to your success, the result isn't typically an obvious or immediate catastrophe waiting to strike at some ill-timed moment—as when you neglect routine maintenance on your ...

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One reason auditing firms don't embrace change is that they can't always see the negative impact of clinging to the status quo—which, as we all know, can be quite comfortable.

But consider this for a moment: Do you make sure your vehicle's oil is changed every 3,000-5,000 miles? What would happen if you didn't? How many miles could you

drive before you had a problem?

worse, seeing a staff member or client abandon ship) that you feel compelled to spring into action.

But why wait? Why be proactive in preventing issues with your car, an easily replaceable asset, yet reactive in addressing issues with your audit workflow, where replacing staff or clients is much harder?

Use this quick diagnostic test to see if you might be past due for some audit business maintenance:

1. Do you ensure that you have internet access available in the field for ALL audit engagements?
2. Are you using risk-based auditing tools to customize your procedures?
3. Do you have regular (i.e. monthly) staff meetings to discuss the successes and challenges of your audit workflow, **resulting in clear action steps being taken** to improve how you work?
4. Is there a firm-wide standard for your audit workflow processes that promotes the principles of effective engagement management and is **adhered to by everyone**?
5. Is your audit software cloud-based?
6. Have you lost significant time on an audit within the last year due to technical challenges?
7. Are you concerned that your firm might be "over-auditing"?
8. Have you lost any audit staff or clients within the last year, and don't know why?
9. Are you or your staff ever stuck waiting for files to get checked in before you can proceed with work?
0. Do you have to manually reach out to people to get status updates on their work?

If you answered questions 1-5 as "yes" and questions 6-10 as "no," then you're in pretty good shape! However, if that's not the case then there's a decent chance you

could uncover some real opportunity for improvement if you took a step back and did

when I asked them what firms need to do today—but aren't doing—to ensure future success.

"You have to slow down to go fast," Sandra told me. "If you don't take time to stop and think and plan for the future and what you need to go forward, you'll fall behind your competition and start to decline."

"There's no doubt that firms who are happy maintaining the status quo year-to-year are significantly falling behind," was Dustin's take. "The external environment and technology are changing rapidly—it's just no longer effective to be happy with the status quo. Leading firms understand this and embody a culture and mindset of continuous improvement at every level."

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