Top 10 Suggestions to Being a Better QA Officer
-- the QA Officer Perspective

Dorothy Love QA Director Eurofins Environment Testing US
Matt Sowards QA Officer ACZ Laboratories

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Continually expand your knowledge and understanding of your laboratory’s requirements, the science & technology used by your laboratory, and the interrelationships between these bodies of knowledge.
Resources:

a. TNI Standards
   - http://www.nelac-institute.org/
   - http://lams.nelac-institute.org/
   - http://www.a2la.org/faq/printable17025faq.cfm – A2LA FAQs about ISO 17025

b. Code of Federal Regulations
   - http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse
Resources:

c. State Rules & Regulations – check websites for any autoemail notification services and sign up for them. This is frequently the means that a state uses to communicate changes.

d. Methods

EPA websites

http://water.epa.gov/scitech/methods/cwa/
https://www.nemi.gov/home/
http://www.epa.gov/wastes/hazard/testmethods/sw846

USGS methods

http://pubs.usgs.gov/twri/twri5-a1/index.html

2015 MUR

http://water.epa.gov/scitech/methods/cwa/mur2015.cfm

Synectics website which includes methods under multiple programs (SW-846, EPA Water, Superfund, etc.)

http://synectics.net
Assimilate multiple perspectives:

a. Take at least one assessor training course: You need to see through the eyes of an assessor to be an effective QAO.

b. Spend time in the lab to learn, not to assess: You need to see through the eyes of production staff, too. This also helps them become more comfortable with you.

c. Understand the needs of your clients.
#8

Listen with an open mind:

a. Be willing to go back to the standards upon which your policies are based and re-evaluate historical interpretations.

b. Talk with clients to understand their concerns and drivers.
#7

Seek “fitness for purpose” – not perfection:

Meet the client’s needs; it does not always help to exceed the client’s needs.
When confronted with difficult decisions, evaluate your options:

- Refer back to #s 7 and 8
- Think about what is really needed.
- Review the regulations relating to the issue and be sure you are interpreting correctly.
- Don’t let emotions drive your decision.
#5

Organize and prioritize your workload:

a. Microsoft outlook email rules – direct emails on related topics to specific folders
b. Outlook calendar – schedule time to work on your own tasks
c. Use risk management principles to help set priorities
   (see next slide)
#5 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIGNIFICANT</strong></td>
<td>Considerable Management Required</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Must Manage and Monitor Risks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extensive Management essential</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MODERATE</strong></td>
<td>Risk are bearable to certain extent</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management effort worthwhile</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management effort required</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MINOR</strong></td>
<td>Accept Risks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accept but monitor Risks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manage and Monitor Risks</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIKELIHOOD</th>
<th>LOW</th>
<th>MEDIUM</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
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** ACZ Laboratories, Inc. **  
A Full Service Environmental Testing Laboratory
#4

Ensure you have the necessary resources to drive and conform to your policies:

a. Hardware & Software – use your IT staff as a resource and be one for them; teach them about the regulatory oversight in this industry

b. Technical expertise

c. Training
#3

**Invest** (this will require support from lab owner/president):

a. in automation of the LIMS and Document Control

b. in training – look for outside courses, webinars (many are low cost)

TNI training sessions [http://www.nelac-institute.org/content/eds-home.php](http://www.nelac-institute.org/content/eds-home.php)

Calibration training

[http://www.azdhs.gov/lab/license/resources/calibration-training.htm](http://www.azdhs.gov/lab/license/resources/calibration-training.htm)

Radiochemistry training (6 most common methods)

[http://www.epa.gov/ogwdw000/radionuclides/training/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/ogwdw000/radionuclides/training/index.html)
Connect with your clients:

a. Responding quickly to client concerns and questions goes a long way to establishing a relationship that will endure when you might have to contact them with bad news.

b. If you have extensive long term projects, set up a regular call schedule for both sides to check in and discuss the progress, roadblocks, etc.
...and our #1 Suggestion for Being a Better Quality Officer is...
#1

Forge and maintain healthy working relationships by refining your people and communication skills:

a. Be present – slow down into the moment and connect with what you’re doing. Give conversations and tasks your full attention until they are complete.

b. Network with your counterparts in the industry. Your competitor can also be your friend!

c. Share a meal or a drink 😊
Questions/Comments??

Dorothy Love
QA Director Eurofins Environment Testing US
dorothylove@eurofinsus.com

Matt Sowards
QA Officer ACZ Laboratories
MattS@acz.com