

Mel Grantham – passionate advocate for internal audit



An 18 year veteran of Adelaide bank (now Bendigo & Adelaide Bank), said one of the big challenges in our profession is keeping young skilled internal auditors engaged and remaining close to the profession.

“Millennials will come in and out of the profession over the years, and it’s important to engage with them as this is a profession they can keep cycling back to, and this cohort will be critical to keeping audit perspectives contemporary.”

Mel has managed to concurrently develop skills and progress at the bank over the 18 years, including completing a Bachelor of Laws at the University of Adelaide, and articles at Minter Ellison. She also studied commerce in France for a year at business university Ecole de Normandie completing her thesis on the UK finance industry and pension.

While working in the second line of defence, Mel felt that if she was to go into internal auditing she needed a prerequisite and base-line training to properly fulfil her role. She then completed her Graduate Certificate in Internal Auditing.

When she stepped into the profession she realised that a professional membership was important, which gave her access to a peer network, formal training and support; “having a professional membership is invaluable particularly for new heads of audit and Chief Audit Executives”.

“The CAE role can be very lonely,” she said. “So you need to build that network of peers and technical support very quickly otherwise you will not be able to fulfil your job requirements. It’s very much about that support”.

Mel was attracted to the third line of defence as it was an area she had not worked in, and felt she needed to develop her skills. She had experience across the first and second line, and when offered the internal audit role she says “I grabbed it with both hands, I did not really appreciate how much I would enjoy it,” she said.

Mel says “the role is grossly underestimated. Importance of the role and the blend of work such as forward-edge thinking, technical aspects, and mental judo combined with that very practical service element, because you are providing a service to the organisation.”

“Having close proximity to the board and working with senior management on strategy and reviewing internal controls is also very rewarding,” she said.

“Being an internal auditor you are leading a highly skilled and intelligent group of people who care about what they do”.

Mel is now Head of Group Operational Risk which is the second line of defence, reporting to the Chief Risk Officer, and also very active in the Youth Leadership Committee with the Institute of Internal Auditors-Australia.

For further information regarding Professional Membership of the Institute of Internal Auditors — Australia please visit www.iaa.org.au/PMIA or contact us 02 9267 9155 or membership@iaa.org.au