

How Professional Reflections of Time Spent with Arthur Andersen & Co. Can Benefit Today's Auditing Students

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The book *Never Think Always Know* is an unassuming 72 page soft cover text that describes one entry level auditor's experiences in the mid-1980s with Arthur Andersen, and how during this timeframe the culture "that eventually destroyed the firm" was already being established. The book is an informal and accessible read, with its author Walker R. Filbert interweaving stories and lessons from his education, his father, and actual experiences with the Firm. Examples of the use of this text by two different instructors to supplement graduate level Advanced Auditing courses are shared. Similar themes expressed in the *Never Think Always Know* book were noted in Arthur Wyatt's August 4, 2003 address to the 2003 attendees at the annual AAA entitled "Accounting Professionalism – They Just Don't Get It!". Since Arthur Wyatt is referenced several times in the book, his speech was included in class discussion of the text, along with related links on the internet pertaining to the Andersen culture and the subsequent demise of the Firm.

The objective of this paper is to share these materials and supplemental instructional resources, so that faculty might be informed of the book and whether the discussion approach used would be suitable for their own undergraduate or graduate auditing courses, or other courses. Over 40 topical questions and answers are provided in the full paper, with a small sample provided here to give those interested a flavor of the themes addressed.

1. Partners didn't like Code 580 because it essentially was what?
2. Was the author more comfortable with old school or new school people?
3. There was a story towards the end of the book about a problem the author saw with an audit report – what was that specific problem?
4. Do you agree with the demise of TFA – transactional flow auditing – why? Consider the tradeoffs inherent in this approach.
5. Can you provide examples of rituals, artifacts, dress, practices and language that established the Andersen culture?
6. The example of the employee that was fired for the lost property ledger – was this action appropriate in your opinion?
7. Blueback points – they are actually formally referred to as something else in today's more formal jargon – what?
8. Do you agree with Pop when he questions why staff were sent to learn in a classroom environment instead of on the job?
9. Who specifically is the "they" that Wyatt is referring to in the title of his speech?
10. State something that was mentioned in the Wyatt speech that is compatible with the *Never Think Always Know* book.
11. Two useful links are http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Andersen and <http://www.qcenter.com/> Independently verify and confirm the validity of your author's perceptions about the Firm training school (F.A.S.T.S.) and the eventual spinoff to Accenture with this internet information.