

Where the Boys (EMS Jobs) Are...  
Gabriele Crognale, P.E.

### Introduction

I was lounging at the beach one day last summer, and in the distance I heard the distinct voice of Connie Francis singing a song from a long time ago, 'Where the Boys Are', which got me to reminisce about Frankie, Annette and all the rest of the old beach party gang. Not a bad introduction to this column, the third in a trilogy of articles dealing with EMS market opportunities. Continuing where we left off in our last column where we delved into EMS auditor credentials and whether there was value in that arena, we now direct our focus to look in greater detail where the EMS jobs really are, or as one EHS manager of a manufacturing company who I interviewed for a cameo role, said: "Don't you mean where the jobs were?" As the manager for a company that went through a considerable downsizing and name change, he is it for EHS and EMS in his company. Another RAB-accredited auditor who has yet to see any EMS work declined to be interviewed for this article. From these two brief conversations, it was made clear to me that such a topic might warrant additional investigation to determine just where such plum jobs really are.

From my own experience in this arena, having both taught a number of ANSI-RAB accredited Lead Auditor courses for various accredited course providers as well as my own home-grown implementation and auditor courses, and having assisted in registration audits for several accredited registrars, I can bring realistic anecdotal information from my experiences over the years. Not relying solely on my own experiences, I supplemented this experience with candid discussions with several environmental managers from a number of regulated organizations and other sole-practitioner environmental professionals to get their take on this service area. From this collective information, I was able to discern that the bulk of work that an accredited EMS auditor can expect to find, albeit not without considerable marketing and behind-the-scenes horse trading, are with the accredited EMS course providers and registrars. However, getting that brass ring does not come without considerable effort and networking, and there are some trade-offs. For example, most, if not all, of the accredited course providers rely upon some sort of a contractual arrangement with the accredited EMS auditors they bring on as trainers for their ANSI-RAB accredited lead auditor courses. Depending on the course providers, some of these contracts may be exclusive, and a prospective trainer may need to evaluate whether he or she wants to enter into such an exclusive contract if work is not guaranteed for a certain time period. After all, if there is no guarantee of work in a given year, the prospective trainer may need to consider where additional income may be generated to offset the downtime. Regardless of the type of contract arrangement, if a prospective course instructor does not mind a non-employee arrangement, and can generate work during down time and afford his or her own health insurance and office space, go for it. Another consideration that prospective trainers may want to consider is that if they work for environmental consulting firms, they may have to enter into some fancy non-compete agreements between the two organizations, since, in essence, both offer consulting services, and may view themselves as competitors.

The other potential work opportunity for EMS accredited auditors can be found with the ISO registrars (the subject of a previous article), although here, too, there may be caveats and conditions, just as with the accredited course providers. From my own experiences, this is what I can offer. Among them, one registrar made a business decision some time ago to use in-house full-time staff over contract auditors to conduct audits, and has relegated their contractors to an auditor bench, so to speak. Another registrar has so many auditors on "staff" that it conceivably could be years before some of them may be part of an ISO 14001 audit team. One of their contract auditors I contacted said that he had yet to see any meaningful work from them, even though he was fully qualified as a Lead Auditor. Other registrars rely almost exclusively upon contract auditors, and one in particular, requires their prospective auditors to carry their own liability insurance, which can run upwards of \$1000 or more. Granted, some auditors/consultants in business for themselves may already have this insurance, but not all, and if they do opt to

procure such insurance, what guarantee can they receive that they will be gainfully employed for a certain time period in return for this costly investment?

In most cases, availability of EMS-related work, just as in real estate, boils down to location, location, location. Market forces being what they are, some accredited auditors will find more than enough work to keep them busy all year – whether with a registrar and/or with an accredited course provider - while others may need to find additional moonlighting work, or even a real job to help pay the bills and keep their staff and/or themselves busy.

### **The View from the Field**

Of the half dozen or so folks I interviewed for this column, Bob Ferrone, an accredited auditor was brave enough to discuss candidly with me his views as to where he feels the EMS jobs are. I respect his willingness to share with our readers his view and feelings. This is what he had to say.

In his view, the big push to provide EMS auditor training can be traced back to the industry surge for training ISO 9000 auditors. Is training auditors that relevant to ISO 14001? In his view, there is greater value in understanding the implementation of an ISO 14001 conforming system. And, to be effective in this capacity, one first needs to be a true practitioner who can capture value for the organization being serviced. Where does he see EMS work? He sees this work in several areas: the big registrar houses will always have work for their auditors (*as we pointed out, the trick is finding the work first with a registrar!*), especially in several key areas, but from his viewpoint, he feels that too many of them do not go the extra mile for their clients/customers. He further explained that it's not enough for an auditor to say that you didn't perform this (blank) in accordance with the document or procedure x-y-z, and leave out where the system can be improved. (*From my own experience in the client's behalf as their ISO consultant, I have seen a few auditors during a registration or surveillance audit provide a little of that "added value", but it's a fine line they walk.*)

Where else does he see EMS work, and does he consider EMS auditor credentials key to this work? In the beginning (in the US), many prospective clients asked whether he was certified, now they are more concerned about his knowledge level in EMS implementation matters, and what value he can bring to the table; whereas, elsewhere in the world, that is still a key driver for work opportunities. In his estimate, not too many EMS auditors are working in the US, unless they work for registrars (*and/or course providers*). The real jobs are in implementing EMS systems – (*the key to these jobs is experience and familiarity with ISO 14001 and EMS elements.*)

### **Value for the Dollar**

The various individuals I interviewed shared their real world experiences in this arena. The follow-up question that begs to be answered then is: if there really aren't that many jobs for EMS accredited auditors, what can the forces that hold the EMS auditor keys do to level this playing field? Some of you may recall that expression was first attributed to Joe Casio, who voiced that phrase in numerous articles to make a pitch for why organizations worldwide should pursue ISO 14001. We have now come full circle. If the service industry that acts as a factory to train, accredit and hire and/or contract EMS auditors, shouldn't they also have a responsibility to see their EMS trainees through? After all, if one goes to the RAB website, there is mention of how much more an accredited EMS auditor can expect to receive in compensation over their non-accredited auditor counterparts, yet that is not always the case when you take into account that not all RAB accredited auditors listed on RAB's website are actually pursuing EMS-related work, whether auditing, training, or implementation, or a combination of all three. At least 3 of the individuals I contacted who declined to be interviewed have not performed any EMS work recently, and I personally know of one additional RAB-accredited auditor who chose to have his accreditation lapse due to a lack of such work.

What are your thoughts on this series of articles dealing with EMS issues? What experiences have you had, either as a prospective EMS auditor seeking work opportunities, or as a facility person trying to decide which EMS consultant/service provider you should pick to help put your EMS program together? Have you had to decide which registrar/auditor you should choose to have them conduct an ISO 14001 registration audit at your facility?

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