LEARNING

STRATEGY | INNOVATION | COLLABORATION

Audit Skills Training Solutions

In-Person & Online Learning

mralearning.com

Welcome

For auditors to perform at their best, they need more than knowledge and a collection of checklists and work programs. Auditors need to be able to solve problems and analyze information to make sound judgments. They need to build relationships with clients that deepen over time. And they need to manage and lead others, and to contribute to teams that complete projects on time and on budget.

MRA Learning specializes in skills development. We know that to develop skills like problem-solving, communication and critical thinking requires more than one-off lectures and a few PowerPoint slides. Skills development requires practice and the chance to fail and be coached in a safe environment.

We created our skills development curriculum for firms that see the need for upskilling staff but are frustrated by traditional training classes.

Case studies, real life scenarios and role-plays are at the center of our learning experiences. Our facilitation model relies on firm managers to act as classroom coaches who mentor learners through difficult workplace challenges.

Training alone can't solve every issue, but our courses have a proven track record of success in:

- Accelerating the development of critical skills.
- Building relationships among staff and between the staff and managers.
- Contributing to a culture of learning.

We hope you find what we offer compelling. We look forward to answering your questions and exploring ways we can add value to your learning programs.

Mike Ramos

What Our Clients Say

"This training program was unlike any other staff training I have attended or conducted. It was a hands-on experience offering real world circumstances that was much more meaningful and memorable than the conventional lecture CPA firms typically provide.

"I really enjoyed watching the participants grasp on to the concepts we were discussing. By the end of the week, I could tell they took something away from the training that will help them going forward in their careers.

"If we do more training like this, we can change the culture of our firm.

AUDIT SKILLS CURRICULUM

We are pleased to announce our 2021 audit skills development training programs.

At MRA Learning we focus on the development of skills that are most critical for auditor success. We teach these skills in the context of real life audit tasks in high impact areas such as risk assessment and internal control. All of our courses are activity-based, designed to improve learning outcomes and on the job performance. We offer our courses in both live seminar and an innovative distance learning format. The courses focus on one or more of the following skills and technical audit areas:

SKILLS

- Critical Thinking
- Problem Solving
- Communications
- Project Management

AUDIT AREAS

- Risk Assessment
- Internal Control
- Audit Evidence
- Analytical Procedures

Throughout the catalog you can hover over an icon to see what level, skill or audit area is represented.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS COURSES (1 DAY)

	Level
Essential Skills for Audit Staff	Staff
Essential Skills for Audit Seniors	Seniors
Essential Skills for Audit Managers	Managers

ELECTIVE COURSES (1 – 2 DAYS)

	Level	Skills	Audit Areas
Introduction to Data Analytics			
Earth First Building Supply – An Audit Simulation			
Project Management for Audit Seniors			
Developing Staff			
Advisory Skills for Auditors			

STAND ALONE MODULES (2 HRS)

	Level	Skills	Audit Areas
Think Like a Data Scientist			
What Now? How to Set Priorities			
You Can't Step in the Same River Twice			
Sez you!			
Remote Supervision and Team Management			
Managing Upwards			
Delegation and Supervision for Managers			
Constructively Challenging Others			
Becoming a Business Advisor			
Choose the Least Worst Option			

CASE STUDIES AND WORKSHOPS (3 – 4 HRS)

	Level	Skills	Audit Areas
Flatiron Solar – Walkthroughs			
Personal Productivity Workshop			
Know What You Want, Get What You Need			
Flatiron Solar – Identify and Assess Risk			
Carl the Controller			
River Valley Bank			
Is Titcomb Ready for Data Analytics?			
The Coaching Game			
The Manager's Challenge			
Risk Assessment is a Team Sport			

AUDIT STAFF COURSES

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

This content is designed for early career staff auditors. Critical success factors for this group of learners include a sound understanding of the risk assessment model combined with critical thinking skills that enable them to:

- Appropriately use prior year work papers only as a guide and not a definitive work product to be duplicated.
- Develop new audit tests when needed to respond to assessed risks.
- Evaluate responses from clients and determine the additional evidence needed for corroboration.
- Understand the implications of audit results and how these impact other audit areas.
- Maintain a high level of personal productivity and don't "spin wheels."
- Identify and communicate problems/issues like accounting, auditing and project management.

Essential Skills for Staff

Level:

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Engage in meaningful dialogue with clients, which includes asking follow-up questions and collecting necessary audit evidence without repeatedly returning to the client.
- Ask for further guidance when required and avoid spinning their wheels.
- Perform audit procedures with intention and a confidence borne of a thorough grasp of the purpose of their procedure and how their work relates to other areas of the audit.
- Maintain a high level of personal productivity.

COURSE AGENDA

This course qualifies for **eight hours** of CPE credit and includes the following modules:

Every Procedure Has a Purpose

A practical application of the risk assessment process. Participants learn how audit procedures link to the risk of "What can go wrong?"

Audit Areas:

Know What You Want, Get What You Need

Two-part communications workshop that requires participants to plan for and conduct client inquiries and obtain supporting evidence when necessary.

Audit Areas:

Stop Spinning Your Wheels

General personal productivity tips presented in the context of common audit situations. How to overcome a reluctance to ask for help.

Case Study: Flatiron Solar

Participants must plan for a client discussion to resolve what seems to be a relatively straightforward issue. Unexpected complications arise, which require them to ask for help to determine what additional audit evidence is necessary and how to test it.

Audit Areas:

AUDIT AREAS KEY

Risk Assessment | Internal Control | Audit Evidence | Analytical Procedures

Other Learning Content for Staff

Level:

INDIVIDUAL MODULES

In addition to fully integrated courses and learning activities, we also offer the following stand-alone learning content.

Think Like a Data Scientist

An introduction to data analytics and how to work with in-house specialists to design and perform audit tests.

Audit Areas:

Length: 2 hours

What Now? How to Set Priorities

Practical application of the urgency/importance matrix (the Eisenhower Matrix) and how to effectively communicate priorities to others.

Audit Areas:

Length: 1.5 hours

You Can't Step in the Same River Twice

Asking clients "Has anything changed since last year?" is a common feature of SALY audits. This module helps staff improve their ability to detect changes at the client that impact risk assessment and test work design.

Audit Areas:

Length: 2 hours

Managing Upward

Practical tips and practice sessions for working with direct supervisors to clarify expectations, communicate unexpected issues and obtain needed support.

Audit Areas:

Length: 2 hours

CASE STUDIES AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

These learning activities vary in length and complexity. They are designed to work with training material already included in your curriculum or to match with one of our modules.

The Secrets of Better Walkthroughs

Practical tips, learning activities and a role-play to help staff prepare for, conduct and assess the results of internal control walkthroughs.

Audit Areas:

Length: 3 hours

Know What You Want, Get What You Need

Two-part communication workshop that requires participants to plan for and conduct client inquiries, and obtain supporting evidence when necessary.

Audit Areas:

Length: 4 hours

Personal Productivity Workshop

Participant teams become experts on a personal productivity technique. They teach the technique to the rest of the class through role-play skits and other instructional techniques.

Length: 2 hours

AUDIT AREAS KEY

Risk Assessment | Internal Control | Audit Evidence | Analytical Procedures

AUDIT SENIOR COURSES

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Audit Seniors lead the day-to-day operations of fieldwork and take responsibility for the on-time, on-budget completion of the audit. Critical success factors for this group of learners include the ability to:

- Thoughtfully apply auditing strategies and techniques for this year's audit and not simply repeat last year's audit.
- Work both independently and closely with the Manager and the sometimes engagement Partner to identify and resolve technical issues and engagement management issues.
- Understand that the audit extends beyond fieldwork, and they are responsible for seeing the audit through to the finish line.
- Assume simultaneous responsibilities on multiple engagements.
- Develop effective working relationships with clients.

Essential Skills for Seniors

Level:

LEARNING OUTCOMES

To be successful as audit Seniors, these professionals must be able to:

- Direct the day-to-day operations of the engagement and complete the job on time and on budget through the successful:
  - Juggling of multiple responsibilities.
  - Delegation and supervision of staff.
- When presented with unexpected problems, analyze information to diagnose root causes, develop multiple solutions and propose a path forward.
- Plan the audit and conduct interim fieldwork in a way that identifies:
  - Potential audit risks early in the audit process.
  - Roadblocks that may prevent the timely completion of fieldwork.

COURSE AGENDA

This course qualifies for **eight hours** of CPE credit and includes the following modules and case study:

You're in Charge

The module on project management begins with a demonstration of how project management impacts realization. The remainder of the module presents basic principles of project management within an audit case study.

Effective Delegation

Participants learn how to assess task requirements and the ability and willingness of staff to define the most effective delegation and supervision strategy.

SALY Isn't Welcome Anymore

Learn to identify changes at the client and the industry. Evaluate those changes and link them to risk assessment and the design of further audit procedures.

Audit Areas:

Case Study: River Valley Bank

Unexpected audit and accounting issues, a client management problem and a staff accountant gone rogue — can the Senior keep the job from going off the rails?

Audit Areas:

Earth First Building Supply: An Audit Simulation

Level: Skills: Audit Areas:

This is a 16-hour, fully immersive, role-based simulation of an audit that is unlike any other audit training seminar these participants have attended. From the moment they enter the classroom, they will enter a role as the Senior on Earth First Building Supplies with a single goal to prepare and deliver an audit plan to the engagement Partner.

To accomplish their mission, they'll have to sort through dozens of information sources, interview the client, and communicate critical developments with the engagement Partner and Manager. They'll have to juggle multiple engagements and delegate tasks to a staff they've never met.

A team of firm managers assume roles, coach, and guide the participants through the experience. In the process, these managers improve their skills and build mentoring relationships with the staff that carry beyond the classroom.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Gather information needed for planning decisions:
  - Perform risk assessment procedures
  - Allow for scheduling and staffing considerations
  - Anticipate project management issues
- Prepare and deliver presentations.
- Use a disclosure checklist to prepare financial statements.
- Plan and perform audit procedures for high-risk audit areas.
- Juggle multiple responsibilities and engagements.
- Supervise staff members.
- Communicate status to internal and client personnel.

COURSE AGENDA

Partner Briefing

The Earth First engagement Partner describes a high-stakes mission to prepare an audit plan for Earth First.

Earth First and the Building Supply Industry

Participants review an assortment of documents to better understand the client and its industry. Initial meetings with various personnel are planned and conducted.

Audit Areas:

What Can Go Wrong?

Having completed their initial risk assessment procedures, they begin to articulate, "What can go wrong?" They are unexpectedly asked to help wrap up another job and must work directly with another Partner to complete it.

Audit Areas:

Internal Controls

The client informs the engagement Partner that they expect the audit to include a closer look at information systems and data quality. The Partner informs the team. Another staff member is brought on to conduct control walkthroughs, and the Senior must decide how to manage this new arrangement.

Audit Areas:

Plan for High-Risk Areas

Additional risk assessment procedures produce unexpected results, and the team must determine how this new information impacts audit risk and the strategy for high-risk areas.

Audit Areas:

Prepare and Deliver Presentation

The teams prepare their audit plan and deliver it to a panel of the firm's actual audit Partners.

Project Management for Audit Seniors

Level: Skills: Audit Areas:

This course begins by asking participants to describe their project management frustrations, which paves the way to exploring practical solutions that they support and are more likely to deploy.

The course provides practical guidance for the blocking and tackling of project management on their jobs. We introduce the participants to a proven approach to successful project management that touches on five interrelated elements: scope, quality, effort, risk and time.

Learning activities allow the participants to practice project management techniques under circumstances they are likely to encounter on their engagements.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Identify project management assumptions during planning and anticipate scope creep.
- Identify and assess project management risks and develop a mitigation plan.
- Develop a preliminary work plan, identify its critical path, and address variances before the audit gets too far over budget.
- Quickly identify and evaluate unexpected project management issues and work quickly to resolve them.
- Create a realistic budget and use it to effectively manage the project.
- Effectively communicate project management matters to key stakeholders.

COURSE AGENDA

Overview of the Senior's Project Management Responsibilities

The participants explore the financial implications of project management and discuss real world challenges that result in jobs running over budget.

Introduction to SQUERT, a Project Management Model

Participants are introduced to an audit-specific, dynamic model for managing their audits to a successful conclusion.

Clarifying Expectations and Managing Scope Creep

Good project management starts with an understanding of who is responsible for what. Scope creep must be identified and managed because it can blur lines of responsibility and create confusion.

Planning for and Managing Project Management Risks

Auditors are accustomed to identifying and assessing audit risk. This module takes that same principle and applies it to the risk of "What can go wrong?" in trying to complete the audit on time and under budget.

Managing the Schedule and Budget

Participants learn to get into the habit of asking, "How does this change from our original audit plan affect my ability to meet the agreed-upon schedule and budget?"

Case Study: River Valley Bank

Unexpected audit and accounting issues, a client management problem and a staff accountant gone rogue — can the Senior keep the job from going off the rails?

Audit Areas:

AUDIT AREAS KEY

Risk Assessment | Internal Control | Audit Evidence | Analytical Procedures

Introduction to Data Analytics

Level: Skills: Audit Areas:

This introduction to data analytics forces auditors out of the "What did they do last year?" mentality and teaches them to ask, "What does the data tell me?" This is a hands-on learning experience in which the participants use basic analytical tools to form a better understanding of a company and audit risk.

During this course, the participants learn to apply a structured approach to evidence-based decisions, beginning with a clearly defined audit objective and how to translate that objective into a data analysis question. They will learn a small number of useful data analysis techniques that can help with risk assessment, audit planning and the design of audit procedures. Finally, they will use data analytics tools to apply these techniques to the case study data set and analyze the results.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Apply the definition of data analytics to the audit engagement tasks you currently face, including engagement management.
- Follow the analytics life cycle approach to address audit issues, including:
  - Defining audit planning objectives and creating an audit question to be solved through analysis.
- Leveraging a basic understanding of the client and its industry to create a testable hypothesis.
- Modeling a data analysis solution to test the hypothesis using a small selection of data mining techniques.
- Analyzing the results and use the analysis to plan appropriate subsequent actions.

COURSE AGENDA

Note: This case study and data set are software agnostic and can be easily adapted to use the analysis tools used by your firm.

What Is Data Analytics and What Can It Do for Me?

We define data analytics as a tool that helps one make better-informed decisions. We provide them with an overview of the data analytics lifecycle, a structured process that will allow them to deploy data analytics more effectively and efficiently.

Flatiron Solar

The participants gather anecdotal information about their case study client, Flatiron Solar. They review a preliminary analytical review of the company that is typical of what most audit teams produce.

Build Better Habits

The class returns to the original planning analytics for Flatiron and compares it to what they discovered by applying the data analytics lifecycle. In this way they discover the value in performing a rigorous analysis of financial data during audit planning.

Frame the Problem and Form a Hypothesis

Using the Flatiron case study, the participants apply the first two steps in the data analytics lifecycle.

Audit Areas:

Data Analytics Techniques and Modeling

We introduce plain English versions of the core principles of data analytics such as classification, prediction, association, data and dimension reduction, data exploration, and our favorite, the bell-shaped curve.

Data Analytics Workshop

Using the firm's data analysis tools, participants examine two years of sales transactions at Flatiron Solar and analyze the results.

Take Action

Based on the results of their analysis, the teams redesign their audit approach at Flatiron Solar to address the newly discovered and revised audit risks.

Audit Areas:

Other Learning Content for Seniors

Level:

INDIVIDUAL MODULES

In addition to fully integrated courses and learning activities, we also offer the following stand-alone learning content.

Think Like a Data Scientist

An introduction to data analytics and how to work with in-house specialists to design and perform audit tests.

Audit Areas: Length: 2 hours

What Now? How to Set Priorities

Practical application of the urgency/importance matrix (the Eisenhower Matrix) and how to effectively communicate priorities to others.

Audit Areas: Length: 1.5 hours

Remote Supervision and Team Management (Webinar)

Audio and video re-enactments illustrate common challenges and best practices for supervising individuals and managing teams remotely.

Audit Areas: Length: 2 hours

Managing Upward

Practical tips and practice sessions for working with direct supervisors to clarify expectations, communicate unexpected issues and obtain needed support.

Audit Areas: Length: 2 hours

CASE STUDIES AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

These learning activities vary in length and complexity. They are designed to work with training material already included in your curriculum or to match with one of our modules.

Flatiron Solar – Identify and Assess Risk

The Senior at Flatiron Solar has conflicting information about what has a changed at the client since the prior year. How will she makes sense of it all to determine "What can go wrong?" with revenue and design an appropriate audit response?

Audit Areas: Length: 2 hours

The Secrets of Better Walkthroughs

Practical tips, learning activities and a role-play to help staff prepare for, conduct and assess the results of internal control walkthroughs.

Audit Areas: Length: 3 hours

Carl the Controller

The Senior at Lowry Financial is determined to perform preliminary analytics and finish audit planning. He needs to talk to Carl the Controller, but he keeps brushing her off because interim financial statements are not available. How can the Senior have a meaningful discussion with Carl that moves the ball forward on risk assessment in the absence of interim financials?

Audit Areas: Length: 3 hours

Case Study: River Valley Bank

Unexpected audit and accounting issues, a client management problem and a staff accountant gone rogue — can the Senior keep the job from going off the rails?

Audit Areas: Length: 2 hours

AUDIT AREAS KEY Risk Assessment | Internal Control | Audit Evidence | Analytical Procedures

AUDIT MANAGER COURSES

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

New audit Managers or those about to become Managers. Critical success factors for this group of learners include:

- Superior technical skills that, when combined with critical thinking and problem-solving, enable them to identify and resolve a wide range of technical audit and accounting issues.
- Deepening client relationships based on trust and an understanding of the client's business.
- Guidance and coaching for staff to develop skills and advance their careers.
- Profitable management of a portfolio of engagements and client relationships.

Essential Skills for Experienced Seniors and Managers

Level:

Making the transition to Manager will challenge the best auditors. Managers are not only responsible for one audit, they're also responsible for multiple audits all at once. It's not enough to be a good auditor; Managers also are expected to build advisory relationships with clients, manage teams and hold them accountable without the benefit of working with them on a daily basis.

This course will help prepare you for a leadership role by addressing the most challenging aspects of the job. This is a case study-driven learning experience that will require you to apply the skills you have while pushing you to develop the new ones you'll need.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Develop a plan to build a trusted advisor relationship with clients by improving credibility and reliability, establishing business intimacy, and consistently messaging that client needs are at the forefront of service delivery.
- Establish clear expectations, provide feedback and take other steps necessary to lay the groundwork for accountability.
- Apply best practices for setting priorities and making tradeoffs when multiple responsibilities surface simultaneously.

COURSE AGENDA

Building Growth Relationships

With their expanded responsibilities for business development, Managers must develop client relationships that go beyond being friendly and easy to work with and start to build a deeper trust that leads to profitable business relationships.

Holding Others Accountable

When the work product they receive is not up to par, new Managers often have difficulty holding the responsible party accountable and instead find other ways to get what they need. This module provides a process for holding others accountable that begins with setting clear performance expectations.

Setting Priorities and Making Tradeoffs

Managing multiple priorities in a world where time and resources are limited can be difficult if not impossible. In this module we provide the participants with tools that will help them learn to make difficult decisions.

The Manager's Challenge

In this case study, the Manager has three different jobs and a business development opportunity happening simultaneously, each with its own unique challenges. How can they strike the right balance repairing a client relationship, keeping the Partner happy, supervising the staff, meeting their own chargeability goals and the timely review of an audit in the field?

Developing Staff

Level: Skills: Audit Areas:

Managers are expected to develop the competencies of those who work for them. Up until this point, most of their interactions with subordinates have consisted of providing guidance on how to complete specific technical tasks, reviewing the completion of those tasks and recommending corrective action when necessary.

Developing broad based competencies is very different and requires a different skill set. Most Manager training courses address the interpersonal skills required to be an effective Manager. This course is intended to supplement those courses with the skills necessary to chart a uniquely tailored professional development path for staff members and then coach them to success.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Through inquiry and active listening, obtain information relevant to assess a staff member's skills development needs.
- Help staff obtain greater clarity about their professional development goals.
- Assess the needs of an individual staff member and create a professional development plan tailored to those unique needs and the goals of the staff member.
- Apply foundational coaching techniques to help others improve their skills.

COURSE AGENDA

Building a Coaching Relationship

Auditor-specific practical guidance on coaching staff. Includes role-play practice session.

Helping Others Navigate Challenges

Rather than provide solutions, effective mentors help their staff gain clarity about the challenge they face and steer them to a productive resolution.

Creating a Professional Development Plan

Managers play a critical role in helping their staff establish goals and create a dynamic plan for achieving them. Formal and informal learning plays a key role in the professional development plan and reinforces a culture of learning within the firm.

Grayson's Professional Odyssey

Grayson was a charismatic staff auditor with middling technical skills. A bad performance review from a prickly Partner shattered his confidence and drove him to nearly leave the firm. How did Amy counsel and develop him to be the top Manager in his class?

AUDIT AREAS KEY Risk Assessment | Internal Control | Audit Evidence | Analytical Procedures

Advisory Skills for Auditors

Level: Skills:

Big data, globalization, rapid changes in technology and regulation are quickly changing businesses of all sizes across all industries. The global pandemic amplified this need for change.

Accounting firms have always been uniquely qualified to help their clients navigate change, and firms are now rapidly developing new service offerings to meet this shifting business environment.

Auditors have obtained a deep understanding of their clients' strategies, operations and information. Tax preparers have intimate access to a business owner's personal financial situation and family needs. The nature of audit tax preparation engagements fosters a client relationship based on candor and trust. For these reasons, the audit or tax can serve as a bridge between client and other firm service lines.

This is not a course about cross-selling. It's a course that helps senior staff and Managers better identify, understand and articulate client needs. The engaged participation in this course will enable the audit and tax professional to serve as the "tip of the spear" in the firm's business development initiatives.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Apply an understanding of the client's business strategies and problem-solving process to lay the groundwork for a business partnering relationship.
- Differentiate between three different types of advice and determine which would be most valuable in a given set of circumstances.
- Use effective techniques for clarifying the root causes of problems.
- Develop foundational skills for effective business advisors, including:
  - Forming and asking probing questions that drive clarity.
  - Using active listening skills to derive meaning.
  - Applying critical thinking and problem-definition skills to develop and present actionable advice that allows the client to make supportable business decisions.

COURSE AGENDA

Problem Solving and the Role of the Business Advisor

Advice is valuable when it helps clients solve a problem or realize an ambition. Participants observe a high-level decision-maker receive and evaluate advice and learn how to strategically insert themselves into a client's problem-solving process.

What You Bring to the Table

Participants build a personalized inventory of expertise, experiences and relationships they can bring to the table to help clients.

Driving Clarity

With their outsider perspective, consultants have the ability to identify their client's problem-solving blind spots and guide them to clarity.

Evaluating Data and Assumptions

Auditors are uniquely positioned to offer advice about the quality of their client's data quality and the systems that generate it.

Presenting Actionable Advice

Participants learn and practice how to present advice that makes a difference.

Introduction to Data Analytics

Level: Skills: Audit Areas:

This introduction to data analytics forces auditors out of the "What did they do last year?" mentality and teaches them to ask, "What does the data tell me?" This is a hands-on learning experience in which the participants use basic analytical tools to form a better understanding of a company and audit risk.

During this course, the participants learn to apply a structured approach to evidence-based decisions, beginning with a clearly defined audit objective and how to translate that objective into a data analysis question. They will learn a small number of useful data analysis techniques that can help with risk assessment, audit planning and the design of audit procedures. Finally, they will use data analytics tools to apply these techniques to the case study data set and analyze the results.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Apply the definition of data analytics to the audit engagement tasks you currently face, including engagement management.
- Follow the analytics life cycle approach to address audit issues, including:
  - Defining audit planning objectives and creating an audit question to be solved through analysis.
- Leveraging a basic understanding of the client and its industry to create a testable hypothesis.
- Modeling a data analysis solution to test the hypothesis using a small selection of data mining techniques.
- Analyzing the results and use the analysis to plan appropriate subsequent actions.

COURSE AGENDA

Note: This case study and data set are software agnostic and can be easily adapted to use the analysis tools used by your firm.

What Is Data Analytics and What Can It Do for Me?

We define data analytics as a tool that helps one make better-informed decisions. We provide them with an overview of the data analytics lifecycle, a structured process that will allow them to deploy data analytics more effectively and efficiently.

Flatiron Solar

The participants gather anecdotal information about their case study client, Flatiron Solar. They review a preliminary analytical review of the company that is typical of what most audit teams produce.

Frame the Problem and Form a Hypothesis

Using the Flatiron case study, the participants apply the first two steps in the data analytics lifecycle.

Data Analytics Techniques and Modeling

We introduce plain English versions of the core principles of data analytics such as classification, prediction, association, data and dimension reduction, data exploration, and our favorite, the bell-shaped curve.

Data Analytics Workshop

Using the firm's data analysis tools, participants examine two years of sales transactions at Flatiron Solar and analyze the results.

Take Action

Based on the results of their analysis, the teams redesign their audit approach at Flatiron Solar to address the newly discovered and revised audit risks.

AUDIT AREAS KEY

Risk Assessment | Internal Control | Audit Evidence | Analytical Procedures

Other Learning Content for Experienced Seniors and Managers

Level:

INDIVIDUAL MODULES

In addition to fully integrated courses and learning activities, we also offer the following stand-alone learning content.

Remote Supervision and Team Management (Webinar)

Audio and video re-enactments illustrate common challenges and best practices for supervising individuals and managing teams remotely.

Audit Areas: Length: 2 hours

Delegation and Supervision for Managers

Length: 3 hours

New Managers must learn to manage others whose work they do not observe on a daily basis. This module provides a structured approach and builds the skills necessary for Managers to supervise their teams.

Constructively Challenge Others

Length: 2 hours

The ability to constructively challenge the thinking of others is a vital skill for advisors and consultants. This module demonstrates the value of the constructive challenge and helps managers build this skill.

Building Growth Relationships

Length: 4 hours

With their expanded responsibilities for business development, Managers must develop client relationships that go beyond being friendly and easy to work with and start to build a deeper trust that leads to profitable business relationships.

Managing Upward

Practical tips and practice sessions for working with direct supervisors to clarify expectations, communicate unexpected issues and obtain needed support.

Audit Areas: Length: 2 hours

Choosing the Least Worst Option

Length: 2 hours

Practical tips for thinking through difficult decisions by setting priorities and making strategic tradeoffs.

CASE STUDIES AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

These learning activities vary in length and complexity. They are designed to work with training material already included in your curriculum or to match with one of our modules.

The Manager's Challenge

The Manager has three different jobs and a business development opportunity happening simultaneously, each with its own unique challenges. How can she strike the right balance repairing a client relationship, keeping the Partner happy, supervising the staff, meeting their own chargeability goals and the timely review of an audit in the field?

Length: 3 hours

Is Titcomb's Ready for Data Analytics?

Titcomb's has an ambitious plan to incorporate data analytics into its business model. Can the auditors leverage their understanding of information systems and internal control to offer management insight into whether the company's data quality is sufficient for advanced analysis?

Audit Areas: Length: 4 hours

Activity: The Coaching Game

Modeled on the 1960s game show The Dating Game, Managers compete against each other to woo the affections of a Senior by presenting their approach to coaching and developing their staff.

Audit Areas: Length: 1 hour

MRAL FACILITATED DISTANCE LEARNING SOLUTION

As organizations rapidly shift to delivering training remotely, they quickly discover several challenges. Working conditions at home may not be conducive to prolonged engagement in learning due to family distractions, routine disruptions, constraints on work space, and lack of reliable or secure Internet. A lack of work structure and a growing sense of isolation can also reduce the effectiveness of at home training.

To remedy these challenges, MRA Learning has created a distance learning solution that provides flexibility for the learner and creates an intimate learning experience. MRAL builds programs around group activities and case studies that require teamwork to solve real world problems. We've de-emphasized lectures and instead your firm's managers work directly with the groups to provide guidance, monitor progress, facilitate interaction, and de-brief activities.

We offer our own distance learning content or can easily convert your firm's programs to our format and LMS.

Goals for Distance Learning

LEARNING EFFECTIVENESS

Distance learning must be just as effective as highly rated classroom seminars and prepare participants for on the job success.

CONNECT PEOPLE

Working remotely can increase isolation and erode firm culture. Training must help bring people together.

PARTICIPANT FLEXIBILITY

Working from home is very challenging. Firm work schedules are in flux. Participants must be able to do training when they are available.

TURNKEY AND AFFORDABLE

Firm cannot purchase or learn new systems or devote excessive admin time. MRAL solution must be affordable.

How It Works

MRAL uses a cloud-based Learning Management System (LMS) to connect a trained manager to facilitate the learning with the participants. The LMS is easy to access from anywhere, keeps all content and assignments organized, and is used to coordinate lessons and group meetings.

- Distribute assignments
- Facilitate feedback
- Monitor progress

- Access content, complete and submit assignments
- Receive feedback from Facilitator
- Communicate with Facilitator

Example Daily Agenda

- 2.5 hours in 1 day
- Facilitated by your firm's managers using our LMS
- Both synchronous and asynchronous
- Provide accountability through group collaboration and instructor feedback

Intro to the Day

Individual Assignments (30 mins)	Group Collaboration (1 hr)	Debrief with Instructor (1 hr)

Results

Evaluations of course participants demonstrated:

Courses were highly effective at preparing participants for new job responsibilities.

Distance learning format was perceived as equal or superior to live classroom training.

Managers were highly effective coaching their staff.

MANAGER FEEDBACK

"It was a HUGE success. We probably learned more about each other than we would have in a live environment. Our distance learning program allowed a more intimate learning experience with individualized feedback in real-time and it also allowed participants the flexibility to learn at their own pace and break up their day however worked best for them."

"This Distance Learning was a more flexible and intimate experience that allowed me as a facilitator to really get to know the participants. Over a couple of days, I really enjoyed listening to their thought process and how it changed over the week and watching them grasp on to the concepts we were discussing. By the end of the week, I could tell the participants took something away from the training that will help them going forward in their careers."

UNEXPECTED BENEFITS

"I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR MY LEARNING"

EVERYONE CONTRIBUTES

Less outgoing participants who are reluctant in a classroom had the chance to share their views and experiences.

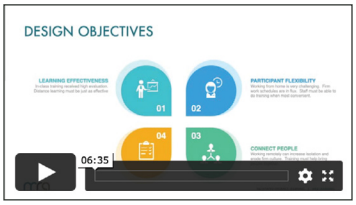
"MY VOICE MATTERS"

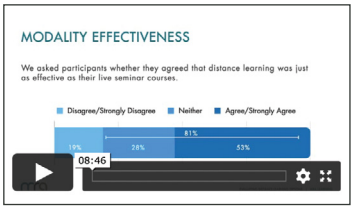
SMALL GROUPS CREATE ACCOUNTABILITY

No issues with enforcing completion of assignments. Participants held each other accountable.

Videos

More details about our distance learning is included in the following video presentations:





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do you provide instructors?

We can, but typically don't. Our usual arrangement is to license our content to firms to be taught by their own personnel after having been trained and coached by us.

We build our learning experiences around case studies, real-world problem solving and learning activities that place facilitators in the role of coach and mentor not subject matter expert. We believe firms are best served building relationships between their staff, managers and partners rather than with third parties.

Facilitating our learning experiences provides firm managers and partners the chance to build their coaching and mentoring skills.

What do we receive when we license your content?

We provide you with slides, a facilitators guide, case studies, learning activities and all other participant materials. When applicable, we provide guidelines for room set up and suggestions for incorporating firm-specific processes and practice aids into the program.

Do you offer remote learning?

Yes. Our facilitated distance learning solution is very different from the remote online programs offered by others.

In our first year of offering distance learning we trained over 200 participants and achieved excellent learning options. One of our clients nominated our solution for an ATD Excellence in Practice award. You can find a detailed description of our distance learning delivery option and results on the previous page.

Can your content be customized for our firm?

Absolutely. These courses are built to be customized.

We are a full service learning consulting and content development firm. Our custom learning courses have been nominated multiple times for the Brandon Hall award, winning twice. We have a network of instructional designers, e-learning developers and audio and video producers that enable us to work with you to create the learning experiences that are right for your firm.

Do your programs replace existing core staff training?

Not in their entirety. Your auditors need technical accounting and auditing training, which we don't provide. Our courses are meant to supplement your existing training with skills development not currently included in your curriculum or not as effective as you'd like.

Do you provide train-the-trainer?

Yes. Because our facilitation model is built on coaching and mentoring, our train-the-trainer is largely focused on improving those skills that will enhance your managers' ability to develop their staff. Our train-the-trainer course also provides in-depth step-by-step advice on how to effectively guide the participants through the learning experience.

What are your fees?

We charge an annual content licensing fee that ranges from $15–25 per person, per CPE credit hour. We also charge a fee for each facilitator's guide. For the train-the-trainer and other instances where we facilitate the course we charge a daily rate of $3200 plus expenses. If we host a facilitated distance learning experience on our LMS we charge an administrative fee of $50 per person. Customization fees vary according to the scope of the project.

Are you NASBA certified?

Yes, for both group live and internet-based. However, because the firm licenses content to be delivered in-house by its own instructors, the firm usually acts as CPE sponsor. If you would prefer us to facilitate and sponsor, then we certainly can.

What are the next steps if I want to learn more?

Send an email to Mike Ramos, mramos@mralearning.com. We'll set up a call to learn more about your needs and see if we're a good fit.

If you'd like to learn more about our firm, MRA Learning consulting services and thought leadership, please visit our website, mralearning.com.