additional reporting requirements and expanded the scope of applicability. The most recent significant changes to CARO were made in 2020 and have profoundly impacted the role of auditors, particularly in relation to internal audit.

Key Changes in CARO 2020

1. Expanded Reporting Requirements:

CARO 2020 increased the number of clauses from 16 to 21, expanding the scope of reporting for auditors. The additional clauses cover various areas such as related party transactions, loans, investments, Fraud, Internal Audit System, and default in repayment of loans.

2. Reporting on Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE): CARO 2020 places emphasis on the physical verification of PPE. Auditors are now tasked with assessing whether the company conducts regular physical verifications of its PPE. In cases where discrepancies are identified during the physical verification of PPE, auditors are required to report on whether these discrepancies have been properly dealt with in the financial statements. CARO 2020 introduces a higher level of transparency by necessitating auditors to disclose any material discrepancies found during the physical verification of PPE.

3. Reporting on Inventory: CARO 2020 mandates auditors to report whether the coverage and procedure of physical verification by the management is appropriate or not. In cases where the discrepancies of 10% or more in aggregate of each class of inventory were noticed, whether it has been properly dealt with in books of accounts.

4. Reporting on Fraud: CARO 2020

explicitly mandates auditors to report instances of fraud that have a significant impact on the financial statements. This includes fraud committed by employees, management, or third parties. The aim is to enhance transparency and integrity in financial reporting.

5. **Disclosure of Loan Defaults:** The revised CARO requires auditors to report any default in repayment of loans, including interest payments, to financial institutions or debenture holders. This disclosure ensures that stakeholders are informed about the company's financial health and potential risks.

6. **Enhanced Disclosures on Related Party Transactions:** The revised CARO requires auditors to examine and comment on the company's related party transactions, ensuring proper disclosure and compliance with relevant accounting standards. This promotes transparency and prevents potential conflicts of interest.

7. **Reporting on Internal Audit:** The company's internal audit system is commensurate with the size and nature of its business or not. Whether the statutory auditor has considered the internal audit reports of the company.

8. **Reporting on Financial Position:** CARO 2020 mandates auditors to report on the company's ability to pay off existing liability over a period of the next one year as and when they fall due.

9. **Reporting on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Activities:** CARO 2020 mandates auditors to report on the company's compliance with CSR obligations as per the Companies Act, 2013. This includes reporting on the utilisation of funds allocated for CSR activities.

10. **Detailed Reporting on Consolidated Financial Statements:** The revised CARO requires auditors to provide more comprehensive reporting on consolidated financial statements, ensuring compliance with applicable accounting standards and proper consolidation of financial information.

11. **Reporting on Unrecorded Income:** The revised CARO auditors to report whether previously non-recorded Income has been recorded properly based on the outcome of the assessment under the Income Tax Act.

Relevance for Internal Audit

The recent changes in CARO have significant implications for internal audit within organisations. Here are some key aspects highlighting the relevance of CARO for internal auditors:

A) **Strengthened Corporate Governance:** The emphasis on internal financial controls and fraud reporting enhances corporate governance practices. Internal auditors play a crucial role in evaluating and strengthening internal controls, thereby ensuring compliance with CARO requirements and promoting transparency and accountability within the organisation.

B) **Expanded Scope of Internal Audit:** Expanded reporting requirements under CARO give internal auditors a broader scope to assess and review various aspects of the company's operations, including related party transactions, loans, investments, and compliance with statutory provisions. This expanded scope enables internal auditors to provide valuable insights and recommendations to the management.

C) **Collaboration with External Auditors:** The changes in CARO foster closer



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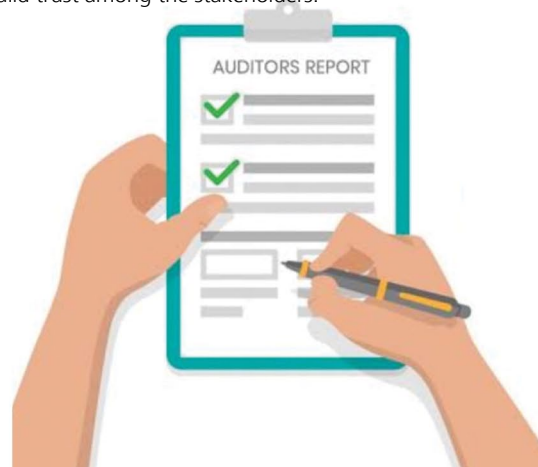


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collaboration between internal and external auditors. Internal auditors can assist external auditors in evaluating the effectiveness of internal controls, identifying potential areas of concern, and facilitating a more comprehensive audit process. This collaboration strengthens the overall audit function and enhances the quality of financial reporting.

Conclusion

The recent changes in CARO reflect the ongoing efforts to enhance audit quality, transparency, and accountability. These changes have a significant impact on the role of internal audit, emphasising the need for robust internal financial controls and reporting on fraud. Internal auditors have an opportunity to play a pivotal role in ensuring compliance with CARO requirements, strengthening corporate governance and providing valuable insights to the management. By embracing these changes, organisations can improve their overall financial reporting processes and build trust among the stakeholders.





The Role of INTERNAL AUDITORS in Assessing and Mitigating Geo-political Risks



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Geo-political risks are the potential political, economic, military and social risks that can emerge from a nation's involvement in international affairs. Typically, they occur whenever there is a significant shift in power, a conflict or a crisis. Geo-

political risks have been known to cause substantial disruption of trade and business activities between two or more nations. High Geo-political risks lead to a decline in real activity, lower stock returns, and move capital flows from emerging to advanced economies.

India has been indicating its intentions that it aims to be one of the biggest economies in the world. The Indian Government has also indicated an ambitious target of USD 5 trillion in GDP by 2030. The government has been taking leadership initiatives in global peace, climate change and various other programmes. The world is now looking at India's diplomacy in international politics. As per the European Confederation of Institutes of Internal Auditing 2023 – Risk in Focus – Macroeconomic and Geo-political uncertainty is among the Top three risks, up from the 7th place last year.

Examples of how Geo-political Issues have Impacted Economies

The recent war between Russia and

Ukraine and its aftermath is a glaring example of how the global economies are linked. Many of the European countries depending on energy supply from Russia are facing significant supply disruptions, thereby threatening their supply chain and people's livelihood. Further, the humanitarian crisis the war brings is also a matter that the local government would be worried about regarding rebuilding, security, shelter, health care and immigration. The war has also caused business leadership of the companies to think about how they run their companies, whether it is manufacturing, supply chain or Research & Development. Companies like ExxonMobil have exited Russia's oil and gas operations that it had valued at more than \$ 4 billion. Similarly, Nissan sold its Russian Business for less than 1 US \$ and suffered a close to \$ 687 million loss.

a. The US has raised issues relating to humanity and related subjects in China and made certain import restrictions, including a diplomatic boycott of sports events.



These differences are multi-dimensional and could engage the action or inaction of many other countries. The tension between the United States and China could also impact India and other emerging economies. This could allow India to showcase her manufacturing capabilities and grow in the export market. The downside could be how the value of the Rupee has dropped down.

b. After Britain's announcement of exit from the EU (popularly known as 'Brexit'), there are new immigration policies; the stock market saw its share of losses, currency fluctuation, changes in regulations and transitioning etc. Every country with trade and other relationships with Britain faced similar dilemmas.

How could Geo-political issues impact Business:

a. Geo-political issues impact the currency value, and therefore the import and export of goods could either be costlier or cheaper, depending on the situation. This could significantly impact an emerging economy largely dependent on goods exports.

b. There could be disruptions in the supply chain, primarily if the vendor is located in a country like China, with which countries have issues regarding rules & regulations, border disputes, currency valuation, etc.

c. Disruptions in operations in a particular country may require quickly evacuating employees and assets.

d. Recommendations or possible regulations not to buy products or services for political reasons could also be considered to be of sentimental value to the people who may refrain from having trade relations.

Role of the Internal Auditor

The moot question is whether the risk management framework includes Geo-political

risks and how the entity plans to mitigate such risks. It goes back to how good internal auditors are in assessing Geo-political risks. Do they have enough skills to determine the possible outcomes due to certain situations arising where they have no control? Geo-political risks arise from political indifferences, geographical disputes, public sentiments, and situations like sovereign debt crises, high inflation, and sanctions imposed by other countries. An internal auditor may or may not be an expert in assessing certain situations. At best, the internal auditor can keep a watch over the developments and see how it impacts the Business and plan to ensure that the Business is not largely disrupted; unless things deteriorate quickly and were not expected. Possible actions could be:

a. **Product Distribution:** Time to think whether the entity needs to build up capacities or infrastructure in other geographies less sensitive to geo-political events. Can the customers be served from alternative or multiple locations? This could be through having strategic tie-ups, franchises and warehouses in different locations.

b. **Dependency on the Vendor:** A critical vendor from a geo-

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political sensitive area could end up in disruptions in the supply chain. Whether the products can be sourced locally or through alternative geographies or channels is also to be planned.

c. Foreign Exchange Management Risk: Foreign Currency valuations could appreciate or depreciate depending on the situation, whether the entity needs derivative instruments like options or forward contracts to be considered to protect the forex loss.

d. Employee Protection: Whether adequate insurance has been taken for employees' life and accident cover. Further, there has to be some mechanism arranged to enable the employees to connect to their families in times of distress to get the emotional and moral support that they need. The entity can facilitate this by arranging video calls or alternative communication channels. The evacuation process should be planned in advance, especially where the situation is predictable and authorities have formally called for it.

e. Asset Protection: Ensuring insurance is taken to cover the assets adequately and the loss of business and disruption. Insurance costs increase significantly as the turmoil deepens; hence, policies should be in place beforehand. Insurance also covers possible political violence, contract frustration or invoking force majeure clauses, sovereign payment default,

currency inconvertibility, inability to repatriate funds and confiscation.

f. Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans: Internal Auditor should reassess the quality of BC and DRP and whether they include geo-political risks. For example,, cyber-crime could be high where critical operations, data centres etc., could be taken down.

g. Contracts: Have major contracts, especially cross-border and critical ones,



vetted by legal experts to ensure that there are no clauses which could be detrimental to the entity in a crisis situation.

Next Steps the Internal Auditor is Expected to Take

a. What should the action plan be? The Internal Auditor should discuss with the Board what possible plan of action needs to be taken in different scenarios going on the experts' reports, government announcements, and assessment of the ground situation. Critical questions need to be asked of business or process owners on how they

expect to mitigate the risk and give them insights into possible risk management. Hear them out and provide an opinion about the most suitable plan on which the Business can take a call on a specific course of action.

b. Have a Contingency Plan: Include 'what if' scenarios wherein KMP cannot act. A quick decision (considering communication breakdown or other challenges due to technical, political or other impediments) must be taken, and time is the essence. Proactively work on safeguarding the assets and employees of the entity.

It is like a fire drill, which needs to be practised and should never expect to happen in real-life scenarios.

c. Have Strategies in Place: If the risk is widespread, like, for example, a possible recession or spike in oil prices or a pandemic like Covid-19, which could either not have been predicted or even if predicted, the impact could not have been assessed to full; then no matter how much one plans, it is bound to have a negative impact. But then, where the macro-economic trends appear to convey an impending recession or political instability, the entity may attempt to ensure that these are factored into strategies.

"A firm's ability to weather storms depends on how seriously executives take risk management when the sun is shining, and no clouds are on the horizon." Kaplan and Mikes

*** Views expressed in this article are personal

Ignite Your Membership Benefits:

EXCLUSIVE AUTO DISCOUNTS FOR IIA INDIA!

The Institute of Internal Auditors, India, is thrilled to share some exhilarating news that promises to redefine your IIA India membership experience! At the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) India, we have always been dedicated to providing our members with the finest opportunities for personal and professional growth. Today, we are delighted to announce not one, not two, but three extraordinary tie-ups that will unlock exclusive discounts for our IIA India members. This collaboration ensures a reliable and stylish mode of transportation and embodies the spirit of progress and success within our IIA community.

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Effective August 25, 2023, IIA India has achieved a significant milestone by being enlisted into the **SEP (Self-employed) Corporate category**, opening up a range of exclusive discounts and benefits for our members. We have partnered with the manufacturers of Honda Cars, renowned for their style and performance, to offer our members exclusive discounts and privileges. To make the most of this opportunity, we invite our members to visit any authorized showroom nationwide to purchase Honda Cars.

Every month, Honda Cars will unveil distinct schemes for specific models, and for August, our members were offered an additional discount of Rs. 28,000 on the Honda City.

KIA Motors - Drive into September with Exclusive Offers:

KIA Motors has partnered with IIA India, offering special discounts and benefits to our members. This opens a world of exclusive opportunities, and here is how you can benefit: visit any authorized showroom across the country if you wish to purchase KIA Cars. They have special offers for Sep '23:

Like Honda, KIA Motors will introduce different schemes for specific models every month.

Skoda - Elevate Your Drive with Exclusive Savings:

Skoda vehicles are now enlisted with IIA India for special discounts. Like Honda and KIA Motors, Skoda will also introduce different schemes for specific models every month, ensuring IIA India members get the best deals on their preferred vehicles.

Here is how an IIA India Member can benefit from all these offers:

- ✓ Visit any Honda, Kia, or Skoda showroom anywhere in the country.
- ✓ Finalize your chosen model and variant.
- ✓ Contact Mehnaz (coordinator@iiaindia.co) to request an email to the dealer, including your membership details.
- ✓ Enjoy the discounts!

These partnerships with Honda, Skoda, and KIA Motors mark the beginning of a series of exclusive offerings designed to elevate your membership experience with IIA India. We have more exciting offers and opportunities in the pipeline and cannot wait to unveil them. So, please stay tuned!

Your association with IIA India is a top priority, and we are committed to providing you with valuable opportunities and experiences. Should you have any questions or require further details, please do not hesitate to contact Mehnaz at coordinator@iiaindia.co. We are here to serve you and ensure your brighter future. Thank you for being an integral part of the Institute of Internal Auditors, India. Together, we will drive towards excellence!



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The Institute of
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QUIZ



Dr. Paul Jayakar

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1. During an engagement, an internal auditor discovered that an organisation's policy on delegation of authority listed six individuals who were no longer employed with the organisation. In addition, four individuals acting with disbursement authority were not identified in the policy as having such authority. Which of the following is the most effective course of action to address this control weakness?

- A.** Immediately initiate a complete audit of the disbursement function to determine if significant fraud has occurred.
- B.** Recommend that the Management review the process supporting the policy and make improvements.
- C.** Advise the Management to add the four additional names and remove the incorrect names from the policy to make it current.
- D.** Review further to ensure that the four individuals do not have the appropriate authority through delegation.

2. In which of the following cases is it appropriate for an audit report to not contain the Management's response either within the report or as an attachment?

- A.** Management's response to an audit report is generally not a requirement.
- B.** Internal controls were found to be properly designed and operating effectively, although operations are deemed inefficient.



- C. There was insufficient time to obtain the Management's response during the draft reporting process.
- D. An internal audit report contains no observations.

3. When performing a compliance audit of the organisation's outsourced services, which of the following is considered the primary engagement objective?

- A. Verifying that the organisation does not have the appropriate knowledge and resources in-house.
- B. Ensuring the provider has adequate internal controls to protect the quality of their service.
- C. Evaluating the efficiency, effectiveness, economy and sufficiency of the services provided.
- D. Assessing the provider's adherence to contract and regulatory requirements.

4. Which of the following actions has the least influence on the chief audit executive's development of an audit plan?

- A. Input from the Senior Management and the Board.
- B. An evaluation of the complexity of each audit engagement.
- C. Changes in the organisation's structure or budget.
- D. An assessment of risks and exposures affecting the

organisation.

5. Which role is not considered a change agent when an organisation wants to implement structural changes?

- A. Senior Management.
- B. Line management.
- C. Independent consultant.
- D. Shareholder.

6. Because of an abundance of high-priority requests from the Management, an internal audit activity no longer has the resources to meet all of its commitments contained in the annual audit plan. Which of the following would be the best course of action for the chief audit executive to follow?

- A. Continue with the plan, seek opportunities to adjust priorities, and reallocate resources.
- B. Present a reassessment of the plan to the Board and the Senior Management for consideration.
- C. Reassess the plan and cancel or divert resources from the lowest priority activities.
- D. Advise the Board immediately and seek their support for additional resources to meet the needs of the plan.



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Data Risk in Third-party Ecosystem



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Businesses depend more on third-party ecosystems for efficient operation in today's interconnected world. These external organisations that provide products and services to the organisation are referred to as ecosystems, together with suppliers, vendors, contractors and other parties. Even though third-party ecosystems can be very beneficial to businesses, many risks are also involved, especially when it comes to data.

In order to secure data from unauthorised access, use, or disclosure, which is one of any organisation's most precious assets, it is imperative to implement appropriate security measures. However, when an organisation shares data with third-party organisations, it may be more exposed to various data risks, such as

breaches, exploitation, and data loss.

Data Breaches: These are among the most serious threats connected to third-party ecosystems. It is possible that third-party organisations do not take data protection as seriously as the organisation does, or they may have liberal security procedures. Their vulnerability to phishing, hacking, and other cyberattacks may result from this. Sensitive data may be disclosed in the event of a third-party business breach, which could harm the organisation's reputation and have serious financial and legal repercussions.

Misuse of Data: This is another danger posed by third-party ecosystems. Third parties can access the information they do not require or use it in ways the organisation has not approved. An example would be a vendor using client information for marketing without getting consent from the company.

Data Loss: Accidental deletion, technology failure and natural disasters are just a few ways data loss can happen. Since these third-party organisations might not have the same level of backup and recovery capabilities as the organisation itself, the risk of data loss increases when data is stored in third-party ecosystems.

Data governance policies that define who has access to sensitive data and how it can be used should be put in place by organisations to reduce the risk of data misuse. To ensure that third-party organisations are aware of their responsibilities and obligations concerning data protection and privacy, they should also offer training and awareness programmes. Contractual agreements that specify the conditions of data use,

confidentiality, and security should also be in place within organisations.

Organisations must ensure that third-party entities have sufficient backup and recovery procedures in place in order to reduce the risk of data loss. In addition to regular data backups, this also entails backup strategies for potential data loss scenarios. Organisations should constantly review third-party backup and recovery strategies to make sure they are current and efficient.

When it comes to third-party ecosystems, data privacy and compliance are crucial factors to take into account. Organisations need to confirm that third-party companies are adhering to all applicable data protection and privacy laws, such as GDPR, CCPA, and HIPAA.

Organisations should routinely audit and evaluate outside parties to make sure they are abiding by legal standards in order to reduce the risk of non-compliance. Additionally, they must ensure that any contracts they enter into with third parties contain clauses requiring them to adhere to applicable laws governing data protection and privacy.

Final thoughts In third-party ecosystems, data risk is a major concern, and in order to safeguard their priceless data assets, organisations must adopt a proactive approach to data risk management. This entails carrying out extensive due diligence on third-party companies, putting data governance policies into place, offering training and awareness programmes, and ensuring compliance with pertinent laws. Organisations can assist in safeguarding sensitive data by employing a comprehensive strategy to data risk.

Charting a Brighter Learning Path: IIA India's Newest Partners



SkillIDA (INGU's Knowledge Academy) Receives Noteworthy Certification

Ms. Uma Prakash, President of IIA India, handing over the certificate to Mr. Kottaram Ramesh, Managing Director of INGU's Knowledge Academy

IIA India is thrilled to herald the inclusion of two distinguished learning partners, Netrika Consulting, headquartered in Mumbai, and SkillIDA, based in the vibrant city of Chennai. This strategic partnership adds remarkable momentum to our ongoing dedication to offering invaluable learning avenues, thus fortifying our mission of nurturing progress within internal auditing. These collaborations also serve as a testament to our unwavering commitment to aiding internal audit professionals in preparing for the prestigious CIA and IAP Examinations.

Netrika Consulting Attains Learning Partner Certification with Distinction

(L to R) Ms. Sana Baqai, Chairperson, Student Development Committee and Mr. Sidheshwar Bhalla, Senior Vice President, IIA India, presenting the certificate to Mr. Sanjay Kaushik, Managing Director, Netrika Consulting.





 The Institute of
Internal Auditors India

Kolkata



Unveiling Insights: IIA India Calcutta Chapter Hosts Transformative Joint Audit Conclave

The IIA India Calcutta Chapter organised a Joint Audit Conclave at the Taj Bengal Hotel, Kolkata, on July 20th and 21st, 2023, focusing

on the theme “*Internal Audit-Business Risk Mitigator.*” This event aimed at furnishing valuable insights into internal audit, business risk mitigation, and technology integration across various sectors. This two-day conclave emerged as a long-awaited platform for knowledge exchange. Collaborating with **The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India** as the knowledge partner, it attracted participation from professionals, experts, and aspiring students intrigued by the realms of auditing and business management. **The Institute of Company Secretaries of India** also partnered in the conclave and made a valuable contribution by bestowing Continuous Professional Education (CPE) credit hours to its members attending the conclave.

The conclave served as a melting pot for individuals from diverse backgrounds, including The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, The Institute of Cost Accountants of India and the Institute of Company Secretaries of India. This event emerged as an enriching platform by fostering an environment conducive to learning, networking and celebrating excellence. Encompassing an array of topics, it ensured participants gained a comprehensive understanding of the latest industry trends and challenges.

It underscored the vital role of internal audit in mitigating business risks while embracing the transformative potential of technology. The conclave rekindled the spirit of collaboration and learning, propelling the domains of internal audit and business risk mitigation forward while embracing technological evolution.

Day One Insights into the Power of Internal Audit as an Ultimate Business Risk Shield

The inaugural session set a reverent tone through the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, a gesture emblematic of dispelling obscurity and heralding the dawn of an enlightening journey. The proceedings were formally initiated by warmly welcoming the distinguished guests and accomplished speakers.

In a graceful opening, Mr. Debashish Ghosh, the Joint Secretary of IIA India and Convenor of the Conference Committee of the Chapter, extended a hearty welcome to the esteemed attendees. His eloquent introduction paved the way for a warm reception of Mr. Suman Choudhary, President of IIA India Calcutta Chapter, further enhancing the event's inviting ambience.



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Distinguished Figures Illuminate the Occasion

The Guests of Honour cast a luminous presence, comprising eminent figures within the realms of auditing and accounting. Among these distinguished individuals, Ms. Uma Prakash, the esteemed President of IIA India, graced the event with her presence. Mr. Ranjeet Kr. Agarwal, the Vice-President of ICAI, enriched the event by sharing his valuable perspective on the conclave's pivotal theme. On the whole the inaugural session resonated with intellectual vigour.

Amid an aura of reverence, Prof. Abhirup Sarkar, the esteemed Chief Guest and Chairman of West Bengal Finance Corporation, graced the event, addressed the audience, and shared his insights on the pivotal role of internal audit in orchestrating seamless business operations. He unveiled a souvenir commemorating the event.

Stepping into the spotlight, Mr. Subhash Chandra Saraf, the Vice-President of IIA India Calcutta Chapter, delivered the vote of thanks for the inaugural session. He acknowledged the collective dedication that breathed life into the event. He recognised the various institutes and organisations whose unwavering contributions and support transformed the event from vision to reality.

Harnessing Internal Audit: Speaker Delves into Business Risk Mitigation

In a captivating keynote, the accomplished Mr. Subhashish Nath, revered for his expertise in risk management and mentorship at GRMI, delivered a thought-provoking address. He underscored the critical role of internal audit in mitigating business risks and shared valuable strategies from his extensive experience, enriching the audience's understanding of effective risk mitigation.

Exploring Frontiers: Sessions Illuminate Finance & Audit's Uncharted Realms

The conclave featured a series of enlightening technical sessions that delved into the convergence of innovation and industry within the realm of auditing and business risk management. These sessions, conducted by accomplished experts and leaders in their respective fields, provided attendees with a comprehensive understanding of emerging trends, challenges and strategies shaping the future of business and audit practices.

Technical Session I: Use of ChatGPT

Mr. Subrata Bagchi, Senior Managing Director and COO of Alliant Talent India, conducted the first technical session. He explored the innovative use of ChatGPT and its applications in auditing. Attendees were immersed in the session that unveiled the potential of AI-powered tools in revolutionising traditional audit practices.

Technical Session II: Technology in the Service Sector

Mr. K. V. Mukundan, CEO of IIA India, shed light on the challenges and control mechanisms associated with integrating technology within the service sector. Through engaging insights, attendees gained a deeper holistic understanding of how technology significantly impacts the landscape of modern business operations.

Technical Session III: Evolving Paradigm of Internal Auditing Due to Digitalisation

Mr. Tejas Jobanputra, an expert in Business Risk Management, discussed the evolving paradigm of internal audit spurred by rapid digitalisation. Attendees were exposed to the latest strategies and methodologies crucial for navigating this dynamic landscape. Mr. Jobanputra illuminated pathways to leverage digital advancements in the realm of internal audit effectively.



Mr. Amar Agarwala, a distinguished CA and Motivational Speaker, took the audience on an introspective journey. Through his inspiring discourse, he shed light on managing the intangible aspects that significantly influence business success. His motivational insights inspired participants to embrace a holistic approach to business management, focusing on technicalities and human and emotional elements that drive excellence.

Technical Session V: Dynamic Ecosystem of Industrial Operations

In the final technical session of the day, Mr. Charith Wickramasuriya, Head of Finance at Brandix India Apparel City Pvt Ltd., shared his expertise in managing the dynamic ecosystem of industrial operations. Attendees were privy to insights on creating adaptable frameworks for successful operations in the ever-changing industrial landscape.

Embracing Gratitude: Recognition Session Commends Dedicated Supporters

Under the guidance of Mr. Arijit Roy, the curtains rose on the Recognition Session, radiating appreciation and recognition. This remarkable gathering aimed to honour the unwavering contributors - sponsors, patrons and well-wishers whose steadfast support has been the cornerstone of the Calcutta Chapter's impactful endeavours.

Mr. Arijit Roy, distinguished as the Managing Director - Business Advisory at alliantTalent and immediate Past President of The Institute of Internal Auditors India - Calcutta Chapter, lent his esteemed leadership to the event. His role as the Chairperson of the Publications Committee, IIA India, attests to his commitment towards nurturing the IA community and fostering excellence.

Closing Notes and Gratitude: Wrapping Up a Day of Learning and Sharing

As the day's sessions gracefully drew to a close, Mr. Subhash Saraf, Vice-President of IIA India Calcutta Chapter, stepped forward with heartfelt appreciation. With sincere gratitude, he acknowledged every participant, speaker, and contributor who played a pivotal role in elevating the day to a resounding success. He reiterated that their collective enthusiasm and engagement enriched the learning experience, leaving an indelible mark on the proceedings.

Pioneering Governance and Social Responsibility: Regulators' Insightful Dialogue Graces Day 2

The second day commenced with an engaging round table discourse that delved into the crux of Governance and Social Responsibility from the perspective of seasoned regulators. A gathering of distinguished panellists adorned the event:

- Dr. Atiur Rahman: Economist and Former Governor of Bangladesh Bank
- Ms. Mamta Binani: Former President of ICSI (2016)
- Mr. Susobhan Sinha: Former Regional Director of RBI
- Ms. Uma Prakash: President of IIA India
- Mr. Suman Chaudhury: President of IIA-Calcutta Chapter

This assembly of thought leaders meticulously unravelled the tapestry of regulatory dynamics, unveiling its symbiotic relationship with governance and social responsibility, all while imparting profound wisdom to the attentive audience.

Bridging Insights: Technical Sessions Redefine Finance and Audit Paradigms





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As the conclave progressed, a series of enlightening technical sessions took the stage, each offering a unique perspective on vital aspects of the financial and audit domains. Guided by distinguished experts, these sessions provided attendees with a platform to delve into cutting-edge subjects, gaining valuable insights that would shape their understanding and approach to finance and audit.

Technical Session I: AI in IA Function

Led by Mr. Anand Prakash Jangid, a Chartered Accountant and thought leader in the area of Machine Learning application in Finance and Audit functions, this session explored the integration of Artificial Intelligence within the Internal Audit function. Attendees were immersed in a discourse that unveiled the transformative role of AI in enhancing audit processes, offering a glimpse into the future of internal auditing.

Technical Session II: ESG Factors & Impact on Governance

Mr. Raj Mullick, Vice President of Reliance Industries, captivated the audience with an encompassing session on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors and their impact on effective governance practices within organisations. His insights navigated the complex intersections of environmental responsibility, social impact, and the imperative of robust governance.

Technical Session III: Embracing Spirituality in Professional Life

Exploring the symbiotic relationship between spirituality and professional life, Mr. Sidheswar Bhalla, Senior Vice President of IIA India and a qualified 'Jyotish Acharya', led a transformative session. Attendees were led to understand the significance of a holistic approach to work and ethics. Amidst the dynamic professional landscape, Mr. Bhalla's session illuminated the importance of aligning personal values with professional conduct for a balanced and ethically driven journey.

Unravelling Public Sector Auditing: Insights from Expert Panelists

The spotlight shifted to a riveting panel discussion that revolved around the evolving role of Internal Audit within the public sector, its unique challenges and opportunities. Guided by esteemed voices, this discussion created a multifaceted exploration transcending boundaries.

The panellists were no strangers to the domain's intricacies. They included:

- Mr. Sunil Rao Addanki: President-IIA India Hyderabad Chapter
- Mr. Sunit Joshi: Chief General Manager, Indian Oil Corporation
- Mr. Arijit Roy: Immediate Past President- IIA India Calcutta Chapter

As the panellists shared their perspectives and engaged in insightful discourse, the audience was left with a renewed appreciation for the complexities and possibilities inherent in the evolving role of Internal Audit in the public sector. The confluence of experience and expertise paved the way for an enriched understanding that would shape the future narratives of audit practices within government realms.

Extending Gratitude and Farewell: Wrapping Up the Conclave

The curtains gracefully drew to a close on the conclave's illuminating journey with Mr. Abin Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Joint Secretary of IIA-Calcutta Chapter, taking center stage. With heartfelt appreciation, he thanked all participants, speakers, and contributors for making the conclave a resounding success. As the event bid adieu on a triumphant note, it left a trail of enriched minds and enlightened perspectives.





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