



From assurance to advisory

A before-and-after guide
to make your internal
audits more strategic



Internal auditors have a great opportunity to add more value to their organizations by shifting their approach from assurance to advisory.

Organizations often approach internal audit with a transactional, assurance mindset centered around checking predetermined boxes – no matter their unique needs or goals.

Shifting to an advisory approach can help internal auditors demonstrate more value by shaping their risk assessments, audits, and reporting to the needs and strategic goals of the organization and position themselves as indispensable business advocates to the organizations they support.

Following are three before-and-after comparisons of common internal audit tasks to help illuminate how shifting from assurance to advisory can improve the internal audit process.



1

Risk assessment

Before | Assurance

Questions are generic and predetermined.

Strategy is only focused on risk assessment.

Data collection is generic and doesn't offer strategic insights.

Technology approach is stagnant and outdated.



After | Advisory

Questions start with relationship-building, active listening, and understanding the audit area's goals and needs.

Strategy involves aligning the risk assessment to also include the organization's strategic objectives.

Data collection is specific to the audit area and the organization's strategic objectives.

Technology approach is open-minded, with a willingness to explore new technological capabilities and incorporate them into the risk assessment.

This approach can include:

- Budgeting to determine how much to allocate to assurance versus advisory activities
- Flexibility of the internal audit plan so that organizations can respond to change with agility



2

The audit

Before | Assurance

The scope for each audit is generic and used year after year – no matter the organization’s unique needs and goals.

Testing is transactional and nothing more.

Process and control design is only explored at the time of the audit.

Data is collected using sample selections.

Testing is done manually with outdated technology and processes.



After | Advisory

The scope for each audit is customized to the organization’s unique needs and goals. The approach is personalized and intentional.

Testing and audit recommendations are tied back into the organization’s strategic plans.

Design is explored before the audit begins. Relationships are built ahead of time with open communication and flexible problem-solving in mind.

Data analytics and real-time dashboards are used to test whole populations instead of relying on sample selections.

Testing is done using up-to-date automation technology.

- Software can read repetitive, unstructured text documents.
- Bots can be built to complete repetitive testing attributes.

3

Report writing

Before | Assurance

Reports only capture negative findings.

Reports don’t mention the audit area’s strengths.



After | Advisory

Reports capture findings and recommendations that support the organization’s strategic objectives.

Reports connect the overall results to how well each audit area aligns with the organization’s strategic objectives. Reporting is specific and in alignment with the organization’s goals.



Need more help shifting from assurance to advisory?

Crowe can provide additional support as you continue to transform into the internal auditor of the future.

Explore the future of internal audit.

Reach out to Mike and let Crowe be your guide.



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