

THE IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF AUDIT AND AUDIT REPORT IN BUSINESS DECISION-MAKING

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RESUME

The article discusses the importance and role of audit, audit report in decision-making process of investors, financial institutions etc. Auditing and especially the audit report increases the reliability (in some cases discovers and avoids “**window-dressing**”) of the financial statements. From this point of view thus the financial data and policy given in the financial statements must be reliable, objective, and competent in order to be relied upon. For that reason, the company’s outside auditors- as the mediator third independent party from managers and shareholders are invited to audit the financial statements. There are also analyzed the types of audit reports and the situations when the independent auditor issues an unmodified or modified reports.

Keywords: Audit Report, International Auditing Standards (ISAs), Modified and Unmodified (unqualified) Audit Report; “Window- Dressing”; Material Misstatements; Audit Evidence, Financial Statements.

INTRODUCTION

A company’s financial statements provide the various financial information that investors, financial institutions and other users use to evaluate a company’s financial position and performance, based on which they may take then an economic decision. The audit provides the public (users) with additional assurance — beyond managements’ own assertions — that a company’s financial statements can be relied upon. The auditor is an independent certified public accountant who examines the

financial statements that a company's management has prepared. Many of these financial statements - including those in the company's annual report and those provided to shareholders in connection with the solicitation of proxies for **annual meetings** - must be examined and reported on by an independent auditor.

As the U.S. Supreme Court stated in the landmark case of *U.S. v. Arthur Young*: “The SEC requires the filing of audited financial statements in order **to obviate the fear of loss from reliance on inaccurate information, thereby encouraging public investment in the Nation's industries.**” When companies register their securities with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and file annual and other reports, they must disclose important financial information. In many cases, this information must be audited. That fact has the important implications on investors making **investment decisions**, on banks and financial institutions that may extend credit or make loans to the company, and on other businesses and members of the public who deal with the company[5]

GENERAL TEXT

A company's management has the responsibility for preparing the company's financial statements and related disclosures. The company's outside, independent auditor then subjects the financial statements and disclosures to an audit. During the audit, the outside auditor obtains an understanding of the company's internal controls and then applies “auditing procedures,” which may include inspection of the company's books and records, observation, inquiries, and confirmations. Some companies also use internal auditors to review the financial reporting processes and internal accounting controls to assure that the company's systems are appropriately designed and operating effectively. The procedures the outside auditor uses must be sufficient to allow him/her to obtain enough competent evidence to express an opinion on the fairness of the financial statements. If the auditor cannot reach that conclusion, then the auditor must either require the company to change the financial statements or **decline to issue** a standard audit report.

Moreover, while publishing financial statements, management can communicate with interested outside parties about its accomplishment-running the company. But sometimes the information provided do not meet exactly the demands of users or there can be used a “**Window-Dressing**” practice (the deceptive practice of using accounting tricks to make a company’s balance sheet and income statement appear better than they really are). There is one phrase for investors in relation with this: “ **You should always try to make sure that you do not fall for any window-dressing and invest in something bad** ”[3]. In the worst cases even the managers try make some adjustments in the financial statements before presenting them to the shareholders in order to get the corresponding bonuses or salaries connected with the achievement of the certain limits/ targets : f.ex. in expenses or incomes, profit etc. That is why necessary to isolate the interests by the third independent and regulated party, such as auditors-“the main task of regulation of auditing is providing the competence and independence of an auditor, or he/she, on the first hand, must be able to discover and disclose any material misstatements and deficiencies in the financial statements (competence) and, on the other hand , contentiously inform about this to the investors of the entity and shareholders (Independence) [2]. According to the **ISA 700** “Forming an Opinion and Reporting on Financial Statements”, the auditor forms an opinion on whether the financial statements are prepared, in all material aspects, in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework based on the audit evidence. Then the auditor prepares a written report that can be divided into two types:

❖ **Unmodified Audit Report**

Unmodified report with unmodified opinion

❖ **Modified Audit Report**

● Unmodified opinion

* Modified report with unqualified opinion AND emphasis of matter paragraph and/or other matter paragraph

● Modified opinion

* Qualified opinion (& qualified report)

* Adverse opinion (& adverse report)

* Disclaimer of opinion (& disclaimer report).

Generally, the audit report includes:

- Title and Addressee
- Introductory Paragraph
- Management's Responsibilities
- Auditor's Responsibilities
- Opinion
- Other Reporting Responsibilities
- Signature, Date and Address.

As for an **unqualified (unmodified) opinion** —this is also known as a clean (positive) opinion meaning that the financial statements appear to be presented fairly. If there are no other matters which the auditor wishes to draw to the attention of the users, they will issue an **unmodified report**. There is interesting a **modified report with unmodified opinion**. This is called the modified report because the contents of the unmodified report are modified as additional paragraph(s) is (are) added. Additional paragraphs can be either or both of the following: 1) **Emphasis of matter paragraph** 2) **Other matter paragraph**. 1) **The Emphasis of Matter Paragraph**- the auditor includes an emphasis of matter paragraph (EMP) when auditor considers that it is necessary to draw the attention of users of financial statements to the matters that are **already disclosed or reported in the financial statements**. EMP is included after the opinion paragraph in the audit report. However it must be clear that inclusion of EMP DOES NOT mean that auditor's opinion is modified [4] 2) **Other Matter Paragraph**-other matters to understanding the audit, the auditor's responsibilities or the audit report are presented here. OMP is included after opinion paragraph and any EMP in the auditor's report.

The Qualified opinion (Qualified report) — there are two reasons why an auditor would need to modify the audit opinion:

- ❖ they conclude that the financial statements as a whole are not free from material misstatement;
- ❖ unable to obtain sufficient evidence.

Disclaimer opinion (Disclaimer report) — Audit report containing a disclaimer of opinion is also called disclaimer report. The auditor shall

disclaim an opinion when the auditor is **unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence** on which to base the opinion, and the auditor concludes that the possible effects on the financial statements of undetected misstatements, if any, could be **both material and pervasive**.

Adverse opinion — the auditor shall express an adverse opinion when the auditor, having **obtained sufficient appropriate audit evidence**, concludes that misstatements, individually or in the aggregate, are **both material and pervasive** to the financial statements. Pervasive means that the matter is a substantial proportion or is fundamental to users understanding of the financial statements. Below are given these types of reports:

Summary of modification of opinion

	Auditor's Judgment about the Pervasiveness of the Effects or Possible Effects on the Financial Statements	
Nature of Matter Giving Rise to the Modification	Material but Not Pervasive	Material and Pervasive
Financial statements are materially misstated	Qualified Opinion	Adverse Opinion
Inability to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence	Qualified Opinion	Disclaimer of Opinion

source: ACCA-F8-Audit and Assurance , Kaplan Publishing

In order for the auditor's opinion to be considered **trustworthy** [1], auditors must come to their conclusions having completed a thorough examination of the books and records of their company and they must document the procedures performed and evidence obtained, to support the conclusions reached. **ISA 500** identifies 8 types of audit evidences which include physical examination, confirmation, documentation, analytical procedures, inquiries, recalculation, reperformance and observation. Thus the auditor more or less explores or “investigates” the whole company. In addition, some attention should be paid to **forensic accounting** [6], or **financial forensics** is the specialty practice area of accounting that de-

scribes engagements that result from actual or anticipated disputes or litigation. “**Forensic**” means “suitable for use in a court of law”. Forensic accountants, also referred to as **forensic auditors** or **investigative auditors**, often have to give expert evidence at the eventual trial. All of the larger accounting firms, as well as many medium-sized and boutique firms and various police and government agencies have specialist forensic accounting departments. Within these groups, there may be further sub-specializations: some forensic accountants may, for example, just specialize in insurance claims, personal injury claims, fraud, Anti-Money Laundering, construction, or royalty audits. Financial forensic engagements may fall into several categories. For example:

- Economic damages calculations, whether suffered through tort or breach of contract;
- Bankruptcy, insolvency, and reorganization;
- Securities fraud;
- Tax fraud;
- Money laundering;
- Business valuation; and
- Computer forensics/e-discovery.

Some forensic accountants specialize in forensic analytics which is the procurement and analysis of electronic data to reconstruct, detect, or otherwise support a claim of financial fraud. The main steps in forensic analytics are (a) data collection, (b) data preparation, (c) data analysis, and (d) reporting that is like financial auditing, its step-by-step procedures. For example, forensic analytics may be used to review an employee’s purchasing card activity to assess whether any of the purchases were diverted or divertible for personal use.

CONCLUSION

In Summary, financial statements, auditing and especially the audit report that increases financial statements reliability (in some cases discovers and avoids “**window-dressing**”), play a key role in the economic decision-making process of investors, financial institutions, society and other users of financial information. From this point of view thus the financial

data and policy must be reliable, objective, and competent in order to be relied upon. For that reason, the company's outside auditors- as the mediator third independent party from managers and shareholders are invited to audit the financial statements. Furthermore, if concluded that the financial statements are prepared, in all material aspects, in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework, then the auditor issues a unmodified (unqualified) report, but in case of discovery any material and pervasive misstatements or insufficient audit evidence, they must issue the modified audit reports. Additionally, there should be mentioned the role of forensic accountants or investigative auditors. The **investigative auditors** may specialize in particular sphere auditing such as : insurance claims, personal injury claims, fraud, Anti-Money Laundering, construction, or royalty audits.

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აუდიტისა და აუდიტორული დასკვნის მნიშვნელობა და როლი ბიზნეს გადაწყვეტილებების მიღებაში

ჟუჟუნა ნიკლაური-შენგელია, სტუ პროფესორი
რევაზ შენგელია, სტუ პროფესორი,
ნათია შენგელია, სტუ ას. პროფესორი

რეზიუმე

ფინანსური ანგარიშგება, მისი აუდიტი და განსაკუთრებით აუდიტორული დასკვნა, რომელიც ზრდის ფინანსური ანგარიშგების

სანდოობის ხარისხს, მნიშვნელოვან როლს თამაშობს ბიზნეს გადანყვეტილებების მიღების პროცესში, ინვესტორებისათვის, ფინანსური ინსტიტუტებისთვის (მაგ. სესხის გაცემის შემთხვევაში), და ფინანსური ანგარიშგების სხვა მომხმარებლებისათვის. თუ აუდიტორი მტკიცებულებების ბაზაზე გამოხატავს მოსაზრებას, რომ ფინანსური ანგარიშგება მომზადებულია ფინანსური ანგარიშგების სტრუქტურული საფუძვლების შესაბამისად ყველა არსებითი ასპექტის გათვალისწინებით, მაშინ გაიცემა არამოდიფიცირებული (დადებითი) უპირობო აუდიტორული დასკვნა; ხოლო არსებითი უზუსტობების აღმოჩენის ან არასაკმარისი მტკიცებულებების მოპოვების შემთხვევაში კი იწერება უკვე მოდიფიცირებული დასკვნა, მათ შორის: პირობითი დასკვნა, უარყოფითი დასკვნა ან უარი დასკვნის გაცემაზე.

ამრიგად, აუდიტი უზრუნველყოფს საზოგადოებას (სხვა მომხმარებლებს) დამატებითი სანდო გარანტიით - კომპანიის მენეჯმენტის მტკიცებულების მიღმა, რომ ფინანსური ანგარიშგება ნამდვილად არის მომზადებული ფინანსური ანგარიშგების საერთაშორისო სტანდარტების მიხედვით და არ შეიცავს არსებით უზუსტობებს, რომელიც გავლენას მოახდენდა მომხმარებელთა ეკონომიკურ გადანყვეტილებაზე. აუდიტის რეგულირების ძირითადი ამოცანაა, უზრუნველყოს ერთი მხრივ, რომ აუდიტორმა შეძლოს ფინანსურ ანგარიშგებაში არსებითი შეცდომების გამოვლენა (კომპეტენტურობა), მეორე მხრივ კი, აცნობოს ამის შესახებ სანარმოს ინვესტორებსა და აქციონერებს (დამოუკიდებლობა).

საკვანძო სიტყვები: აუდიტორული დასკვნა, აუდიტის საერთაშორისო სტანდარტები (ასს), მოდიფიცირებული და არამოდიფიცირებული (უპირობო) აუდიტორული დასკვნა; “ჭინდონ-Drესსინგ”; არსებითი უზუსტობა; აუდიტორული მტკიცებულება, ფინანსური ანგარიშგება.