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Who's Hot and Who's Not?

The most desirable characteristics and
profile in the audit profession



Bachelor Thesis

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Business Administration
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ABSTRACT

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Title: Who's Hot and Who's Not? - The most desirable characteristics and profile in the audit profession

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Background: As soon-to-be auditors many questions appear with regard to the profession and what is required of us who plan to practice it. At the same time as it is apparent that among students, being an auditor is coming into vogue, the negative focus on auditors is greater than perhaps ever before and this places us before a substantial challenge. How does one live up to existing expectations and what is needed to achieve professionalism in view of harsher business environments? An auditor today needs the ability to develop successful relations with clients as well as the ability to stay updated with respect to the most recent rules and regulations, this in order to appear knowledgeable and trustworthy. Hence, the modern auditor is not only an assiduous monitor of business documents and a number-cruncher, but also an adviser who works in close contact with people. As a result of this development it is reasonable to assume that now there exist other demands on the auditor's competence and personal qualities.

Research Issue: Considering these new demands, there exists a definite incentive to study what the situation looks like today, focusing on what characteristics auditors possess, what characteristics they *should* possess, and what attributes related to the profile are more desirable. This leads us to our two research questions: "What characteristics should an auditor possess?" and "What auditor profile is desirable?"

Methodology: The research is based on primary data collected through two surveys carried out among 55 CPAs and 42 audit clients in Sweden.

Results and Conclusions: Our results show that although some characteristics are considered important by both auditors and clients (such as analytical skills and problem solving skills), the auditors have emphasized the importance of soft competencies (such as communicational skills) while clients have focused more on hard competencies (such as the ability to update professional skills). Both auditors and clients were largely indifferent to the auditor profile. We discovered that neither age nor appearance were considered to have a significant influence on trust building or perceived professionalism. Gender was in this context considered least significant, whilst title was considered most significant.

Key words: Auditors, Characteristics, Profile, Professionalism, Technical skills, Non-technical skills

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

*“If you are in a bar at a restaurant and you say you are an auditor,
people no longer turn away but say ‘An auditor? How nice.’”
Anders Hult, CEO at Deloitte’*

The traditional view of an auditor is that of an elderly man with a sullen expression who critically examines other people’s work. This view, however, seems to be gradually replaced by a rather different one, where the auditor is seen as a younger, extrovert – perhaps female – individual who has cleared the dust from her auditor-gray suit and put on the more colorful outfit that accompanies this new role.²

Furthermore, it appears that social skills and communicational skills have increased in importance. The auditor has been transferred “from the back office to the front office,”³ and more attention seems to be given to the auditor as an individual. Hence, our awakened interest in the profession.

As soon-to-be auditors many questions appear with regard to the profession and what is required of us who plan to practice it. At the same time as it is apparent that among students, being an auditor is coming into vogue⁴, the negative focus on auditors is greater than perhaps ever before.⁵ This places us before a substantial challenge.

So what makes an auditor an applauded hero to students or a scapegoat to society? How does one live up to existing expectations and what is needed to achieve professionalism?

An auditor today needs the ability to develop successful relations with clients as well as the ability to stay updated with respect to the most recent rules and regulations, this in order to appear knowledgeable and trustworthy.⁶ Hence, the modern auditor is not only an assiduous monitor of business documents and a number-cruncher, but also an adviser who works in close contact with people.⁷ As a result of this development it is reasonable to assume that now there exist other demands on the auditor’s competence and personal qualities.

For one, technical knowledge is not sufficient. In the audit profession, appearance and personal conduct are more important than one expects. It takes an effort to find the right people to do the right job the right way and gain success. It is crucial to understand how to adapt to a certain work environment and thereby adopt its values and behaviors in order to be able to advance in one’s career and feel committed to and content in the organization.⁸

And finally, closely related to personal qualities is the individual profile, as for instance gender, age and appearance could affect the characteristics that one possesses, at the same time as they are

¹ Bahlenberg J. Revisorn har blivit trendig. *Fokus*. 2006;4:24.25

² Bergqvist H, Brännström D, Ström P. Du ser inte ut som en revisor! – är det en komplimang. *Balans*. 2003; 2:26-27

³ Holtzman Y. The transformation of the Accounting Profession in the United States. *Journal of Management Development*. 2004;10:949-961

⁴ Hedelin J. Sony Ericsson i topp bland studenterna. *Dagens Industri*. 2006 April 6;17

⁵ *Dagens Industri*. 2006

⁶ Westerdahl S. *Vad har de för sig? – Om revisorers vardag och vad den betyder för etik och lärande*. In: Johansson S-E, Häckner E, Wallerstedt E. *Uppdrag Revision*. Stockholm: SNS Förlag, 2005:45-60

⁷ *Journal of Management Development*. 2004

⁸ Anderson-Gough F, Grey C, Robson K. Tests of time: organizational time-reckoning and the making of accountants in two multi-national accounting firms. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*. 2001;26:99-122

characteristics in themselves. To examine the profile and its effect on trust building becomes interesting in view of the questioning of the auditors' professionalism that has taken place as a result of recent company scandals.

B. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Other studies on this particular subject are not easily found, although much has been said about somewhat related issues. Three investigations especially caught our attention, however, and have served as inspiration in our research.

The first was published in *Accounting and Business Research* and identifies the characteristics that clients base their rating of audit firms on.⁹ As an employee represents a firm and to a certain extent often also identifies with the firm and its values¹⁰, it can be assumed that parallels can be drawn between this study and required characteristics in individual auditors working at a given firm. The results showed that most important was the integrity of the firm, second most important was the technical competence of the firm and third most important the quality of working relationships with audit partners. Good reputation came as number four on the list, technical competence of auditor partners as number five, value for money of audit service as number six, and ethical standards of audit partners as number seven. Integrity topping the list is perhaps not a surprise but an important observation which has encouraged us to further explore the issue of integrity. The above ranking has also encouraged us to ask a question in our surveys that refers to the relative importance of the CPA's characteristics, title, reputation, and the represented firm.

Another study that attracted our attention was one that deals with attributes seen as important for "superior audit performance". The focus was on what, except for technical knowledge, was required for superior performance, as well as on the extent to which auditors were aware of the importance of these attributes. To briefly summarize the results, different attributes were identified on different organizational levels. Assistants were expected above all things to be capable of teamwork whereas seniors were expected to have good client knowledge and the ability to determine what is relevant information and what is not (what we in this paper refer to as having analytical skills). Managers were expected to first and foremost have a sense of responsibility and the most important attributes for a partner was business acumen and communicational skills. As is pointed out in the study, knowing what the requirements are could help the individual in his/her "effort toward self-improvement", and accounting education may also benefit from awareness of which attributes are deemed important.

Finally, in one qualitative case study of a then Big Six Firm, it is argued that being professional has more to do with one's behavior and way of conducting oneself, and less to do with the possession of technical skills or the like. An evaluation of every audit engagement was carried out at the end of the year, where employees had to rate their co-workers on a 5-point scale for *Technical Ability*, *Client Service*, *Quality of Work Product*, *Job Administration*, *Time Management*, *Professional & Personal Attributes* and *Managerial Skills*. What was fascinating was the relative importance of the category *Professional & Personal Attributes* when it came to determining how professional an auditor was considered to be. Technical expertise was of course a prerequisite for professional practice but far from enough. The ability to communicate, take initiatives, have self-confidence, gain respect from

⁹ Beattie V, Fearnley S. The Importance of Audit Firm Characteristics and the Drivers of Auditor Change in UK Listed Companies. *Accounting and Business Research*, 1995; 100:227-239

¹⁰ Bolman L, Deal T. *Nya perspektiv på organisation och ledarskap*. 2nd ed. Lund: Studentlitteratur; 1997

clients, cooperate, be creative and have good judgment, to only name a few qualities, were more important to the auditor's professionalism. Moreover, outward appearance, demonstrated enthusiasm, as well as commitment to clients were other factors on which professionalism depended.

C. RESEARCH ISSUE

Clearly, as soon-to-be auditors, many questions surge with respect to the professional role and the qualities that one should possess. One does not become a professional simply by achieving a university diploma or by rattling off sections of a law. Hence, there exists a definite incentive to study what the situation looks like (today), focusing on what characteristics auditors possess, what characteristics they *should* possess, and what attributes related to the profile are more desirable. In order to obtain better insight, we consider it appropriate to treat the aforementioned issues in two separate questions sectioned into several smaller questions.

- WHAT CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD AN AUDITOR POSSESS?

- ◆ Which are the auditor's most important characteristics?
- ◆ Which are the auditor's most important characteristics according to clients?
- ◆ Does any difference exist between which qualities the auditors advertise to clients and which qualities clients *actually* request?
- ◆ What impact do the auditor's different roles have on requested qualities?

- WHAT PROFILE IS DESIRABLE?

- ◆ How do auditors and clients regard attributes such as gender, age, title and appearance?

D. SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS

The study of the auditor's role in this thesis is limited to the observation of personal *qualities*. This means that the auditor's tasks will not be discussed other than when they are briefly referred to when we discuss the qualities the auditor may or may not need to be able to carry out his or her undertakings in a satisfactory manner. Furthermore, we will discuss the possible expectation gap that could exist between an auditor and a client with respect to the qualities possessed by the auditor and the qualities requested by the client. We would hereby like to emphasize that the implication of the term *expectation gap* is somewhat different than when the term is used in the context of expectations on the auditor's role *as such* - which normally refers to the inherent tasks.

Two different types of surveys were carried out. One was aimed at certified public accountants active at audit firms of varying sizes, while the other was aimed at small and medium sized companies that use audit as well as non-audit services. The surveyed audit firms and companies were randomly chosen in order that we might achieve a fair representation of all the regions in Sweden. The investigation took place during the period April through May, 2006.

E. DISPOSITION

PART I – INTRODUCTION

This part includes a short background, the presentation of previous studies and the formulation of our research issue.

PART II – METHODOLOGY

This part describes the methods and techniques, used for the data collection and analysis.

PART III – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This part gives deeper insight into the theories and previous research that serve as a foundation for our empirical research.

PART IV – RESULTS - AUDITOR QUESTIONNAIRES

This part presents the results from the survey aimed at the auditors.

PART V – RESULTS - CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRES

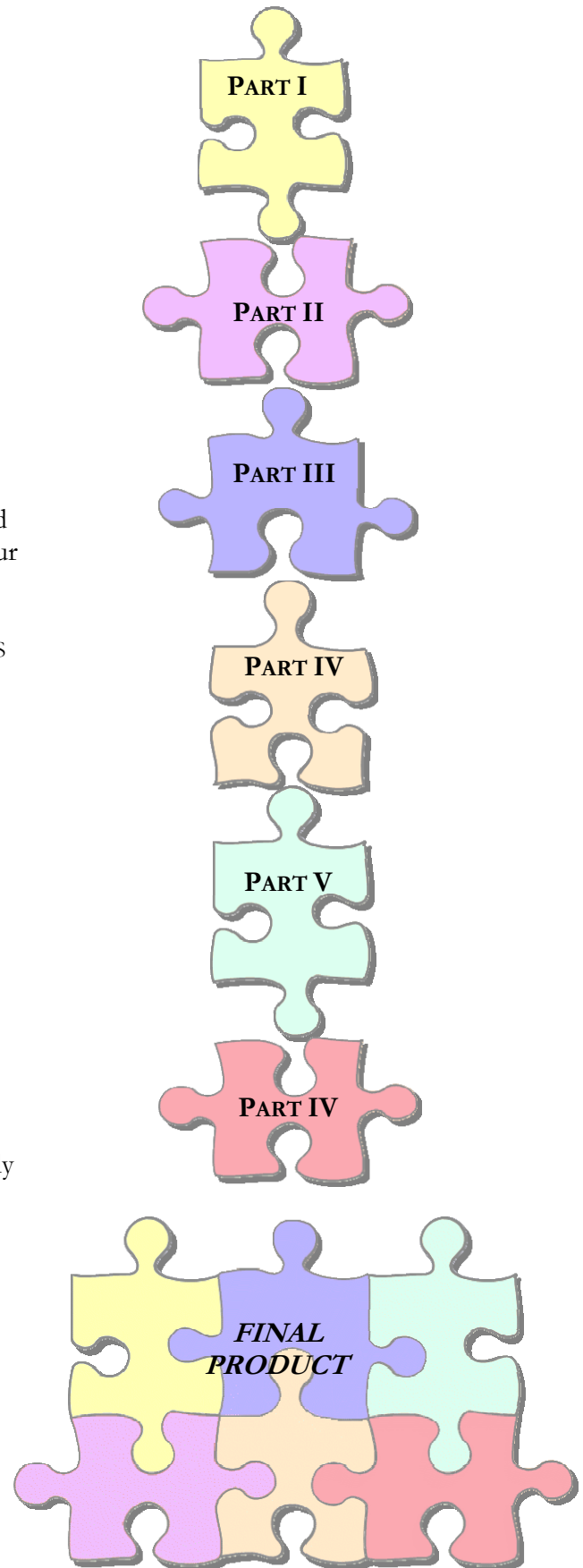
This part presents the results from the survey aimed at the clients.

PART VI – ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

This part consists of comparisons of the previously presented results and serves as a link between the theoretical framework and our empirical findings.

PART VII – CONCLUSIONS

This part summarizes and concludes our findings.



II. METHODOLOGY

A. RESEARCH DESIGN APPROACH

As the purpose of this thesis is to explore what the auditor role implies and what characteristics are required from those active in the audit profession today, we consider a method based on the examination of a selected sample most appropriate; i.e., we seek to look at the *status* of the audit profession with regard to the auditor's characteristics and profile. This is most easily done with the help of questionnaires directed at two target groups (i.e. *opinion polling*).¹¹ In this fashion we can come to know many individuals' opinions about the subject, which is a requisite for answering our research questions.

Our study applies both qualitative and quantitative methods since it in part seeks to measure *how many* of the respondents think one thing or another (quantitative method), while at the same time, it is interesting to discover and explain *why* they think one thing or another (qualitative method).¹²

B. DATA COLLECTION – SECONDARY SOURCES

In order to be able to formulate relevant questions in our surveys, and in order to back up our conclusions, we have used secondary data, such as can be found in books, newspaper articles, journals, and previously published scientific research. The theoretical framework has largely been the basis of our empirical investigation as it has allowed us to familiarize ourselves with the subject and triggered many of the questions that made it to the final version of the questionnaires.

We started by doing a number of searches in GUNDA, the library's database at Göteborg University, in order to get an idea of what has been published on this subject earlier. Key words were *auditor*, *the auditor's role* and *the auditor's characteristics* (in both English and Swedish). We discovered that essays had been written in the past on similar subjects but hardly ever with a focus on *characteristics* in the auditor role. Countless publications existed on the topic, "the auditor's different roles with respect to tasks", and the subsequent question of the auditor's debatable independence. After having examined these more closely, we found certain interesting facts that we thought could serve as the foundation for a slightly different study in that field.

Except for the previously mentioned searches in the database, GUNDA, we also found use for the database, Business Source Premiere, when looking for appropriate literature. Relevant sources were also found through references in other books and articles. Moreover, at the seminar, *Uppdrag Revision*, which provided interesting and valuable discussions and presentations, we were able to get hold of a book with the same name (written by several of the seminar participants) that later proved to be very useful in our research.

¹¹ Mauch J E, Park N. *Guide to the Successful Thesis and Dissertation: A Handbook for Students and Faculty*. 5th ed New York: Marcel Dekker; 2003

¹² Trost J. *Enkätboken*. Lund: Studentlitteratur; 1994

C. DATA COLLECTION – PRIMARY SOURCES

DATA COLLECTION APPROACH

As we are interested in studying a rather large target group, questionnaires are the instruments most suitable for the collection of data. The study is hereby to a great extent based on statistics, since it is crucial to have a large number of people participating in order to be able to make certain generalizations and avoid drawing conclusions that are based on only a few individuals' perception of the auditor role.

When one refers to questionnaires, it is appropriate to differentiate between surveys done via regular mail, on the Internet, or face-to-face (among others).¹³ A survey via mail is advantageous since the questionnaires can be sent to many people at the same time and can be answered at the respondent's leisure.¹⁴ Moreover there is no interviewer (or other person collecting the data) who could cause *collector bias*, i.e. intentionally or unintentionally distort or affect the respondent's answers.¹⁵ These arguments encouraged us to go through with a survey via mail, and we planned to do this until the last moment. However, we realized that it would cost both money and time and that it would be quite difficult to perform, wherefore we decided to exploit all the advantages of this type of survey, but avoid the apparent disadvantages. This we accomplished by sending the finished questionnaire via e-mail. The result was hereby a hybrid between a traditional survey carried out via mail and a modern electronic survey.¹⁶

Other advantages of this type of survey is that our questions were formulated in such a way that the respondent often had to study the alternatives thoroughly, which would not have been possible had we decided to do e.g. interviews.

Possible disadvantages that we discovered were that the survey could not be too comprehensive, that there was no-one available to answer questions that appeared unclear to respondents, that open-ended questions would not always be answered, and that spontaneous follow-up questions could not be asked.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

When formulating the survey questions, we focused first and foremost on wording the question in such a way that the respondent would be willing to answer it and interpreted them the way we had planned; it was important that the respondent would not be daunted by any question but would rather get a positive view of the investigation.¹⁷ We tried to achieve this by limiting the number of questions, and making the questionnaires visually appealing as well as clear and accessible. We chose to make use of both closed and open-ended questions, the former being advantageous as they normally are much easier to answer, code and analyze, and as they can provide the respondent with alternative answers that he or she would not normally have thought of. Open-ended questions, however, are a good complementary to closed questions as they allow for more exhaustive and nuanced answers.¹⁸ Some of our questions were also difficult to add

¹³ Dahmström K. *Från datainsamling till rapport. – att göra en statistisk undersökning*. 3rd ed. Lund: Studentlitteratur; 2000

¹⁴ Dahmström K. 2000

¹⁵ Mullins J W, Walker O C, Boyd H W, Larréché J-C. *Marketing Management – a strategic decision-making approach*. New York, 2005

¹⁶ Modern electronic surveys in their truest form are often HTML-based.

¹⁷ Dahmström K. 2000

¹⁸ Dahmström K. 2000

alternatives to as these might have *led* the respondent to choose a certain alternative, wherefore these types of questions were kept open-ended.

After having produced a first draft of both questionnaires, we let a couple of people of each target group answer these as a test to see if there was any need for corrections or clarifications of unclear questions. It also allowed us to see that some questions were superfluous, irrelevant or simply missing. An example of how these tests served to show where the questionnaires were flawed, was that the first and apparently straight-forward question regarding the respondent's gender could be misunderstood (this, however, was before the questionnaires were converted into their electronic and final form). The idea was that the respondent circle the suitable answer, but the respondent chose to *cross out* the alternative that did not apply to him, which probably would have been interpreted as equivalent to a circling of the answer had we not known him to be male.

After necessary adjustments we began the process of making contact with auditors and clients to ask them to participate in the survey. The reason for calling each and every one of the potential respondents instead of simply e-mailing the questionnaire immediately, was that we believed this would render a higher answer frequency. Getting in touch with everyone via telephone contact was, however, no easy task. In order to reach most auditors and clients, we had to go through the firm or the company first, which prolonged the process significantly. In some cases, however, when we had access to the auditors' e-mail addresses, we sometimes chose to only send an e-mail, although with a short letter attached intended to awake their interest. We spent a total number of three days on these activities.

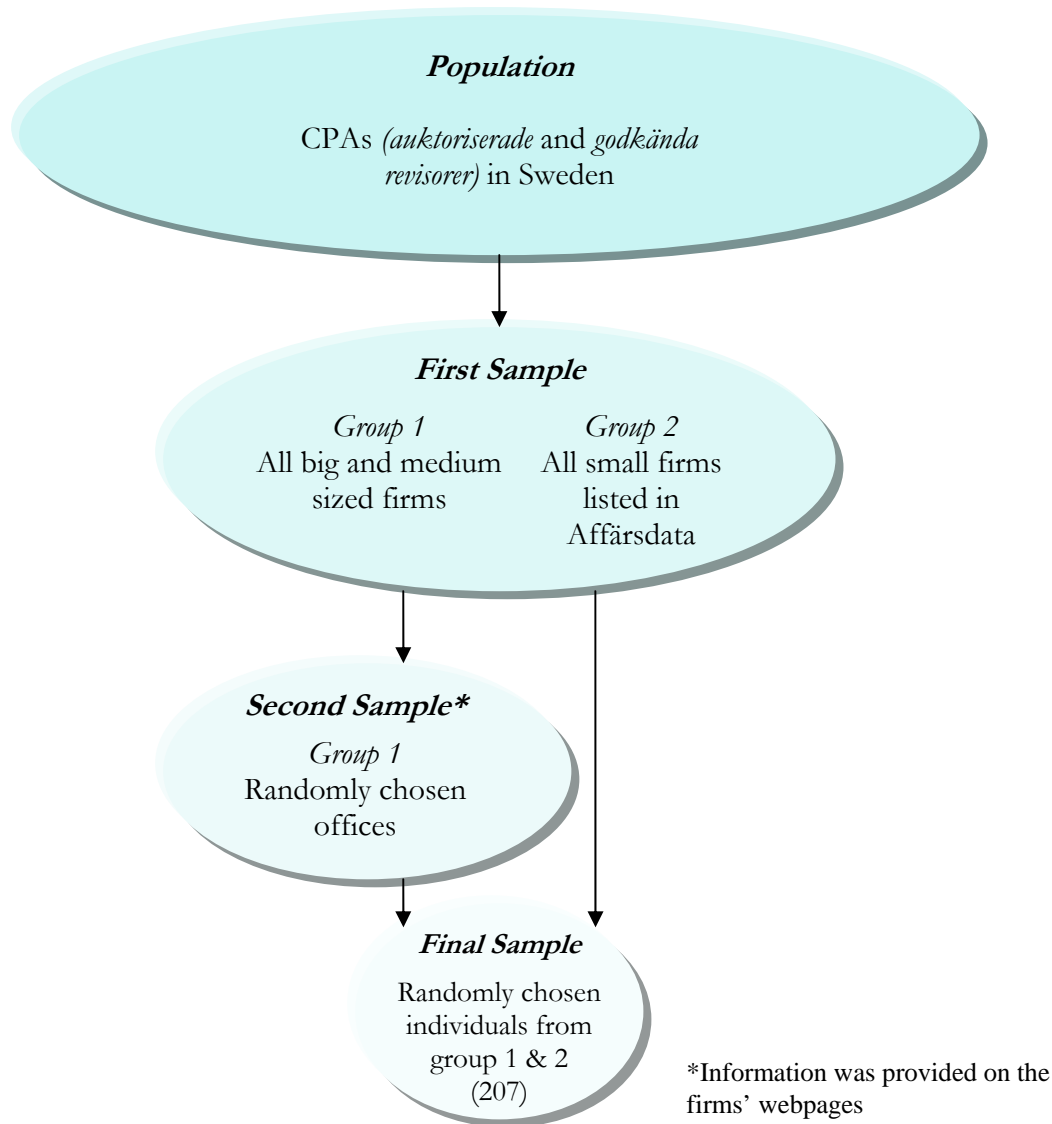
Subsequently, we sent an e-mail to everyone who had agreed to participate, with a link to the questionnaire and the request that they answer within one week. After a week had elapsed, approximately half (60) of the respondents had answered, which compelled us to send a reminder to all who had promised to partake but who had still failed to do so. This generated another 37 answers.

D. SAMPLE OF RESPONDENTS

As has become clear, two questionnaires have served as the basis for this paper, one of which was directed at CPAs (*auditors*), and one of which was aimed at companies that hire CPAs (*clients*). The sampling method used was a cross between *probability (random) sampling* – since every person/firm in the population had an equal chance of being selected from the database list – and *nonprobability sampling* – since the database used (Affärsdata) cannot be guaranteed to provide a *completely* updated directory of all companies listed in Sweden.¹⁹

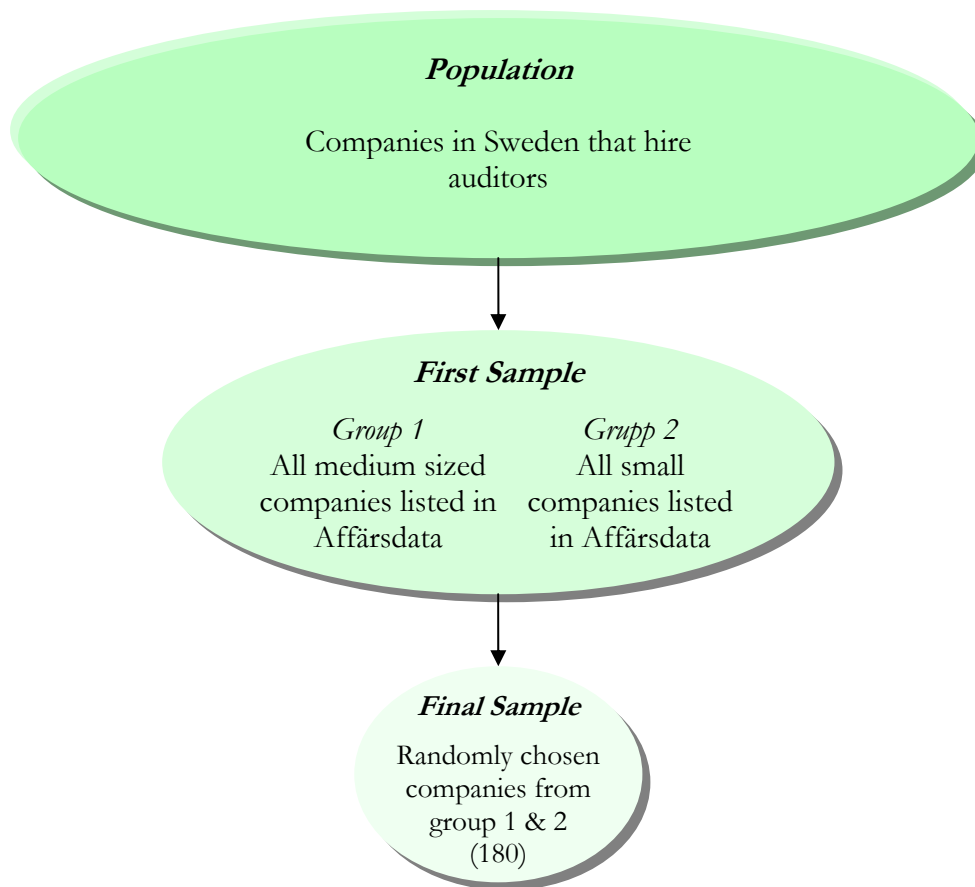
The auditor questionnaire was more specifically aimed at certified public accountants (Swe. *Godkända revisorer* and *auktoriserade revisorer*) active at audit firms of varying sizes in all of Sweden. In total, 207 CPAs were chosen, and the procedure can be seen below (Exhibit II-1).

¹⁹ Mullins J W, Walker O C, Boyd H W, Larréché J-C. 2005

Exhibit II-1**SAMPLING PLAN – AUDITOR QUESTIONNAIRE**

The client questionnaire was aimed at 180 small and medium sized companies in all of Sweden (see Exhibit II-2). We chose to employ the EU's definition of small and medium sized companies (less than 50 and 250 employees, respectively), with the exception that only the criterion for the number of employees needed to be respected.²⁰ The reason we chose small and medium sized companies was that we suspected that these would show more interest in answering the questionnaires, and that at these companies it would be easier to get hold of the person or persons who had the main contact with, or took decisions regarding the hiring of, the auditor. That the respondent would have these responsibilities was of primary concern as we intended to study the auditor characteristics desired by the client.

²⁰ <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/sv/lvb/n26001.htm>

Exhibit II-2**SAMPLING PLAN – CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRE****E. REDUCTION OF RESPONDENTS**

Overall, we were met with a kind reception by audit firms as well as companies, and many were willing to take part in our survey – of those whom we managed to contact, it should be added (it was exceptionally difficult to get in touch with many of the potential respondents, since they were often busy elsewhere when we called and we were told to call back later). We are satisfied, however, with the answer frequency, although it would have been preferable to have received a greater number of client responses to ensure maximum reliability. Our contact method was likely the most efficient, and having the questionnaire e-mailed to the respondents was also the most efficient and practical solution as it facilitated sending, filling out, and returning the questionnaires. Respondents also seemed more inclined to participate due to this, although we suspect the reason for them promising to participate and then failing to do so was that an e-mail is easier to forget or ignore than a “real letter” or a paper copy of the questionnaires

Below follow the statistical results of missing values.

Exhibit II-3a

ANSWER FREQUENCY – CPAs²¹

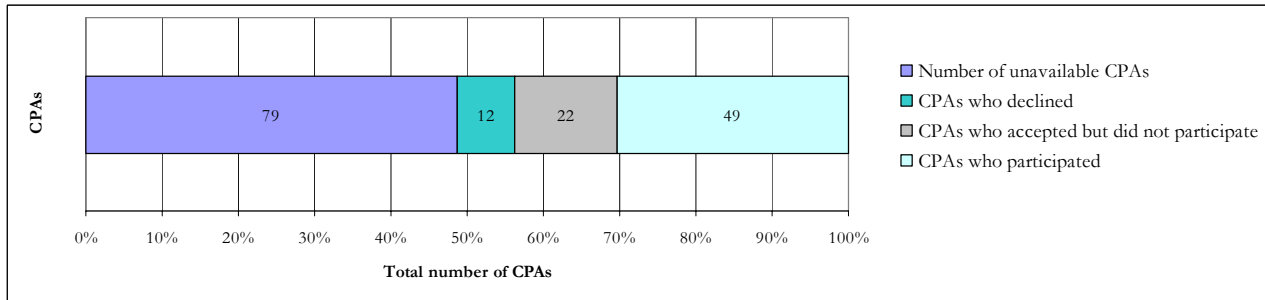


Exhibit II-3b

ANSWER FREQUENCY – CLIENTS

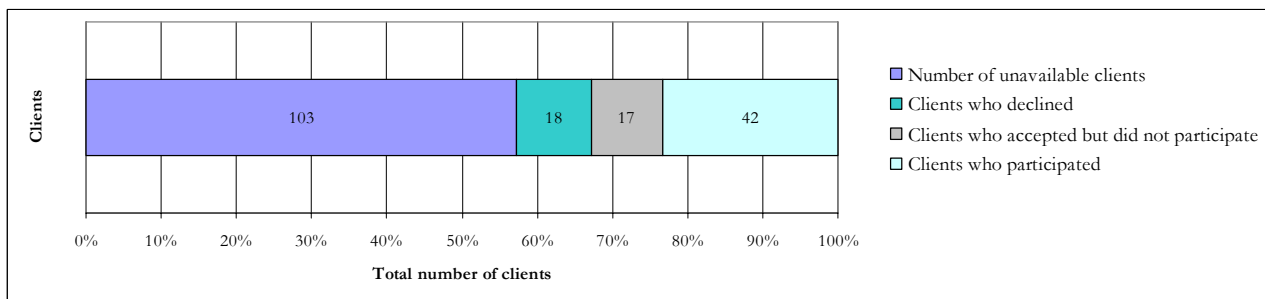
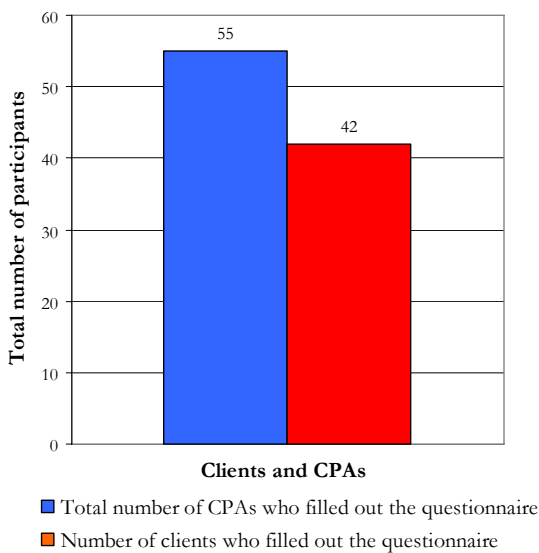


Exhibit II-4

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



This chart shows the total number of survey participants, including those (auditors) who were contacted only via e-mail.

²¹ It must be noted that in this chart, the auditors who were only e-mailed are not included (45 individuals), and therefore the total does not add up to 207. As we knew the answer frequency for these individuals would be substantially lower, we did not count on their participation but welcomed any additional participants.

F. METHOD FOR DATA PROCESSING

Questionnaires were sent, filled in and collected by us via a Swedish website.²² The raw data was then transferred manually into two separate spreadsheets (one for auditors and one for clients) using the program SPSS, variables were assigned, and the data was processed into bar and pie charts.

Before developing the charts, we had to recategorize some characteristics that we, during the processing of the data, had realized were too similar or redundant. Some characteristics that were repeatedly brought up by respondents also received their own categories. For this reason, the categories shown in the results do not always correspond to those found in the questionnaires. The following changes were made:

- ◆ Analytical skills + the ability to see details as well as the "big picture" + the ability to focus on what is important/relevant (category suggested by respondents) = *Analytical Skills*
- ◆ Problem solving skills + creativity + the ability to act as a sounding-board (category suggested by respondents) = *Problem Solving Skills*
- ◆ Social skills + the ability to make and keep contacts = *Interpersonal Skills*

Completely new characteristics/categories include *Empathy & Humility*, *Client Knowledge*, *Integrity*, *Availability (the Quality of Being Reachable)* and *Meticulousness*.

G. SECONDARY SOURCE CRITIQUE

Due to the nature of our subject, most of what is published expresses opinions and support from scientific research is therefore limited. This forces us to occasionally turn to less scientific sources for information. We are, of course, aware of the reduced reliability and the possible bias of these sources but have still found them useful where our objective has been to find out what people think of a certain issue rather than find hard facts.

With regard to the currentness of the sources, some might seem obsolete; however, this has sometimes been deemed acceptable due to the subject matter. For example, where male and female characteristics have been examined, we do not believe that the passage of time should affect the results. This can be contrasted to the issue of gender inequality which is affected by constantly changing conditions.

Finally, one concern is that the bulk of the articles we have referred to are international as opposed to Swedish, the reason being that related studies have been practically impossible to find. As a result, comparisons between our theoretical framework and our results are made difficult. However, due to the internationalization of the audit profession and accounting regulations, and due to the fact that all big audit firms are international, there is reason to suspect that there are great similarities between countries, and that comparisons can still be valid.

H. PRIMARY SOURCE CRITIQUE

To ensure high *internal validity*²³, we were careful to always emphasize the objective of our investigation, partly to ourselves as we prepared the questionnaires and partly to the respondents

²² <http://www.re-pdf.com>

²³ *Internal validity* is in this case equivalent to the Swedish term "inre validitet", meaning that the measuring instrument measures what it intends to measure. This definition might differ from the Anglo-Saxon definition. Source: Lundahl U, Skärvad P-H. *Utredningsmetodik för samhällsvetare och ekonomer*. Lund: Studentlitteratur; 1992.

before they filled in the forms. We attempted to do so by briefly describing the survey when speaking with the respondents for the first time, and thereafter by commencing the questionnaires with a missive, in which we reminded the respondent of the purpose of the survey as well as described his or her role in it. After having already distributed the questionnaires, however, we realized that a few questions were "missing", and that this would affect the internal validity. To improve our analysis, we would for instance have liked to know whether or not there existed disadvantages of being male/female in the audit profession (since we asked about possible advantages); we would also have liked to be able to group auditors according to firm size; and finally, the questions concerning age and clothing had open-ended follow-up questions, and it would have been useful and logical to also have an open-ended follow-up question where *title* was concerned.

With regard to *external validity*²⁴, it is important to remember that the respondents might have "enhanced" their answers in order to appear a "better person" or answered what they thought we might expect or hope them to answer. Although we emphasized that all answers would be treated confidentially, we can never be sure that differences do not exist between the respondents' true opinions and what they actually answered. One apparent example of where this is possible concerns the questions about gender preference. We believe some respondents were reluctant to admit to preferring a man to a woman or vice versa; this might especially be the case for male respondents, as the issue of inequalities between the sexes is somewhat sensitive. We also think this is particularly relevant as we who carry out the study are females and could unintentionally cause a type of collector bias.

In order to avoid the influence of chance on the data collection, and hereby achieve higher *reliability*²⁵, we attempted to formulate the questions in the survey in such a way that it would be clear what we were seeking/asking and in such a way that the questions would not be misunderstood by the respondents. We have therefore avoided complicated words and negations.²⁶ Moreover, to further guarantee that the questions were interpreted as we intended, one person from each target group filled out the questionnaires in advance. In this manner, we received an evaluation of the surveys and the opportunity to improve them. However, after collecting the questionnaires, we discovered that one question had been the source of confusion, namely the question which asked the respondents to rank certain attributes. Many respondents could or would not follow the instructions, which resulted in that a few alternatives were ranked as equally important or not ranked at all. These cases were therefore treated as missing, which has unfortunately caused smaller participation for this question. To avoid this type of problem, we would have liked to perform a more extensive test run of the questionnaires, but this was not possible due to time limitations. What was to our disadvantage was that we chose to ask many open-ended questions. These might have been considered a burden as they caused some of the respondents to skip them altogether.

Another possible problem/limitation is that the analysis is affected by the formulation of the questionnaires and thereby by the given alternatives. For instance, the characteristics not listed by us naturally received less attention. This must be taken into account when we determine the relative importance of the characteristics. Integrity perhaps received surprisingly little attention, the explanation for this being that we intentionally excluded this characteristic, since we preferred to develop similar but less insipid alternatives.

²⁴ *External validity* is in this case equivalent to the Swedish term "yttre validitet", meaning that answers correlate with the circumstances one wishes to study, i.e. that one's words (answers) do not deviate from what one's actions (true opinions). This definition might differ from the Anglo-Saxon definition. Source: Lundahl U, Skärvad P-H. 1992.

²⁵ Wallén G. *Vetenskapsteori och forskningsmetodik*. Lund: Studentlitteratur; 1993

²⁶ Trost J. 1994

Furthermore, we had trouble getting the respondents to give their opinions on certain issues related to the auditor profile. We believe that the reliability of the answers could have improved had we asked specific questions that avoided the answers yes/no/no opinion and instead forced respondents to rank certain characteristics according to how these are influenced by the attributes that constitute the profile.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework is aptly divided into three parts (see Exhibit III-1). Firstly, we study the implications of the new demands on the auditor's characteristics due to changes taking place in the audit profession. Secondly, we study the auditor's roles in order to better recognize the value of certain characteristics. Here it should be noted that the roles contain two different dimensions: two of the roles (the monitoring role and the consulting role) are directly related to the auditor's two principal tasks, whereas the other roles overlap with these first two roles (tasks). And finally, we explore the different attributes of the auditor profile.

Exhibit III-1

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



A. ON THE WINDS OF CHANGE

A dramatic change is said to have occurred as the auditor's role as bookkeeper has been gradually replaced by the one as strategic business advisor.²⁷ This development that has taken place over the last few decades in the international audit field has been the source of new demands on the auditor. Particularly two characteristics seem to receive more attention than others: integrity and communicational skills.

Nowadays it is not just about what *you can do*, in the sense of having technical skills, but it is also about *who you are*, that is to say that which is related to personal values, social intelligence and communicational skills (non-technical skills).

COMMUNICATIONAL SKILLS

²⁷ *Journal of Management Development*. 2004

*The pursuit of correct formulations, [...], negotiations and joint efforts will appear central [to the auditor].
[The job] will be less about reviewing recommendations and interpreting the company's audit manuals.²⁸*

The traditional view of the auditor “as a lonesome eccentric surrounded by piles of receipts and data lists” is slowly fading.²⁹ To be active in the profession today it is not enough to be skilled at crunching numbers and reviewing old files and records. Perhaps it does not seem that way when one as a recently employed assistant auditor is relegated to the abandoned office at the end of the hallway with stacks of binders as one's only company, but according to Westerdahl it is here that most auditors begin their career.³⁰ At this early point in time their immediate future depends on how well they master the words of an Act and various published recommendations. However, this is apparently *not* enough to be successful in the long run; an auditor needs, apart from formal skills, the ability to act appropriately in many different situations, the ability to gain trust and appear altogether trustworthy, as well as the ability to see to the disparate interests of the involved parties.³¹

Interpersonal skills – an extension of communicational skills – are also essential when it comes to adapting to daily shifting (organizational) environments as well as interacting and connecting with the individuals within these environments (the importance of which must not be underestimated where e.g. fraud detection is concerned).³²

The article *The tide is turning. Are you ready?*³³ reinforces the view that the auditor's profession is undergoing some major changes (and that it is best to keep up). The author asks rhetorically where the greater transformations are taking place, and answers his own question by emphasizing that if there is ever so subtle a change, it is there, and the accountant must make the transition from a “number's cruncher [sic] to number's communicators [sic].” Furthermore he states that if one is unable to communicate the results of one's work, it is hardly worth the effort. Nowadays computers can “crunch the numbers”, which implies that it would be a waste of time for an auditor to do just that; other qualities that the individual might possess become all the more important. “Many accountants think their role is to become the best number cruncher in town. However, client [sic] will value the communications [sic] more.” Here he encourages the companies and audit firms to make sure their workforce become superior number communicators.

It is obvious that the current trend is for the auditor to have a higher social intelligence than ever before. To be a judge of human nature and be able to cooperate with people with completely different backgrounds has become essential in the audit business.³⁴

INTEGRITY, ETHICS AND MORALS

Values have come to play a greater role when it comes to how one is perceived and evaluated in one's professional role. It has become more difficult to motivate one's actions simply by claiming a close adherence to rules and regulations when various interest groups

²⁸ Westerdahl S. In: Johansson S-E, Häckner E, Wallerstedt E. 2005

²⁹ Westerdahl S. In: Johansson S-E, Häckner E, Wallerstedt E. 2005

³⁰ Westerdahl S. In: Johansson S-E, Häckner E, Wallerstedt E. 2005

³¹ Westerdahl S. In: Johansson S-E, Häckner E, Wallerstedt E. 2005

³² Jayalakshmy R, Seetharaman A, Khong W. The changing role of the auditors. *Managerial Auditing Journal*. 2005;3:249-271

³³ Waugh T. The Tide in Turning. Are you Ready? Special Report. 2004;18:16

³⁴ Precht E. Man måste kunna samarbeta med folk från skilda miljöer. *Balans*. 2006;2:28-30

*consider that the underlying reality speaks a different language.*³⁵

The independence issue has been much debated in the media over the past few years. The ability to uphold independence – and thus be able to accomplish one’s tasks in a professional manner – depends to a high degree on one’s personal qualities, such as the ability to stand up for what one believes in and act according to one’s conscience.³⁶ In all professions it is important that a person should have at least an average level of ethics and morals. However, this is especially important in the audit profession since the notion of there being such a thing as “right and wrong” is the foundation for the public’s trust in the audit business. The auditor’s actions – or lack of them – may have dire consequences; it seems as if the uncovering of one individual’s immoral conduct is enough for the entire profession to be questioned. Because of this lack of confidence in the profession, and because of the recent audit frauds, the auditors face a great challenge – proving to be better professionals than ever before.³⁷

Problems occur when auditors fail to achieve a balance between professionalism and good contacts. In this situation, the conflict between the auditor’s many roles becomes especially apparent. On one hand, in the monitoring role the auditor has a responsibility towards his or her client, i.e. the shareholders. For instance, the actions taken by the company management have to be monitored in order that shortcomings may be *detected* or guarantees may be made that the company is being run in an appropriate manner. On the other hand, in the auditor’s role as a consultant, he or she needs to urge the company management to act in one way or another so as to *prevent* shortcomings and inadequacies.³⁸ The conflict is based on the perceived difficulty of knowing the boundaries between these different roles.

Here it is possible to identify three requirements concerning the characteristics. Firstly, one needs to know right from wrong. Secondly, a decent share of professional skepticism is required. This implies having a questioning mind, being slow to judge but still being attentive to fraudulent activities.³⁹ And thirdly, one needs courage to act according to one’s conscience. This includes being able to resist pressure possibly exerted by the company management and being able to take responsibility when things have gone so far that all that remains to do is write a modified auditor’s report or even report a misdemeanor.

It is important to remember that despite that the auditors are appointed by owners, the influence of company managements in the hiring process is often significant. Since one of the auditor’s tasks is to monitor the company management, it soon becomes clear that the auditor’s independence can be threatened.⁴⁰ In situations where the auditor might have to question the CEO’s or company management’s discharge from liability, his objectivity and ability to see the “big picture” are tested. Moreover, it is essential that the auditor show integrity and the ability to defend his decisions concerning or judgment of the liability issues.⁴¹ Due to laziness or even cowardice many auditors attempt to ignore or cover up conflicts with those he is assigned to

³⁵ Johansson S-E (1). *Varför har vi revisorer och vad ska de uträtta?* In: Johansson S-E, Häckner E, Wallerstedt E. Uppdrag Revision. Stockholm: SNS Förlag, 2005: p. 9-23

³⁶ Gometz U. *Värden och penningbegär – ett revisorsdilemma.* In: Nord G, Thorell P. Intressekonflikter och finansiella marknader. 2006:162-183

³⁷ *Managerial Auditing Journal.* 2005

³⁸ *Managerial Auditing Journal.* 2005

³⁹ *Managerial Auditing Journal.* 2005

⁴⁰ Wennberg I. Hur ska förväntningsgapet slutas? In: Johansson S-E, Häckner E, Wallerstedt E. Uppdrag Revision. Stockholm: SNS Förlag, 2005: p. 172-189

⁴¹ Johansson S-E (2). *Våga vara revisor – revisorsrollen och individen* In: Johansson S-E, Häckner E, Wallerstedt E. Uppdrag Revision. Stockholm: SNS Förlag, 2005: p. 133-146

audit.⁴² In order to act independently, however, it is important that the auditor show courage and the ability to stand strong in his or her beliefs when in conflict with or experiencing pressure from the CFO or the company management. The demands on the auditor to uphold his or her integrity and independence are thus high in these situations, for although the auditor might have access to many specialists and knowledgeable colleagues, it is the responsibility of the individual auditor to make his or her stand clear.⁴³

Fortunately, many laws and recommendations also exist upon which the auditor can lean for support when things start to get shaky. Yet, although the laws and recommendations are great in number, it is not possible to only depend on these in all situations; it is also necessary to have a fair degree of both sense and sensibility when evaluating information and when making decisions.⁴⁴ It is simply not enough to follow directives, but it is also imperative that the auditor accept help from people in the company surroundings in order to “feel” what is right and what is wrong.⁴⁵

The claim that “a code of ethics is an attitude or philosophy, not a listing of commandments”⁴⁶ implies that in order for the auditor to be able to act according to a high standard of ethics and morals, it is essential that he or she believe in the importance of telling right from wrong. Some people instinctively know what is right and what is not, whereas others require an extended learning process.

In order that auditors and other specialists active in the audit profession may maintain high ethical standards, FAR works actively to promote integrity and objectivity of all members of the profession. This has resulted in the publication of *FAR:s yrkesetiska regler* (whose title refers to rules of ethics), in which it is possible to read that “integrity aims at honesty and truthfulness”.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the rules underline how important trust is to the execution of successful audits as well as to non-audit services, and how trust first and foremost is created and maintained through the auditor’s competence, integrity and good judgment.⁴⁸

B. THE AUDITOR’S ROLES

An auditor needs to master – perhaps to a greater extent than others – a wide range of roles. As a result, it becomes essential to also have access to an ample reservoir of characteristics. The auditor is expected to wear a police helmet; a judge wig; a consultant’s portfolio; and a pair of auditor glasses,” Filip Cassel writes in his book *Den reviderade revisorsrollen* (Eng. *The Revised Auditor Role*), which helps create an image of the auditor as a somewhat encumbered being with many roles to juggle.⁴⁹ The auditor today has to, apart from with the “auditor glasses” monitor the companies’ accounts, as a “police” also discover and report criminal activities within organizations as well as use his or her knowledge to act as a consultant to the companies. (The role as judge mentioned by Cassel will not be further developed here). Westerdahl also expresses this in *Uppdrag Revision* as he studies the auditor’s workday. ”The same auditor can lead a project

⁴² Cassel F. *Den reviderade revisorsrollen*. Stockholm: Nerenius & Santérus Förlag AB, 1996

⁴³ Johansson S-E (2) In: Johansson S-E, Häckner E, Wallerstedt E., 2005

⁴⁴ Tschudi F. *Regler, komplexa situationer och känslor*. In: Johansson S-E, Häckner E, Wallerstedt E. *Uppdrag Revision*. Stockholm: SNS Förlag, 2005:80-92

⁴⁵ Tschudi F In: Johansson S-E, Häckner E, Wallerstedt E. 2005

⁴⁶ Gometz U. 2006

⁴⁷ FARs Samlingsvolym 2006 – del 2. FARs yrkesetiska regler. Stockholm: FAR Förlag AB, 2006

⁴⁸ FARs Samlingsvolym 2006 – del 2. FARs yrkesetiska regler.

⁴⁹ Cassel F. 1996

and a meeting in the morning, have a smaller role in a different project in the afternoon, and be the person in charge of a division at the end of the day.”⁵⁰

Apart from the four roles that Cassel refers to, there exists yet another role that is becoming increasingly important – the auditor’s role as a businessman. This means the auditor needs a good business acumen, i.e. the ability to make money for the firm and attract clients. Whether or not this role is fully honorable is an entirely different discussion, and will only briefly be touched upon in this paper.

So is there a need then for different characteristics? It becomes clear in the role descriptions below that the demand for integrity, will-power, an analytical mind and an ability to communicate becomes the natural consequence of the multiplicity of auditor roles.

THE MONITOR

The auditor’s most fundamental role is the one as monitor of company accounts and of how well company managements run the companies. The principal purpose of the monitoring function is to explore whether or not the externally presented information and the underlying accounting are of sufficiently high quality and can be considered reliable. In addition, the auditor needs to determine to what extent the accounts correspond to the economic activities which they are meant to mirror. Hence, it is the auditor’s responsibility to point to possible shortcomings that may exist in the company’s accounts.⁵¹

In order to perform an efficient review, it is essential that the auditor carefully plan the monitoring procedure, meaning that he or she needs to identify what has to be reviewed and how this will be done. Since it would be impossible to examine every single business transaction individually, it is necessary for the auditor to quickly see the ”big picture” and then select what activities are most relevant to review or audit.⁵² Moreover, it is important that the auditor, before initiating the audit, is informed of specific rules that might apply to the company being audited. Without this information, it is impossible to identify and understand the transactions, activities and conditions which the auditor might deem have an impact on the bookkeeping or the management of the company.⁵³ It would also be difficult to identify problems, evaluate risks, effectively plan and perform the audit, as well as offer superior service to the client.⁵⁴

THE CONSULTANT

The auditor’s consultative role can be said to be based on the observations that the auditor has made in the previous (monitoring) phase, and allows for him or her to identify possible improvements on the company’s accounting or bookkeeping system. The company expects the auditor to offer continual advice as a logical consequence of the audit so that the identified problems can be resolved. The advice must not, however, be of such magnitude that the auditor’s independence is threatened.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Westerdahl S. *Vad har de för sig? – Om revisorers vardag och vad den betyder för etik och lärande*. In: Johansson S-E, Häckner E, Wallerstedt E. *Uppdrag Revision*. Stockholm: SNS Förlag, 2005:45-60

⁵¹ Cassel F. 1996

⁵² FAR: *Samlingsvolym 2006 – del 2. RS 300 Planering*

⁵³ FAR: *Samlingsvolym 2006 – del 2. RS 310 Kunskap om verksamheten*

⁵⁴ FAR: *Samlingsvolym 2006 – del 2. RS 310 Kunskap om verksamheten*

⁵⁵ Cassel F. 1996

What happens is also that companies seek advice regarding other issues that appear within the company and which may not have anything to do with the auditor's other (audit) engagements. The auditor's independence becomes an issue here as well. The auditor does, however, have the possibility (although within limits, of course) to offer non-audit services, which implies giving consultations to companies which he or she does not audit or monitor.⁵⁶

Through the auditor's consulting role the auditor may improve his or her knowledge of the company, which in turn can mean an advantage when performing a successful audit. The monitoring function and the consulting function may therefore reinforce each other and be of much use to the company, its owners and other interested parties, the condition being that the auditor's impartiality and independence is guaranteed.⁵⁷

THE POLICE

At this point, it is impossible *not* to mention the now notorious scandals, Enron and Worldcom. Did the auditors do the right thing? If the auditor does not don the police helmet in time, it seems it might just be that blue prison garment that replaces it (at least from the public's point of view).

“All company scandals these past years [...] have provoked both individuals and public organization to question what is seen as the auditors' passivity,”⁵⁸ says Sven-Erik Johansson in *Uppdrag Revision's* opening chapter. He continues to provoke the reader by asking, “How could they have let this happen without sounding the alarm? Is being independent, having integrity, and defending morals and ethics not the very foundation of the audit profession? The auditors have instead indignantly pushed away any accusations and maintained that it is not reasonable to demand that auditors should act as ‘moral policemen’ over boards of directors and company managements.”

Although perhaps unrealistically, the public often expects that the auditor should be able to handle the task as “police”. Whether or not the auditors want the responsibility, there exist demands on that they should be able to manage this role, and thus on what characteristics they need. It becomes essential, as Johansson states, to have integrity, represent ethics and morals, be attentive, and have self-respect and audacity in order to remain independent and objective. This is especially important considering that auditors do not only have to live up to client expectations but also answer to authorities and respect national and international regulations.⁵⁹

THE BUSINESSMAN

The auditors at Arthur Andersen, the audit firm that crashed and fell from the top of the world into the debris of Enron, are possibly those who have experienced to a greater extent than any others what it is like to try and juggle the role as a businessman along with the other auditor roles. This due to that the non-audit services, which Arthur Andersen was among the first to offer at a larger scale⁶⁰, probably can be said to contain that which first and foremost awakens the possibly dormant businessman in every auditor.

⁵⁶ Cassel F. 1996

⁵⁷ FARs *Samlingsvolym 2006 – del 2*

⁵⁸ Johansson S-E (2) In: Johansson S-E, Häckner E, Wallerstedt E. 2005

⁵⁹ FARs *Samlingsvolym 2006 – del 2*; Aktiebolagslagen 9 kap. § 42

⁶⁰ *Journal of Management Development*. 2004

The necessity of a good business sense has increased, and the problems that this brings is discussed by Ulf Gometz in *Värden och penningbegär – ett revisorsdilemma*⁶¹ (Eng. *Values and desire for wealth – an auditor dilemma*).⁶² During the 80's and 90's, the collegiality decreased radically, until it almost disappeared completely, and Gometz claims the competition was so rough that it bordered on brutality. The characteristics "impartiality", "independence" and "integrity" became less and less important to the auditors and having a good business sense became instead imperative to success. A few firms sold themselves as cadavers to a pack of vultures – only the shells remained of what once were firms with high values and a focus on the core activities.

The auditing mentality has gradually left room for a consulting mentality and the commercialization of the business has allowed for a supplantation of professional values.⁶³ Self-interest has led to that "the profession has failed at its mission – to create trust."⁶⁴

Words like integrity seem to pervade most of the writings on the subject nowadays, however, which indicates that the pendulum might be swinging back and that auditors are discovering their "crime". Arthur Andersen serves, if nothing else, as a constant reminder of the import of defending what is right.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the above discussion is that the auditor's role as a businessman of course puts demands on his or her having a good business sense, but that the role also – and maybe foremost – puts demands on the auditor's good judgment and, ultimately, integrity. Gometz summarizes this by maintaining that what is needed is not more watching over auditors, but rather auditors with "stature, authority and integrity".

C. THE AUDITOR PROFILE

The auditor profile is here meant to include the auditor's age, gender, title, and appearance (age, although relevant in our empirical study, will not be discussed further in the theoretical framework). Based on the interpretation of several texts and publications, it can be said that the auditor's characteristics in many ways are the product of his or her profile, but in certain contexts, it is just as true that the profile is a characteristic in itself. These two aspects of the auditor profile will be the cornerstone in this section.

The reason why the auditor profile is worth looking into is that client satisfaction depends on the fulfillment of expectations and certain attributes, such as knowledge, trustworthiness and professionalism, and the perception of these attributes varies in turn with certain other factors, including gender, ethnic background and dress (appearance).⁶⁵ According to stereotype research in psychology this is not to say that people are intentionally discriminatory or bigoted, but rather that expectations play a major role. Making decisions based on the use of stereotypes is not uncommon, one explanation for the phenomenon being that it is a simple and quick method when the subject is overcome by the complexities of processing too much information.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Gometz U. 2006

⁶² Johansson S-E, Häckner E, Wallerstedt E. Uppdrag Revision. Uppdrag Revision; 2006 April 25; Gothenburg, Sweden. Stockholm: SNS Förlag, 2005

⁶³ *Journal of Management Development*. 2004

⁶⁴ Gometz U. 2006

⁶⁵ Khan U, Chawla S, Devine E. Impact of gender, race and dress on choice of CPAs. *Journal of Applied Business Research*. Winter 96/97;1:53-

⁶⁶ *Journal of Applied Business Research*. Winter 96/97

GENDER

Research that has been done on attitudes, capabilities and performance and so forth, shows that in these respects there are few or inconsequential differences between the sexes.⁶⁷ One study shows that job satisfaction, organizational commitment and performance do not vary between males and females, but that turnover intentions are more often presented by females⁶⁸. This was seen as somewhat surprising as other factors would have to be identified to understand why females were more likely to depart voluntarily from public accounting despite experiencing the same level of job satisfaction as their male co-workers. Furthermore, it was concluded that the large, international audit firms give male and female auditors adequate levels of autonomy in their work, that they provide work environments that allow for the same level of personal skill utilization and development for males and females, and that males and females feel equal attraction to their work.

Despite these positive results, seen from a historical point of view, the audit profession has been dominated by men, and this is still – though to a smaller degree – true today.⁶⁹ For instance, woman partners constitute a minority group at the large Swedish CPA firms,⁷⁰ and fewer women than men hold high positions⁷¹.

The question then is, are there differences between the sexes? The results from a study presented in the *Journal of Applied Business Research* show the effects of four independent variables (client gender, CPA ethnic origin, CPA gender and CPA dress) on the likelihood of hiring.⁷² Dependent variables included, among others, the likelihood of hiring, knowledge, trustworthiness, reliability and friendliness. (Except for CPA ethnic origin, the same independent variables are also subjects of study in this paper and will thus be given special attention.) Among other things, it was shown that the auditor's gender *does* affect the client's perception of the CPA. Perhaps surprisingly, women were consistently rated higher by both male and female clients, being considered more knowledgeable, more trustworthy, more credible, more friendly as well as more honest.⁷³ Another finding was that for most dependent variables, male clients rated female CPAs higher, and female clients rated male CPAs higher. Those who performed the research finish by questioning whether it is some form of discrimination that takes place in the final stage, however, since the female CPA's high grades in all variables did not translate into a (much) higher probability of being hired.

There seem to be many areas in which it is possible to analyze gender differences. Research has for instance also been conducted on whether men and women use different strategies for information processing (the selectivity hypothesis). Women are hypothesized as being more likely to use more complex information processing strategies regardless of whether the task is simple or more complicated. Men, on the other hand, apply these complex strategies only when the nature of the task is more complicated.⁷⁴ The study *The Effects of Auditor Gender Task Complexity on Information Processing Efficiency* corroborates this hypothesis and shows that the female auditors in their study spent less time than the male auditors on the assigned high complexity task, while the

⁶⁷ *Journal of Applied Business Research*. Winter 96/97

⁶⁸ Fogarty T. Gender differences in the perception of the work environment within large international accounting firms. *Managerial Auditing Journal*. 1996;(11/2):10–19

⁶⁹ *Journal of Applied Business Research*. Winter 96/97

⁷⁰ Låg andel kvinnliga delägare. *Balans*. 2005; 11:23

⁷¹ ”Det krävs aktivt arbete för att uppnå en förändring”. *Balans*. 2005; 11:26-27

⁷² *Journal of Applied Business Research*. Winter 96/97

⁷³ This was however not true for all ethnic groups.

⁷⁴ O'Donnell E, Johnson E. The Effects of Auditor Gender Task Complexity on Information Processing Efficiency. *International Journal of Auditing*. 2001;5:91-105

males spent less time on the low complexity task.⁷⁵ This leads us to believe that there exist distinguishable differences between male and female attributes and behavior.

According to an investigation that FAR carried out among 150 female auditors these assumptions appear valid.⁷⁶ It was revealed that women consider themselves having an advantage over their male colleagues when it comes to making contact with clients and that they also are more perceptive. The study shows that women are often deemed to have a softer attitude and give a gentler impression, which helps clients to feel less threatened and more willing to confide in a female auditor. Women are also considered more flexible than men as well as more skilled at seeing the “big picture”. Moreover, many of the women who were interviewed had the opinion that being a woman in a men’s profession means one stands out more and can more easily get positive attention.

Of course, several of the disadvantages of being a woman in the audit business were also brought up. The fact that the profession has long been dominated by men and their views make many women feel underestimated and discriminated against. For instance, men have better established social networks and professional ties. In addition, those who tend to be responsible for the selection and hiring of auditors are most often men, and the natural choice for them is another man. Other problems that the women who were interviewed had encountered, included that it sometimes is hard to be taken seriously, and that combining the professional role and the mother role is a challenge.

In conclusion, it is apparent that the gender issue is not just about bridging gaps and eliminating intolerance and prejudices. There is evidence that men and women are perceived differently and that they go about things differently.

TITLE

Does title matter? A “better” title, of course, is associated with a higher degree of education and maybe higher skills. Hence, a better title is equivalent to the quality of being knowledgeable and experienced. In an interview by Balans with Mats Fredricson, the former chairman of FAR, the significance of title is underlined. To the question whether he thinks the title *auktoriserad revisor* (see Exhibit III-2) has a better resonance to it, Fredricson answers that this title *does* sound better than *godkänd revisor* (see Exhibit III-2), and that this fact will urge auditors to seek certification. He is nevertheless careful to point out that the idea that this title carries more value is more a question of what clients think or demand and not so much a question of title as a confidence booster to the auditors. Fredricson says that young, quite recently-graduated business students who achieve the title *godkänd revisor*, are just as qualified as the older certified public accountants (*auktoriserade revisorer*) who have full certification. This, however, clients will never understand and will consistently value a certified public accountant higher than a merely “approved public accountant”. To be a certified public accountant is simply considered a cut above by the public, and this view will, according to Fredricson, remain longer with clients than it will with those who are active in the business.⁷⁷

Exhibit III-2

CPAs IN SWEDEN

In Sweden, the title *Certified Public Accountant* can be divided into two levels. Achieving the title *Godkänd revisor* (literally: approved public accountant) is the first step to becoming certified. The title *Auktoriserad revisor* implies one has passed the highest-level exam and achieved certification. (Source: <http://www.far.se>)

⁷⁵ *International Journal of Auditing*, 2001

⁷⁶ Kvinnorna och revisorsyrket. *Balans*, 1997; 12:8-13

⁷⁷ Finns det auktoriserade revisorer om 20 år? *Balans* 2002;10:34-35

A different view on the significance of title emerged, however, when a number of auditors from the "big four" firms were interviewed for a thesis at Lunds universitet.⁷⁸ Many of them indicated – in accordance with Mats Fredricson – that the reason one decides to obtain the highest degree of certification is that the improved title is a form of status symbol, and that clients, like the public, also see the certification as a type of guarantee of higher quality. The interviewees' answers, however, seemed to indicate that the importance of title is greater *within* the firm, which contradicts Fredricson's belief that title is more important to clients than to auditors. The interviewed auditors saw certification as the only way to remain at the firm, since the policy at the big firms is to deny non-certified accountants partnership and responsibility for more important assignments. It should be added, however, that the debate concerning *godkända revisorer* and *auktoriserade revisorer* probably differs significantly depending on the size of the firm, the size of the client, and the geographical location of the firm.

APPEARANCE

"Back in the late 1970s, "especially in large, conservative CPA firms, the term 'business dress' meant 'wingtips'--a symbol for the dark suit, white shirt and a conservative tie"⁷⁹

Several articles highlight the development in this area. Despite there being definite dissimilarities between Sweden and the United States as far as the audit profession is concerned, it is not unreasonable to draw certain parallels between the countries, considering the "big four" audit firms introduce an international accounting culture. In the U.S. the relaxation of the dress code has taken the shape of *Casual Friday* (although the informal attire now is not limited only to this weekday).

Casual or not casual? This is not a simple question as opinions seem to diverge. The original thought was that casual clothing would boost morale and team spirit as well as improve productivity.⁸⁰ One study shows that although attitudes are generally positive towards casual clothing, attitudes differ among different age groups and different positions within a firm. Regardless of one's attitude, casual must never mean tasteless, revealing or sloppy, of course, but neat and clean.⁸¹

The down-side of dressing down has also been evident: the ensuing confusion about what to wear. Many wonder what is appropriate. Moreover, clients might have expectations on the auditor's clothing. One article relayed how clients had been upset by the informal clothing at their audit firm, one client's argument being: "If we're going to pay you professional rates, I expect you to dress like a professional." Some partners at the firm were also worried that a too informal atmosphere at the office meant the firm's professionalism would not show properly. A too relaxed atmosphere was also claimed to reduce productivity.⁸²

One survey completed by more than 400 CPAs all over the U.S. showed that three fourths of the auditors agreed that casual clothing boosts morale, although partners were more prone to disagree. Three fourths also agreed that casual clothing is an employee benefit, although this was not generally true for respondents older than 50. Half of the respondents agreed that casual

⁷⁸ Johansson L, Johansson M, Laffrenzen K, Thell A-C. Godkänd och auktoriserad revisor – kompetens och framtid: [Bachelor Thesis]. Lund: Lund University; 2005

⁷⁹ Centennial countdown: Looking Back. *Journal of Accountancy*. 2005;2:14-

⁸⁰ McMullen D. Casual daze? A new wrinkle: what to wear for business casual. *Pennsylvania CPA Journal*. 2000;4:15-

⁸¹ Gutierrez T, Freese J. Dress-down days. Benefit or burden? *CPA Journal*. Apr99;4:32-

⁸² *Journal of Accountancy*. 2005

clothing increases productivity, which is a strong indicator of conflicting views. In this case there were much more positive attitudes among younger auditors. To the statement “a casual dress policy can be used as an incentive to attract new employees, half the respondents agreed and only a fifth disagreed. Although the survey seems to suggest a general open-mindedness among auditors, it must be remembered that age and position matter. As stated before, the survey also showed that some felt that casual clothing could threaten professionalism.

According to the study mentioned in the previous section (Gender),⁸³ the variables trustworthiness, reliability, honesty, credibility, professionalism and likelihood of hiring were all affected by the auditor dress, the last two significantly so. Casual clothing was contrasted to formal clothing. It was shown that female clients, to a higher degree than male clients, rated formally dressed CPAs higher for all variables. It was concluded that even small business clients relate the more formal clothing to the professional image of the CPA. The only exception was male clients rating casually dress CPAs higher for honesty and trustworthiness. However, this does not represent the situation for all ethnic groups; casually dressed Caucasian CPAs were for many variables rated equal to formally dressed CPAs. More pressure can be said to be on CPAs of minority groups to wear a formal attire in order to communicate professionalism.

According to a Swedish brand-image consultant, Mari Sammeli, one’s clothing should transmit a certain sentiment, and in the case of an auditor, he or she, should want to deliver trust, security and meticulousness. “Buttons that are buttoned correctly, shoes that are well brushed, and no visible, loose threads indicate that one is aware of one’s apparel, and this helps transmit the feeling that one also pays attention to the numbers.” She also states that by staying up-to-date on fashion trends, it is easier to be convincing in one’s attempt to show that one is advancing with the times – an important characteristic in an auditor today, as rules and regulations constantly change and the auditor needs the ability to always update his or her knowledge and stay informed.⁸⁴ Furthermore, Sammeli points out that it is of consequence to adjust and adapt one’s clothes to specific situations, environments and people since what helps to build trust varies between clients and the businesses they find themselves in.

⁸³ *Journal of Applied Business Research*. Winter 96/97

⁸⁴ Precht E. Se på dina kläder- andra gör det. *Balans*. 2005;8-9:32-40

IV. RESULTS – AUDITOR QUESTIONNAIRES

Below follow the results from the auditor questionnaires. Where statistical results are presented, the answers to the sometimes accompanying open-ended questions are also included to give further insight into the respondents' way of thinking.

What is important to note is that fifteen characteristics were already given as alternatives. This will naturally affect the results since respondents might have found it easier to simply select one of these characteristics and not come up with their own. As the respondents had the opportunity to submit their own alternatives/characteristics, this explains why the charts show different combinations of characteristics.

The new and revised list of categories (see Methodology for the elimination of certain redundant categories):

- ◆ *Communicational Skills*
- ◆ *Problem Solving Skills*
- ◆ *Interpersonal Skills*
- ◆ *Analytical Skills*
- ◆ *Ability to Organize One's Time Well*
- ◆ *Ability to Update One's Professional Skills*
- ◆ *Flexibility*
- ◆ *Ability Take Initiatives*
- ◆ *Ability to Defend One's Views*
- ◆ *Aptitude for Numbers*
- ◆ *Ability to Handle Stress*
- ◆ *Cooperational Skills*

A. THE RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

Exhibit IV-1

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

	Valid	53
	Missing	2
Mean		45,47
Median		45,00
Minimum		30
Maximum		66

Not only is the range high, but nearly all ages in between the minimum age (30) and the maximum age (66) are represented, making the age distribution satisfactory.

Both the mean and the median age is 45 years. This corresponds well to the present average age of FAR's members, which is 47 years.⁸⁵

Exhibit IV-2

GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

	<i>% of Cases</i>
Males	72,7%
Females	27,3%

The gender distribution is also satisfactory, as it closely resembles that of FAR (30% females, 70% males)⁸⁶

⁸⁵ This information was obtained through contact with FAR (May 28, 2006).

⁸⁶ This information was obtained through contact with FAR (May 28, 2006).

Exhibit IV-3

TITLE OF RESPONDENTS

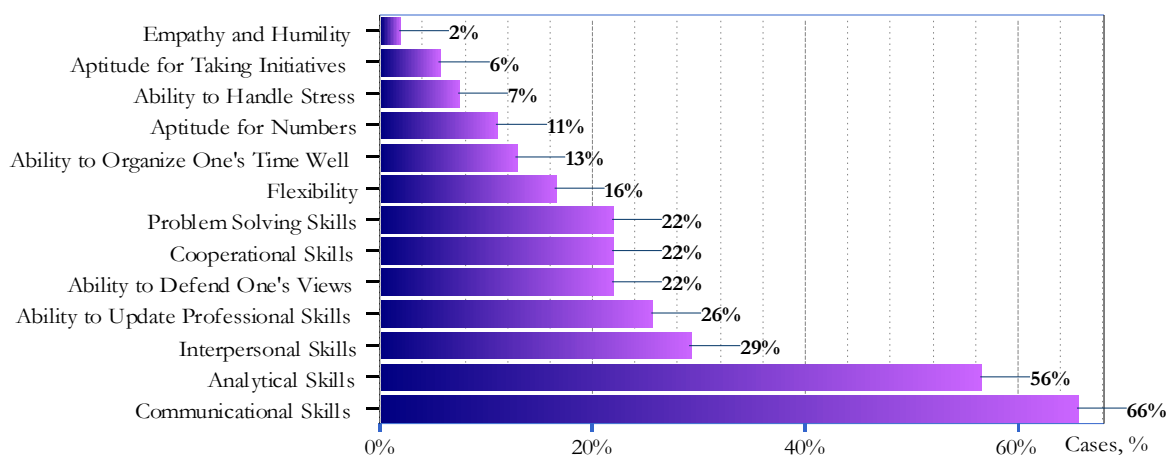
	<i>% of Cases</i>
CPA 1st lvl (Godkänd revisor)	41,8%
CPA 2nd lvl (Auktoriserad revisor)	58,2%

The distribution between the two categories correspond almost perfectly with the existing distribution in the audit profession in Sweden. FAR has estimated the distribution to be: CPAs 1st lvl (Godkänd revisor), 41,6%; and CPAs 2nd lvl (Auktoriserad revisor), 58,4%.⁸⁷

B. AUDITOR CHARACTERISTICS

Exhibit IV-4a

THE THREE MOST FREQUENTLY FEATURED CHARACTERISTICS



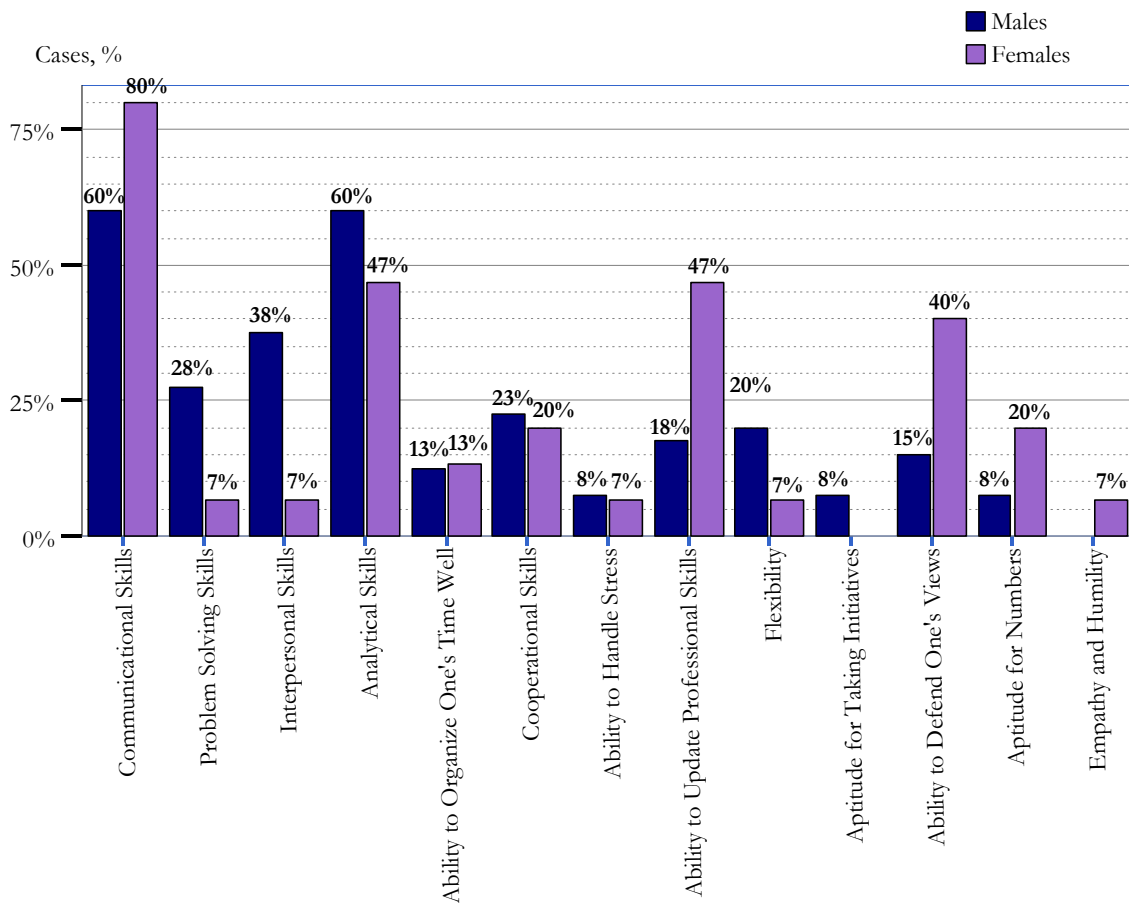
From a list of fifteen characteristics, the respondents were asked to choose the three characteristics that best described them. They were also given the opportunity to name other characteristics if they could not find any appropriate alternatives in the list. Note, therefore, that the percentage cannot and does not add up to 100%.

There is a relatively even distribution of the featured characteristics among the respondents. However, a couple of characteristics are predominant, such as *communicational skills* (66%) and *analytical skills* (56%). *Interpersonal skills* (29%) and the *ability to update one's professional skills* (26%) were also considered two of the auditor's most featured characteristics, although they were ranked significantly lower.

⁸⁷ [http:// www.far.se](http://www.far.se)

Exhibit IV-4b

THE THREE MOST FREQUENTLY FEATURED CHARACTERISTICS - MALES VS. FEMALES



From a list of fifteen characteristics, the respondents were asked to choose the three characteristics that best described them. They were also given the opportunity to name other characteristics if they could not find any appropriate alternatives in the list. Note, therefore, that the percentage cannot and does not add up to 100%.

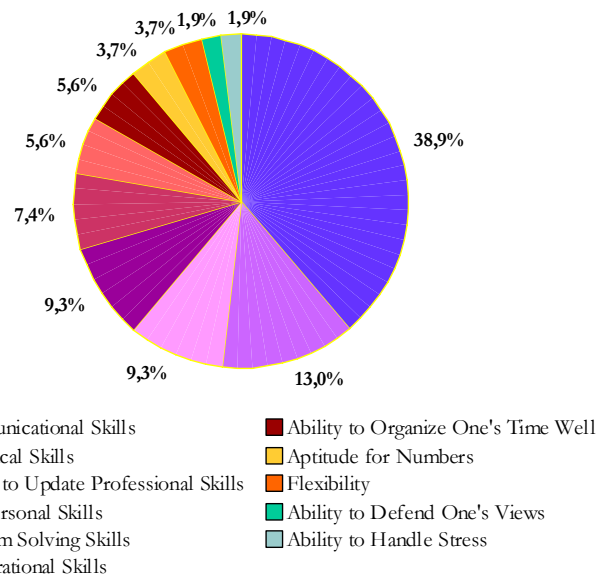
Both the female and the male auditors thought of themselves as having good *communicational skills* (80% and 60%, respectively). The women, however, considered themselves to be much better at communication than at anything else, whereas the men thought that their *analytical skills* (60%) were equally good. The biggest difference between the two sexes was that the females had a greater *ability to update their professional skills* (47% vs. 18%) as well as a greater *ability to defend their views* (40% vs. 15%) while the males had better *problem solving skills* (28% vs. 7%) and *interpersonal skills* (38% vs. 7%).

Exhibit IV-5

THE MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTIC TO JOB PERFORMANCE

From a list of fifteen characteristics, the respondents were asked to choose *one* characteristic that they believed was the most important to job performance.

The results show more or less the same characteristics as above (Exhibit IV-4a); *communicational skills* (39%), *analytical skills* (13%), the *ability to update one's professional skills* (9%) and *interpersonal skills* (9%) were characteristics chosen by most respondents. However, the category *communicational skills* stands out considerably.

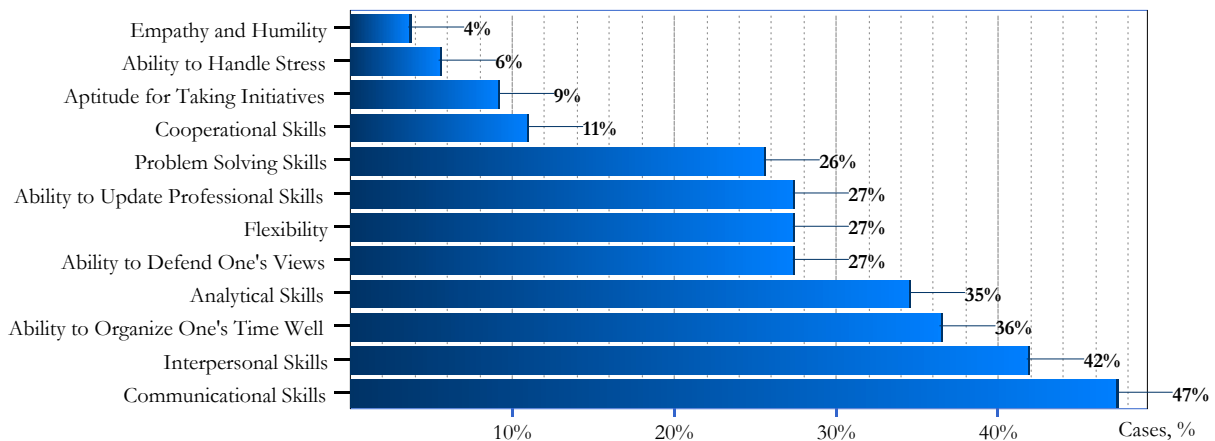


Communicational skills were said to be important for various reasons; the ability to clearly express oneself is essential in order to promote understanding and help build trust among clients. This is especially important considering the constant addition of new and complex laws and recommendations. Several respondent explained that without the ability to communicate, all other abilities will become more or less useless; a brilliant mind will never shine through unless one possesses the ability to clearly convey one's thoughts.

Furthermore, analytical skills were considered the key to efficiency since the possession of these skills imply an ability to sort through information and focus on what is relevant and ignore that which is less relevant. Of those who regarded the ability to update one's professional skills the most important characteristic, many argued that it was because of the rapidly changing regulations. And finally, interpersonal skills were deemed most important by those who claimed functioning relations and cooperation are essential since behind all companies and annual reports stand *individuals*. Without interpersonal skills and the ability to make and keep good contacts, one could fail to attain valuable assignments.

Exhibit IV-6

THE THREE CHARACTERISTICS MOST FREQUENTLY DEVELOPED DURING THE CAREER



From a list of fifteen characteristics, the respondents were asked to choose the three characteristics that they have had to develop during their career. They were also given the opportunity to name other characteristics if they could not find any appropriate alternatives in the list. Note, therefore, that the percentage cannot and does not add up to 100%.

Once again, *communicational skills* was ranked high by the respondents (47%), along with *interpersonal skills* (42%). The respondents have also had to develop their *ability to organize their time well* (36%) as well as their *analytical skills* (35%).

Exhibit IV-7

CHARACTERISTICS REQUIRED IN THE ROLE AS MONITOR AND CONSULTANT, RESPECTIVELY

From a list of fifteen characteristics (the same as above), the respondents were asked to choose the one characteristic that they considered most important in their role as monitor and consultant, respectively.

In the role as monitor, *analytical skills* surpassed all other characteristics (46%). The characteristic that was deemed to be the second most important was the *ability to organize one's time well* (16%), whilst the third most important was the *ability to defend one's views* (13%).

In the role as consultant, *problem solving skills* was deemed most important (41%), and ranked slightly lower was *communicational skills* (32%). Ranked third, the *ability to update one's professional skills* was considered the most important characteristic by much fewer respondents (13%).

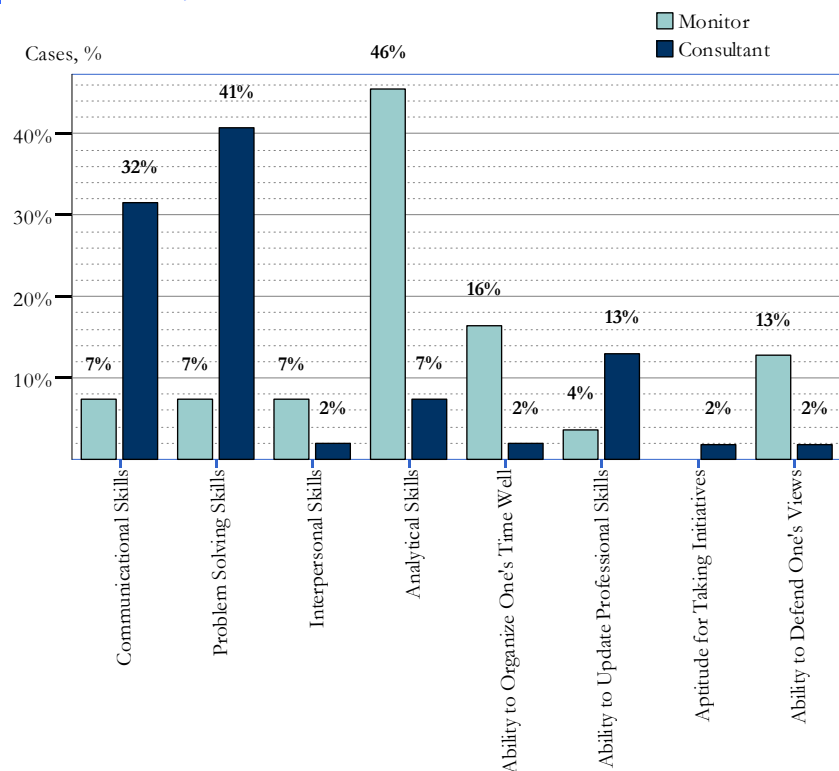


Exhibit IV-8**CHARACTERISTICS NEEDED TO HANDLE THE CONFLICT RESULTING FROM THE CLASH BETWEEN THE CONSULTING ROLE AND THE MONITORING ROLE**

In the table below, the answers – which all reflect the importance of integrity – are categorized and summarized.

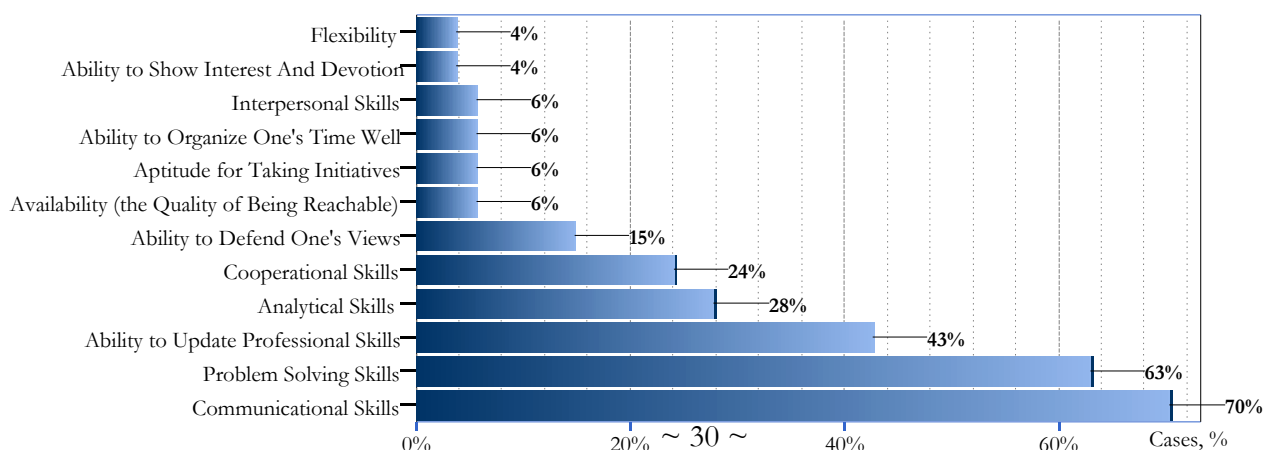
<i>Integrity</i>	<i>Answers</i>
Separating the roles	...this is about having good judgment and knowing how to separate the two roles. One needs the ability to continuously change perspectives to guarantee that one's independence not be jeopardized.
Defending one's views	...this is about being able to defend one's views and make good decisions. In order to do this it is essential that one has self-confidence. One cannot simply accept opinions and pressure from others.
Communicating to the client	...this is about being able to explain to the client why a certain activity is not allowed. At the same time, it is important that the auditor direct the client in order that he or she may receive help from other people who can provide independent consultations.

Additional auditor viewpoints, to make sure no conflict develops, were that great care should be taken to choose "appropriate" clients, i.e. clients who want their company to be managed decently and with respect toward all interested parties. In case a conflict does develop, respondents also recommended one have a great deal of creativity to be able to handle the situation.

Exhibit IV-9**CHARACTERISTICS NEEDED TO RESIST PRESSURE FROM CLIENTS THAT COULD JEOPARDIZE THE AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRITY**

The table below summarizes the most common answers.

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Answers</i>
High morals and ethics	...this is about knowing what is right and wrong, having good judgment, and defending what one believes is right.
Meticulousness and knowledge	...this is about understanding and acting according to existing rules and regulations, partly those which are related to the issue of independence, and partly those which deal with problems related to accounting itself.
Self-confidence	...this is about being self-assured, being able to tell "when enough is enough", and not being afraid to leave the assignment or report misdemeanors when the client will not yield.

Exhibit IV-10**THE THREE CHARACTERISTICS MOST FREQUENTLY ADVERTISED TO CLIENTS**

From a list of fifteen characteristics, the respondents were asked to choose the three characteristics that they primarily advertise to clients, i.e. the characteristics they think clients look for in an auditor. They were also given the opportunity to name other characteristics if they could not find any appropriate alternatives in the list. Note, therefore, that the percentage cannot and does not add up to 100%.

Communicational skills (70%) and *problem solving skills* (63%) were characteristics the auditors first and foremost emphasized when it came to trying to meet the client's demands. The *ability to update one's professional skills* is also considered important (43%). Moreover, *analytical skills* and *cooperational skills* are considered fundamental by a fourth of the respondents (28% and 24%, respectively).

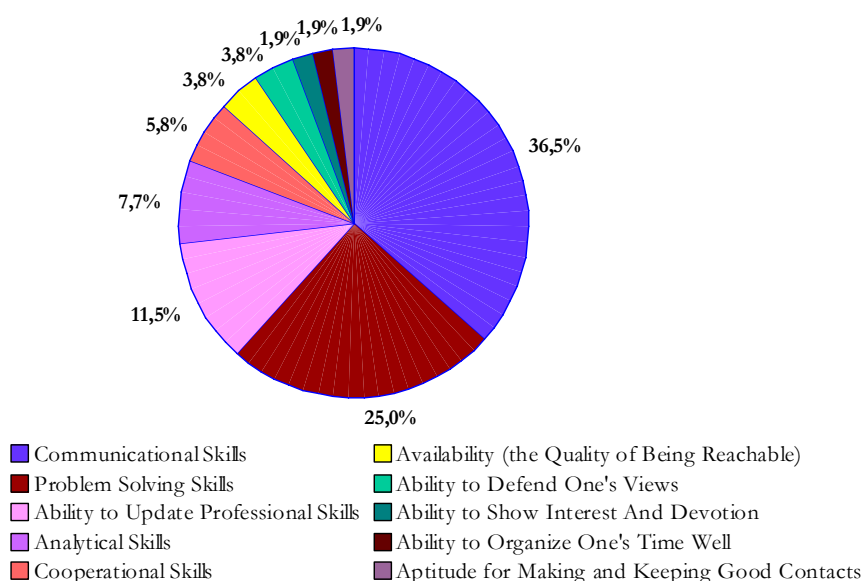
Exhibit IV-11

THE CHARACTERISTIC THOUGHT TO BE CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT TO CLIENTS

From a list of fifteen characteristics, the respondents were asked to choose *one* characteristic that they believed clients consider the most important.

Communicational skills (37%) and *problem solving skills* (25%) stick out in this figure. Communicational skills were deemed most important because communication is fundamental when trying to transmit the auditor's knowledge to the client.

Accounting deals with many complex concepts and regulations which need explaining. Another argument was that communication is needed in both directions – from auditor to client and reversely – in order to make the exchange meaningful and effective, and thus allow for correct analyses and conclusions. Why problem solving skills were considered so important is because clients are thought to want more than just audits; the client wants ideas on how to find solutions to problematic issues such as payment of corporate taxes. Being able to solve problems is also thought to help when it comes to gaining a client's trust.



C. AUDITOR PROFILE

Exhibit IV-12a

ADVANTAGES OF BEING A WOMAN IN THE AUDITING PROFESSION

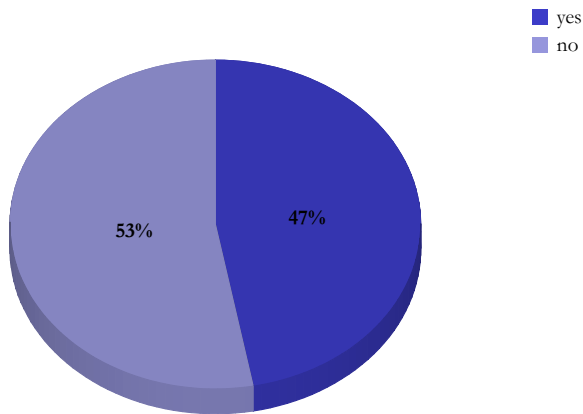
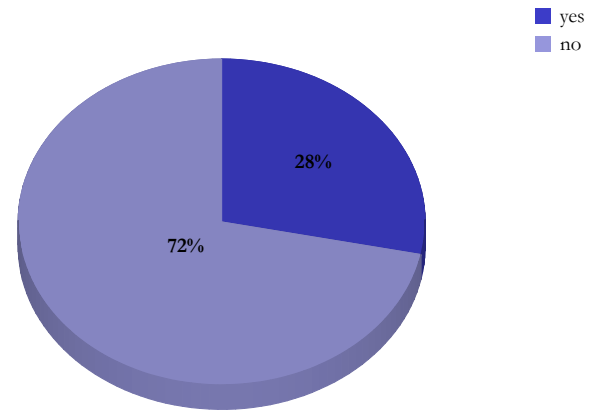


Exhibit IV-12b

ADVANTAGES OF BEING A MAN IN THE AUDITING PROFESSION



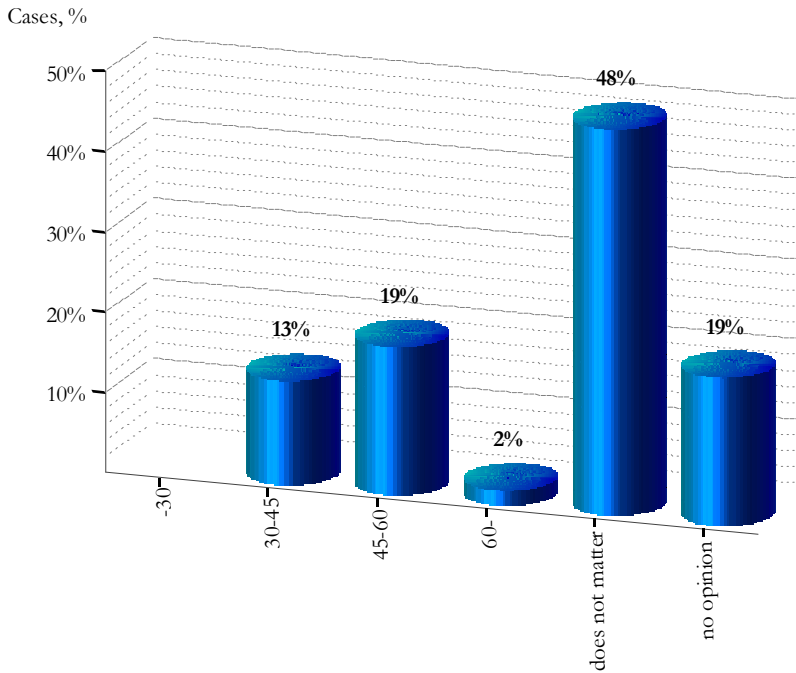
The females were asked to answer whether they saw it as advantageous to be a woman in the audit profession, and the males were asked to state whether they saw advantages in being men. More women than men experienced that their gender meant having certain advantages in the profession.

The women answered that they are often regarded as having better knowledge of people and that they are more attentive and better listeners than men. Moreover, women might seem less prestigious, which helps clients to feel comfortable confiding in a female auditor. For similar reasons, female auditors are not considered a "threat" to company managers to the same extent.

The few men that saw advantages acknowledged that the audit profession is still dominated by men, but that this is changing, making it easier for women to advance. Furthermore, a few thought that some clients still associate the title CPA with a man, and that therefore being a man makes it easier to meet clients' expectations and be taken seriously. That older clients prefer male auditors is also a belief, but that as these clients retire these inequalities will probably decrease. Also, there are more male company managers, which facilitates communication and the development of male networks.

Exhibit IV-13

THE AUDITOR'S AGE: THE AGE INTERVAL THOUGHT TO BE PREFERRED BY CLIENTS

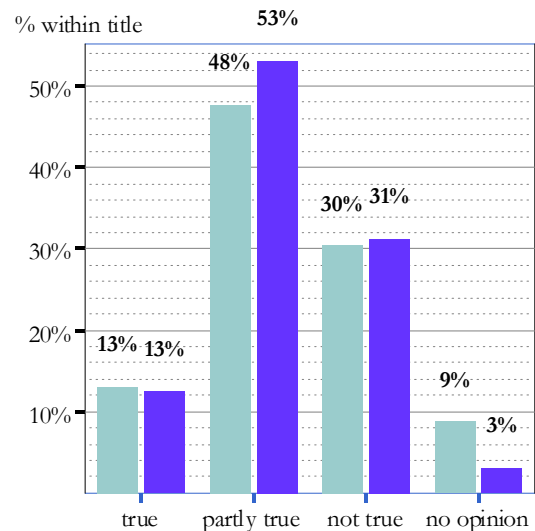


Two thirds of the respondents had no opinion or believed that age does not matter. Of the 34% that actually thought age matters, almost all thought that clients prefer auditors between 30 and 60. Being "too young" or "too old" is less advantageous.

The first observation is that the respondent's title is of little or no consequence to his or her opinion regarding this subject. As the figure shows, half of the respondents believed that it is partly true that title matters to clients, and around 13% believed it is true. A third said it is not true.

Exhibit IV-14

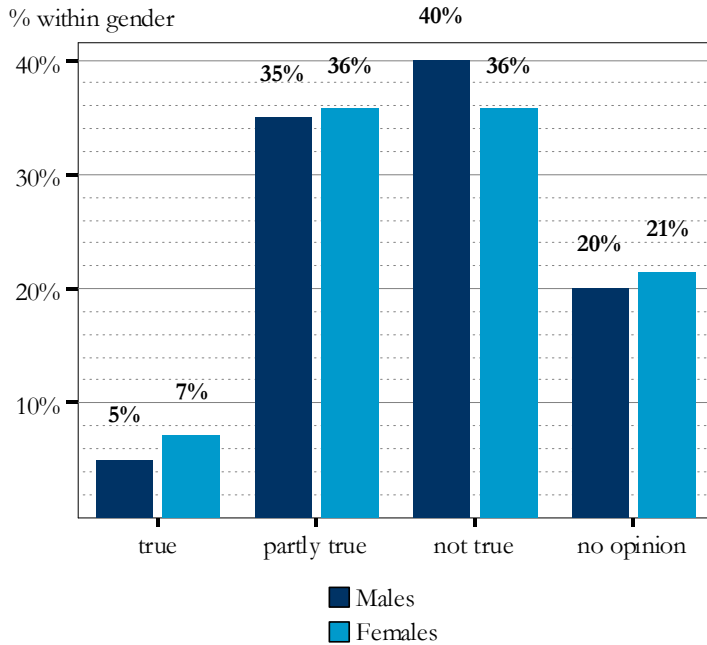
THE AUDITOR'S TITLE: THE INFLUENCE OF TITLE ON TRUST BUILDING



■ Respondent's Title CPA 1st lvl (Godkänd revisor)
 ■ Respondent's Title CPA 2nd lvl (Auktoriserad revisor)

Exhibit IV-15

THE AUDITOR'S GENDER: THE INFLUENCE OF THE MISSION/TASK ON GENDER PREFERENCE



The first observation is that the respondent's gender is of little or no consequence to his or her opinion regarding this subject. As the figure shows, approximately the same number of respondents believed the statement to be true as those who believed it not to be true. However, of those who believed it true, most believed it to be only partly true. And finally, more females than men believed the statement to be true.

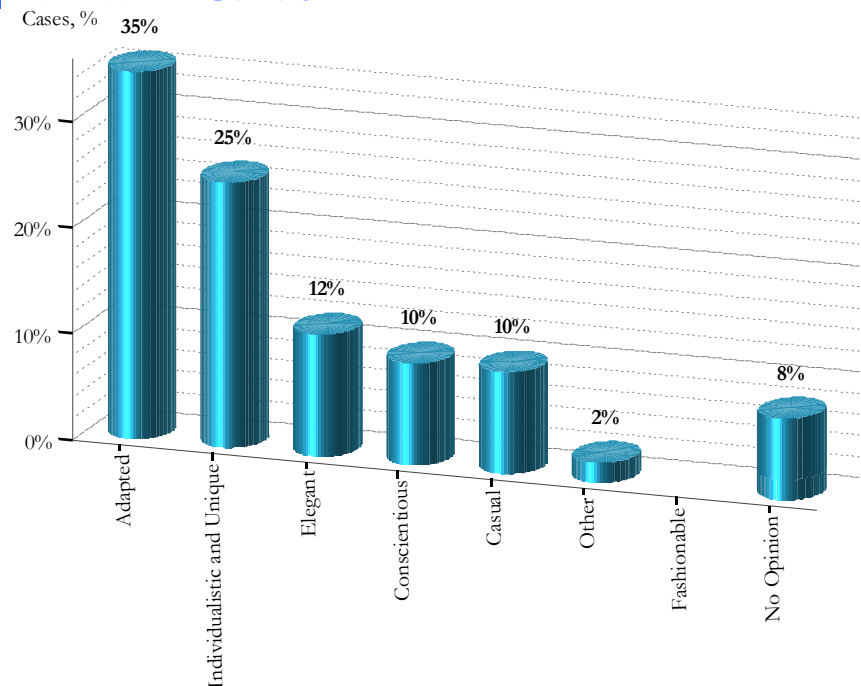
The respondents were also asked to give examples of when the situation might lead to gender preference. For instance, a male auditor might be preferable when a client, who is active in an environment dominated

by men, finds himself in a controversial situation or conflict. Also, in certain situations when an auditor is needed to exert pressure on or intimidate external parties, a man can be perceived as more authoritarian and commanding than a woman. Also, a board of directors made up of only men is also suspected to often prefer a male auditor. For similar reasons, in a situation where a company has a female CFO, some believe a female auditor is preferred. Of those who thought the statement not to be true, most had the opinion that it is more about chemistry than about gender. It was also stated that some might even prefer an auditor of the opposite sex(!).

Exhibit IV-16

THE AUDITOR'S CLOTHING: CLOTHING THOUGHT TO BE PREFERRED BY CLIENTS

Most respondents had an idea of what clothing would be most appropriate. The most common opinion was that it is important to adapt one's clothes to the client and the particular situation in which one finds oneself, whereas the second most common opinion was that the auditor should dress individualistically. The need for adaptation of one's clothing is due to the importance of making the client feel comfortable and



able to identify with the auditor. A suit was considered appropriate among bank clients but less so among e.g. small clients from the manufacturing industry.

D. AUDITOR CHOICE

Exhibit IV-17

THE RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION:
DOES THE CHOICE OF AUDITOR INFLUENCE THE
PUBLIC'S TRUST IN THE COMPANY

The great majority (83%) believed that the choice of auditor has an impact on the public's trust in the company. The rest (except for 2%) considered the choice of auditor to be irrelevant to the public.

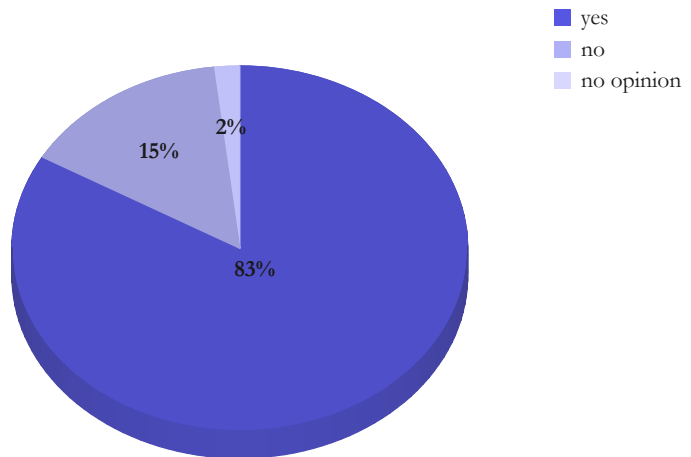
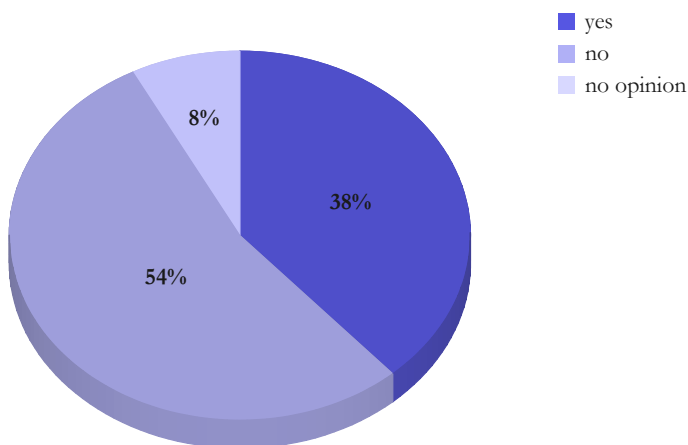


Exhibit IV-18

THE RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION: DO
YOU THINK IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO HAVE A
CERTAIN AUDITOR NOW COMPARED TO BEFORE?

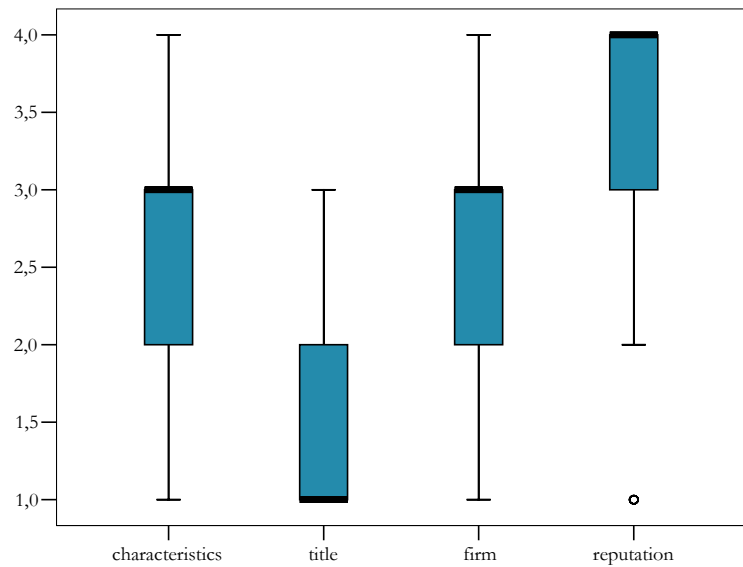


More than half of the respondents thought that it is not more important now to have a certain auditor. Almost 40% thought that more focus is on the individual auditor now then before.

Exhibit IV-19**THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT ATTRIBUTES WHEN ASSESSING THE AUDITOR**

The respondents were asked to rank four factors (characteristics, title, represented firm and reputation) with respect to what interested parties would consider most important when it comes to assessing the auditor. A 4 was the highest grade and 1 the lowest.

Reputation was ranked as the most important factor (median 4) and title was considered the least important factor (median 1). No one thought that title was most important and only one individual thought reputation was least important. Characteristics and represented firm share second and third place (median 3). As the “boxes” show, the dispersion around the median value was quite low for all factors, i.e. the respondents generally agreed on the relative importance of the observed factors.



Title	1,32	1,00
Represented Firm	2,56	3,00
Reputation	3,51	4,00

V. RESULTS – CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRES

Below follow the results from the client questionnaires. Where statistical results are presented, the answers to the sometimes accompanying open-ended questions are also included to give further insight into the respondents' way of thinking.

What is important to note is that, just as in the auditor questionnaires, fifteen characteristics were already given as alternatives. This will naturally affect the results since respondents might have found it easier to simply select one of these characteristics and not come up with their own. As the respondents had the opportunity to submit their own alternatives/characteristics, this explains why the charts show different combinations of characteristics.

The new and revised list of categories (see Methodology for the elimination of certain redundant categories):

- ◆ *Communicational Skills*
- ◆ *Problem Solving Skills*
- ◆ *Interpersonal Skills*
- ◆ *Analytical Skills*
- ◆ *Ability to Organize One's Time Well*
- ◆ *Ability to Update One's Professional Skills*
- ◆ *Flexibility*
- ◆ *Ability Take Initiatives*
- ◆ *Ability to Defend One's Views*
- ◆ *Aptitude for Numbers*
- ◆ *Ability to Handle Stress*
- ◆ *Cooperational Skills*

A. THE RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

Exhibit V-1

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

	Valid	42
	Missing	0
Mean		47,02
Median		46,50
Minimum		27
Maximum		60

The range is high, yielding a satisfactory age distribution. There are few respondents between the ages 27 and 39, but nearly all ages between 40 and 60 are represented. Both the mean and the median age is 47 years.

Exhibit V-2

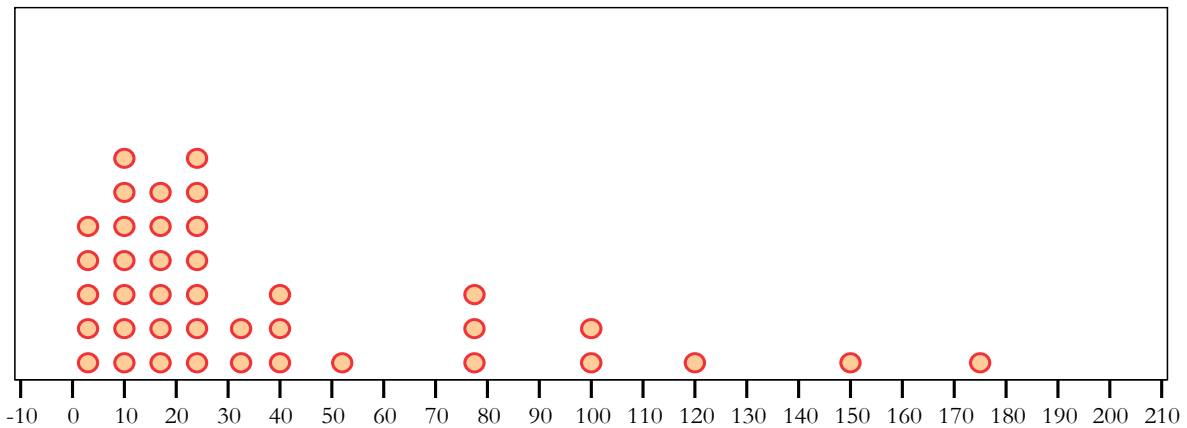
GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

	<i>% of Cases</i>
Males	52,4%
Females	47,6%

The even distribution of males and females can also be considered satisfactory since this means that the opinions of both sexes are equally represented.

Exhibit V-3

SIZE OF COMPANY – BASED ON THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

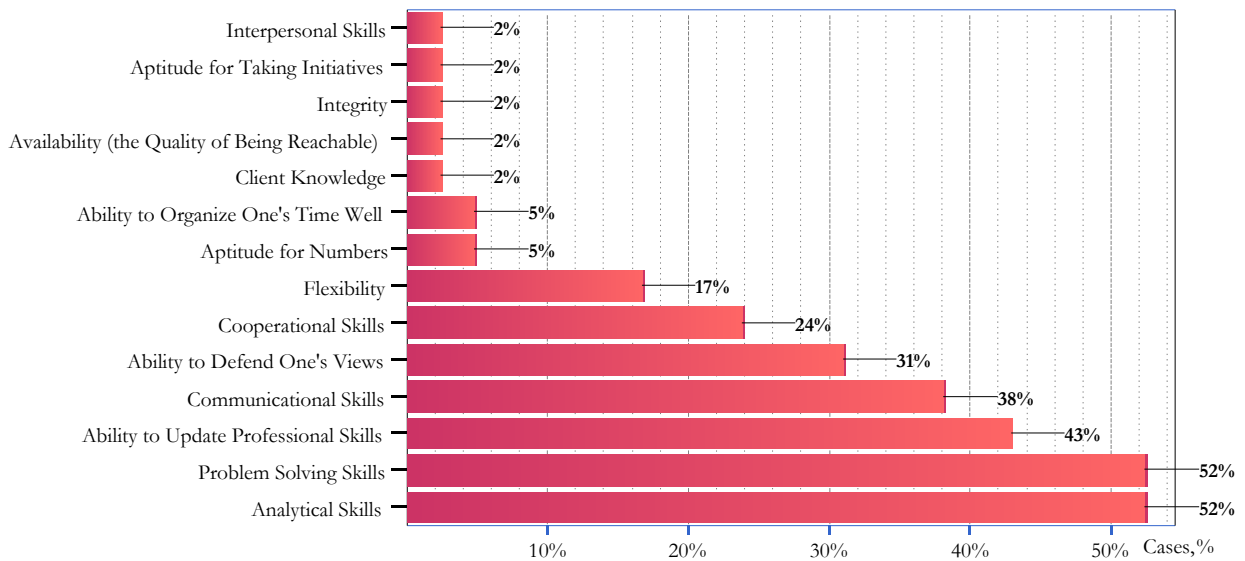


This scatter plot shows the distribution of the represented companies based on the number of employees. The average sized company had 22/37 (median/mean) employees.

B. DESIRED AUDITOR CHARACTERISTICS

Exhibit V-4

THE AUDITOR’S THREE MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS (ACCORDING TO CLIENTS)



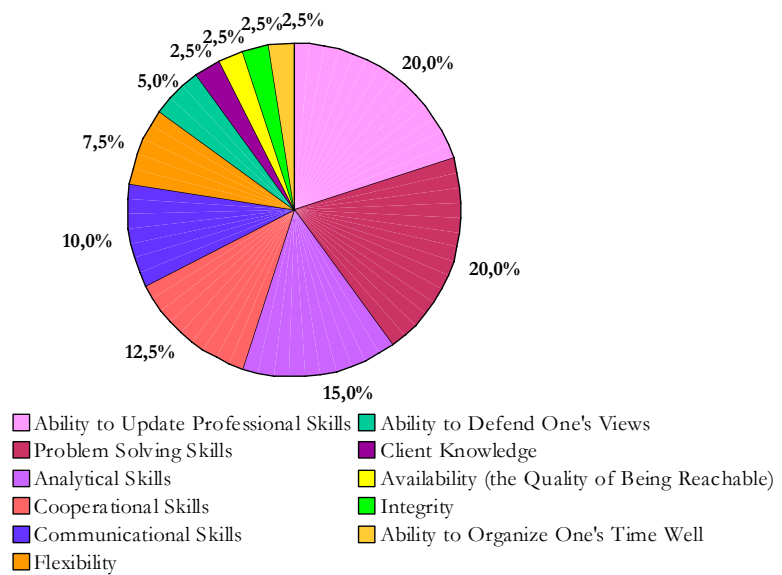
From a list of fifteen characteristics, the respondents were asked to choose the three characteristics that they thought were the auditor’s most important. They were also given the opportunity to name other characteristics if they could not find any appropriate alternatives in the list. Note, therefore, that the percentage cannot and does not add up to 100%.

The respondents value *analytical skills* and *problem solving skills* higher than any other characteristics; half of the respondents (52%) thought these two were most important. Five other characteristics also stick out, of which the *ability to update one’s professional skills* was ranked the highest (43%).

Exhibit V-5**THE AUDITOR'S MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTIC
(ACCORDING TO CLIENTS)**

From a list of fifteen characteristics, the respondents were asked to choose *one* characteristic that they thought was the auditor's most important.

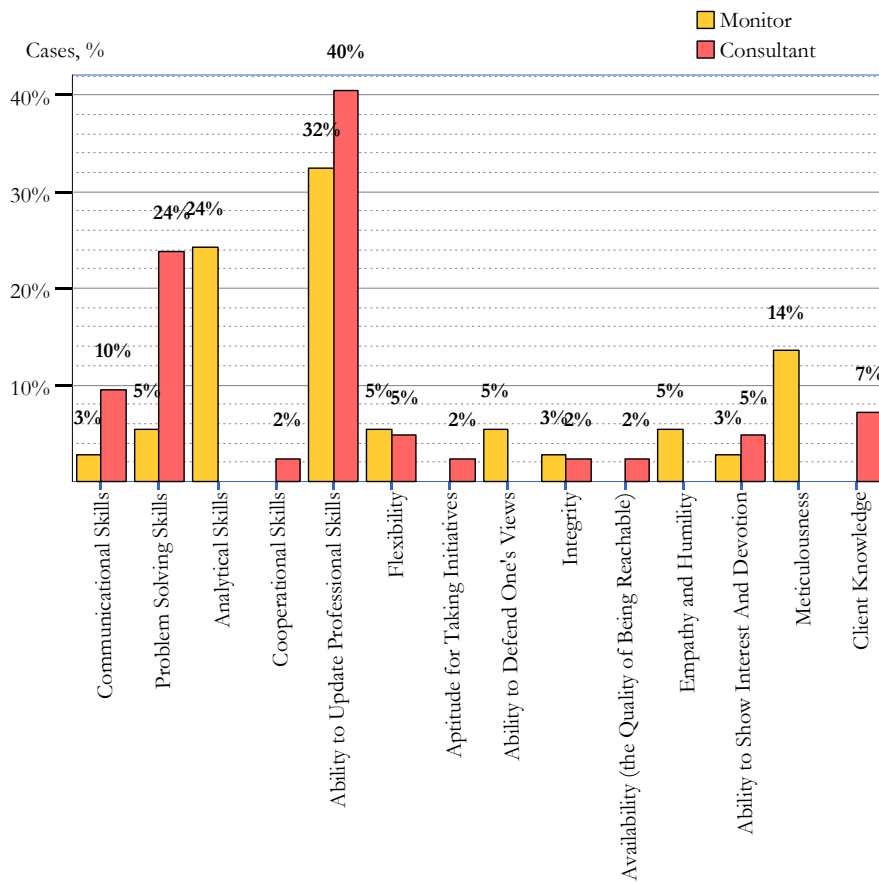
What is most surprising is that the order of the three most important characteristics is reversed (see Exhibit V-4). The implication of this is that of those who thought the ability to update professional skills was among the three most important characteristics, many thought it was *the* most important characteristic. At the same time, *more* people thought analytical skills were essential, but as seen in this exhibit, not as many considered this characteristic to be *the* most important characteristic.



Looking at this chart without making any comparisons, what is clear is that there is a quite even distribution between the three top characteristics: the *ability to update one's professional skills* (20%), *problem solving skills* (20%) and *analytical skills* (15%). These three together comprise half of the respondents' answers. The ability to update professional skills was considered fundamental because the auditor is expected to be an expert at issues that clients themselves cannot possibly master. This is especially important since so many changes take place nowadays in the accounting field. Moreover, problem solving skills are needed as the client often finds him- or herself in situations where there are many possible solutions and which require the input from someone external to the organization who can offer professional views.

Exhibit V-6

CHARACTERISTICS REQUIRED IN THE ROLE AS MONITOR AND CONSULTANT, RESPECTIVELY (ACCORDING TO CLIENTS)



The ability to update one's professional skills was considered most important in both roles, although it was somewhat more important in the consulting role than in the monitoring role (40% and 32%, respectively).

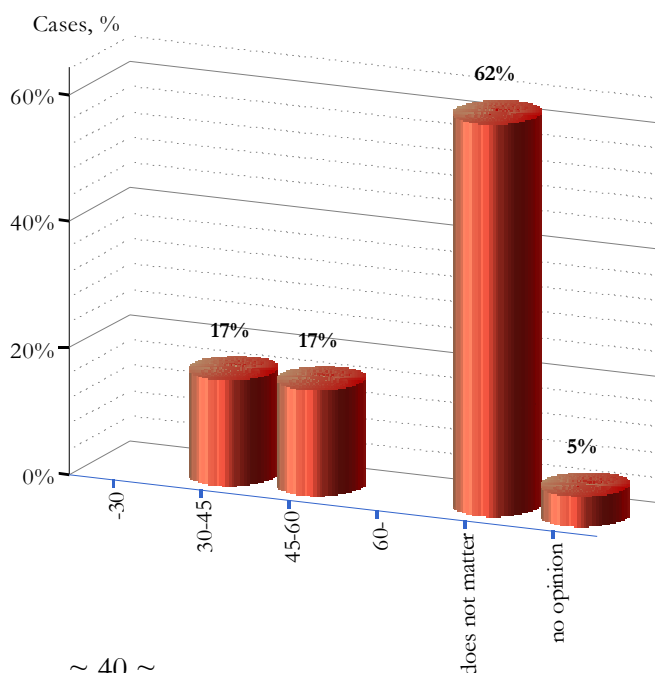
Analytical skills (24%) and meticulousness (14), were exclusively important to the auditor in the monitoring role, whereas problem solving skills (24%) and communicational skills (10%) were characteristics considered especially important to the auditor in the role as consultant.

C. DESIRED AUDITOR PROFILE

As shown in the graph, most clients claimed to be indifferent to the auditor's age. A third of the respondents, however, preferred an auditor between either 30-45 years or 45-60 years. Of those who thought a "younger" auditor is desirable, some argued that this was because he or she has gained sufficient experience to perform well, is still curious and open-minded, and has a "modern" way of thinking. Others argued that an "older" auditor is preferable because he or she has gained more experience and is more self-confident. The most common opinion, however, is that age does not matter because it is more about the individual

Exhibit V-7

THE AUDITOR'S AGE: THE AGE INTERVAL PREFERRED BY CLIENTS



(and his or her knowledge, personality and involvement).

Exhibit V-8

THE RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION: DO YOU FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE AROUND OR FIND IT EASIER TO CONFIDE IN A FEMALE/MALE AUDITOR?

	<i>% of Cases</i>
Female	0%
Male	0%
Does Not Matter	100%
No Opinion	0%

The unanimous answer was that gender does not have the slightest effect on the respondent's ability to confide in and/or feel comfortable around the auditor.

Most of the respondents (71% of the males and 50% of the females) do not agree with the statement that the mission/task has an influence on gender preference, and quite many have no opinion at all. More women than men have no opinion (45% and 19%, respectively) and only men find the statement to be completely true.

Exhibit V-9

THE AUDITOR'S GENDER: THE INFLUENCE OF THE MISSION/TASK ON GENDER PREFERENCE (ACCORDING TO CLIENTS)

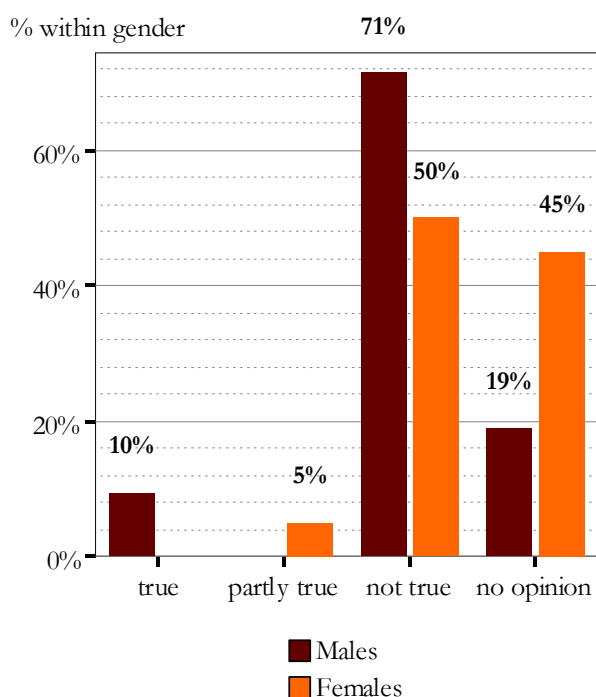


Exhibit V-10

ADVANTAGES OF HAVING A FEMALE/MALE AUDITOR

	<i>Male Auditor</i>	<i>Female Auditor</i>
Yes	2,4%	7,1%
No	97,6%	92,9%

Very few respondents perceived any advantages of having a male/female auditor. One male respondent found it easier to confide in a female auditor, although it was

understood by the comments that some clients preferred an auditor of the same sex, since this enabled, to a greater extent, the exchange of thoughts and ideas.

Exhibit V-11

THE AUDITOR'S TITLE: THE INFLUENCE OF TITLE ON TRUST BUILDING (ACCORDING TO CLIENTS)

Nearly two thirds of the respondents agreed with the statement that title matters to trust building, with 43% saying it is true and 19% saying it is partly true. One fourth disagreed with the statement.

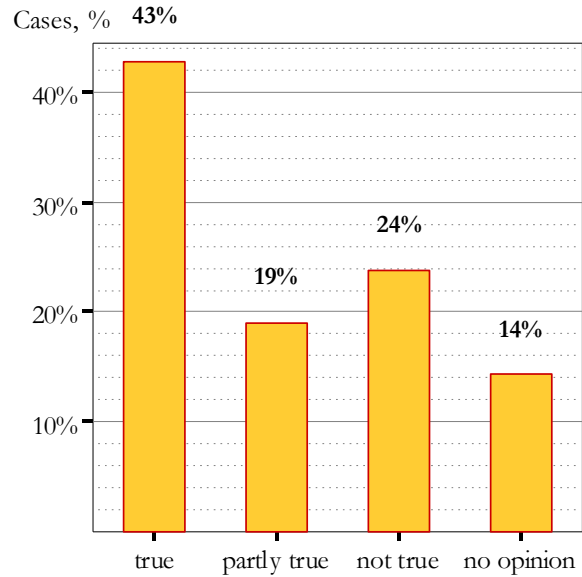
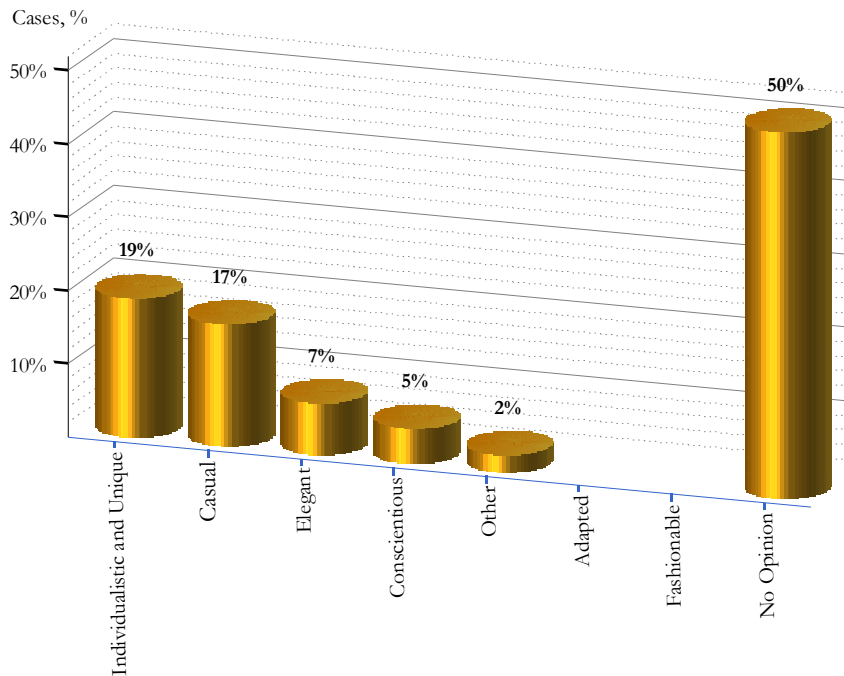


Exhibit V-12

THE AUDITOR'S CLOTHING: CLOTHING PREFERRED BY CLIENTS



Note that the option *adapted clothing* is not eligible to clients.

This question elicited fewer responses than any other as 50% proved to be indifferent to the auditor's clothing. Many expressed the beliefs that clothing has no influence on the performance of the auditor and that the focus of the auditor should be on auditing and not on fashion(!).

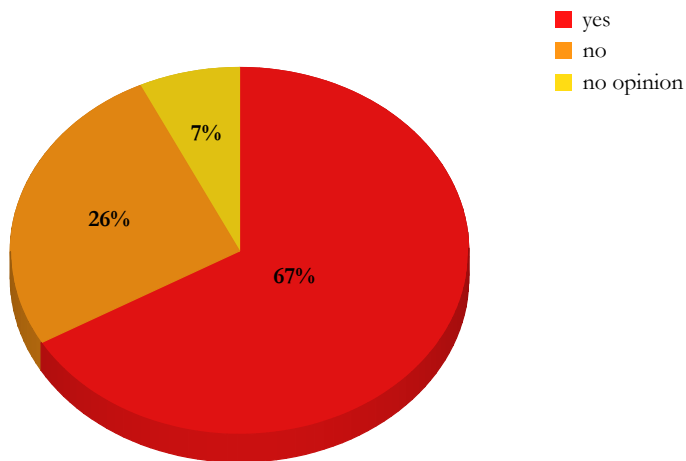
Individualistic & unique (19%) as well as *casual* (17%) were the two "styles" preferred,

whereas fashionable clothing was not considered desirable by any respondent. Individualistic & unique clothing was said to imply self-confidence, open-mindedness and professionalism. Casual clothing on the other hand implies that the auditor is relaxed and confident in his professional role.

D. AUDITOR CHOICE

Exhibit V-13

THE RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION:
DOES THE CHOICE OF AUDITOR INFLUENCE THE
PUBLIC'S TRUST IN THE COMPANY



Two thirds of the respondents thought that the choice of auditor influences the public's trust in the company while one fourth did not think that the choice of auditor matters in this respect. One explanation for why it is important to have a certain auditor (according to the respondents) is that having an auditor who is considered trustworthy facilitates communication with banks and authorities.

Exhibit V-14

THE RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION:
DO YOU THINK IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO HAVE A
CERTAIN AUDITOR NOW COMPARED TO BEFORE?

By a certain auditor, we refer to the possession of certain attributes (characteristics, title, represented firm, reputation).

40% of the respondents did not believe that having a certain auditor is more important today than before. One third had no opinion and a mere 29% had noticed a difference between now and before.

Those who noticed an increased importance of having a certain auditor today, explain this by referring to recent accounting scandals (such as Enron) and the increased focus on auditors guilty of fraud or embezzlement.

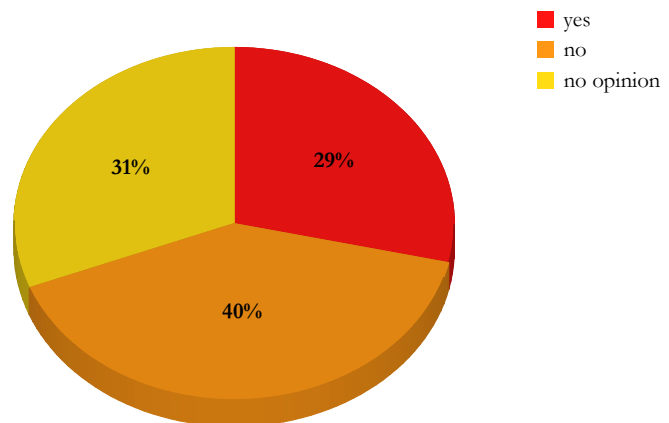
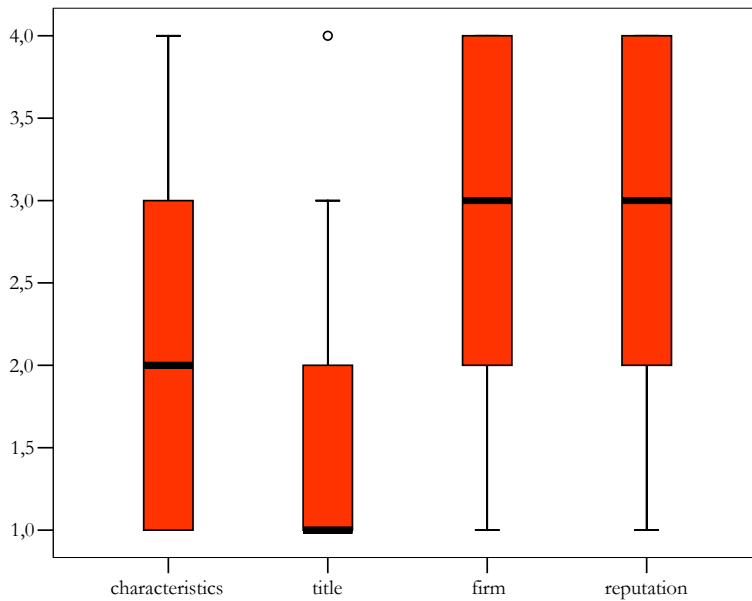


Exhibit V-15**THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT ATTRIBUTES
WHEN ASSESSING THE AUDITOR (ACCORDING TO
CLIENTS)**

The respondents were asked to rank four factors (characteristics, title, represented firm and reputation) with respect to what interested parties would consider most important when it comes to assessing the auditor. A 4 was the highest grade and 1 the lowest.

Reputation along with represented firm were ranked as the most important factors (median 3) and title was considered the least important factor (median 1). Only one individual considered title to be most important. As the “boxes” show, the dispersion around the median value was quite high for all factors but title, i.e. the responses were quite varied.



	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
Characteristics	2,29	2,00
Title	1,58	1,00
Represented Firm	2,88	3,00
Reputation	2,88	3,00

VI. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Below follows the analysis of our results. All exhibits⁸⁸ are discussed and, when possible, grouped in order to allow for a comparison between the auditors' and the clients' answers. This, along with the drawing of parallels to the theoretical framework, will eventually lead us to the answering of our research questions at the end of this paper.

From our results it is possible to derive two average individuals who each may represent the majority/norm or group of individuals who have participated in the two separate surveys. Hopefully these two representatives may satisfactorily reflect the constitution of the audit profession and their clientele on the whole, although some limitations must be underlined: clients are only small and medium sized firms and all companies and audit firms are located in Sweden and therefore influenced by Swedish culture and norms.

The average client is a man (although this is not indisputable since nearly as many females as males are represented in the statistics) aged 47 who bears the title CFO at a medium sized company of approximately 22 employees (see Exhibit V-1, Exhibit V-2, Exhibit V-3). Meanwhile, our findings suggest that the prototypical auditor is a man aged 45 with the highest-level certification (Swe. *Auktoriserad revisor*) who considers himself as having excellent communicational and analytical skills (see Exhibit IV-4; henceforth, when an exhibit is referred to, only the number of the exhibit is used).


*The Relative Importance of Different Attributes When Assessing the Auditor (IV-19) and
The Relative Importance of Different Attributes When Assessing the Auditor (according to
Clients) (V-15)*


We would like to begin by discussing whether the individual auditor can have an impact on the public's trust in a certain company. This is a relevant question since if one believes the *individual* is of consequence in this context, characteristics – an integral part of each individual – must also

Exhibit VI-1

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

<i>The Relative Importance of Different Attributes When Assessing the Auditor</i>	<i>The Relative Importance of Different Attributes When Assessing the Auditor (according to Clients)</i>
1. Reputation	1. & 2 Reputation and represented firm
2. & 3. Characteristics and represented firm	3. Characteristics
4. Title	4. Title



matter. It is then logical to ask *how* important characteristics are considered to be. Our results show that the auditors are more convinced than the clients that the choice of auditor has an impact on the public's trust in the company. As Exhibit VI-1 shows, characteristics are considered more important than title, but less important than reputation (and represented firm, according to clients). However, whilst most auditors believe that the choice of auditor matters, they do not think it matters more today than before. Neither do clients think it matters more today than before, with the exception that some clients have said there is more focus on the individual auditor today as a result of the recent company scandals, but also as a result of perceived greater responsibility on the part of the auditor and because of the increased focus on the auditor's professionalism in media. This is consistent with the theories discussed in the theoretical framework.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ All exhibits are explicitly discussed with the exception of Exhibit V-5, Exhibit V-8 and Exhibit V-10, since these were not considered as relevant for our comparisons.

⁸⁹ See Part III - A. Integrity, Ethics and Morals

A. WHAT CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD AN AUDITOR POSSESS?

As stated in previous chapters, the auditor's personal qualities and characteristics are considered important to job performance and success. We therefore first ask ourselves what characteristics one should possess.


*The Most Important Characteristic to Job Performance (IV-5) and
The Three Characteristics Most Frequently Developed during the Career (IV-6)*


The average auditor considers the most important characteristics to be communicational skills and analytical skills. The average auditor experiencing that communication is central to his work, is analogous with the trend that communicational skills are becoming increasingly important in order to successfully inform clients of current conditions and

circumstances.⁹¹ The importance of these skills are also highlighted in another study which shows the most important characteristics to managers and partners: communicational skills, along with a sense of responsibility and business acumen.⁹² Moreover, analytical skills are also deemed important by many of the auditors, which finds support in what is said about the role as monitor⁹³ - it is not possible to go through every single transaction, but one needs to be able to see what is relevant when confronted with too much information.

The third and fourth most important characteristics are the ability to update one's professional skills and interpersonal skills. The ability to update professional skills, although a requisite for the job, is, as Westerdahl states, becoming "less" important. This is consistent with our results since this characteristic is considered important but not *most* important. On the other hand, interpersonal skills, being one of the available options, should perhaps have received more attention if one is to believe Westerdahl.⁹⁴ Whereas communicational skills are more concerned with the ability to make the client understand something, interpersonal skills are more about understanding the client. Perhaps this difference is subtle, but it was clearly understood from the open-ended answers, that the auditors had interpreted these characteristics as we had hoped. The focus was *not* social luncheons but rather on making oneself understood.

All these characteristics, which the auditors consider important, they have also been forced to develop during their careers. However, the ability to update professional skills has not been

Exhibit VI-2

SUMMARY OF RESULTS⁹⁰

<i>The Most Important Characteristic to Job Performance</i>	<i>The Three Characteristics Most Frequently Developed during the Career</i>
1. Communicational Skills (39%)	1. Communicational Skills (47%)
2. Analytical Skills (13%)	2. Interpersonal Skills (42%)
3. & 4. Ability to Update Professional Skills (9%), Interpersonal Skills (9%)	3. Ability to Organize One's Time Well (36%)
6. Ability to Organize One's Time Well (6%)	4. Analytical Skills (35%)
	5. Ability to Update Professional Skills (27%)

⁹⁰ Note that where three characteristics were chosen, the sum of the percentages is 300%. Therefore, a comparison of percentages would in this case be misleading – only the internal ranking is of interest.

⁹¹ see Part III-A. Communicational Skills

⁹² see Part I-B. Previous Studies. These last two characteristics (a sense of responsibility and business acumen) were not among the alternatives given to our respondents, but it is still noteworthy that not a single auditor brought up, for instance, business acumen.

⁹³ see Part III-B. The Businessman

⁹⁴ see Part III-A. Communicational Skills

developed to the same degree. We think this might be because it is an ability that is so ingrained that few auditors ever consider it. On the other hand, an ability that is not considered very important compared to others, but which is still among the characteristics that an auditor needs to master, is the ability to organize one's time well. This could be said to be another dimension of the problem mentioned by Cassel – since it is impossible to do and see and revise everything, one needs to carefully schedule one's activities.

❧ *The Three Most Frequently Featured Characteristics (IV-4a) vs.*
The Auditor's Three Most Important Characteristics (according to Clients) (V-4) ❧

Our average auditor has several of the characteristics that our average client desires. However, clients would generally prefer their auditors to be more proficient at solving problems and more able to update their professional skills than the auditors realize.

The auditors' communicational and analytical skills are highly developed, but the clients value the latter to a much greater extent. This leads us to hypothesize two things: either, clients do simply not see it as important having an auditor with good communicational skills, and in that case, the importance of being a number communicator (rather than a number cruncher)⁹⁵ is overrated; or, clients take for granted that their auditors can explain their work to them. Furthermore, the auditors also emphasize their interpersonal skills, although these seem to go practically unnoticed by the clients. This could be explained by the fact that these skills might be replaceable by cooperational skills from the clients' point of view.

❧ *The Three Characteristics Most Frequently Advertised to Clients (IV-11) vs.*
The Auditor's Three Most Important Characteristics (according to Clients) (V-4) ❧

These questions were formulated in order to make possible a comparison between what clients demand and what auditors think they should supply. The most striking difference is that our typical auditor does not supply more than half of the analytical skills demanded by our typical client. The auditors believe their clients want them to be good at communication, but once again utterly overrates this characteristic. One characteristic is in absolute equilibrium, however, namely the ability to update one's professional skills, which is deemed equally important by both clients and auditors.

Exhibit VI-3

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

<i>The Three Most Frequently Featured Characteristics</i>	<i>The Auditor's Three Most Important Characteristics (According to Clients)</i>
1. Communicational Skills (66%)	1. & 2. Analytical Skills (52%), Problem Solving Skills (52%)
2. Analytical Skills (56%)	3. Ability to Update One's Professional Skills (43%)
3. Interpersonal Skills (29%)	4. Communicational Skills (38%)
4. Ability to Update One's Professional Skills (26%)	11-14. Interpersonal Skills (2%)

Exhibit VI-4

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

<i>The Three Characteristics Most Frequently Advertised to Clients</i>	<i>The Auditor's Three Most Important Characteristics (according to Clients)</i>
1. Communicational Skills (70%)	1. & 2. Analytical Skills (52%), Problem Solving Skills (52%)
2. Problem Solving Skills (63%)	3. Ability to Update Professional Skills (43%)
3. Ability to Update Professional Skills (43%)	4. Communicational Skills (38%)
5. Analytical Skills (28%)	

⁹⁵ see Part III-A. Communicational Skills


*Characteristics Required in the Role as Monitor and Consultant, Respectively (IV-7) vs.
 Characteristics Required in the Role as Monitor and Consultant, Respectively (according
 to Clients) (V-6)*


On this subject, opinions largely diverge. The auditors claim that the most important characteristic in their role as monitor is having analytical skills. This includes being able to sort out relevant information and thus being able to see the “big picture” - abilities also considered important by Cassel.⁹⁶ The majority of the auditors also thinks it is somewhat important to have the ability to organize one’s well and the ability to defend one’s views (note that these characteristics receive more attention in this context than when the the auditor role in general is referred to). This also coincides with Cassel’s view that one must carefully prepare the execution of the monitoring process and be able to (forcefully) point out possible shortcomings in the company’s financial reports. Cassel also stresses that the monitor should have client knowledge. As client knowledge was not given as an alternative to the respondents, we realize this must have affected the outcome. However, more clients than auditors have mentioned this characteristic, and so we ask if this is not, after all, an example of the infamous expectation gap. Clients also expect their auditors to, first and foremost, be able to update his or her professional skills, thereafter have developed analytical skills and be meticulous. Only analytical skills are considered a necessity by both. One conclusion is that clients, in all situations, have their attention on the auditor’s professionalism with regard to technical abilities, whereas auditors focus on softer competencies. One wonders then if perhaps auditors take technical skills for granted?

As for characteristics needed in the role as consultant, the majority of auditors as well as clients regard problem solving skills, communicational skills and the ability to update professional skills as essential. However, the relative importance of these characteristics differs between the two groups of respondents. “The auditors think problem solving skills are most important, whereas the clients think that the ability to update professional skills is much more important. We thought that perhaps the need for an auditor with problem solving skills varies with company size since smaller companies might not have the same expertise and therefore have higher expectations on the auditor and his ability to act as a sounding-board.”⁹⁷ However, when we tried to verify this, the comparison did not show any significant results, most likely due to our limited sample.

Exhibit VI-5

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

<i>Auditors</i>	<i>Clients</i>
<i>Characteristics Required in the Role as Monitor</i>	
1. Analytical Skills (46%)	1. Ability to Update One’s Professional Skills (32%)
2. Ability to Organize One’s Time (16%)	2. Analytical Skills (24%)
3. Ability to Defend One’s Views (13%)	3. Meticulousness (14%)
<i>Characteristics Required in the Role as Consultant</i>	
1. Problem Solving Skills (41%)	1. Ability to Update One’s Professional Skills (40%)
2. Communicational Skills (32%)	2. Problem Solving Skills (24%)
3. Ability to Update One’s Professional Skills (13%)	3. Communicational Skills (10%)

⁹⁶ See Part III-B. The Monitor

⁹⁷Andersson PM, Hellberg CR. *Förväntningsgap och revisorsroll – en studie av förväntningsgapet ur olika perspektiv*. [Master Thesis]. Lund: Lund University, 2005

*Characteristics Needed to Handle the Conflict Resulting from the Clash between the
Consulting Role and the Monitoring Role (IV-9) and
Characteristics Needed to Resist Pressure from Clients that Could Jeopardize the
Auditor's Independence and Integrity (IV-10)*

We have chosen to treat these two separate questions simultaneously since they are interrelated; the answers to the first question primarily refer to the need for integrity to be able to separate the two roles, whilst the answers to the second question refer to the need for certain characteristics that will help the auditor *maintain* his integrity.

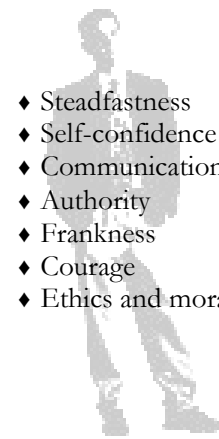
The monitor is expected to keep a certain distance to his client and have the public's trust, whilst the consultant has to adapt and relate to the individual company and have the client's trust.⁹⁸ Perhaps this clash to which we refer is not apparent to all, and especially not to clients. The surveyed auditors, however, showed awareness of the gravity of being able to draw clear boundaries between the two conflicting roles, and thus uphold one's independence and integrity.

What does integrity imply then? Respondents suggest that integrity first and foremost is accomplished through the ability to defend one's views and then explain one's standpoint to the client. That is, firstly, courage to stand up for one's beliefs is necessary when the auditor experiences pressure from, or conflicts with, the client,⁹⁹ and secondly, having communicational skills are the key requirement in order to be able to clarify to the client what can be expected from the auditor. The auditors' answers also show that in order to uphold one's integrity and independence, it is of great importance that one have high morals and ethics as well as self-confidence and knowledge of existing rules and regulations. Moreover, emphasis was on the auditor's need of being steadfast, frank and authoritative. These findings show a clear parallel to the auditor's role as police. The auditor cannot simply agree to everything the client suggests but has a responsibility towards shareholders and society.

Exhibit VI-6

WHAT DOES INTEGRITY IMPLY?

- ◆ Steadfastness
- ◆ Self-confidence
- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Authority
- ◆ Frankness
- ◆ Courage
- ◆ Ethics and morals



⁹⁸ Johansson C, Notelid J. *Konflikten mellan revisorns dubbla roller – kan en revisor vara oberoende?* [Bachelor Thesis]. Luleå: Luleå Technical University, 2005

⁹⁹ See Part III-A. Integrity, Ethics and Morals

B. WHAT PROFILE IS DESIRABLE?

The Three Most Frequently Featured Characteristics – Males vs. Females (IV-4b)

This analysis is intended to highlight possible differences between the sexes which can be interesting to keep in mind throughout the next few comparisons. The results are derived from Exhibit IV-4a in order to explore the differences between the sexes with regard to featured characteristics. Most noteworthy are the

characteristics, communicational skills, interpersonal skills, analytical skills and flexibility, since the results differ from those of a previous study carried out by FAR.¹⁰⁰ The women in our study consider themselves as having good communicational skills but not so good interpersonal skills. This can be contrasted with the men's belief that they have good interpersonal skills and not as good communicational skills. These results correspond only in part to the aforementioned study. The interviewed female auditors claimed to have a facility for making contact with clients, which in our study would have been equivalent to a higher outcome for the interpersonal skills category. On the other hand, since men have better established social networks (according to the study), this might be the reason our male respondents believe they have good interpersonal skills. The study by FAR also shows that women consider themselves better at seeing the "big picture", which in our case is part of being analytical. As our results show, however, the male respondents claim to have *higher* analytical skills, as well as higher problem solving skills. Another observation is that the female auditors in our study consider themselves flexible to a smaller degree than the males, which is the opposite result of that presented in the study carried out by FAR. Are these differences significant? Could some discrepancies be explained by the fact that the other study is ten years old? We would like to believe our results are valid, but one possible explanation for the differences is that our study comprises very few women and might not give a completely fair view of the actual situation.

Advantages of Being a Woman in the Audit Profession (IV-13a) vs. Advantages of Being a Man in the Audit Profession (IV-13b)

These results are somewhat surprising. *More* females than males think they have advantages in the profession. Considering what has been discussed in earlier chapters – that the audit profession is still dominated by men – women should enjoy fewer benefits. Perhaps the explanation for our results is that men take their advantages for granted. One male respondent

Exhibit VI-7

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

<i>The Three Most Frequently Featured Characteristics (Males)</i>	<i>The Three Most Frequently Featured Characteristics (Females)</i>
1. & 2. Communicational Skills (60%), Analytical Skills (60%)	1. Communicational Skills (80%)
3. Interpersonal Skills (38%)	2. & 3. Analytical Skills (47%), Ability to Update One's Professional Skills (47%)
7. Ability to Update One's Professional Skills (18%)	8.-12. Interpersonal Skills (7%)

Exhibit VI-8

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

<i>Advantages of Being a Woman in the Audit Profession</i>	<i>Advantages of Being a Man in the Audit Profession</i>
1. No (53%)	1. No (72%)
2. Yes (47%)	2. Yes (28%)

¹⁰⁰ See Part III-C. Gender

admitted to this, saying that there are advantages but not more than in life in general(!). Contrary to the findings in Exhibit IV-4b, but in correspondence with the previously mentioned study (by FAR), one female respondent claimed women have better interpersonal skills and can therefore more easily make contact with the clients. Other than that, we believe that by some it is considered taboo to admit that men and women face different conditions, and that therefore many respondents are reluctant to express possible inequalities between the sexes.

The Auditor's Gender: The Influence of the Mission/Task on Gender Preference (IV-16) vs.
The Auditor's Gender: The Influence of the Mission/Task on Gender Preference (according to Clients) (V-9)

Exhibit VI-9

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

<i>The Auditor's Gender: The Influence of the Mission/Task on Gender Preference</i>		<i>The Auditor's Gender: The Influence of the Mission/Task on Gender Preference (according to Clients)</i>	
<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
1. Not true (40%)	1. & 2. Not true (36%), Partly true (36%)	1. Not true (71%)	1. Not true (50%)
2. Partly true (35%)	3. No opinion (21%)	2. No opinion (19%)	2. No opinion (45%)
3. No opinion (20%)	4. True (7%)	3. True (10%)	3. Partly true (5%)
4. True (5%)		4. Partly true (0%)	4. True (0%)

The difference between these outcomes is conspicuous; more than a third of both female and male auditors believe different tasks/missions could require either a man or a woman, whereas hardly any clients consider gender to be a factor. Could it really be that clients are indifferent to whether they have a female or a male auditor? By the comments made in the open-ended questions, this seems to be the case. Many clients maintain that the importance of auditor expertise far surpasses that of auditor gender. Nevertheless, one would expect clients to, when faced with a choice, have a certain predilection toward one particular gender. The explanation would be that although men and women may be equally skilled/qualified,¹⁰¹ it is impossible to ignore evidence that men and women possess different qualities and to a different extent. Also, other studies have shown that the auditor's gender *does* affect the client's perception of him or her.¹⁰² Women have in these studies, for instance, been considered more knowledgeable, more credible and more friendly. Again we ask, is it taboo to admit to gender preference? After all, as the previously mentioned study shows, despite acknowledging that women are both more knowledgeable and more trustworthy than men, a male auditor is still more likely to be hired.

The Auditor's Age: The Age Interval Thought to Be Preferred by Clients (IV-14) vs.
The Auditor's Age: The Age Interval Preferred by Clients (V-7)

The results here are noticeably similar. All respondents (auditors and clients alike) agree that, in general, age does not matter. However, an auditor who is "too young" (<30 years) or "too old" (>60 years) is not quite as desirable as one who is somewhere in between. Many

Exhibit VI-10



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

<i>The Auditor's Age: The Age Interval Thought to Be Preferred by Clients</i>	<i>The Auditor's Age: The Age Interval Preferred by Clients</i>
1. Does not matter (48%)	1. Does not matter (62%)
2. & 3. No opinion (19%), 45-60 (19%)	2. & 3. 30-45 (17%), 45-60 (17%)
4. 30-45 (13%)	4. No opinion (5%)
5. 60- (2%)	5. & 6. -30 (0%), 60- (0%)
6. -30 (0%)	

¹⁰¹ See Part III-C. Title



¹⁰² See Part III-C.:Gender

auditors think being 30-45 years old is less favorable than being 45-60 years old, whereas many clients consider having an auditor of either of these age intervals as being equally advantageous. Clients value a “younger” auditor because such a person is sufficiently experienced but also “modern” and open-minded.


The Auditor's Title: The Influence of Title on Trust Building (IV-15) vs. 
The Auditor's Title: The Influence of Title on Trust Building (according to Clients) (V-11)

These results corroborate the assessment made by Mats Fredricsson, the former chairman of FAR, which is that more clients than auditors focus on the auditor's title. That auditors are more concerned about title than clients and that this is a result of the internal competition at firms¹⁰⁴ is

therefore questionable. Whereas the auditors think the statement (that title matters) is only partly true, the clients think it is completely true. Although, as Fredricson points out, the difference between different titles are not that great (considering that older auditors, for instance, have generally lower levels of education compared to younger auditors bearing the same title), perhaps auditors should remember the significance of the title's impact on trust building. Clients do, after all, experience to a somewhat greater extent, that title matters. However, as discussed above, title is less important than certain other attributes when it comes to assessing the auditor.


The Auditor's Clothing: Clothing Thought to Be Preferred by Clients (IV-17) vs. 
The Auditor's Clothing: Clothing Preferred by Clients (V-12)

Most auditors believe they should dress as their clients do. They emphasize that one should not wear a suit when visiting a garage or repair shop. This, of course, made us curious as to whether the clients' answers might have any correlation to the industry in which they are active.

Is there evidence then that small clients who work in e.g. the manufacturing industry prefer casual clothing to a more elegant attire? Although no conclusions can be drawn from our rather limited number of respondents, it was apparent that, when we checked for any correlation between the variables, client industry had no visible effect on responses.

The clients are on the whole indifferent to the auditor's clothes as half of the respondents have no opinion in this matter and accentuate that it is the person *in* the clothes(!) that matters as well as the person's skills. Since several other studies related to this subject have been carried out and shown that clothes is a debatable issue with diverging opinions, our results are somewhat unexpected; that is, we thought this question would elicit more responses. Clients who agree that clothing matters, prefer their auditors to dress either individualistically or casually, motivating this

Exhibit VI-11

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

<i>The Auditor's Title: The Influence of Title on Trust Building</i> ¹⁰³	<i>The Auditor's Title: The Influence of Title on Trust Building (according to Clients)</i>
1. Partly true (50%)	1. True (43%)
2. Not true (30%)	2. Not true (24%)
3. True (13%)	3. Partly true (19%)
4. No opinion (6%)	4. No opinion (14%)

Exhibit VI-12

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

<i>The Auditor's Clothing: Clothing Thought to Be Preferred by Clients</i>	<i>The Auditor's Clothing: Clothing Preferred by Clients</i>
1. Adapted (35%)	1. No opinion (50%)
2. Individualistic & Unique (25%)	2. Individualistic & Unique (19%)
3. Elegant (12%)	3. Casual (17%)
4. Casual (10%)	4. Elegant (7%)

¹⁰³ For simplicity, an average percentage is given, based on the responses from the two groups of respondents.

¹⁰⁴ See Part III-C. Title

by saying that these styles imply self-confidence. As seen in previous research, casual clothing can also give a sense of trustworthiness. This seems reasonable since a person cannot “hide” behind a fancy exterior or cause others to be intimidated by his or her appearing superior. Also, of those who claim clothes do matter, some state that one cannot possibly dress however one pleases if one hopes to maintain an air of professionalism. That a formal attire communicates a professional image is an opinion also expressed in other studies (especially by older employees and auditors at higher positions).¹⁰⁵ Finally, it is noteworthy that no respondent thought fashionable clothing was preferable, contrary to what was claimed by the brand-image consultant cited in the theoretical framework.

¹⁰⁵ See Part III-C. Appearance

VII. CONCLUSION

We have asked ourselves what characteristics are needed, and what profile is desirable, in the audit profession. By what has been previously published on this subject, we were led to believe that the profession has undergone changes which imply that the auditor has become more “visible”. By this we mean that more focus seems to be on the auditor and his or her professionalism, but also that the need for technical skills has been reduced and gradually been replaced by the need for other qualities and competencies. We see these as interrelated as the results from our research confirm that in order to convey an air of professionalism it is not enough to only master a set of rules and regulations, but one also needs sound values, interpersonal skills and the ability to develop and nourish professional relations.

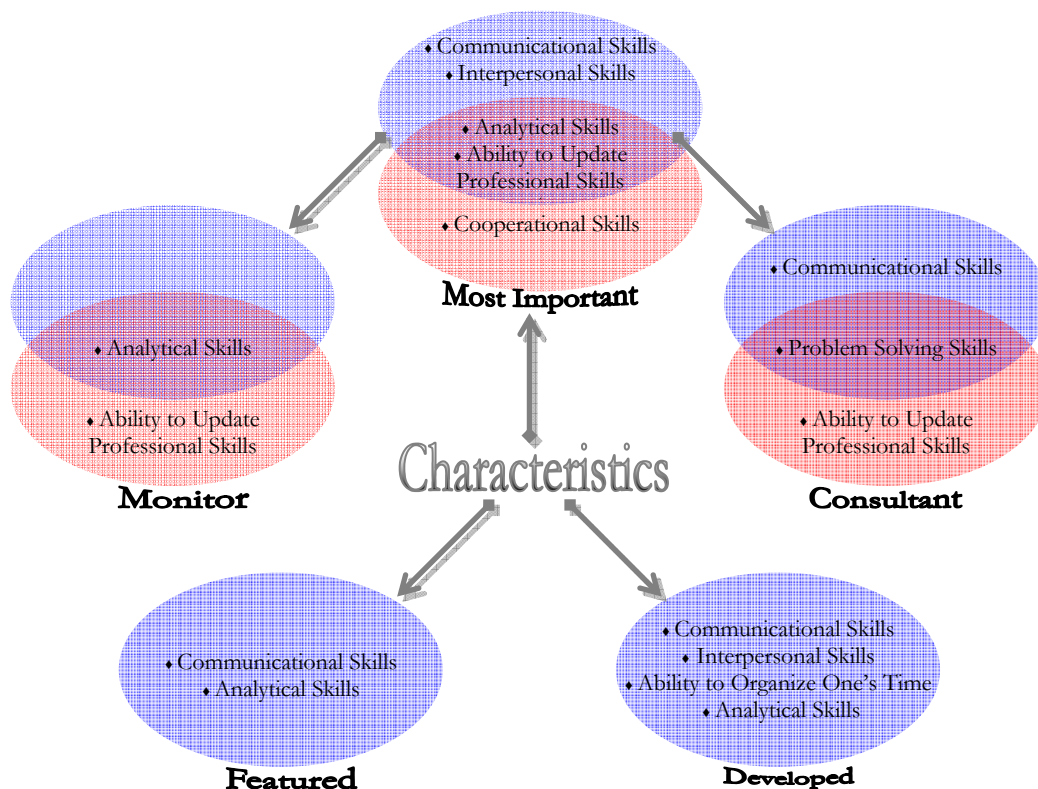
Closely related to personal qualities is our second research issue concerning the auditor profile, since one’s profile affects the characteristics that one possesses, at the same time as the attributes which constitute the profile are characteristics in themselves.

WHAT CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD AN AUDITOR POSSESS?

In order to answer the first research question, we have asked which characteristics auditors perceive as being most important and which characteristics clients find the most desirable. Moreover, as there is much focus on the issue of the auditor’s independence, we have also questioned what characteristics are needed in the auditor’s role as monitor, in the role as consultant and in order to handle the potential clash between these two roles. The exhibit below summarizes and compares our results.

Exhibit VII-1

FIRST RESEARCH QUESTION



This chart shows the most conspicuous characteristics from our results, the light blue ellipses representing the auditors’ point of view, the light red ellipses representing the clients’ point of view. Where the ellipses overlap, the responses shared by both groups of respondents are shown.

We conclude that some characteristics are considered important by both groups of respondents, but that opinions largely diverge. The auditors have emphasized communicational skills in almost every case, with the sole exception that it is not considered as important in the auditor's role as monitor. As is also noticeable, interpersonal skills have been ranked high, along with analytical skills, both of which the auditors have been forced to develop and deem most important. The clients, on the other hand, have repeatedly said that the ability to update professional skills is the most important characteristic and that having analytical skills is essential.

What is noteworthy is that non-technical skills have been highlighted by the respondents – and especially by the auditors – throughout. Having noticed this tendency, we divided the characteristics into two categories, placing characteristics that have to do with hard competencies (technical skills) in one, and characteristics that have to do with soft competencies (non-technical skills) in another. By analyzing the results from Exhibit IV-5 and Exhibit V-5 (which asked respondents what characteristic is the most important), we were able to see the relative importance of technical and non-technical skills, respectively (see Exhibit VII-2 below).

Exhibit VII-2

SOFT AND HARD COMPETENCIES

<i>Auditors</i>	<i>% of Cases</i>	<i>Soft Competencies</i>	<i>Hard Competencies</i>
Soft competencies	59 %	◆ <i>Communicational Skills</i>	◆ <i>Problem Solving Skills</i>
Hard competencies	41 %	◆ <i>Interpersonal Skills</i>	◆ <i>Analytical Skills</i>
		◆ <i>Ability to Defend One's Views</i>	◆ <i>Ability to Organize One's Time Well</i>
		◆ <i>Flexibility</i>	◆ <i>Ability to Update One's Professional Skills</i>
		◆ <i>Cooperational Skills</i>	◆ <i>Ability Take Initiatives</i>
		◆ <i>Empathy & Humility</i>	◆ <i>Aptitude for Numbers</i>
		◆ <i>Integrity</i>	◆ <i>Ability to Handle Stress</i>
			◆ <i>Client knowledge</i>
			◆ <i>Availability (Quality of Being Reachable)</i>
			◆ <i>Meticulousness</i>

Note: The above categorizations are based on our own judgments

As is apparent, auditors have stressed the importance of having soft competencies. We can thus draw a conclusion that auditors experience that their profession demands not only technical skills, but skills such as being able to communicate ideas, cooperate connect with people, defend one's beliefs in what is right and wrong, and have integrity. These last two abilities are especially important when it comes to upholding one's independence and, in the long run, one's professionalism. We believe that this tendency is reinforced by recent audit frauds and that auditors feel a new type of pressure, to prove themselves better professionals than ever before. When asked to name an auditor's most useful qualities, the answers were unambiguous. High social skills, genuine interest in the client's business, flexibility and courage to be oneself, were characteristics that stood out.

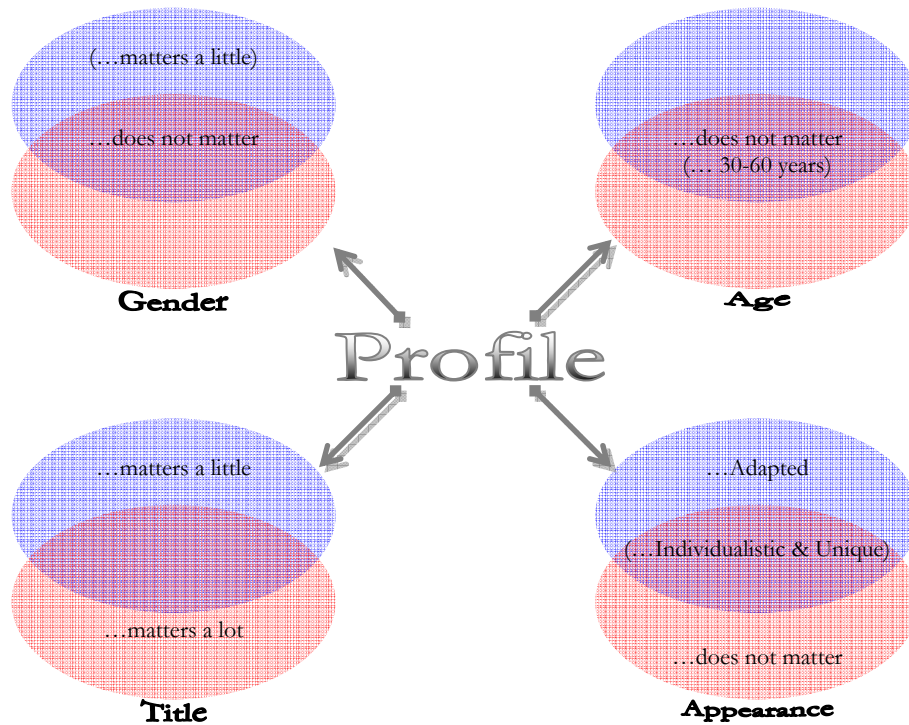
Clients focused first and foremost on hard competencies. Of course, the client's primary concern is that his or her auditor must be competent in accounting and have the knowledge that the client lacks in order to be able to offer useful advice and assistance. However, it is noteworthy that significant emphasis was on soft competencies as well, which leads us back to the discussion above. Clients have expressed the need for an auditor with the ability to defend his/her views, i.e. a strong auditor able to help the company build a trustworthy image in view of the multiple instances of scandals that have occurred. Clearly, technical skills are what clients buy, but soft skills should not be neglected as they differentiate the auditor, becoming his or her fundamental weapon in the battle for the clients.

WHAT PROFILE IS DESIRABLE?

And finally, in order to answer the second research question, “What profile is desirable?”, we have asked both auditors and clients how certain attributes, such as gender, age, title and appearance (which together constitute the profile), are perceived and how important they are when it comes to gaining the client’s trust. The exhibit below summarizes and compares our results.

Exhibit VII-3

SECOND RESEARCH QUESTION



This chart shows opinions regarding the auditor profile, the light blue ellipses representing the auditors’ point of view, the light red ellipses representing the clients’ point of view. Where the ellipses overlap, the responses shared by both groups of respondents are shown.

To conclude our findings, both auditors and clients seem largely indifferent to the auditor profile. We discovered that age is not a factor when it comes to judging the auditor and gender only matters a little, if at all. However, some respondents did admit there existed certain advantage in having an auditor with certain attributes; for instance, young auditors were believed to have a more modern way of thinking and be more open-minded whereas older auditors were appreciated due to their superior experience. As for the gender issue, we suspect that complete honesty was hard to achieve on the part of the respondents as most answers indicated indifference, but some clients (both males and females) revealed that they, for instance, found it easier to confide in a woman or experienced that a male auditor is more authoritative. This rings true with what we have encountered in the theoretical framework, that males and females are different in many ways, including professionally. With regard to title, both groups of respondents considered it to be only modestly important to trust building when compared to other factors, such as reputation, represented firm and characteristics. However, when asked to state whether or not it was true that the auditor’s title affects trust building, the respondents confirmed that this

was indeed true, which allows us to conclude that title is much more important to clients than for instance gender and appearance. And finally, few respondents believed that an auditor can enhance his or her professional look through an elegant or formal attire, but advocated casual or individualistic clothing because such outfits indicate self-confidence and trustworthiness. However, the majority of the auditors believed that they should dress as their clients do, whereas the majority of the clients had no opinion in the matter.

...So, who is hot and who is not? It seems as if auditors today believe in the importance of having soft skills and being a competent communicator. From the clients' point of view, it is more desirable to have the technical skills in order to handle constant changes in the accounting field. Furthermore, if one is to believe our results, one should not worry too much about attributes such as age and gender, since professionalism and trust building are not considered to be dependent on these attributes.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

We would have found it interesting to explore further the same research issue but extending the empirical study by looking at whether the desired characteristics and profile vary with the size of client companies and audit firms or between countries.

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APPENDIX A



Handelshögskolan
VID GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

April 2006

Bäste enkätmedverkande,

Vi är två studenter på Handelshögskolan i Göteborg, som skriver vår kandidatuppsats inom Externredovisning. Vårt val av uppsatsämne grundar sig på vårt intresse för revisionsyrket och på våra funderingar om vilka egenskaper som en revisor har – eller bör ha – för att kunna utöva sitt yrke på bästa möjliga sätt. Har revisorerna det som Du som kund kräver, och vad förväntar sig revisionsbyråerna av oss som blivande revisorer?

Med tanke på de många frågor som väckts hos oss, gällande yrkesrollen och de egenskaper man bör besitta, önskar vi utforska hur situationen ser ut idag, genom att kartlägga både innehavda och efterfrågade egenskaper hos revisorer. På så vis hoppas vi få ökad insikt i revisorsrollen, med fokus på de personliga egenskaper som krävs i denna.

Vårt syfte är därmed att utforska hur revisorsprofilen ser ut idag och vilka förväntningar Du som kund har på denna. Vi är bl.a. intresserade av vilka revisorns viktigaste egenskaper är, hur revisorns förändrade arbetsuppgifter under de senare åren påverkat de innehavda, respektive efterfrågade, egenskaperna, samt huruvida det föreligger någon skillnad mellan de egenskaper revisorerna ”marknadsför” gentemot Dig som kund och de egenskaper som Du egentligen efterfrågar.

För att kunna svara på dessa frågor, kommer vi att genomföra två olika enkätundersökningar, varav den ena besvaras av Dig, i egenskap av användare av revisionstjänster medan den andra besvaras av revisorerna själva.

Vi vill understryka att Ditt svar kommer att behandlas konfidentiellt och endast i samband med det uppgivna ändamålet.

Slutligen hoppas vi att Du ska tycka att enkäten känns relevant! Om Du sedan vill ta del av den färdiga uppsatsen kan du meddela oss det per e-post (uppsats2006@yahoo.com), så skickar vi Dig en kopia efter färdigställandet i mitten av juni.

Frågor kan när som helst ställas till oss på ovanstående adress eller per telefon:
0732-615793 eller 0706-806914

Tack på förhand!

Med vänliga hälsningar

Emmeli Runesson och Carolina Dietrichson

9. Vilken av ovanstående egenskaper anser Du vara **allra viktigast**? (ange bokstav)
Varför?

10. Vad ställer Du för krav på revisorns egenskaper i samband med hans/hennes roll som **granskare** av Ditt företags räkenskaper?

11. Vad ställer Du för krav på revisorns egenskaper i samband med hans/hennes roll som **rådgivare** till Ditt företag?

12. Markera det svarsalternativ Du tycker stämmer bäst.

a) Jag föredrar en revisor mellan åldrarna...

-30 31-45 46-60 61- Ålder spelar ingen roll Ingen åsikt
...därför att en revisor i denna ålder...

b) För att jag ska känna mig bekväm och ha förtroende för revisorn,
bör denne/denna vara ...

Kvinna Man Kön spelar ingen roll Ingen åsikt

c) Jag känner större förtroende för en auktoriserad revisor än en godkänd.

Stämmer Stämmer till viss del Stämmer inte Ingen åsikt

d) Beroende på uppdraget eller arbetsuppgiften kan en kvinnlig/manlig revisor vara att föredra.

Stämmer Stämmer till viss del Stämmer inte Ingen åsikt

e) Revisorn bör klä sig ...

Elegant Personligt Sportigt Modemedvetet Bekvämt Ingen åsikt

Denna klädsel är att föredra eftersom revisorn då ger intryck av att vara...

.....

f) Revisorns språk/ordval påverkar i vilken grad jag får förtroende för denne/denna.

Stämmer Stämmer till viss del Stämmer inte Ingen åsikt

13. Ser Du någon speciell fördel med att ha en **kvinnlig** revisor? Motivera.

.....

.....

14. Ser Du någon speciell fördel med att ha en **manlig** revisor? Motivera.

.....

.....

15. Tror du att valet av revisor påverkar allmänhetens förtroende för företaget?

Ja Nej Ingen åsikt

Om ja, rangordna följande alternativ utifrån vad Du tror företagets intressenter fäster störst vikt vid (1 = störst vikt, 5 = minst vikt).

Egenskaper

Titel

Företrädd revisionsbyrå

Anseende

Annat _____

16. Tror du att det är viktigare för företaget att ha en viss revisor (med avseende på egenskaper, titel, företrädd revisionsbyrå etc.) idag jämfört med för ett par år sedan?

Ja Nej Ingen åsikt

Om ja, varför?

.....

Tack för din medverkan!

APPENDIX B



Handelshögskolan
VID GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

April 2006

Bäste enkätmedverkande,

Vi är två studenter på Handelshögskolan i Göteborg, som skriver vår kandidatuppsats inom Externredovisning. Vårt val av uppsatsämne grundar sig på vårt intresse för revisionsyrket och på våra funderingar om vilka egenskaper som en revisor har – eller bör ha – för att kunna utöva sitt yrke på bästa möjliga sätt. Har revisorerna det som kunderna kräver, och vad förväntar sig revisionsbyråerna av oss som blivande revisorer?

Med tanke på de många frågor som väckts hos oss, gällande yrkesrollen och de egenskaper man bör besitta, önskar vi utforska hur situationen ser ut idag, genom att kartlägga både nu innehavda och efterfrågade egenskaper hos revisorer. På så vis hoppas vi få ökad insikt i revisorsrollen, med fokus på de personliga egenskaper som krävs i denna.

Vårt syfte är därmed att utforska hur revisorsprofilen ser ut idag och vilka förväntningar kunderna har på denna. Vi är bl.a. intresserade av vilka revisorns viktigaste egenskaper är, hur revisorns förändrade arbetsuppgifter under de senare åren påverkat de innehavda, respektive efterfrågade, egenskaperna, samt huruvida det föreligger någon skillnad mellan de egenskaper revisorerna "marknadsför" gentemot kunden och de egenskaper som kunden egentligen efterfrågar.

För att kunna svara på dessa frågor, kommer vi att genomföra två olika enkätundersökningar, varav den ena besvaras av Dig, i egenskap av revisor, medan den andra besvaras av företag som använder sig av revisionstjänster.

Vi vill understryka att Ditt svar kommer att behandlas konfidentiellt och endast i samband med det uppgivna ändamålet.

Slutligen hoppas vi att Du ska tycka att enkäten känns relevant! Om Du sedan vill ta del av den färdiga uppsatsen kan du meddela oss det per e-post (uppsats2006@yahoo.com), så skickar vi Dig en kopia efter färdigställandet i mitten av juni.

Frågor kan när som helst ställas till oss på ovanstående adress eller per telefon:
0732-615793 eller 0706-806914

Tack på förhand!

Med vänliga hälsningar

Emmeli Runesson och Carolina Dietrichson

Obs! Frågorna fortsätter på nästa sida

Frågor till Dig som är revisor

Profil och yrkesroll

1. Kön: Man Kvinna
2. Ålder: _____ år
3. Titel: Godkänd revisor Auktoriserad revisor

Egenskaper i yrkesrollen

4. Dina **tre** starkaste egenskaper: Du...

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) ... har förmåga att kommunicera på ett lättförståeligt/engagerande sätt <input type="radio"/> | (J) ... har förmåga och intresse av att ständigt aktualisera dina kunskaper <input type="radio"/> |
| (B) ... är en problemlösare <input type="radio"/> | (K) ... är flexibel och anpassar dig lätt till nya situationer <input type="radio"/> |
| (C) ... har förmåga att knyta och hålla kontakter <input type="radio"/> | (L) ... är bra på att ta initiativ <input type="radio"/> |
| (D) ... är en människokännare <input type="radio"/> | (M) ... inte är rädd för att stå för dina åsikter <input type="radio"/> |
| (E) ... har god analytisk förmåga <input type="radio"/> | (N) ... har lätt för att se detaljer såväl som helheten <input type="radio"/> |
| (F) ... har förmåga att disponera din tid väl <input type="radio"/> | (O) ... har sinne för siffror <input type="radio"/> |
| (G) ... har god samarbetsförmåga <input type="radio"/> | (P) Annan: _____ <input type="radio"/> |
| (H) ... är kreativ i ditt tänkande <input type="radio"/> | (Q) Annan: _____ <input type="radio"/> |
| (I) ... är stresstålig <input type="radio"/> | (R) Annan: _____ <input type="radio"/> |

5. Vilken av de ovanstående egenskaperna har Du **mest nytta av** i revisorsrollen?

Ange bokstav:

Varför har du mest nytta av denna?

6. Vilka **tre** egenskaper har Du utvecklat/tvingats utveckla sedan Du började jobba som revisor?

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) Din förmåga att kommunicera på ett lättförståeligt/engagerande sätt <input type="radio"/> | (J) Din förmåga och intresse av att ständigt aktualisera dina kunskaper <input type="radio"/> |
| (B) Din förmåga att lösa problem <input type="radio"/> | (K) Din flexibilitet och anpassningsförmåga i nya situationer <input type="radio"/> |
| (C) Din förmåga att knyta och hålla kontakter <input type="radio"/> | (L) Din förmåga att ta initiativ <input type="radio"/> |
| (D) Din människokännedom <input type="radio"/> | (M) Din oräddhet att stå för dina åsikter <input type="radio"/> |
| (E) Din analytiska förmåga <input type="radio"/> | (N) Din förmåga att se detaljer såväl som helheten <input type="radio"/> |
| (F) Din förmåga att disponera din tid väl <input type="radio"/> | (O) Ditt sinne för siffror <input type="radio"/> |
| (G) Din samarbetsförmåga <input type="radio"/> | (P) Annan: _____ <input type="radio"/> |

(H) Ditt kreativa tänkande (Q) Annan: _____

(I) Din stresstålighet (R) Annan: _____

7. Vilken tror Du är den allra viktigaste egenskapen i Din roll som **granskare** av företagets (klientens) räkenskaper? (ange bokstav)

8. Vilken tror du är den allra viktigaste egenskapen i Din roll som **rådgivare** till företagen (klienten)? (ange bokstav)

9. Har Du märkt att kravet på revisorernas egenskaper förändrats i takt med att revisorn allt mer fungerar som rådgivare?

Ja Nej Ingen åsikt

Om ja, på vilket sätt?

10. I samband med att revisorns granskande och rådgivande roller "krockar" kan revisorns oberoende sättas på spel. Vilken egenskap hos Dig tror Du krävs för att kunna hantera den konflikt som uppstår i samband med detta, och varför krävs just denna egenskap?

Fråga 11. riktad till kvinnor

11. Ser du någon speciell fördel med att vara kvinna i revisionsbranschen?

Fråga 12. riktad till män

12. Ser du någon speciell fördel med att vara man i revisionsbranschen?

Mötet med kund

13. De egenskaper som Du ”marknadsför” gentemot kund, dvs. de egenskaper Du tror kunden efterfrågar hos Dig som revisor är att Du... (markera **tre** av svarsalternativen nedan)

- | | |
|---|---|
| (A) ... har förmåga att kommunicera på ett lättförståeligt/engagerande sätt <input type="radio"/> | (J) ... har förmåga och intresse av att ständigt aktualisera dina kunskaper <input type="radio"/> |
| (B) ... är en problemlösare <input type="radio"/> | (K) ... är flexibel och anpassar dig lätt till nya situationer <input type="radio"/> |
| (C) ... har förmåga att knyta och hålla kontakter <input type="radio"/> | (L) ... är bra på att ta initiativ <input type="radio"/> |
| (D) ... är en människokännare <input type="radio"/> | (M) ... inte är rädd för att stå för dina åsikter <input type="radio"/> |
| (E) ... har god analytisk förmåga <input type="radio"/> | (N) ... har lätt för att se detaljer såväl som helheten <input type="radio"/> |
| (F) ... har förmåga att disponera din tid väl <input type="radio"/> | (O) ... har sinne för siffror <input type="radio"/> |
| (G) ... har god samarbetsförmåga <input type="radio"/> | (P) Annan: _____ <input type="radio"/> |
| (H) ... är kreativ i ditt tänkande <input type="radio"/> | (Q) Annan: _____ <input type="radio"/> |
| (I) ... är stresstålig <input type="radio"/> | (R) Annan: _____ <input type="radio"/> |

14. Vilken av ovanstående egenskaper tror Du är **allra viktigast** för kunden?

Ange bokstav:

Varför?

15. Markera det svarsalternativ Du tycker stämmer bäst.

a) Kunden föredrar en revisor mellan åldrarna...

- 30 31-45 46-60 61- Ålder spelar ingen roll Ingen åsikt

b) Kunden känner större förtroende för en auktoriserad revisor än en godkänd.

- Stämmer Stämmer till viss del Stämmer inte Ingen åsikt

d) Beroende på uppdraget/arbetsuppgiften föredrar kunden en kvinnlig/manlig revisor.

- Stämmer Stämmer till viss del Stämmer inte Ingen åsikt

Om påståendet stämmer, i vilken situation skulle man kunna tänka sig att uppdraget/arbetsuppgiften påverkar?

e) Som revisor bör man klä sig ...

Elegant Personligt Sportigt Modemedvetet Bekvämt Ingen åsikt
 Denna klädsel är att föredra eftersom revisorn då ger intryck av att vara...

f) Språk/ordval påverkar i vilken grad kunden får förtroende för revisorn.

Stämmer Stämmer till viss del Stämmer inte Ingen åsikt

16. Vilka egenskaper behövs för att stå emot påtryckningar från kund som kan hota Ditt oberoende och Din integritet, eller på annat stå i strid med god revisorssed?

17. Tror du att valet av revisor påverkar allmänhetens förtroende för företaget?

Ja Nej Ingen åsikt

Om ja, rangordna följande alternativ utifrån vad Du tror företagets intressenter fäster störst vikt? (1 = störst vikt, 5 = minst vikt)

Egenskaper	Titel	Företrädd revisionsbyrå
	Anseende	Annat _____

18. Tror du att det är viktigare för företaget att ha en viss revisor (med avseende på egenskaper, titel, företrädd revisionsbyrå etc.) idag jämfört med för ett par år sedan?

Ja Nej Ingen åsikt

19. Och slutligen, vad skulle bli Ditt råd till en blivande revisor - vilka grundläggande egenskaper behöver han/hon för att lyckas i yrkesrollen?

Tack för Din medverkan!