

## Site Visit Interview Tips and Techniques

### *A few things to remember as you prepare for Site Visit...*

- **Role of the Examiner:** You are *not* an auditor. The site visit is your opportunity to learn more about the organization, so you can provide value-added feedback. Be mindful that the site visit should be a positive experience for the applicant.
- **Site Visit Issues:** Your team leader will ask you to use the Site Visit Issue form to document your Site Visit Issues (things you want to learn more about on site), along with any documents you would like to request and people you would like to interview. Your team leader will consolidate these site visit issues into one comprehensive list to provide to the applicant at least one week prior to site visit. In general, you will include each OFI you plan to clarify and each double-plus strength you plan to verify on your list. You may also want to request large documents ahead of time, such as the applicant's updated results or a copy of their strategic plan.
- **Site Visit Issue Worksheets:** You will then prepare a SVI Worksheet in Word for each issue that you wish to clarify or verify on site (from the list above). At a minimum, prepare a SVI Worksheet for each OFI and double-plus strength (++) in the items you are leading. Your team leader will help you determine the appropriate number of SVIs based on the length of the site visit and size of the organization.

Additional instructions will be provided by your Team Lead

**Move the Applicant to the Right:** If your applicant addresses a **process SVI** by demonstrating an approach, don't stop there. **Simply identifying an approach doesn't necessarily turn an OFI into a strength.** Use the evaluation factors (A-D-L-I or Le-T-C-I) to identify gaps that will help move the applicant forward on its performance excellence journey. Ask follow-up questions to determine:

- *Is the approach well deployed?*
- *Has the approach gone through cycles of improvement?*
- *How is it integrated with other key processes?*

If your applicant addresses a **results SVI** by demonstrating appropriate performance levels, don't stop there. Ask follow-up questions to determine:

- *Are trends provided for few, many, or most of the areas addressed in the item requirements?*
- *Are results presented for key competitors, industry sector averages, or best-in-class organizations? How do the applicant's results compare?*
- *To what extent do results link to key factors and process items?*

A few days before you go on site, you will need to send your SVI worksheets to your team leader and category back-up. Your team leader may choose to have one person print all of the SVI worksheets for the team. While on site, you may take notes directly on the SVI worksheet.

- **Interview in Pairs:** To ensure that you capture the essence of every interview, the item back-up should take notes while the item lead asks the questions.
- **Verify and Clarify:** Remember, after site visit the term “it is unclear” should no longer appear in any of your comments. **If an issue is still unclear, that means you haven’t done your job!**
- **Caucus:** While on site, be sure to meet as a team at least once a day to share your findings and make adjustments to your approach. The team leader will schedule time for team caucuses.
- **Walk-Around Questions:** A good way to check deployment of a process is to walk around and talk to the employees of the organization. Review sample walk-around questions will be provided by your Team Lead.
- **KyCPE Representative:** If asked on site, feel free to disclose where you work, but refrain from giving your job title or function. What you can say is this: every member of your team has been trained as a KyCPE examiner.
- **KyCPE Employee:** While on site you are first and foremost working for KyCPE. This should take precedence over your other work responsibilities.
- **Team Work:** In a multi-day site visit, at the end of each day meet as a team to discuss findings and revise the next day’s schedule.
- **Leave It at the Door:** Make sure you don’t go home with any pens, paper, coffee mugs, etc. that could identify your applicant.
- **Wrap-up Meeting:** Upon completion of your site visit, be prepared to spend an additional day together as a team to complete your SVI forms, revise your comments, finalize key themes, and complete the Score Summary Worksheet.
- **Final Documentation:** You will be responsible for documenting a resolution for each SVI with evidence and conclusions reached on-site, as well as finalizing comments for your items, immediately following the site visit. You do not need to complete any additional work on your SVI worksheets, although KyCPE will collect these following your site visit.

## Other Tips and Techniques

- Be prompt in starting the interview.
- Introduce yourself: “Hello, I’m \_\_\_\_\_ from the KyCPE Examiner Team.” Ask the person’s name if it is not offered. Ask the person some questions about his or her background to help put him or her at ease.
- Begin the interview by telling the applicant that examiners are not looking for right answers but, rather, that they are trying to fully understand processes and results.
- Let him or her know that you will be taking notes.
- Keep a separate page for each person with whom you talk. Note his or her name, department, or unit, and other pertinent information. Keep a separate page for each SVI. This permits easier sharing of information among the examiners.
- Ask simple, straightforward questions using the applicant’s language. Avoid Baldrige or other types of jargon.
- Do not ask leading questions, and be careful not to inadvertently prompt answers. For example, ask, “How often does the planning team meet?” rather than “Does the planning team meet every week?”
- Ask the person if he or she would like to add anything. You may have missed something the
- applicant feels is vital.
- Thank the interviewee for his or her time, and communicate appreciation for the applicant’s effort.
- Record materials requested and received.
- Applicants are typically interested in assessing their progress on a site visit, and they may ask you how their site visit is going. While this is a simple question, it is one that is premature to answer while the site visit is ongoing, and the team is gathering information on its SVIs. Accordingly, if the applicant asks you, “How are we doing?” you should simply tell the applicant that the team is still in the process of gathering information on its site visit issues, and, as such, it is premature to answer the question. However, you can compliment the applicant’s hospitality, flexibility, and cooperation in helping the team obtain the information needed to close out the SVIs.