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How Windes strengthens its quality management framework with QMCore



Moving beyond manual, reactive processes

When the new quality management standards replaced the prior quality control framework, Windes (like many firms) had to reevaluate its entire approach to audit quality. Before implementing QMCORE, the firm relied on largely manual processes to manage quality activities.

“We didn’t really have software before. It was a very manual process... everything from independence confirmations to assessments to addressing what led to a restatement was all done ad hoc as it came up.”

While the firm had thoughtfully developed its quality management system and defined its quality risks and monitoring activities, there was no centralized platform connecting those elements.

About the firm:

WINDES 100
 100 YEARS • TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS

Windes is a Top 110 accounting firm completing approximately 400–500 audits annually, supported by roughly 10 audit partners. As new quality management standards (SQMS) took effect, the firm recognized the need to formalize and centralize its approach to audit quality, monitoring, and documentation.

One of the biggest concerns was sustainability. During initial drafting, the connection between quality risks and monitoring procedures was clear. But leadership recognized that over time, especially in years two, three, and beyond—those connections could fade from immediate view.

“When you get to years two, three, four, that connection kind of... it’s not as front of mind as when you initially draft the documents.”

Quality events, when they occur, often require immediate attention. Without a centralized system, responding quickly and confidently could become challenging.

The firm needed a solution that would:

- Provide reminders and structure for monitoring activities
- Clearly connect quality risks to remediation efforts
- Distribute responsibility beyond a single individual
- Create a defensible, documented audit trail

A flexible platform that fits Windes’ ecosystem

Windes began preparing for SQMS implementation approximately 18 months before the deadline, engaging QMCORE roughly six to seven months into that process. A key differentiator was flexibility. Unlike solutions tied to specific audit methodologies or platforms, QMCORE could integrate into Windes’ existing technology ecosystem, including CCH and PPC.

“The difference between QMCORE and those other products is that we felt like it could fit into our ecosystem... and also do what we wanted it to do.”

Equally important was the collaborative relationship. Windes had already designed its quality management framework; QMCORE provided the structure to operationalize it. When questions arose, the QMCORE team responded quickly and worked with the firm to tailor functionality as needed.

“Every question that we had... we could describe something and they could tell us how it fit into the system and how it would work.”

Rather than rushing toward compliance, QMCORE adapted to Windes’ measured implementation timeline, aligning with the firm’s preparation pace.

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Centralization, documentation, and ongoing confidence

“It really provides a lot of evidence.

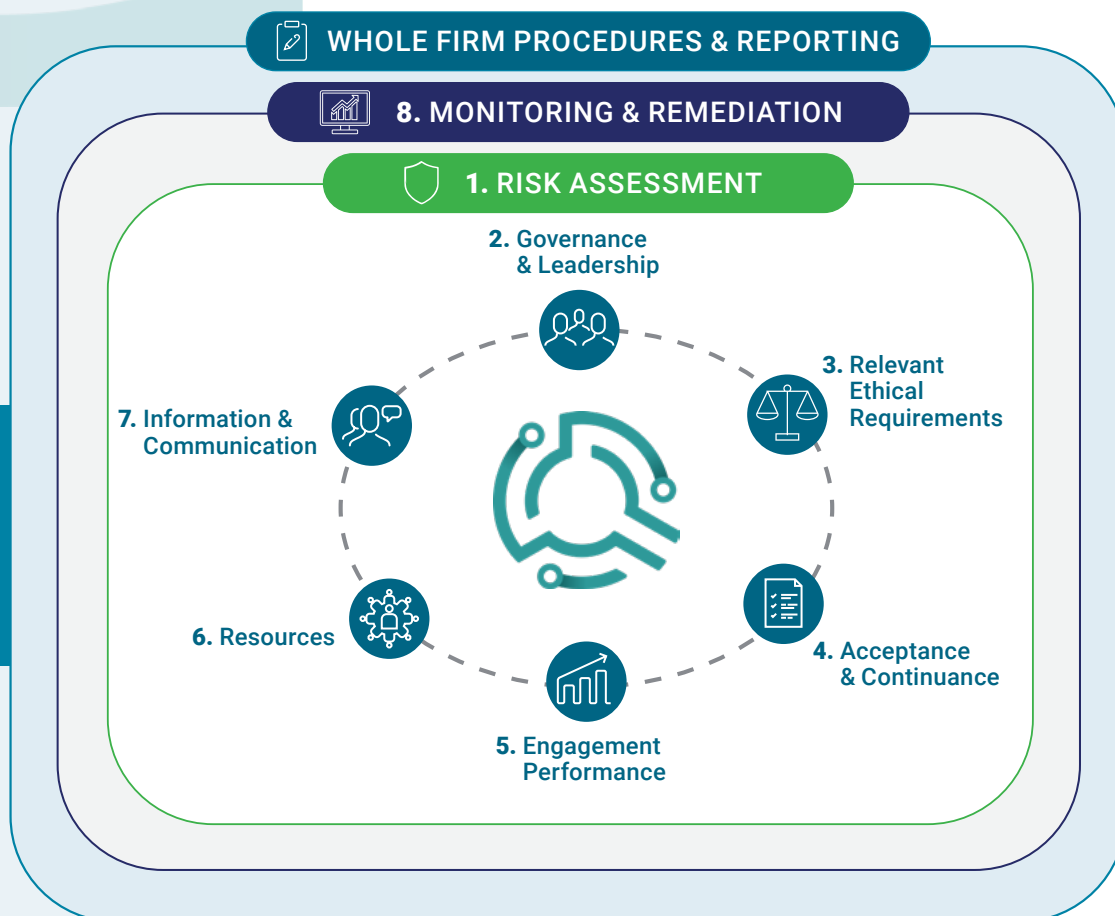
There’s always an audit trail. There’s always documentation for when a quality risk event happens and how it gets resolved.”

With QMCORE in place, Windes now has a centralized system that provides clear documentation, audit trails, and visibility into quality risk events and monitoring activities.

“It really provides a lot of evidence. There’s always an audit trail. There’s always documentation for when a quality risk event happens and how it gets resolved.”

This documentation is especially valuable in peer review and inspection contexts. The system demonstrates not only compliance with SQMS requirements, but also the effort and structure behind the firm’s quality management processes.

The independence monitoring module has already delivered tangible benefits by consolidating oversight into a single dashboard—allowing issues to be identified and addressed quickly.



Key takeaways that Windes benefits from QMCORE

- **A simpler path to SQMS 1**

QMCORE provided a clear, structured way to implement quality management without overcomplicating the process or overextending internal resources.

- **From reactive to proactive**

Instead of relying on ad hoc responses, Windes now has a system that keeps monitoring activities connected to risks so nothing falls through the cracks over time.

- **One place for everything**

Quality management activities, from independence to remediation, are centralized, making information easier to access, manage, and act on.

- **Confidence without complexity**

QMCORE gives leadership confidence that quality is being managed effectively without adding unnecessary operational burden.

While it is still early in the lifecycle of SQMS adoption, Windes expects meaningful time savings and improved accountability as it progresses through its first full monitoring cycle.

“My assumption is it’s going to save a good amount of time and assign responsibilities so that it’s not just on one person or a small group of people.”

For a firm of Windes’ size that completes hundreds of audits annually, having an “always-on” system in place provides reassurance. Ideally, quality management software operates in the background, surfacing issues when needed while supporting ongoing compliance.

An always-on approach to quality

Quality management is not a one-time implementation exercise. It requires consistent monitoring, documentation, and reassessment.

Although Windes has not yet completed a full annual cycle under the new standards, leadership is confident that QMCORE will support the firm’s long-term compliance and quality objectives.

In addition to its functionality, the partnership itself stands out.

“Customer support... they’re very proactive and helpful. Always easy to get ahold of.”

As Windes continues to grow and navigate evolving standards, QMCORE serves as a structured, centralized platform that supports sustainable compliance—without overcomplicating processes for a mid-sized firm.



“Using QMCORE to help our team document and capture our work on our Risk Assessment has allowed us to quickly and efficiently document our System of Quality Management. We have also been able to automate our independence assessment leveraging the power of QMCORE.”

– Jeffrey Ehlers, CPA, Partner, Windes Inc.



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