Building Awareness: 
Essential for the Internal Audit Profession

Many professions enjoy an inherently universal understanding of their value. Even young children have a sense of a physician’s job and how he or she makes a difference to others, so a campaign designed to build awareness of a medical doctor’s purpose and role is not necessary. Unfortunately, this is not true for the internal audit profession. In fact, even internal auditors’ close friends and family members often misunderstand their role and the value of their profession.

For this reason, The Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) has long worked to build awareness of the internal audit profession and its value. Not only do these efforts help to dispel misperceptions of the profession, but they enhance the business community’s knowledge of the essential role internal auditing plays in strong organizational governance, internal control, and effective risk management. When management and the board of directors fully understand and appreciate the value of internal auditing, they ensure the internal audit activity is adequately sourced and effectively utilized. Likewise, as the general public becomes more aware of what internal auditors can do, the number of young people to consider it as a viable career option rises, fueling the profession with greater talent.

As an internal audit professional, you too play an important role in building awareness of the tremendous value of internal auditing and thereby elevating the profession. Whether you are actively involved in your local chapter, you’re new to the field, you’re part of an extensive audit team, or you are the sole practitioner at your organization, there’s something you can do to help build awareness of the profession.

To guide you in this effort, The IIA is pleased to provide this comprehensive toolkit, which offers a variety of creative ideas — from the simple to the elaborate — as well as tips, multi-media tools, and templates. For ease of use, the toolkit is organized into three main parts:

1. **Tools for Individuals** — explains how you, as an individual, can promote internal auditing in your personal relationships and workplace.
2. **Tools for Chapters** — describes awareness-building and advocacy activities for teams of volunteers at the chapter level.
3. **How The IIA Does It** — describes IIA Global Headquarters’ awareness-building initiatives.

The many tools and tips herein are designed to be engaging and motivating, and we hope you will use them to activate your own creativity and passion for the internal audit profession. Start today: show the world you’re proud to be an internal auditor!
Part I: Tools for Individuals

Believe it or not, there’s a lot you can do as an individual to build internal audit awareness. When you make a concerted effort to depict internal auditing accurately to people outside the profession, you can heighten others’ understanding of internal auditing and influence opinions.

From the skill and insight you exhibit in communications with your audit customers to the confidence and commitment with which you make recommendations to executive management, you are influencing the perceptions others have of internal auditing. The ways in which you demonstrate professionalism, patience, compassion, diligence, leadership, and integrity significantly contribute to your image and the trust you garner throughout your organization. When your audit customers understand the true value you can offer them and see you as part of the solution, not only will they be more open and cooperative, but they will welcome your input and suggestions.

The following is a list of ideas and resources to help you plan your awareness-building activities during International Internal Audit Awareness Month (May) and throughout the year:

1. Plan for and participate in International Internal Audit Awareness Month (May).
   - During May, customize your email signature and social media accounts with the International Internal Audit Awareness Month digital icon (depicted right) and a friendly quote:
     - “May is International Internal Audit Awareness Month. Please ask me about it!”
     - “This month is International Internal Audit Awareness Month. What can I do for YOU?”
     - “May is International Internal Audit Awareness Month. Please stop by my office for a visit!”
   - Host a workplace cake celebration.
     - Have executive management welcome attendees, make a value statement about internal auditing, and introduce the internal auditors.
     - Serve a cake inscribed with “Happy International Internal Audit Awareness Month!”
     - Decorate the room with large pictures of audit staff and quotes that describe the personality of each.
     - Invite one department head to provide a positive testimonial on how internal audit has provided valuable insights, ideas, and
recommendations for improvement.

2. Conduct a lunch-and-learn with people who work in your organization.  
   - Explain what you do and why you do it, and answer questions to clarify their perceptions.  
   - Make sure they understand what it means to hold a professional certification such as the Certified Internal Auditor (CIA), including how you work to assure and improve quality, how you conform to The IIA’s Code of Ethics and Standards, and how you engage in continued learning.  
   - Use the Your Internal Audit Team or Getting to Know Internal Auditing PowerPoint presentations to depict how your activity is structured, and explain your roles and responsibilities.

3. Display an internal audit poster in your workplace break room.

4. Change your email signature on a monthly basis, depending on what’s going on in your organization. Customize it with eye-catching quotes such as “Internal auditing adds value. Let’s talk about what I can do to help you increase effectiveness and efficiency!”

5. Encourage your audit committee members, other board members, and members of your organization’s senior management team to subscribe to Tone at the Top, a complimentary bimonthly publication that covers governance-related topics important to them. When you meet with them, give them printed copies of the publication.

6. Obtain copies of IIA brochures for executive management and audit committee members.  
   - All in a Day’s Work – Describes internal auditors’ roles and responsibilities.  
   - Adding Value Across the Board – Provides an overview of the internal auditor’s relationships with governance entities.  
   - The Audit Committee: Purpose, Process, Professionalism – Describes audit committee responsibilities and key areas of concern.

7. Help correct misperceptions about your profession by sharing Five Classic Myths About Internal Auditing with nonauditors.

8. Let your organization know when you obtain a new IIA professional certification.

9. Create an intranet or Internet web page that promotes your internal audit function and demonstrates the value of internal auditing. See sample pages below for ideas.  
   - Florida Lottery
10. Place an article in your employee newsletter or other internal publication, or author an article for a professional journal that reaches nonauditors. Provide positive information that enhances internal audit's image. Possible topics include:
   - The audit committee oversees internal auditing.
   - Management is responsible for risk management and internal control.
   - Internal audit conforms with The IIA’s Code of Ethics and Standards.
   - The chief audit executive’s reporting line supports internal audit independence.
   - Internal auditors evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of governance, risk management, and internal control processes.

11. Write an article for your local newspaper. Refer to the sample article as an example of what a business journal, guest blog, or op-ed page might publish.
Part II: Tools for Chapters

There is great strength in numbers, and your chapter can make an enormous impact on your community’s understanding of the internal audit profession. In addition to strengthening your chapter’s membership and level of involvement, building awareness within the general business community, at schools, and through media will broaden the public’s knowledge and appreciation of internal auditing. In turn, this will help enhance the profession.

The following is a list of ideas and resources to help you plan your chapter’s awareness-building activities during International Internal Audit Awareness Month (May) and throughout the year:

1. Participate in the annual celebration of International Internal Audit Awareness Month (May).
   - Establish an awareness committee to plan activities for the month of May.
   - Report awareness month activities to IIA Chapter Relations for Chapter Achievement Program (CAP) points.
   - Engage all members in activities throughout the month.
   - Obtain a special proclamation from your state governor, city mayor, head of state, or other well-known local official to increase the visibility of your IIA chapter. Such proclamations often can be obtained annually by a simple request to the designated official’s office. Click here for proclamation request guidelines and procedures. When you contact your official, it is helpful to include the suggested wording for the proclamation. A photograph of the signing adds to the publicity potential. Remember to send a copy of your proclamation to your chapter’s newsletter editor for inclusion in an upcoming edition, along with a copy to pr@theiia.org.

2. Conduct a chapter program on why awareness is important and how the chapter and individual audit teams can build awareness. For the program:
   - Have a chapter roundtable discussion about internal audit awareness target markets and the challenging gaps in awareness at members’ organizations.
   - Brainstorm how the awareness gaps might be filled.
   - Prepare and disseminate a checklist of ideas resulting from the discussion.

3. Invite special guests to a chapter meeting and conduct a stakeholders’ panel discussion.
4. Host a chief audit executive-CEO chapter breakfast featuring a panel discussion or keynote address on internal auditing’s roles, responsibilities, and relationships. Use this to encourage nonmembers’ involvement in their local IIA chapter as well as CEO buy-in.

5. Consult the Media Relations Primer for planning awareness-building activities with the media.
   - Establish one or more spokespersons to represent your chapter with the media, and make spokespersons available to the media when an internal audit-related issue appears in the news.
   - Notify the media of all newsworthy happenings.
   - Refer to the following resources for The IIA’s official position on topics such as internal auditing’s value, role, and ideal reporting line, and use these key messages in preparing chapter programs and conducting media interviews:
     - International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF)
     - Definition of Internal Auditing
     - Code of Ethics
     - International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing
     - Value Proposition
     - Global Advocacy Platform (available in English and Spanish).
     - Frequently Asked Questions
   - When in doubt, contact The IIA’s Global Headquarters Corporate Communications and Public Relations Department at pr@theiia.org.
   - Refer to the News Release Tips and Sample News Release Template before issuing a news release.

6. Use The IIA’s reader-friendly brochures about the profession for building awareness with colleges, governance groups, and other stakeholders.
   - All in a Day’s Work – Describes internal auditors’ roles and responsibilities.
   - Adding Value Across the Board – Provides an overview of the internal auditor’s relationships with governance entities.
   - The Audit Committee: Purpose, Process, Professionalism – Describes audit committee responsibilities and key areas of concern.

7. Customize the following PowerPoint presentations in your chapter’s awareness-building efforts.
   - Your Internal Audit Team – A customizable template for internal auditors to use for programs in their organizations or for posting to their intranet.
   - Getting to Know Internal Auditing – A high-level overview of internal auditing.
8. Use IIA videos for chapter programs, outside presentations, college classes, and stakeholder meetings.
   - Chairman’s Video – IIA chairman talks about the profession.
   - Internal Auditing: A Career for Today, A Career for Tomorrow (available in English, Spanish, and French) – An overview of why internal auditing is a viable career choice.
   - AuditChannel.tv – Various topics.

9. Recognize newly certified members in a special ceremony and encourage them to publicize their accomplishments through their company newsletter.

10. Honor an “Internal Audit Practitioner of the Year” and publicize the recipient’s accomplishments in the media.

11. Produce and disseminate bumper stickers: “Rest assured. Consult your internal auditor.”

12. Schedule individual luncheons with those who are not members of The IIA to discuss IIA membership benefits and offer a year’s membership for free.

13. Contact your local Junior Achievement office and invite chapter members to volunteer to help educate students (grades K-12) on business ethics.

14. Invite area businesses to an open chapter meeting featuring a corporate governance or risk management and internal control roundtable discussion.

15. Help form a new IIA chapter or strengthen a smaller existing chapter.

16. Establish a college outreach program.
   - Conduct a student research project competition, designed to help young people learn more about internal audit effectiveness and importance.
   - Invite students to participate in chapter meetings, especially those designed to support students hoping to have a career in internal auditing.
   - Sponsor student IIA memberships.
   - Participate in career days at nearby colleges.
   - Tap into The IIA’s Chapter Achievement Program (CAP), discuss ideas provided there, and earn recognition for all of your awareness-building efforts.
   - Conduct a chapter student night.
   - Sponsor a gift subscription to Internal Auditor magazine for a local college or public library.
   - Contact nearby colleges and arrange for an internal auditor to visit accounting classes to introduce and explain internal auditing. Use the
Sample Lesson Plan to lead a college class discussion on internal auditing.

17. Start or join a conversation about awareness-building on The IIA’s Discussion Forums, Twitter, or LinkedIn Group.

As always, The IIA encourages you to share your creative internal audit awareness-building ideas and accomplishments with our Corporate Communications and Public Relations Department at pr@theiia.org.

**Advocacy at the Chapter Level**

Another important way that IIA chapters can help build internal audit awareness and promote the profession is through chapter advocacy initiatives.

“Advocacy” means actively reaching out to educate and influence internal auditors’ key stakeholders to enhance the image of the internal audit profession. It involves building relationships with stakeholders to increase the business world’s understanding of internal auditing and of The IIA as a credible, objective voice for the profession.

Engaging with stakeholders at the local, national, and regional levels is vital to The IIA’s advocacy efforts. Within this context, stakeholders include:

- Elected officials.
- Regulators.
- Standard-setting bodies.
- Board of directors.
- Audit committee members.
- Executive management.
- External auditors.
- Shareholders.
- Customers.
- The business community.

The IIA’s North American Advocacy Committee helps implement advocacy-related strategies in North America and encourages chapter leaders to engage in advocacy at the chapter level by forming a chapter advocacy committee. The chapter’s advocacy committee should:

1. Specify its objectives, structure, and responsibilities.

2. Become familiar with The IIA’s advocacy materials and resources:
   - International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF)
   - Definition of Internal Auditing
   - Code of Ethics
   - International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing
   - Value Proposition
   - Global Advocacy Platform (available in English and Spanish).
   - Frequently Asked Questions
   - Online brochures, including All in a Day’s Work (describes internal auditors’ roles and responsibilities), Adding Value Across the Board (provides an
overview of the internal auditor’s relationships with governance entities), and
The Audit Committee: Purpose, Process, Professionalism (describes audit committee responsibilities and key areas of concern).

3. Identify local area elected official(s). U.S. residents can use the online congressional directory to identify their members of Congress.

4. Become familiar with the local area elected official’s website, and sign up to receive newsletters or other communications from the elected official.

5. Look for opportunities to meet with the elected official when he or she is visiting the area.

6. Schedule a visit with the elected official at his/her district office. The IIA can help chapter leaders get prepared for such a visit (contact Advocacy@theiia.org). Click here to view suggestions for meeting with elected officials in the United States.

7. Invite the elected official to attend an IIA event. Click here for tips on how to get an elected official to attend your event.
Part III: How The IIA Does It

For more than a decade, The IIA has devoted significant resources to building awareness of internal auditing’s value. From its extensive media relations program, to connecting with legislators and regulators on behalf of members, to its many outreach efforts with influential governing and standard-setting bodies, The IIA has increased the profession’s visibility and set the standard for the way internal auditing is practiced around the world.

1. To further its motto of “Progress Through Sharing” and to build internal audit awareness throughout the business community, The IIA launched AuditChannel.tv in 2011. Similar to YouTube, the site enables users to upload and view short videos that provide information on a myriad of internal audit-related topics, including fraud, governance, risk and internal control, technology, operations and performance, and finance and compliance.

2. IIA Global Headquarters works with chapters and Institutes around the world to promote International Internal Audit Awareness Month, and May is now globally recognized as the month for the business community to focus special attention on our profession.

3. The IIA’s chief spokespersons — the president and CEO and global chairman of the board — have travelled thousands of miles to represent the profession on behalf of internal audit practitioners everywhere. Because of these trips, their key messages have reached not only IIA members, but internal audit stakeholders around the world.

4. The IIA’s extensive advocacy efforts play a critical role in building awareness of the profession. These efforts include:
   - Engaging a premier U.S. government relations firm to facilitate meetings with regulators and legislators on Capitol Hill with the ultimate goal of broadening the business world’s understanding and appreciation of internal auditing and elevating the professional practice of internal auditing.
   - Collaborating with key internal audit stakeholder organizations.
   - Elevating the visibility of The IIA and internal auditing through the media.

5. For many years, The IIA has produced Tone at the Top, a complimentary bimonthly newsletter for executive management, boards of directors, and audit committees. This popular publication, which accepts no advertising, is designed to serve internal audit stakeholders.

6. The International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF) Oversight Council was formed in 2010 to ensure the rigor of The IIA’s standard-setting process. Organizations represented on the Oversight Council include IFAC, International
Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions, World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and National Association of Corporate Directors.