
Minnesota Council for Quality Stakeholder Update
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In This Issue:

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1. A Message from the President: Managing Organizational Knowledge
2. Join the 2004 Board of Evaluators: Time is Running Out for Fall Training
3. Sustaining the Quality/Improvement Journey – PIN Discussion 9/2
4. Organization Change and Development Competencies – MNODN Discussion 9/7
5. Take This Job and LOVE It – RAQC Session 9/14
6. Roles Models in Performance Excellence – Baldrige Regional Conferences 9/10 and 9/30
7. Minnesota Quality Conference: Save the Date – 10/4-10/5
8. South Central Technical College Announces Fall Courses; Council Members Get 10% Discount
9. Hennepin Technical College Announces Lean Courses; Council Members Discounted 10%
10. St. Thomas Announces Fall Courses; Council Members Get 15% Discount
11. Inver Hills Community College Announces Fall Events; Council Members Discounted 15%

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1. A Message from the President: Managing Organizational Knowledge

The concept of organizational “knowledge management” became common in the mid- to late-90s. With the introduction of database technologies such as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) applications, Enterprise Resource Management (ERP) systems, and data warehouses, many organizations began managing their data, information, and knowledge in more sophisticated ways. However, some managers considered the task of managing their organization’s knowledge mainly related to that of managing its information systems (and the information within them). While technology certainly has a role in effective knowledge management, it is not the only way organizations can -- or should -- manage their knowledge.

Let me briefly explain by reusing an example from the March newsletter (you can find the full story at http://www.councilforquality.org/about_newsletter.cfm). In that edition, I talked about the importance of succession planning, especially as baby boomers approach retirement. The example I gave was of a mid-sized Twin Cities organization that predicts nearly half of its employees will reach retirement in five years but that the high-tech skills needed for its core business are not readily being taught by today’s higher education institutions. A data warehouse -- while a great tool for synthesizing, analyzing, processing, and manipulating this organization’s data and information -- probably won’t

help in capturing and transferring the collective knowledge of some of this organization's most seasoned, most experienced workers before they walk out the door.

So how does this (or any) organization effectively transfer and manage its knowledge? I'll offer six possible ways:

- 1) Job design and organizational structure. Since a great deal of knowledge resides within the minds and memories of an organization's employees, finding ways to transfer that information to other employees through work systems is imperative for most organizations. Some possible methods: job sharing, job rotation, job shadowing, cross-functional work teams, temporary problem solving and improvement teams, mentoring, and idea systems.
- 2) Training and development. Perhaps one of the most traditional ways of building and transferring knowledge, organizations should train its employees on the skills and competencies needed to advance the organization's strategic objectives (and also increase the individual employee's value). Training can take many forms: classroom, on-the-job, computer-based or on-line, seminars and workshops, and so forth. In addition, new employee orientation training is an effective way to begin the transfer of knowledge from incumbent employees to new hires.
- 3) Performance management processes. If you train and develop your employees and you build work systems that allow for knowledge transfer, then you should also consider providing incentives for employees to actually execute the transfer of knowledge. In other words, reward employees for sharing their wisdom, skills, and knowledge.
- 4) Communication. In the context of knowledge management, communication can take a couple of forms. First, an organization's senior leaders can -- and should -- communicate the organization's strategic priorities, current challenges and issues, vision and direction. This knowledge helps employees know what is important to the organization's success, thereby helping them align their individual efforts accordingly. Second, organizations should build communication mechanisms to solicit improvement ideas and feedback from employees (this could be through suggestion systems, aggregated 360 reviews, input into product/service design, input into training and work system design, and so forth); these processes could easily be extended to suppliers, partners, customers, and other stakeholders to capture their knowledge. Finally, organizations should build mechanisms to share best practices across the organization -- spreading good ideas across various work units, departments, and teams, thereby reducing the wasted energy resulting from constantly "reinventing the wheel."
- 5) Process documentation. Another way to capture and distribute organizational knowledge is simply by documenting your key processes. There is no better way to communicate to employees, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders how work gets done than with a process map (flow chart). This method of sharing knowledge also helps to ensure consistent process deployment and therefore predictable product/service

performance, to facilitate the identification of improvement opportunities, and to sustain process performance over time despite changes in employees.

6) Technology. Technology absolutely has a major role in managing organizational knowledge. Data warehouses, certain applications (such as CRM and ERP), and a robust infrastructure can allow an organization to quickly, accurately, securely, and cost-effectively transfer data, information, and institutional knowledge to a variety of key stakeholders.

In today's environment, it is critical for organizations to fully leverage and transfer its knowledge. Technology is one tool to facilitate knowledge management, but leaders should also consider a variety of other ways to manage knowledge.

Yours in Improvement,

Brian S. Lassiter
President, Minnesota Council for Quality
www.councilforquality.org

2. Join the 2004 Board of Evaluators: Time is Running Out for Fall Training

Are you interested in learning more about what makes organizations successful? Are you interested in helping other organizations – such as schools, hospitals, non-profits, and businesses – around the state improve their performance? Would you be interested in networking, learning, and sharing with others who feel the same way?

The Minnesota Council for Quality is seeking candidates for the 2004 Minnesota Quality Award Board of Evaluators and time is running out to join our third and final training session this fall.

There are many benefits to becoming an Evaluator: strengthening your ability to understand what factors drive organizational results, networking with peers across the state, forming deep relationships with professionals and leaders interested in organizational improvement, reviewing performance of organizations throughout the state (and possibly identifying best practices for your organization), and developing other professional skills such as analysis, consensus- and team-building, interpersonal, written communication, interviewing, and systems thinking. Many Evaluators consider the experience to be among the most valuable of their careers.

The fall Evaluator training session is scheduled for September 21-23 at Unisys in Roseville (using a business case study). Applications for new Evaluators are due August 20 (date extended) and for returning Evaluators on September 10.

In addition to the fall full three-day training sessions above, new Evaluators are also required to attend a one-day orientation. New Evaluators can select one of three dates for the fall orientation: September 1, 2, or 8.

Furthermore, this year is the first time that Evaluators can earn post-graduate credit for participating in training. For interested Evaluators, the University of Wisconsin-Stout will offer three (3) hours of credit in partnership with the Minnesota Council for Quality. For more information, please email the Council at kathryn.mackin@councilforquality.org.

We hope that you would consider (re)joining the Board of Evaluators and/or encourage others to do so. For more information or for an application, please visit www.councilforquality.org/assess.cfm, email us at kathryn.mackin@councilforquality.org, or call 612-462-3577.

3. Sustaining the Quality/Improvement Journey – PIN Discussion 9/2

Sustaining the quality journey in an organization over time remains an awesome challenge for both leaders and implementers alike. While the fundamentals of quality may not have substantively changed since the original work done by many of our quality gurus dating back to the 1930's, certainly the packaging of concepts and tools today would have us believe that breakthrough is regularly being established.

The Minnesota Council for Quality is pleased to welcome Mr. Gary Floss of BlueFire Partners and Marvin Windows and Doors, to the September 2 Performance Improvement Network (PIN) discussion. Gary's discussion, "It's Never Over Until...No Wait, It's Just Never Over!", will offer the perspective that the factor most often leading to successful quality revolves around HOW to deploy, not so much WHAT to deploy. Gary will build on a PIN talk that he gave a little over a year ago, providing insights into what he sees as the challenges to sustaining a world-class ongoing quality journey toward performance excellence.

The discussion is from 8:00-9:00 a.m. on September 2 (networking and continental breakfast begin at 7:30 a.m.) at the University of St. Thomas in downtown Minneapolis, Murphy Hall Room 203. Admission is FREE for Council members; \$20 for the public. For more information or to register, visit www.councilforquality.org/perform or email brian.lassiter@councilforquality.org.

4. Organization Change and Development Competencies – MNODN Discussion 9/7

The Minnesota Strategic Leadership Forum (MSLF), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to announce their September 7 discussion "Organization Change and Development Competencies: Competencies and Skill Building for the Superior-Performing OD Practitioner and Change Agent." The discussion will be lead by Mary

Hovden, owner of Hovden Consulting, and Roland Sullivan, one of the original 100 change agents.

This highly interactive session highlight comprehensive research on what it takes to be a superior-performing OD practitioner. It also gives participants a tool to rate themselves against organization change and development competencies. Advice on how to build OD skills and competencies is given in a best practice application from Wells Fargo Home Mortgage (WFHM). Special emphasis will be placed on the internal consulting role. Roland and Mary will:

- * Summarize the history of OD competency research.
- * Offer a new and emerging definition of change agent competency.
- * Share current, future, and WFHM OD competencies.
- * Give participants an opportunity to dialogue around the competencies that they believe are unique or significant to the internal OD/change agent role.
- * Discuss a best practice case study of building internal OD skills and capabilities.

Mary and Roland combined their recent presentations to “The Sixth Annual Best of Organizational Development Summit” offered by Linkage.

The discussion will be held Tuesday, September 7, from 3:00-5:30 at the University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis Campus, Opus Hall Room 203A. Cost is \$20 for the public; \$10 for MNODN or Council members. For more information, visit http://www.mnodn.org/members/speakers/spk09_04.htm or contact Charlie Bisanz at cfbisanz@visi.com or 612.344.1789.

5. Take This Job and LOVE It – RAQC Session 9/14

Please join the Rochester Area Quality Council (RAQC), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, for their next monthly meeting on September 14, when they welcome Patricia Jump and her talk “Take This Job and LOVE It!”

Patricia will offer a powerful message through this amusing and enlightening presentation. Through personal stories, humor, and practical knowledge, discover how to rekindle your passion and enthusiasm for your career. Laugh and learn as you take back information to help you triumph over every-day work challenges.

Patricia Jump is President of Acorn's End Training and Consulting. She has over two decades of public speaking experience. She is known for her energetic, animated and results-oriented presentations. Pat's passion for developing people transmits to all with whom she interacts.

This program will be held at the University Center Rochester, Coffman Building, Room CF206-208. Breakfast and networking begin at 7:15; the program is from 7:50-9:00. Cost is \$20 for non-members, or \$10 for members of RAQC or the MN Council for

Quality. For more information or to register, visit www.raqc.com, email kay.wiegert@roch.edu, or call 507-285-7560.

6. Roles Models in Performance Excellence – Baldrige Regional Conferences 9/10 and 9/30

For more than a decade, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Regional Conferences have been a valuable forum for Baldrige Award recipients to showcase their exceptional performance practices. This year, the Baldrige Award Program is pleased to welcome Award recipients from all five Award sectors: Medrad, Inc. (manufacturing); Boeing Aerospace Support (service); Caterpillar Financial Services Corporation (service); Stoner, Inc. (small business); Community Consolidated School District 15, Paletine IL (education); Baptist Hospital, Inc. (health care); and St. Luke’s Hospital of Kansas City (health care). In addition, the conferences will feature past Award recipients.

There will be two regional conferences this fall: September 10 in Chicago (Oak Brook) and September 30 in San Antonio. Both sessions will also feature a Pre-Conference Workshop for Baldrige Beginners the day before. Both sessions will feature a combination of plenary, concurrent, and town hall presentations that provide a dynamic and interactive experience to maximize learning and networking. Both conferences are \$495 (\$445 advanced registration available, as well as discounts for faculty and groups).

Whether your organization is large or small; in service, manufacturing, education, or health care; located in one location or has multiple sites; you can benefit from the knowledge and experience of Baldrige recipients.

For more information or to register, visit www.baldrige.org or call 301-975-2036. You can also find more information at www.councilforquality.org/improve_events.cfm.

7. Minnesota Quality Conference: Save the Date – October 4-5

The Minnesota Section of the American Society for Quality (ASQ), in coordination with the Minnesota Council for Quality, is proud to announce the 51st annual Minnesota Quality Conference. The conference is schedule for Monday, October 4, 2004, at the Marriott City Center in downtown Minneapolis. A post-conference day of workshops will be held Tuesday, October 5.

This two day conference will include quality and improvement topics such as Quality in Manufacturing, Quality Systems, “Small Shop” Quality, Reliability & Testing, Six Sigma, and much more! In addition, this year’s conference will include a track the features the 2003 recipients of the Minnesota Quality Award: Micro-Tech Hearing Instruments, Tappe Construction, Unisys Corporation Central Development Lab, and the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Save the date! More information will be released later this month on www.mnasq.org and the Council's Clearinghouse at www.councilforquality.org/improve_events.cfm.

8. South Central Technical College Announces Fall Courses; Council Members Get 10% Discount

South Central Technical College, Faribault Campus, is pleased to announce their fall quality curriculum. Council members are entitled to a 10% discount for the following courses:

9/20-11/8: Geometric Dimensioning & Tolerancing, \$267
10/13: Problem Solving Tools & Methods, \$235
10/19: Understanding & Implementing ISO 9001:2000, \$235
10/20: Internal Auditor Skills, \$235
11/3-11/4: Introduction to Quality, \$370
11/15: Corrective & Preventive Action Systems, \$235
12/1-12/2: Introduction to Lean Manufacturing, \$390
12/8: Project Management, \$235
12/9-12/10: Introduction to Six Sigma, \$390.

The following additional certification review classes will be offered (the 10% discount still applies):

9/16-10/14: Certified Quality Technician (CQT) Review, \$250
9/22-10/13: Certified Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point Auditor Review, \$200
10/4-11/29: Certified Quality Engineer (CQE) Review, \$450
10/26-11/30: Certified Calibration Technician (CCT) Review, \$300
11/2-11/30: Certified Quality Improvement Associate (CQIA) Review, \$250
11/3-12/1: Certified Quality Auditor (CQA) Review, \$250

For more information, please contact Laura Hardy at 507-332-5802 or at laura.hardy@southcentral.edu. You can also find more information on the Council's Clearinghouse at www.councilforquality.org/improve_events.cfm.

9. Hennepin Technical College Announces Lean Courses; Council Members Discounted 10%

Hennepin Technical College of Eden Prairie, a partner of the Council, is pleased to announce two quality courses for this summer/fall:

* Quality Concepts and Systems: 3 credits, Tuesday evenings from August 24 through December 14.

* Principles and Practices of Lean Manufacturing: 3 credits, Thursday afternoons from August 26 through December 16.

Council members will receive a 10% discount on tuition. For more information, please visit <http://www.hennepintech.edu/index.htm>. You can also find more information on the Council's Clearinghouse at www.councilforquality.org/improve_events.cfm.

10. St. Thomas Announces Fall Courses; Council Members Get 15% Discount

The Management Center at the University of St. Thomas recently announced its fall course offerings. As in the past, Council members will receive at 15% discount to all courses.

The following courses will be offered:

September 9 through December 16: Mini MBA
September 10 through December 11: Planning Company Growth (Info Session 8/10)
September 13 through December 20: Six Sigma Black Belt Certificate
September 17: Decision Tools for Managers
October 7: Conflict Resolution Skills
October 28 through November 19: Six Sigma Green Belt Certificate
November 3-4: The "Micro MBA" - Essentials for Managers Under Pressure

Mark your calendars! For more information, please contact The Management Center at 651-962-4600 or visit www.stthomas.edu/mgmtctr. You can also find more information on the Council's Clearinghouse at www.councilforquality.org/improve_events.cfm.

11. Inver Hills Community College Announces Fall Events; Council Members Discounted 15%

Inver Hills Community College recently announced its upcoming management and advanced IT networking classes. Council members receive a 15% discount on all listed tuition.

The following courses will be offered:

September 9: Inver Hill's Open House for Continuous Improvement, Free
September 29, October 6: Introduction to Lean, \$700
September 30, October 7: Introduction to Lean, \$700
October 13, October 20: Introduction to Six Sigma (Yellow Belt), \$700
October 14, October 21: Introduction to Six Sigma (Yellow Belt), \$700
October 18-22: Six Sigma Green Belt, \$1625
October 20-22: Six Sigma Discovery Process

For more information on any of these courses, call Bill Zwicky at 651-450-8679 or visit <http://www.inverhills.edu/>. You can also find more information on the Council's Clearinghouse at www.councilforquality.org/improve_events.cfm.

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