

Questions To Consider When Vetting Prospective Peer Reviewers

Is The Reviewer A Peer?

Think about asking the following questions to help determine if a potential peer reviewer is truly a peer:

- How does the reviewer's firm size compare in terms of billings and number of personnel?
- What size are the reviewer's firm's clients?
- What size are the firms that the reviewer provides services for?
- Does the reviewer (or the reviewer's firm) specialize in the same industries and have at least the same depth of knowledge as our own firm in those areas?
- If my firm is a member of a quality center, is the reviewer's firm also a member?
- Does the reviewer perform similar kinds of other engagements?
- How many industry specific audits does the reviewer perform in the firm?
- How would the reviewer describe the "Tone at the Top" in the firm?

What About Timing and Cost?

Consider the following questions for prospective reviewers regarding timing and cost:

- What is the reviewer's availability during the time my review needs to be performed?
- What are the reviewer's procedures regarding planning, field work and communications before, during and after the review?
- How does the reviewer charge for his or her services?

How Do I Evaluate Competency?

Some questions your firm may want to ask in evaluating technical qualifications are:

- How many reviews has the reviewer performed?
- Has the reviewer ever served on a Peer Review Committee or been a RAB member?
- Has the reviewer ever attended the annual Peer Review Conference? If so, what was the last year attended?
- Has the reviewer ever been oversighted? If so, what were the results?
- Is the reviewer a member of the GAQC (Governmental Audit Quality Center), the EBPAQC (Employee Benefit Audit Quality Center), the PCPS (Private Companies Practice Section), or the CPEA (Center for Plain English Accounting)?
- Were there any findings noted in the reviewer's peer review?
- Has the reviewer been subject to corrective actions or restrictions due to reviewer performance issues?
- Have there been any communications of suspension from scheduling or performing reviews?
- Is the reviewer involved in any open investigations?

Should I Ask For References?

In contacting references provided by prospective reviewers, consider the following:

- Whether the reviewed firm is more confident about their practices and procedures as a result of previous peer reviews performed by the reviewer
- The thoroughness of the review
- Whether they would recommend the reviewer and why
- The nature and extent of any communications between the firm and the reviewer
- What the firm liked the most and least about the reviewer and how the process was conducted

When Interviewing Reviewers, What Should I Consider?

When you are speaking with prospective reviewers, things to consider include:

- Is this a person who will perform a quality review?
- Is this an individual who cares about the firm and the profession?
- How much experience does the reviewer have and is it the right type of experience?
- Are the reviewer's communication skills acceptable?
- Is this an individual with whom the firm can establish a rapport?