

INDUSTRY INSIGHT · 2026 EDITION

Is Your Organization Truly Resilient?

The Risk Audit Reality Check

Boards that treat internal audit as a compliance checkbox are leaving their organizations exposed. Here is what separates firms that withstand disruption from those that do not — and how rigorous risk frameworks make the difference.

8 min read | For CFOs, Audit Committees & Risk Leaders | Grow International · 2025

67%

of major corporate failures linked to weak internal controls

\$4.7T

estimated global cost of fraud & non-compliance annually

3×

more likely: high-audit-maturity firms survive disruption

IIA

global standards our practice is built on

THE CHALLENGE

Risk is no longer a back-office concern

We are operating in an era of unprecedented disruption. Geopolitical instability, technological acceleration, tightening regulatory regimes, and the increasing frequency of climate-related shocks are no longer confined to a risk committee meeting once a quarter.

They are board-level, front-page, shareholder-value issues. The organizations that navigate them most effectively are not those with the thickest policy manuals — they are those with the clearest, most current understanding of where their risks actually sit, and the governance structures to act decisively on that understanding.

"The question boards should be asking is not 'do we have an internal audit function?' — it is 'does our audit function give us genuine confidence, or only the illusion of it?'"

— **Grow International, Risk & Audit Practice**

This distinction — between genuine assurance and its illusion — drives our entire practice. In our experience working across banking, insurance, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, and the public sector, far more organizations operate on the latter than they realize.

OUR FRAMEWORK

The Three Lines of Defense: built for accountability

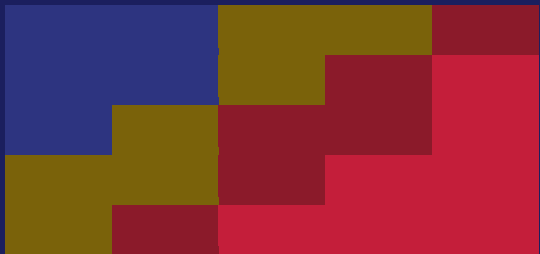
The Three Lines of Defense model is the governance architecture that separates organizations with genuine risk oversight from those with fragmented or absent coverage. When all three lines function well, the result is a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

FIRST LINE	SECOND LINE	THIRD LINE
<p>Operational Management</p> <p>Business units and process owners who hold primary responsibility for identifying, managing, and mitigating risk day-to-day. They own the controls and the outcomes.</p>	<p>Risk & Compliance Oversight</p> <p>Risk management, compliance, and legal functions that set frameworks, monitor control performance, and provide real-time risk intelligence to management.</p>	<p>Independent Internal Audit</p> <p>Reporting directly to the audit committee, internal audit provides objective assurance on governance, risk management, and controls. This is where Grow International operates.</p>

RISK VISUALIZATION

The Risk Heat Map

Where does your organization sit — and does your audit plan reflect it?



Low
Moderate
High
Critical

WHY IT MATTERS

Risk registers are living documents

A static register is a false comfort. We update it dynamically, so the audit plan never chases yesterday's risks.

Audit scope follows risk, not habit

Many functions audit the same areas because it's comfortable. Risk-based planning ensures every hour is directed where it matters most.

Critical risks get senior attention

The top-right quadrant is where careers and companies end. Our most experienced practitioners focus here first.

THE AUDIT CYCLE

How a world-class audit engagement works

The value of internal audit is realized through a complete, closed-loop cycle — from the first planning conversation through to confirmed implementation of every agreed recommendation.







01	<p>Risk-based scoping & planning</p> <p>Scope is driven by the current risk register, not historical precedent. We agree audit objectives with management and the audit committee before any fieldwork begins, with clear timelines and resource allocation.</p>
02	<p>Fieldwork & evidence gathering</p> <p>Detailed testing of controls, processes, and policy compliance — using document review, data analytics, observation, and structured interviews. Every finding is evidence-based, never reliant on unverified representations.</p>
03	<p>Root cause analysis & findings</p> <p>We go beyond symptoms to identify underlying causes. A finding without root cause analysis treats the surface — not the disease. Every finding is severity-rated and mapped to the control objective it undermines.</p>
04	<p>Reporting for decision-makers</p> <p>Reports written for business leaders — not compliance archives. Findings prioritized by severity. Every recommendation is specific, practical, and linked to a business outcome. We write for boards and CFOs.</p>
05	<p>Management response & action plans</p> <p>Every finding requires a formal management response — accepting with a specific action plan (owner, due date) or formally disputing with justification. This creates accountability before the engagement closes.</p>
06	<p>Action plan tracking & follow-up</p> <p>This is where most audit functions stop — and where we continue. Every agreed action is tracked, reported to the audit committee periodically, and overdue items are formally escalated.</p>

WHY IT MATTERS BY SECTOR

Non-compliance has a price — and it is material

In highly regulated industries, audit and compliance failures result in regulatory fines, licence revocations, reputational damage, and personal liability for directors. Our sector-specialist teams bring the regulatory depth your environment demands.

 Banking & Finance Basel III/IV · AML/CFT · IFRS 9 · KYC · FATF	 Insurance Solvency II · ORSA · Reserving · Conduct risk	 Pharmaceuticals GxP · FDA/EMA · Data integrity · GMP	 Manufacturing ISO controls · Supply chain · Environmental
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\$2.9B

Average total cost of a major compliance failure including fines, remediation, and reputational damage

3.2×

Higher shareholder returns for firms with mature internal audit functions over 10-year periods

89%

Of board members who want more frequent, more direct communication from internal audit

OUR SERVICES

Four pillars of the Grow International Risk & Audit practice

Every engagement draws from a consistent set of core capabilities — each designed to deliver assurance that is independent, evidence-based, and genuinely actionable.

Risk Assessment & Register Development

Full identification and scoring of your strategic, operational, financial, compliance, and reputational risk universe — mapped to a dynamic register that drives audit planning and management decisions. Never static, always current.

Risk Universe Mapping · Impact & Likelihood · Living Register

Internal Audit Execution

Full-cycle audit delivery across planning, fieldwork, findings, and reporting. Every finding severity-rated, every recommendation specific and linked to a control objective. Written for boards and CFOs, not for files.

Full Audit Cycle · Root Cause Analysis · Board-Grade Reports

Action Plan Monitoring

Structured follow-up on every agreed management action. Progress tracked and reported to the audit committee. Overdue items escalated formally. A culture of accountability that goes far beyond the report itself.

Structured Follow-up · Committee Reporting · Escalation Protocol

Compliance Audits

Independent assurance over adherence to internal policies, regulatory requirements, contractual obligations, and industry standards. For regulated sectors where non-compliance carries material financial and reputational consequences.

Regulatory Compliance · Policy Adherence · Sector Standards

Grow International

Risk & Internal Audit Practice

Is your organization genuinely resilient?

Our Risk & Internal Audit practice delivers independent assurance that protects assets, builds stakeholder confidence, and enables better decisions at every level. Engagements begin with a complimentary risk conversation — no obligation, no generic frameworks.

[Book a Risk Conversation →](#)