COMPETITION AUTHORITY OF KENYA

KNOWLEDGE HUB

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EXIT INTERVIEW

In this twelfth issue of the Knowledge Hub, Ms. Velgon Chelangat shares about her experiences and learnings during her one year stay at the Authority. She joined the Authority in February 2024 and exited in February 2025 during which she was stationed at the Internal Audit department. Ms Velgon is a certified public accountant and holds a Bachelor's degree of Commerce in Accounting.

Velgon Chelangat

In a nutshell share with us what Internal Audit is about.

Internal audit is a line of assurance where departments certify how the organization has been working. Audit gives an independent opinion on whether the processes are working according to what is required and whether the organization is being managed accordingly. In summary, it is a line of assurance that provides the assurance level of the activities of the organization.

Tell us about your typical day in the office.

My typical working days are somewhat repetitive because we work with a work plan which has timelines for specific activities. When I'm dealing with an audit, for example, currently I'm auditing the CPD department, you find that this audit course takes 23 days. So for the 23 days, I'll be reviewing the departmental activities. After approval and once the audit has begun, I define my duties according to what I want to review within the identified department, for example if I'm reviewing the CMS section, I may decide to review 15 cases and how they have been handled by the relevant department. Hence I schedule my daily work as per areas I want to cover during the entire audit period.

Which Knowledge/Information gaps did you encounter as you carried out the audit processes and which recommendations would you give to address the same?

I have been at the Authority for exactly one year having joined from the private sector. This was a very different experience for me and I had a big knowledge gap in terms of understanding how the audit process in the public sector is structured. It was with the assistance of my colleague and the Manager Audit that I got to learn the different operations. There were different approaches during auditing where I could not give an objective conclusion but I put in the effort to catch up quickly. The management provided avenues for internal training and those were very helpful. I can rate my skill and knowledge acquisition from the Authority currently at 80%.

Which tools, and information/knowledge resources did you find most relevant during your work processes?

The key documents were the ISO documentation that entailed how I was supposed to conduct my audit, the period I was supposed to give an auditee to respond, and the departmental requirements. I referred to the internal audit charter which guided me on how to conduct an audit and it provided the objective and scope of the Audit. We have international auditing standards which were mandatory to refer to. The Public Finance Management Act and the guidelines from the National Treasury in line with Audit were also part of the main resources I would use. Other guiding documents were the departmental policies, guidelines, and procedures together with the Strategic Plans and the Performance contracts.

Did you find yourself in an instance where you were not able to get any resources or information that would guide you in the audit process?

I would say no, since the internal auditing standards provided adequate direction. In cases where we were required to consult further, we would refer to the National Treasury guidelines or the Public Service guidelines. At the end of an Audit, we would always get information that would provide adequate guidance.

Which areas of training did you receive and how did these impact your work?

I did not receive any external training but I had sessions with my colleague and Manager where I was continuously being sensitized on internal audit processes in the government sector. I however, attended some workshops and conferences as a certified public accountant.

Which key areas of training would you recommend for the team members who will take up your position in Internal Audit?

I would recommend training on analysis or analytics of data as this will be helpful when reviewing bulk data and information. They should also do certified professional courses to be compliant with the laid down rules and regulations of auditing. Other trainings to consider are those that focus on emerging trends to be aware of the new regulations and procedures.

Give three recommendations on how the Internal Audit Department can maintain or improve its working engagement with the other departments.

The most critical thing is to have the auditing processes automated as this will enable the department to easily get information and data on the departmental processes. The department will not have to physically collect information but instead, obtain the same from the system. The Authority has different systems in place that as the ERP, CMS, and DMS it would be critical to interlink the same to provide unified access on a common dashboard, this will make audit work easier to generate reports on key areas of audit interest and enable us to identify areas of high risk or low risk.

How is an internal Audit carried out? Using a specific example, briefly take us through the audit process.

The process begins by planning where we develop documentation that have to be approved by the Manager, Internal Audit . These documents include the audit program that indicates what tests will be conducted. An example would be the closed cases or pending cases. That is simply an audit program that details the areas to be audited and the test to be performed in that department.

We also prepare the audit plan which gives a preview of the department and the scope of the audit. It details the audit period and provides the methodologies and approaches to be used to conduct the audit. We begin by giving a notification of an audit entry meeting sent to the auditee by the Manager, Audit. Upon agreement on the audit dates and time, an entry meeting is done and the actual audit begins. The team requests documentation and proceeds to review it. In the instance an issue arises we ask for clarification and seek concurrence.

At the end of the audit, an exit meeting is held where the preliminary findings in the report are discussed to make the auditee understand the outcome. Some of the findings may be well addressed during the exit meeting. That means that those will not feature in the final report. So after the exit meeting, the exit meeting minutes are prepared.

After that, now we go to the reporting stage where a first draft of the report is prepared and sent to the auditee for review and comments. In the instance there are issues to be addressed, the department will go back and review and then again amend the report. The report is then sent to the Audit Committee of the Board after which it is signed as a final report after which the Manager of Audit will share with the auditees for implementation.

A follow up to check on the implementation of the recommendations is done after six months.

Which misconceptions are there about audit processes? Kindly demystify this and provide the correct position.

I'll start by saying nobody likes auditors, that's something, we know, and we understand that.

People see the audit team as people who are just witch-hunting. They are after finding problems in your department. But one thing they don't understand is that the internal audit department is not here to find out the issues. Our main purpose is to strengthen the departmental activities and processes.

Because when we come in, we can see the areas of improvement you have to focus on and we recommend improvements. However as this is done, we have to call a spade a spade, hence we identify areas of non-compliance and improvement. So in a nutshell, internal audit is about improving internal processes. So in the audit, we have to check all the areas in your department and we help you to improve. You may have the internal controls, but they may be weak.

We also have to pinpoint that the internal controls are weak. Observation is what we found on the ground, then give the risk implication because inconsistency can cause a risk or maybe high risk is a low risk or is a medium risk. If it's a low risk, that means you just need to correct and everything is in order. But if it's an area of high risk, that may mean that it can cost the organization money or maybe litigation cases.

When the internal audit comes and finds out that we give you the chance at the department to correct inconsistencies so that by the time the external audit comes in, they find the department as pure as it's supposed to be. The bigger picture here is we are trying to give you a line of assurance first before the external or the second insurer comes, the external audit will come and find the department activities are flowing well. Audit simply strives to improve and strengthen departmental activities and internal controls and is in no way malicious.

As you carried out the audit processes, which information and knowledge resources do you propose need to be adequately documented ?

The Authority's documentation procedures are adequate, with resources available on DMS and even on departmental-operated shared folders.

Recommendations to the KM Unit to improve information and Knowledge sharing especially for non-technical departments

The unit can consider carrying out surveys to gauge the impact of the plenary sessions carried out and also to gather topical areas of interest for discussion. This can be done once or twice in a calendar year.

The plenary sessions were very insightful as it helps the organization, move towards a better future by knowing what is working and what is not working. Having the knowledge management department, it's a very plus for the organization, so keep it up and continue doing the good job.

What 3 key pieces of advice/knowledge /information would you give about your work processes/ assignments?

It is important to be well versed with the internal auditing standards, both globally and internally as this will guide your work. As an auditor, it is critical to be independent and objective in your work.

Use available documents and information to make conclusions that are objective and not subjective. Be a good communicator since you will have a lot of interactions with the other departments hence the need to be articulate and precise as you communicate. It is critical to be well versed with the internal auditing standards and the external ones, and also be independent and objective as possible as you can be. Have a good coexistence with colleagues from other departments.

What major lesson are you taking with you?

Having a positive work relationship with colleagues makes your work easier. I will miss a lot is about how people are good here and they can help you adapt or adjust to the environment very easily. That's something I wish to carry with me forever, wherever I go.