



## Happy New Year

New Year is the time to bid farewell to the previous year and welcome the coming year. It is the time to forget and leave behind all past memories that are no longer useful or worth pondering upon. It is the time for new beginnings and new starts in life. New Year brings along a message of new joys, new happiness, new commitments, and new promises for each one of us. It is the time to start afresh and do things that would make you and your smile in delight.

Our Education committee is busy preparing for May 24-25 weekend which will be held in Winnipeg. The online registration will open April 1, an email will be sent out in March will all the information and links to register.

Our Treasure Michele will not be seeking re-election this year. If you are interested or know of a Region IX member who may interested, please contact [Michele@nshregionix.org](mailto:Michele@nshregionix.org) or me [ann@nshregionix.org](mailto:ann@nshregionix.org) for more information

Ann Lynde  
Region IX Director

## NSH Summer and Annual Convention Symposium

Region IX members interested in attending the NSH Summer Symposium, it will take place at the Planet Hollywood in Las Vegas on June 17-18.

Chart your Course to the 2013 NSH Convention/Symposium in Providence, Rhode Island  
September 20– 25

Watch for more information from NSH regarding registration!

WINTER  
2012

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Future Dates  
**40th Annual Sympo-  
sium/Convention**  
August 21-27, 2014  
Austin, TX

**41st Annual Sympo-  
sium/Convention**  
August 28-September 2,  
2015  
Washington, DC

## Posse Whisperer

Coworkers can become dedicated and efficient teams when given the power to do so

"Peer reviews assembled by managers and conducted by coworkers have dual benefits in that they help meet compliance goals while at the same time build team spirit."

Sheriffs of the American Wild West often employed the tactic of assembling posses to help bring about law and order in their towns. The word "posse" comes from the Latin phrase, *posse comitatus*, which translates as "a team of persons granted the power and authority." The sheriff (i.e., supervisor) of the town (i.e., lab department) empowers all able-bodied citizens (i.e., employees) to resolve crimes (i.e., lab deficiencies). Simply put, posses or coworkers can become dedicated and efficient teams when given the power to do so.

### I See Live Psychics

Whisperers have become very common in modern society in that their sixth sense expertise has been popularized in many movies and television shows. The characterization of a whisperer is a telepathic that communicates with a variety of entities, including horses, dogs and cats. In fact, one of the more popular whisperers is the fictional "Ghost Whisperer," played by the television actress Jennifer Love Hewitt.

In this long running drama series, Hewitt uses her supernatural ability to talk to troubled ghosts. It seems that whisperers operate as a clairvoyant referee to pets and spirits assisting them in problem resolution with other humans and animals.

### Sixth Sense Vs. Common Sense

The good news is that lab managers do not have to possess extrasensory sixth sense skills for assembling teams together to accomplish the goal of laboratory compliance. The reason being is that there are always plenty of common sense clues, with objective indicators to point out potential and actual deficiencies. For example, the lab equipment calibration log is an objective resource too for inspections.

These logs can quickly reveal the timeliness or delinquency dates of maintenance checks with having to mind-read what the errors are. A supervisor who taps into the lab's strengths and weaknesses using objective means, such as a logbook, can easily rally the staff together to conduct peer reviews using this tool to meet and surpass compliance levels.

### Benefits of Peer Posse

Interactive team building amongst peers is an essential part of creating a cohesive department. Self-regulating audits can be utilized as a tool to build teamwork. When everyone participates in the auditing process, as both reviewer and the one being reviewed, regulatory. The peer review process shifts everyone within the department from an independent passive worker into an active unified team before, during and after assessment activities.

### Employee Buy-in

Buy-in can be defined as taking ownership of something which is shared with other owners. For laboratories desirous of creating a culture of ownership, the atmosphere must be one of having employees engaged in and excited about the team problem identification and resolution processes. Employees must feel as if they own the process. This can be done by encouraging everyone to join in a "no-fault" fact finding mission about compliance levels.

One method to jumpstart the process would be to encourage adherence to established policies and procedures. After all, established standards are an important part of the laboratory's success. Clearly defined compliance expectations are one way to keep everyone committed to the mission and to encourage team buy-in.

### In It To Win It

Promoting feelings of ownership doesn't need to be difficult if you keep a few key points in mind. First, everyone must be committed to the current lab policies and procedures, and to improving any documents that are in need of enhancements. Next, there needs to be ongoing team discussions defining what is considered acceptable compliance levels. Conversations about optimal and minimum tolerable levels should be clearly stated.

Finally, there must be agreement for the process of interactive peer audits. Agreements should include the scope, number of audits, schedules for reviews, communication methods of findings and follow-up procedures for reviewing corrective measures.

### Types of Inspections

Spot-checks and audits consist of two types of co-worker inspections that can be utilized during peer reviews.

- Spot-Checks are quick checking activities which can be a valuable compliance review process. Checking levels of laboratory compliance is a swift process and less structured than an auditing activity. Sometimes the checking process highlights the need for a more intense audit endeavour. Audits are a more extensive and structured review process. Auditing is considered a formal review of lab activities. Inspecting at this level involves several types of activities including data sampling, testing systems and processes and validation checks.

Simple one page checklist sheets can be created for each type of activity in order to keep the process uniformed amounts reviewers Both techniques are good approaches for peer reviews. However audits tend to rendered more in depth information regarding the root causes of lab deficiencies.

### Audit Checklist

A variety of activities such as document reviews (i.e., calibration logs), interviews and bench observations should be built into the peer review process in order to keep the process fresh and interesting for all participants. Requirements are learned effortlessly, resulting in improved team communication.

The audit checklists that record questions and responses during the peer review are a valuable reference and follow-up tool. It can be designed to look at specific systems and processes within your lab.

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The audit scope and categories of review can span across multiple areas. The following is just a small sampling of some of the categories: calibration (i.e., current calibration logs current and up-to-date); documentation (i.e., entries in log books legible, signed and dated); laboratory equipment (i.e., updated maintenance logs, current preventative maintenance procedures); physical facilities (i.e., cleanliness organized work areas, lab costs, goggles and gloves worn in lab); storage (i.e., receipt of samples documented, inventoried and secure); and traceability (i.e., analytical reagents dated upon receipt).

Finally, when updating the checklist for the next audit, be sure to highlight areas of deficiencies and weaknesses discovered during previous peer review inspections.

Peer reviews can be a valuable tool to bring continual improvement within the lab department. But in order for this to occur, lab supervisors must skilfully assemble, or "whisper" together the posses to do the inspection task. When co-worker findings from the audits are communicated in a timely manner to all team members and corrective actions are promptly taken, the internal monitoring and evaluation system fosters a solid communicative infrastructure processes and systems.

Eleanor Wolfram is a certified QA&C auditor

NSH Region IX would like to extend thanks to Leica Microsystems for their continued sponsorship of  
The Cutting Edge Newsletter



2013  
NSH Teleconference/Webinar

23 Jan: 1 pm ET  
Lung Cancer: Immunohistochemistry & Molecular Testing

Feb 27: 1 pm ET:  
Stretching your Knowledge of Elastin Stains

March 27 : 1 pm ET:  
Training for the Revised Hazard Communication Standard (HCS)

April 24 : 1 pm ET  
MOHS: What's It All About

THE CUTTING EDGE  
is the official newsletter of Region IX of the  
National Society for  
Histotechnology. It is distributed  
quarterly to all members in  
Canada.

Contributions are welcome.  
Please send your articles to:

Ann Lynde

[ann@nshregionix.org](mailto:ann@nshregionix.org)

or

Darlene Collett

[Darlene.collett@centralhealth.nl.ca](mailto:Darlene.collett@centralhealth.nl.ca)

[www.nshregionix.org/](http://www.nshregionix.org/)

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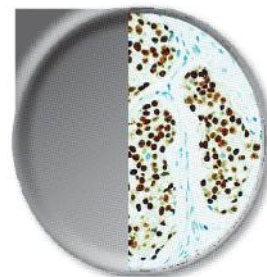
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