I'm Sorry – It’s My Fault We Lost That Audit

A TEACHING CASE

SYNOPSIS

An information systems audit manager talks about his/her troubles working at a regional firm, including a situation where he/she was responsible for an audit engagement that was lost. “Is it really my fault?” is the ending lament.

This case identifies issues that many accounting firms and their employees are grappling with:
- Inadequate numbers of qualified specialist staff
- Poor within firm communication skills
- Lack of respect for staff personal time
- Poor supervision and quality control due to time pressures
- Lack of guidance or a support structure for employees who identify poor quality work
- Inability to look at mistakes as a learning tool (hiding mistakes rather than talking about them)
- Inadequate upgrade training for long term personnel

Accounting firms are addressing these issues on an ongoing basis, yet there are pockets in every firm that need help or attention.

Instructors can use this case in the undergraduate introductory auditing course, focusing on generally accepting audit standards and how these standards have been violated in this situation. They could talk about potential ways to remedy the problems in the case. A human resources management course or organizational behaviour course could use this case to explore motivation in the work force, and how stress can affect quality control and supervision. An advanced auditing course could look at the issues involved in managing an accounting practice and how supervision and training could be used to improve the audit practice.