

NEWS RELEASE

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KANSAS JOINS MULTI-STATE CONSULTANT REFERRAL NETWORK

The Minnesota Council for Quality – in cooperation with the Michigan Quality Council, the Ohio Partnership for Excellence, and the Wisconsin Forward Award – is pleased to announce that the Kansas Center for Performance Excellence has agreed to offer the Consultant Referral Network© in the state of Kansas.

Located at www.consultantreferralnetwork.org, the Consultant Referral Network is a dynamic, web-enabled search tool that connects organizational improvement experts to client organizations seeking them. This service allows clients to outline their needs in terms of subject matter expertise sought, type of assistance desired (consulting, training, coaching, speaking, or facilitating), sector/industry expertise required, size of consulting firm desired, desired location of consulting firm, and years of experience preferred. The client can also weight the relative importance of each variable. The tool will then identify up to five consultants or firms that best match the client's needs.

“We are extremely pleased to include Kansas in this partnership,” says Brian Lassiter, president of the Minnesota Council for Quality. “The Consultant Referral Network offers an effective way to connect improvement experts to the clients who seek them. This unique tool will be of value to consultants and clients in Kansas, as it already is for organizations in Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin.”

John Shoemaker, Director of the Kansas Center for Performance Excellence adds: “It is oftentimes challenging for organizations in our state to find consultants that can help their business improve. This service will help us bring expert resources – those focusing on Baldrige, Six Sigma, Lean, leadership, human resources, measurement, change management, and a host of other subjects – to our stakeholders in a cost-effective, efficient manner. And, because this is a multi-state collaborative service, our clients can now find consultants outside of Kansas, and our Kansas-based consultants can find potential client leads in other states.”

There are three benefits of this service to organizations. First, the tool can accelerate an organization's search for improvement resources because it is quicker and more efficient than “word of mouth” and traditional searches. Second, it is neutral, independent, and unbiased. “Because the tool is managed and maintained by independent third parties, no consultant receives preferential treatment in the search formula,” says Lassiter. “This makes the tool credible and more useful for clients.”

Third, there is no charge for organizations to use this tool to search for consultants. “We hope to create awareness and encourage organizations to use this tool, because the more clients that find value in the service, the more valuable it becomes for consultants to list in it. And the more consultants who register, the more valuable the tool is for clients, because searches are from a broader base of expertise and capabilities.”

The service also offers three distinct benefits to consultants. First, it provides a potential channel of leads and a legitimate mechanism to create market awareness for the consultant's services and capabilities. Second, it is independent and unbiased, making it credible and fair. And third, it is reasonably priced for consultants to get listed.

“This service provides a win-win-win,” says Lassiter. “The organizations win because they can more efficiently locate organizational improvement resources to help them advance improvement efforts in their operations. The consultants win because they may now get connected with organizations interested in their services. And the state quality programs win because we are offering a valuable service to stakeholders in our states.”

About the Kansas Center for Performance Excellence

The Kansas Center for Performance Excellence is the education, training and consulting arm of the Kansas Award for Excellence Foundation (KAE), a 501c(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to promote and recognize performance excellence in Kansas. KAE is the state affiliate of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. For more information about the Kansas Center for Performance Excellence, visit <http://www.kae.bluestep.net/> or call 800-743-6767.

About the Minnesota Council for Quality

Founded in 1987, the Minnesota Council for Quality is a non-profit that helps organizations improve performance and competitiveness. The Council's primary service is a comprehensive organizational assessment that identifies strengths and improvement opportunities and serves as the foundation for the Minnesota Quality Award. In addition, the Council brokers improvement-related resources, information, knowledge, and best practices within and between Minnesota organizations. For more information, please visit www.councilforquality.org.

About the Michigan Quality Council

The mission of the Michigan Quality Council is to assist organizations in improving their performance through the use of proven quality concepts and techniques that ensure desirable results for products, services and customer satisfaction. The MQC does this by providing professional development; advising/consulting in partnership with others; assessing and providing feedback on strengths and improvement areas; recognizing exemplary performance; and identifying and disseminating best practices. For more information, please visit www.michiganquality.org.

About the Ohio Partnership for Excellence

The Ohio Partnership for Excellence™ (OPE) is a non-profit organization that works with organizations to simply become better at what they do. By using the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence as a framework, OPE helps organizations see improved results. Many organizations see lowered costs, improved productivity, increased profitability, and rises in both employee and customer satisfaction. For more information, please visit www.partnershipohio.org.

About the Wisconsin Forward Award

The mission of Wisconsin Forward Award, Inc. is to promote and recognize the adoption of high performance management principles and practices by Wisconsin organizations in order to achieve world-class status for Wisconsin products and services; help meet international competition; and enhance continuous learning, quality improvement and performance excellence. For more information, please visit www.forwardaward.org.

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