

# EXPERT FRAUD INVESTIGATION: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE BY TRACY COENEN

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TRACY L. COENEN

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From the Inside Flap  
Expert Fraud Investigation

A Step-by-Step Guide

A sharp, savvy examination of financial fraud, Expert Fraud Investigation: A Step-by-Step Guide is one of the few books to take the leap from theoretical discussion to the actual nuts and bolts of performing an investigation. Fraud expert Tracy Coenen offers an insider look at many of the most common types of fraud cases and points out some of the best methods for analyzing the books and records to search for proof of fraud.

An invaluable tool to help professionals understand how financial fraud occurs in an organization and what to do when it is found or suspected, all the guidance needed to uncover corporate fraud is here, from the point of opening an investigation, selecting a team, through the entire investigative process, including:

- The most common fraud schemes
- The difference between audits and investigations
- Effectively managing the investigation
- Looking for fraud in little things
- Using public and private records in investigations
- Getting creative as a fraud investigator
- Uncovering asset misappropriation schemes, financial statement fraud, corruption schemes, and external fraud schemes
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From the Back Cover  
Praise for Expert Fraud Investigation

"Fraud is a constant evil that attacks businesses, consumers, and government. The financial and reputational impact of fraud can be devastating, but education and awareness are key weapons in the war on this crime. With this new book, Tracy Coenen delivers an excellent primer on the many fraud schemes as well as practical investigative techniques to detect and prevent fraud."

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—Cynthia Cooper, Author of Extraordinary Circumstances: The Journey of a Corporate Whistleblower

About the Author

Tracy L. Coenen, CPA, MBA, CFE is a fraud expert and President of Sequence Inc., a forensic accounting firm with offices in Milwaukee and Chicago. She conducts financial investigations for private and public companies, reports her findings to executives and boards of directors, and testifies in court as an expert witness. She has provided fraud-related commentary to television and print media. Her commentary has been featured on NBC news and on CNBC's personal finance show, On the Money, and her comments have been printed in the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, BusinessWeek.com, CBSNews.com, and Entrepreneur.com, among others. Tracy writes articles on fraud for national business publications including Fraud Magazine.

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A fraud investigation is aimed at examining evidence to determine if a fraud occurred, how it happened, who was involved, and how much money was lost. Investigations occur in cases ranging from embezzlement, to falsification of financial statements, to suspicious insurance claims. Expert Fraud Investigation: A Step-by-Step Guide provides all the tools to conduct a fraud investigation, detailing when and how to investigate. This guide takes the professional from the point of opening an investigation, selecting a team, gathering data, and through the entire investigation process. Business executives, auditors, and security professionals will benefit from this book, and companies will find this a useful tool for fighting fraud within their own organizations.

- Sales Rank: #1210725 in Books
- Published on: 2009-02-09
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.02" h x .91" w x 6.42" l, .90 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 240 pages

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Tracy L. Coenen, CPA, MBA, CFE is a fraud expert and President of Sequence Inc., a forensic accounting firm with offices in Milwaukee and Chicago. She conducts financial investigations for private and public companies, reports her findings to executives and boards of directors, and testifies in court as an expert witness. She has provided fraud-related commentary to television and print media. Her commentary has been featured on NBC news and on CNBC's personal finance show, On the Money, and her comments have been printed in the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, BusinessWeek.com, CBSNews.com, and Entrepreneur.com, among others. Tracy writes articles on fraud for national business publications including Fraud Magazine.

#### Most helpful customer reviews

9 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

Good, but...

By 007

This is a well written book, but not quite what I expected. Although the information contained is certainly informative and helpful, there really isn't enough of it. Many subjects get little more than a page in the book. For someone not trained in accounting, this would be a great book, but for someone with the education and some experience, it really didn't give me enough to justify the fairly steep price tag. If it had fleshed out more of the concepts and was another 100-200 pages longer, it would be a fantastic book, but it just not quite enough of what I needed. Her writing is excellent considering the technical nature of the subject matter, so I will certainly look into other titles by the author.

7 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Don't waste your money.

By T. corporation

This is filled with standard info pulled from a thousand textbooks and papers on the subject. Nothing new and not worth spending your hard earned money. It seems the author decided to opt out on realistic ideas with this one.

8 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

A good read for both beginners and experienced fraud investigators

By Michael Goldman

I really like this book. I am a certified fraud examiner, and have been a sole practitioner practicing in this area since 1996. I read a few books and many articles on fraud every year. This is one of the best.

In a logically structured presentation, Coenen walks through all of the major types of fraud and discusses the thought process that an investigator should use when trying to detect each of them. The discussions of each thought process is typically aided by five to fifteen bullet points--not excessive lists by any means--that the investigator should make sure to consider.

She maintains an engaging, conversational tone throughout the book, with just enough detail and war stories to illustrate the procedures and techniques that she presents. Coenen's book reeks of actual, real-life experience. You can feel the depth and breadth of her fraud investigation experience as you read this book.

Expert Fraud Investigation starts out with three chapters describing the beginning of the cycle: finding fraud, beginning the investigation, and managing the case. These are useful not only for the investigator; attorneys or corporate managers hiring a fraud investigator will also benefit from the delineation of the thought processes and approaches that the investigator should be taking.

Chapters four through six provide a general overview of how to conduct a fraud investigation: searching for fraud, sources of information, and investigative techniques. These chapters give a good overview and some discussion of the thought processes to use.

Chapters seven through ten discuss specific types of fraud and specific investigative steps usually taken to detect them. They cover asset misappropriation schemes, financial statement frauds, corruption schemes, and external frauds such as Ponzi schemes and insurance fraud. The book then concludes with chapters on reporting and litigation, and other issues such as how to market a fraud investigation practice.

Expert Fraud Investigation presents its topic comprehensively, but without redundancy or overkill: Coenen hits each idea once and moves on. There is no new information that I didn't already know, but this book is a great summary of most of the things I need to know to do my work. It is probably a book I will pick up and read a few more times when I need a refresher or am stumped on a fraud investigation.

This book is a good read for fraud investigators with all levels of experience, for judges and lawyers who deal with expert witnesses or consultants in fraud cases, and for corporate managers fearful that they may need a fraud investigation at their own company.

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