CAE Corner
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Throughout your career, you have witnessed the evolution of the internal audit profession. What future challenges should CAE's and auditors be prepared for?

"The internal audit profession has made remarkable strides over its history, and the velocity of those strides has increased markedly in the 21st century. However, as I often caution, the biggest risk for the profession is complacency. If we become comfortable with the success we have achieved, we will likely find ourselves falling out of alignment with the ever evolving expectations of our stakeholders. As a risk-centric profession, we must be cognizant of the speed of risk and the potential for emerging risks that no one sees coming. Like meteorologists, we must use technology and our seasoned expertise to identify storms beyond the horizon. By anticipating unseen risks, we can better prepare our stakeholders, and we can be better equipped to address those risks when they are confronting us. I predicted in late 2019 that the coming decade would test our profession and the world we live in with a series of political and economic crises. The first year and a half of this decade has certainly borne out that prediction. As internal audit professionals, we must prepare ourselves for even more disruptive events in the years ahead."
Auditors rely on collaboration with various stakeholders. What approaches can be utilized to build these relationships for a more effective audit process?

"In both of my books Trusted Advisors: Key Attributes of Outstanding Internal Auditors and Agents of Change: Internal Auditors in an Era of Disruption, I emphasized how critical it is for internal auditors to build and sustain strong relationships based on trust. For, if our stakeholders do not trust our abilities or our motives, we will find successful collaboration very elusive. I have frequently written about relationship acumen. Those in our profession who have built and sustained successful relationships have typically mastered six key skills:

- Positive intent
- Diplomacy
- Prescience
- Trustworthiness
- Leadership
- Empathy
Internal Auditors often focus on technical skills such as accounting or analytics. What are other skills you look for in your internal audit staff?

A lot has been said and written about the importance for internal auditors to be seen as Trusted Advisors. In preparing my book on the subject, I surveyed chief audit executives around the world. They conveyed that the very best internal auditors share 9 common attributes:

- Ethical resilient
- Results focused
- Intellectually curious
- Open-mindedness
- Dynamic communicators
- Insightful relationships
- Inspirational leadership
- Critical thinkers
- Technical expertise

If I were building an internal audit team today, I would be looking for these traits in every person I hired. Sure, we must be proficient in the technical skills of our profession, but those 9 characteristics are the differentiators.
In your new book, Agents of Change: Internal Auditors in an Era of Disruption, you write about how internal auditors create value in their organizations. How can internal auditors better sell the services they provide?

“For almost 2 years, I have been expounding on the need for internal auditors to be more proficient in “telling your story.” Telling our story is simply another way of creating awareness among those of our stakeholders who may not appreciate the value we create, or our potential. It is not enough to deliver value and do great things in our organizations. We have an obligation to create awareness about what we achieve, and our potential to do even more. I recently published a blog titled: **Internal Auditors Can’t be Change Agents if They are ‘Secret Agents.’**
So, how does internal audit communicate its value? There is no simple answer, but as I communicated in my blog, I believe there are five strategies that every internal audit department should be embracing:

- Obsess about the value we deliver
- Communicate incessantly about the value we deliver.
- Don’t be afraid to market.
- Understand what makes our stakeholders tick.
- Seek feedback and adjust.

I recognize that telling your story may take you outside of your comfort zone. But, successful change agents never relent in pushing the boundaries of their comfort zones. As I convey in my most recent book *Agents of Change: Internal Auditors in an Era of Disruption*:

“Agents of change...are the top performers, the trusted advisors, who recognize they can promote and foster change within their organizations. Agents of change understand that change begets change, and they are comfortable articulating how they can foster change. They build a culture of change by continually pushing to innovate. And they are never satisfied with the status quo.”