

An Efficient Approach to Developing the Audit Report Message

An Exclusive Presentation by
Carole Buncher

INSTRUCTOR BACKGROUND Carole S. Buncher, M.S., B.A.

Hello. I'm pleased to be working with you today. I own *Carole Buncher and Associates: The Compliance Company (CBA)*, a small, emerging, Washington, DC-based training and consulting firm. CBA specializes in delivering a wide variety of training, primarily to the audit community, including audit report writing, public speaking, supervision, leadership, conflict management, and creative problem solving.

For 23 years prior to establishing CBA, I led analyses of federal programs and policies for the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). During my GAO tenure, I was also

actively involved in designing and delivering audit training, both internal and external to GAO.

Delivering training that is fun and results focused is my passion. I look forward to sharing my expertise with you and facilitating your learning and performance improvement experience.

My contact information:

carole@carolebuncher.com
<http://www.carolebuncher.com>

A Seven-Step Approach to Efficiently Developing the Audit Report Message

A Seven-Step Approach

1. Audit team meets toward the end of fieldwork to develop the preliminary findings and determine what additional fieldwork is needed.
2. Upon completion of fieldwork, audit team members prepare for a report planning conference by developing preliminary findings.
3. Audit team holds a report planning conference to consider preliminary findings and finalize findings.

A Seven-Step Approach (Continued)

4. Audit team drafts the report based on the elements of each finding and supporting details.
5. Audit team develops conclusions and recommendations that add impact because they link directly to the "effect" and "cause" for each finding.
6. The report is proof read and reviewed for accuracy and objectivity.
7. The reviewer comments on the draft report.

Step 1. Audit team meets toward the end of fieldwork to develop the preliminary findings and determine what additional fieldwork is needed.

- Is there sufficient and appropriate evidence to support each finding?
- Do the findings link directly to and fully answer the audit objectives?
- Has each element of the finding been developed?
- Is there a compelling message?

Step 2. Upon completion of fieldwork, audit team members prepare for a report planning conference by individually developing preliminary findings.

Think about your potential findings:

- What main points surface?
- What caption could you use to explain each main point? Does the caption set the desired tone and accurately summarize the point?
- Would your message be clear to a "lay" reader?

Step 3. Audit team holds a report planning conference to consider preliminary findings and finalize findings.

- Finalize the findings.
- Synthesize the main points of each finding into a coherent report message.
- In what order should the findings be presented?
- Develop an executive summary that incorporates the main points of each finding.

Step 4. Audit team drafts the report based on the elements of each finding and supporting details.



- Don't start drafting the report until steps 1 through 3 are complete.
- Identify each point in the executive summary to determine the report sections that need to be drafted.
- Outline a section and subsections for each point in the synopsis paragraph.
- Draft a lead paragraph for each section and a topic sentence for each subsection.

Step 5. Audit team develops conclusions and recommendations that add impact because they link directly to the "effect" and "cause" for each finding.

- For high-impact reports, highlight the significant "effects" (so what?) and "causes" (why?) in the conclusions and recommendations
- Recommendations are linked directly to conclusions and "cause"
- Conclusions and recommendations should be predictable based on the information presented in the report sections and subsections that precede them
- No surprises!

Step 6. The report is proof read and reviewed for accuracy and objectivity.

Proofread

- as a "cold" reader,
- on an ongoing basis, and
- prior to submitting draft for supervisory review

Step 7. The reviewer comments on the draft report.

- Reviewers:
 - are our friends. They add significant value.
 - read the draft report as other cold readers would.
 - are an important source of quality control.
- Quality control and review of report drafts are required by the "Yellow Book".
- Peer reviewers may consider reviewer comments and auditor responses to them.

Thank you!

For future training and consulting needs, contact:

**Carole Buncher and Associates:
The Competency Company**

Phone: (202) 363-6645
E-mail: carole@carolebuncher.com
Website: Carolebuncher.com



© 2008 Carole Buncher and Associates

13

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Carole Buncher and Associates website. The header includes the company name and logo. A navigation menu on the left lists: Learning Workshops, Audit Training Workshops, Consulting Services, Home Page, Client Site & Participant Comments, and Contact Us. The main content area features a group photo of staff, a 'Who Are We?' section with a text box, and a list of services: Supervision and Leadership, Post-Examination Management, Communication Skills, Data Collection and Analysis, and Auditing Skills. A sidebar on the left contains a section titled 'Exciting News!' with a sub-heading 'Carole Buncher has been selected to receive the Faculty Excellence award from the Chronicle'. On the right side, the phone number (202) 363-6645 is displayed. At the bottom of the screenshot, the website URL www.carolebuncher.com and email address Carole@carolebuncher.com are provided.
