

# How Audit Moved the Big Cheese!

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I had lunch recently with a friend, who manages Contingency Planning (CP) for a company. After normal jibber jabber when people get together, we turned to what was pressing at work for him. After all the years he had been working on CP, his program was written up by Audit. It wasn't that he was not doing his job. Programs were in place, requirements communicated, and so on. Like most in his position, he could not get "Bigger Cheeses" in the organization to actively support his program, nor department Cheese Heads to write, test and update their CP plans.

Audit discovered this failure, and wrote up a "Does Not Meet" finding. You could hear those simple words reverberate through the organization. So much so, that it reached the Big Cheese. "We will be in compliance!" he exclaimed. Of course all the "Little Cheeses" beneath the "Big Cheese" started scurrying around pointing fingers and looking for tails to kick. It's not that the mice in the organization had ignored the requirement. They simply did not have the time and figured someone else was complying. It just never seemed important to anyone to know what to do if the "Rats" came over the wall. "After all, fires, gas leaks, power outages, hurricanes, shooters, terrorists, down systems, would never happen here?" they thought.

The Senior Cheeses and Executive Cheeses decided to call a meeting. "This will get to the bottom of the finding," they said. It would also give them something to do to show their lofty titles were of some meaning and importance.

Sitting around the large conference table, the Cheeses debated on what to do. Finally, someone suggested that the CP Cheese, should be brought in to answer to the charges. "What a great idea" they agreed as they excitedly came to a consensus. We "We have someone we can point the finger at for the Big Cheeses ire!" they thought. "What Little Cheese handles that for us?" a Senior. Cheese said.

So the Steering Committee of Cheeses (SCC) called in the witness - the CP Cheese. "So how do you explain this Audit finding?" they asked. Looking at his leaders in amazement at the question - the CP Cheese was lost for words. "It's not that we are out of compliance," he said. The programs and tools are in place,

communications has been established, but the Senior and Executive Cheeses have not supported the program" he exclaimed.

"Why not?" said one of the Cheeses. "Big Cheese are not showing their leadership around this issue!" exclaimed the CP Cheese. "They understand the importance of a good CP program, but have not supported the process."

The SCC faces immediately reflected horror, and were astounded by what they were hearing. "You need to be careful on what you are saying Little Cheese. We take great pride in doing the right thing, and we would not be in our positions if we had not shown the agility and ability to do exactly just that. So, I and the SCC will over look your indiscretion and ask again: How do you explain this Audit finding?"

The CP Cheese leaned forward in his chair. Could it be that he had the courage to tell it like it was? He proceeded to say, "your plates are so full that you failed to see this one important morsel. You could have delegated to a little cheese, but you even failed to do that. Why? Because you don't value CP as much as you do other things on your plates. I don't begrudge you for that, but the Auditors do. The best way to keep Audit happy is to write your plans, test your plans, and update your plans annually or as needed. If you don't keep the Auditors happy, we all just might find our cheese moved, and then what do we do?"

The end of the story is obvious. The SCC sent the Big Cheese a report and a message for her to approve. It was sent to all the responsible department Cheese Heads with the mandate that they would be in compliance.

Moral of the story: If the Big Cheese wants something done, it will get done. So, rather than waiting for Audit to become your friend, provide your Big Cheese with a message that you can send (from her) to all responsible little cheeses to ensure compliance. Remember, what gets measured gets done! When there is a will, there is a way!

Author's note: Audit is your friend. Embrace them. Bring them into your confidence so that there are no rude awakenings. If you can't move mountains, imagine how fast Audit can! The same principle works with Information Security Awareness Training too.