

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR INTERVIEW



ABOUT

NADCAP AUDITOR SINCE **2003**

TPG AUDITOR SINCE **2016**

INSTRUCTOR SINCE **2005**

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT IN **AQS and HT**

BASED IN **UK**

FAVOURITE PLACE TO VISIT **JAPAN**

[What attracted you to Nadcap auditing in the first place?](#)

I had just separated from a role as Quality Director at a tier 1 automotive supplier and was looking for something part-time and flexible while I worked out my future – that was in 2003. Part-time kept going for a long time as I always had (and still have) at least 6-months forward view of my work. I never really had that before, even when I was in full time employment, so it quickly became normal. Add to that the ability to decide when I want work and it was a winner. Even today, as I wind down a bit and do fewer audits, I have a calendar completely full for the next 6 months.

[How did you get involved with TPG auditing?](#)

The program started and was a natural addition to Aerospace. I volunteered and was in.

[What about being an instructor?](#)

I was invited in 2004. At that time there were only the Pyrometry and RCCA courses and only five Heat Treatment auditors in Europe. There were two instructors in the US but someone was needed to do training in Europe. Pyrometry meant a Heat Treat person was needed - I suspect that I stepped back the slowest - I did it and got hooked – surprised by the energy and intensity - and went on to get a few firsts in: the first training sessions in Europe in 2005, the first in Asia in 2006 (with translators) and the first in a local language other than English (no translator) in France in 2007.

[What has surprised you about being an auditor and instructor?](#)

Auditing – the sheer duplicity of some people. Something is wrong and they think they can cover it up and that I won't notice.

Training – the energy and intensity, especially when you see 'lights go on' in people's eyes. Sometimes, during a session I can get an adrenalin high and then I collapse – exhausted – when we finish. I have been known to need a sit down and a rest before I can even walk to the bar...

What's the best thing about being an auditor and instructor?

First thought is probably the variety - the travel and the different people you meet. Every event is different and we go to lots of different places. I have done audits or training in over 25 countries so far. Some sound exotic (Toulouse, Tokyo, Turin, Taiwan) even if the reality is 'a hotel or a factory on an industrial estate on the edge of XXXX'. So, every event I see new things, meet new people and learn new stuff. Depending on the airport, travel can also be my least favourite thing. It's so time consuming. Second thought – it is quite nice having other people say that they think of you as an expert worth listening to.

What would be the key piece of advice you'd give to companies preparing for a Nadcap or TPG audit?

Prepare. Really prepare. Get the audit checklists and read them thoroughly. The most common problems come from assuming everything is ok when at a detail level it is not. Get down to detail. Understand the requirements and then check them – at the workplace. The audits take place in the factory/shop – you cannot prepare simply sitting at a desk.

In your experience, describe the impact of Nadcap on the companies you have audited?

In the early days the improvements were amazing. Some companies I visited went from over 30 NCR's down to five or six in the space of a couple of years. As a result of their improvement, some confirmed that they get fewer complaints, fewer problems and, some say, more business. Some, of course, were already good - they have stayed good.

Please describe a typical audit day.

Wake, send Maria a 'good morning' message, go to breakfast. Off to the factory, usually only 10-15 minutes away, arriving (in Europe) around 8.30-9.00am. Briefly

check on the plan for the day and then down to work – straight onto the shop floor checking jobs, activities, records. Lunch and then more of the same, with a brief review meeting at the end of day on site. That usually means only 5-10 minutes somewhere around 5.00pm. Return to hotel. I usually spend an hour or more each evening collating the days audit information – a better phrase than just 'entering it all onto the computer'. If possible I fit in a session in the gym at least every other evening. Dinner? In my dreams it is a different 4-star restaurant every night. In practice it depends how isolated the audit is. But yes, different places every night. Sounds boring but every day and every site is different. Within that outline no two days are the ever same.

What about a typical training day?

While audits are not stressful for me (auditees usually have other opinions), training can be, as I am on my own and the only PRI representative on site. Most training is in hotels where setting up on the first day can be awkward – Is the room layout right? Can I connect to the projector? Where are the training materials? Who (in the hotel) knows? How do people find the rooms? So far, I have had rooms that were not big enough, no projection system, training materials lost (binned by accident in one case) and a room below a very loud fitness centre. Usually all this is being done from around 8.00am, which is before the support offices (hotel conferencing or equalearn) start for the day. That means adrenalin and stress with the morning coffee and all before the people start arriving.

The training delivery by contrast is easy, just relax and get into the flow. Check the timings as we go. Breaks morning and afternoon, usually spent chatting to attendees and often answering the questions they do not wish to air in public.

End of the day, usually late afternoon, I am exhausted and need a break, but often am also fielding yet more questions – sometimes quite detailed - from people who did not want to disrupt the class. Then, on the last day of a series, of training sessions, it is time to race to the railway or airport to get home.

And all that is even more fun when in a different country and/or language!