
Minnesota Council for Quality Stakeholder Update
February 2005

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1. A Message from the President: Making Processes Systematic

We recently completed a Minnesota Quality Award assessment for a medium-sized organization. One of the recurrent themes for this organization was that many of their key processes were not "systematic." After giving the feedback a few times, it occurred to me that this organization may not completely understand the meaning of systematic. And if they didn't, perhaps others don't either.

A systematic process is one that 1) is repeatable, and 2) uses data and information so that learning and improvement are possible. The fact that a process is repeatable means that the process can be replicated to produce a consistent, predictable outcome (or product or service). And the notion of using data and information to learn and improve requires organizations to build in the opportunity for evaluation, improvement, and sharing such that increased organizational maturity and improved results may follow.

The opposite of systematic might be labeled "anecdotal." In the Council's organizational assessment process, anecdotal refers to process information that lacks specific methods, measures, deployment mechanisms, and evaluation and improvement factors. Anecdotal information frequently uses examples and describes individual activities rather methodical processes.

Perhaps the difference between systematic and anecdotal can be made clearer through an example. Let's say you are writing a description of how your organization's senior leaders deploy performance expectations throughout the organization (either for one of our organizational assessments or for your own internal use). An anecdotal response might describe a specific occasion when a senior leader visited all company facilities and communicated the company's annual goals and might look something like this:

“To deploy performance expectations in our organization, last October the General Manager John Smith visited company facilities and communicated our annual goals to employees. The visits were well received by employees, and Mr. Smith therefore intends to conduct these visits frequently in the future.”

While that certainly is an example of a valuable activity, it is not systematic because it is a one-time event (is not repeatable, predictable, and consistently deployed) and does not use data and information for learning and improvement (there is no indication of how this activity/process is measured so that effectiveness is gauged and learning and improvement can take place).

On the other hand, a systematic, well-deployed process would involve a specific description of how communication method(s) are used by all senior leaders to deliver performance expectations to all employee locations, the measures used to assess effectiveness of the methods, and the tools and techniques used to evaluate and improve the communication methods. So the following would more appropriately describe a systematic process:

“To deploy performance expectations in our organization, the General Manager John Smith visits all company facilities every October to communicate our annual goals to all employees. We collect employee feedback on these sessions with a brief survey to ensure that the forum is effective. Because of feedback we received during last October's meetings, we will now report progress on these goals in our monthly employee newsletter (which all employees receive), and we now require all managers to informally discuss corporate goals with all employees in their monthly staff meetings.”

See the difference? The latter description not only describes in more detail the specifics of the process used (who, where, and when), but also mentions the extent to which this process is deployed as well as how data are collected to assess the effectiveness of those sessions. In addition, it offers evidence that learning and refinements have actually taken place as a result of evaluating the process. As a result, the second description is more characteristic of a systematic process than the first.

Not all activities in an organization need be systematic: indeed, some things within an organization are appropriately one-shot events. And for a process to be systematic doesn't mean it has to be “formal” (you can have very effective, systematic processes that are informal and even undocumented so long as they are repeatable and use data for evaluation, learning, and improvement).

The bottom line: for a great majority of organizational processes, managers should work to make them systematic. They should be repeatable (consistent, predictable) and they should use data and information for evaluation, learning, improvement.

Yours in Improvement,

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

2. Sarah Field Elected to Council Board

The Minnesota Council for Quality is pleased to announce the election of Sarah Field to its Board of Directors. Ms. Field is currently the Executive Director of Rochester Area Math Science Partnership (RAMSP), a non-profit that focuses on promoting high student achievement and on providing leadership and support for continuous improvement and promoting collaboration among K-12 districts in southeast Minnesota.

“I am very excited to welcome Sarah to our Board,” says Brian Lassiter, president of the Minnesota Council for Quality. “Sarah has a passion for organizational excellence and is dedicated to improving the quality of K-12 schools in the Rochester area. She also brings significant non-profit experience to our Board, a perspective we hope to increase.”

Ms. Field is a graduate of the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota. She has a diverse background with experience in many industries, including information technology, manufacturing, non-profit, and education. Prior to her work with RAMSP, she held positions with the following organizations: IBM (software engineer), Worksystems, Inc (Special Projects Coordinator), and the United Way of Olmsted County. Sarah also served for one year as an AmeriCorp VISTA volunteer with the “Teaming for Technology” program.

Currently Sarah serves on the Rochester Area Quality Council (RAQC) Board, a partner of the Council, and will serve as the current ex Officio Board member from RAQC.

“Our partnership with the Rochester Area Quality Council continues to strengthen,” says Craig Robinson, Chair of the Council’s Board and Marketing Consultant with Kopp Financial Advisors. “Sarah will help us better understand the needs of our members and stakeholders from southeast Minnesota.”

Sarah also serves on the Board of Evaluators for the Council’s Minnesota Quality Award. She also volunteers on several community projects. Sarah currently lives in Rochester with her husband David and children Isabel & Olivia.

3. Looking for Experts to Join the 2005 Board of Evaluators; Training Dates Set

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 2005 Minnesota Quality Award Board of Evaluators. There are many benefits to becoming an Evaluator, such as:

- * 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. Furthermore, Evaluators can now 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.

If you are interested in joining the 2005 Board of Evaluators, please note the following training dates: the spring session will be March 22-24 (in the Metro); the summer session will be June 28-30 (in Rochester); and the fall session will be September 20-22 (in the Metro). You may select the session that best meets your needs. In addition to the full three-day training session, new Evaluators are also required to attend a one-day orientation. New Evaluators can select one of three dates for the spring orientation: February 16 (registration deadline has past), February 21 (registration deadline has past), or February 25 (application due February 18).

Applications for returning Evaluators are due on March 8.

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.

4. Achieving Excellence in Health Care -- DVDs and VHS Available

On January 5, the Minnesota Council for Quality hosted an extraordinary event that featured three recipients of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award from the health care sector: SSM Health Care from St. Louis (2002 recipient), Baptist Health Care from Pensacola (2003 recipient), and St. Luke's Hospital from Kansas City (2003 recipient).

Executives from the three organizations shared how they are using Baldrige and other frameworks to improve clinical outcomes, increase patient and customer satisfaction, improve staff-related results (such as satisfaction, retention, morale), improve financial and operational performance, and advance their missions and strategic objectives. The event -- attended by more than 220 health care and business leaders from Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Missouri, Florida, and California -- provided an exceptional opportunity to learn from role model health care providers, as well as a chance to network with others interested in improving the performance of health care in their communities and/or organizations.

Unfortunately, the event sold out well in advance, and there were at least 80 other professionals interested in attending (50 of whom were officially on a waiting list). For those who could not attend, slides are now available on the Council's homepage (www.councilforquality.org).

In addition, the Council is now offering videos of the proceeding for those who did not attend the event (one of the Baldrige recipients requires us to only make videos available to those who did not attend; therefore, if you did attend, feel free to invite others from your organization to order a copy). We will have VHS and DVDs available sometime next week and can now accept orders. Copies are \$59 for members of the Council; \$79 for non-members; all charges include postage. (For information on the event -- including the agenda and slides -- visit www.councilforquality.org.) To order a copy of the video, please email brian.lassiter@councilforquality.org, and indicate how many copies (of either VHS or DVD) you desire, to what address you would like them sent, and how you desire to pay (Visa, MasterCard, or invoice; we will ship the video once payment is received).

5. Selling Your Ideas Inside & Outside Your Organization -- PIN Discussion 3/3

Some people seem to be natural born communicators: they appear as if they can influence anyone and everyone to adopt their ideas. In truth, anyone can successfully "sell" customers, clients, team members, other departments, or executive management on their ideas if they have a supportive belief system -- a belief system that supports the desired results.

The Minnesota Council for Quality is pleased to welcome Danita Bye, President of Sales Growth Specialists, to the March 3 Performance Improvement Network (PIN) discussion. Danita will discuss the four crucial elements -- the characteristics and beliefs -- of people who can and WILL effectively influence others: desire, commitment, taking

responsibility, and a positive outlook. In addition, she will outline the beliefs that can sabotage your effectiveness, leaving you ineffective in promoting our ideas and solutions. She will also give suggestions for strengthening these components so they do not derail you.

Danita's insights will help any professional who has a need for sales or influence: her experience and suggestions can help you improve the way in which you communicate with external customers, your internal customers, and your superiors.

The discussion is from 8:00-9:00 a.m. on March 3 (networking and continental breakfast begin at 7:30 a.m.) at the University of St. Thomas in downtown Minneapolis. Note the new room: OPUS Hall Room 201 (across the skyway from the old location). Admission is FREE for Council members; \$10 for partner organizations; \$20 for the public. For more information or to register, visit www.councilforquality.org/perform or email brian.lassiter@councilforquality.org. Space is limited so register today.

6. Strategy in Picking Winners -- MSLF 2/22 Discussion

Megatrends were obvious, right? Then how come some made money, cashing in on megatrends, but others did not?

The Minnesota Strategic Leadership Forum (MSLF), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to announce their February 22 discussion "Strategy in Picking Winners." The discussion will be facilitated by Yuval Almog, a venture capitalist.

Yuval Almog focuses on investments in media, communications, Internet infrastructure, software, and systems. He has spent 16 years in private equity/venture capital and over 14 years as an entrepreneur and operating manager. Yuval's history of developing market leaders includes being the lead investor in, among others, Advanced Fibre Communications, Cerus, Macromedia, Magnet Communications, Optical Solutions, and RichFX. Prior to becoming a venture capitalist, Yuval co-founded Zoran Corporation, a digital signal processor company in Silicon Valley. From 1979 through 1982, Yuval was with Raychem Corporation in both staff and line positions. For nine years prior to his arrival in the U.S., Yuval was a fighter pilot, systems officer, and instructor with the Israeli Air Force. Yuval earned a B.A. and B.S. in Mathematics, Computer Science and Economics from the University of Alabama and an M.S. in Management from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Yuval Almog is one of the premiere strategists in evaluating businesses opportunities. His investment model is built on strategic principles that consistently attract large audiences.

Yuval will cover the following questions:

- * Is it possible to reduce risk by not diversifying?
- * How to sort out what is strategic and what is not.
- * The Coral investment model

The discussion will be held Tuesday, February 22. Registration, networking, and breakfast are at 7:00 AM; the program is from 7:45-9:00 AM. The meeting location HAS MOVED TO the University of St. Thomas, 1000 LaSalle Ave in Minneapolis, Opus Hall. Cost is \$35 to the public or \$25 for members of Council (free for MSLF Premium members). For more information or to register, visit <http://www.slf-minnesota.org/calendar.htm>.

7. Quality Pays: the Business Case for Quality -- RAQC Session 3/1

Pease join the Rochester Area Quality Council (RAQC), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, for their next monthly meeting on March 1 on the topic of "Quality Pays: the Business Case for Quality." Craig Robinson, Marketing Consultant with Kopp Financial Advisors, will share evidence of the effect of quality on an organization's bottom line, evidence that could build a case for action within your organization. This information could be helpful for those needing to show senior leaders support that systematic improvement frameworks indeed drive value within organizations.

In 1998, Mark Billeadeau and Mr. Robinson developed a proprietary scoring methodology that analyzes the effect of quality. Using this methodology, the companies represented in the S&P 500 are graded based on their success of attaining quality goals and achieving national recognition. The Q-100 is then created by taking the 100 highest scoring companies relative to their peers, chosen from a cross section of economic sectors represented in the S&P 500. This process leads to a distinctive, enhanced way of investing in large-cap stocks, and also represents a body of knowledge that demonstrates the potential value-add of systematic quality within organizations.

Come hear Craig Robinson outline the Q-100 -- its history, construction, scoring methodology, and results of the Q-100 list. Craig's talk will summarize the quantifiable benefits of systematic approach to quality and process improvement. Craig is the current Chairman of the Minnesota Council for Quality and is a frequent national speaker on quality.

This breakfast meeting will be held at the University Center Rochester, Coffman Building, Room CF206-208. Registration will begin at 7:30 a.m., followed by networking. The presentation will begin at 7:50 a.m. and conclude at 9:00 a.m. The \$10 fee for members (of RAQC or MCQ) and \$20 fee for non-members includes a continental breakfast. You can register online at www.raqc.com, or by calling Kay Wiegert at 507-285-7560.

8. Essential Conversations: Talking About What Really Matters -- MNODN Session 3/1

Helping leaders and organizations to hit the "pause button" and think deeply about what really matters is a profound wish of many people involved in organizations. Craig Neal

has been working for over 25 years to discover and teach the principles and approaches that allow leaders to move forward with authenticity, heart, and impact.

The Minnesota Organization Development Network (MNODN), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to announce their March 1 monthly meeting, "Essential Conversations: Talking About What Really Matters." In this session, Craig and John Gisler from Twin Cities Federal Coop Credit Union will help us understand how the principles of essential conversation can have an impact in the real world of leadership and change. Using the approaches developed by Heartland Institute (through such learning communities as Thought Leader Gatherings and the Art of Convening tele-series), they will convene the group in a highly interactive exploration of these principles and how they can make a difference in organizations.

The discussion will be held March 1 from 3:30-5:30 (networking at 3:00) at the University of St. Thomas Minneapolis Campus, Opus Hall Room 202. Cost is \$10 for members of MNODN or the Council and \$20 for non-members. For more information, visit <http://www.mnodn.org> or contact Al VanArsdal at 952 210-7676 or vanarscon@aol.com.

9. Using the Balanced Scorecard to Improve Performance: -- U of M Course 3/15

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) is still one of the most popular management tools of the last decade. Thousands of organizations are using the framework and thousands more are considering it. The University of Minnesota's College of Continuing Education is pleased to offer a one day course, "Using the Balanced Scorecard to Improve Your Organization's Performance" on March 15.

The course, taught by Brian Lassiter, president of the Council, will introduce the BSC as a strategic measurement and management framework and demonstrate how it can be used in any organization -- of any size, any sector, or any marketplace. Through a highly interactive discussion, the course will also provide the participant with tools that can be taken back to your job to help you design and use a scorecard.

The course is March 15 from 8:30-4:30 at the University of Minnesota's Continuing Education and Conference Center (formerly Earle Brown Center) on the St. Paul Campus. Cost is \$595; Council members receive a discount (inquire at registration). For more information, visit www.cce.umn.edu/professionaleducation and enter ID number 177117. Or call 612-624-4000.

10. Learn from the Best: "Quest for Excellence" XVII Conference -- 4/10-4/13

Are you ready to "Turn the Corner toward Performance Excellence?" This year, four organizations have reached a milestone in their journey toward performance excellence. The 2004 Award recipients of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award are The

Bama Companies (manufacturing), Texas Nameplate Company, Inc. (small business), Kenneth W. Monfort College of Business (education), and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton (health care). These winning organizations demonstrate role model excellence in several key areas, including leadership, strategic planning, and performance results.

Meet the 2004 recipients of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award to learn about their best practices and how they achieve exceptional performance results at The Quest for Excellence(R) XVII Conference (QE) April 10-13, 2005, at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, DC.

Also, hear from recent service category Award recipients Boeing Aerospace Support, Caterpillar Financial Services Corporation (U.S.), Operations Management International, Inc., and the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, L.L.C.

Attendees will be able to track the journey of two Award recipients, track a Baldrige Criteria Category, or both! Join us early for pre-conference workshops customized to match your experience level.

Visit <http://www.quality.nist.gov/QEXVII/dem.htm> for complete information on QE and online registration, or call the American Society for Quality at 800-248-1946 to register by phone. Early registration discounts available until March 14, 2005. Hotel accommodations should be made directly with the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel at 202-328-2900 or online at www.stayatmarriott.com/2005QuestforExcellence.

11. Century College Announces Winter/Spring Courses; Council Members Receive \$50 Discount

Century College, White Bear Lake, is pleased to announce their winter and spring quality curriculum. Council members are entitled to a \$50 discount for the following courses:

* Certified Quality Improvement Associate (CQIA); 5/3 through 5/24; \$525 Council members, \$575 non-members

* Certified Quality Engineer (CQE); 3/2 through 5/25; \$825 Council members, \$875 non-members

* Certified Quality Auditor (CQA); 3/29 through 5/10; \$745 Council members, \$795 non-members

You can also find more information on the Council's Clearinghouse at http://www.councilforquality.org/improve_events.cfm.

Century College offers a comprehensive program of Quality training, certificate and certification courses to meet the needs of business and industry. Courses may be

customized and delivered to your organization's work site. For more information on the above courses or any of Century's offerings, please contact Nancy Hoglund, CQM at 651-747-4048 or n.hoglund@century.edu.

12. South Central Technical College Announces Spring Courses; Council Members Get 10% Discount

South Central Technical College, Faribault and Mankato campuses, is pleased to announce their spring quality and performance improvement curriculum. Council members are entitled to a 10% discount for the following courses at the Faribault campus (prices before member discount):

Applying SPC & Statistical Tools; 2/24; \$235
Geometric Dimensioning & Tolerancing; 3/8-3/9; \$375
Understanding & Implementing ISO 9001:2000; 3/15; \$235
Internal Auditor Skills; 3/16; \$235
Introduction to Lean Manufacturing; 3/17; \$235
Problem Solving Tools & Methods; 4/7; \$235
Introduction to Quality; 4/19-4/20; \$370
Supplier Quality Management & Improvement; 5/5; \$235
Certified Quality Manager (CQM) Review; 1/4-3/1; \$450
Certified Quality Technician (CQT) Review; 1/24-2/28; \$250
Certified Mechanical Inspector (CMI) Review; 1/24-2/14; \$250
Certified Quality Auditor (CQA) Review; 5/5-6/2; \$250

Council members are entitled to a 10% discount for the following courses at the Mankato campus (prices before member discount):

Introduction to Lean Manufacturing; 3/16; \$235
Introduction to Quality; 3/30-3/31; \$370
Project Management; 4/6; \$235
Corrective & Preventive Action Systems; 5/3; \$235
Introduction to Six Sigma; 5/5-5/6; \$390
Certified Quality Technician (CQT) Review; 1/25-2/22; \$250
Certified Mechanical Inspector (CMI) Review; 1/25-2/15; \$250
Certified Quality Auditor (CQA) Review; 5/5-6/2; \$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.

13. St. Thomas Announces Spring Courses; Council Members Get 15% Discount

The Center for Performance Excellence at the University of St. Thomas Minneapolis Campus is pleased to announce their winter improvement curriculum. Council members are entitled to a 15% discount for the following courses:

- * Mini Master of Human Capital Management, 2/22-5/24, \$1695
- * Basic Supervision, 2/24, \$595
- * Building a Foundation of Management Skills, 2/24, \$375
- * The “Micro MBA” - Essentials For Managers Under Pressure, 3/2-3/3, \$695
- * Mini Master of Business Communication, 3/3-5/19, \$1795
- * Mini MBA[®] Program, 3/3-6/2, \$1895
- * Planning Company Growth, 3/4-6/18, \$3495
- * Project Management: Project Execution, 3/4, \$375
- * Mini MBA[®] in Family Enterprise, 3/7-6/20, \$1995
- * Mini MBA[®] For Technical Professionals, 3/8-5/24, \$1695
- * Mini Master of Project Management, 3/9-5/25, \$1795
- * Six Sigma Champion Training, 3/9-5/25, \$1795
- * Project Management: Maximizing Your People, 3/11, \$375
- * Beating the Odds: Successful Planning for New Products & Services, 3/30, \$345

For more information on any of these courses or to register, visit the Center for Business Excellence’s website at www.stthomas.edu/cbe or call 651-962-4600.

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