
Minnesota Council for Quality Stakeholder Update
March 2005

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1. A Message from the President: It's About Time

My wife and I needed to take our five month old to the emergency room on a recent Saturday night. Maria had a horrible hacking cough, congestion, and a moderate fever (I'm sure many of your households have experienced similar maladies this season). But, given her age, our pediatrician suggested that we take her in to test for RSV, pneumonia, and influenza (fortunately, she didn't end of up having any of these).

When we arrived at the ER, I was impressed by the in-take and triage processes -- both of which went very quickly and relatively smoothly. But then the wait began. We waited...and waited...and waited. Of course, I was realistic as other patients came in with higher priority conditions. But when 30 minutes became 60...and when one hour became two, my patience was beginning to wear thin (and my tricks of entertaining a tired and irritable infant were also running out).

We finally were called to a room, but ended up waiting off and on throughout the evening -- about four and a half hours total -- for a physician to arrive, for a nebulizer, for culture tests to come back, for diagnosis, for the take-home nebulizer instructions, for the pharmacy, etc., etc.

I wasn't completely dissatisfied with the service we received, but the length of time it took to deliver it got me thinking: in an economy where speed (of service and of product delivery) is still paramount to most customers, what are organizations doing to improve – their performance against this ever-present requirement?

Some organizations are indeed focusing on their cycle times -- their “agility,” if you will. And these organizations are seeing tremendous gains as a result:

* Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital-Hamilton has a guarantee that patients coming into the emergency department will see a nurse within 15 minutes and a physician within 30 minutes. As a result, patient satisfaction with emergency has improved from 85% to 90% over the last three years, exceeding the national benchmark (this is during a time when their emergency department volume has doubled).

* Boeing Aerospace Support has reduced its cycle time on services to three days (competitor turnaround takes up to 40 days).

* Pal's Sudden Service, a fast food restaurant chain based in Tennessee, has improved its order handout speed by over 30% since 1995, from 31 seconds to 20 seconds (compared to its competitors' performance, which has actually increased from 73 seconds to 76 seconds over the same period of time). As a result, Pal's customer satisfaction has increased to 95.8%, while customer satisfaction with competitors is 84.1%.

* Texas Nameplate Company, a small privately held manufacturer that produces nameplates and tags, has reduced its production cycle time almost 50% over the last six years, from 14 days to less than eight; it also has reduced the time to respond to quotes from six hours to under two (which is four times fast than its competitors).

Some organizations have actually made cycle time a core competency and competitive advantage. FedEx promises “the world on time” (or at least delivery by 10:30am the next morning). Domino's Pizza promises 30 minute delivery (or at least they used to).

Whether your organization calls this “cycle time,” “agility,” “speed of delivery,” or “responsiveness,” today's environment requires that organizations have the capacity for faster and more flexible responses to the needs of customers and stakeholders.

So how can your organization improve its agility? Here are some ideas:

- 1) Simplify your work processes. Eliminating unnecessary steps (with tools such as Lean) will save time and could also improve product/service quality as well.
- 2) Simplify your work structure. A simpler design to work and jobs will decrease decision making time and therefore increase agility.
- 3) Empower your workforce. By giving employees and authority (and responsibility) to make quick decisions, responsiveness to customer needs can be increased.

- 4) Train your staff to give them the skills and competencies to improve speed of delivery.
- 5) Set stretch goals for cycle time, and then reward staff for achieving them.
- 6) Listen and learn customer/stakeholder requirements relative to time. Customer and marketplace needs frequently change, so build systematic mechanisms to identify shifting -- or emerging -- needs.
- 7) Develop a robust strategic planning process that responds to these customer needs. It's not enough just to know what your customers want, but important to quickly respond through new products, services, programs, and/or processes to satisfy them.

All aspects of time performance are becoming increasingly important, so should be among an organization's key process measures. Not only will focusing on time-related performance improve agility, but it also often drives simultaneous improvement in organization, quality, and cost. I guess you could say it's about time that organizations refocus on the aspect of agility.

Yours in Improvement,

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

2. Minnesota Council for Quality Launches 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 the launch of the Consultant Referral Network(c).

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.

“This service is extremely unique,” says Brian Lassiter, president of the Minnesota Council for Quality. “A few consultant directories exist, but this is the only tool to my knowledge that allows a client organization to search for consultants based on their specific needs. In this way, the Consultant Referral Network can much more effectively

connect experts with organizations in need of assistance, where the two parties likely would not have otherwise found each other.”

Liz Menzer, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Forward Award adds: “It is oftentimes difficult for clients to locate organizational improvement experts. Unless a client already knows of a specific consultant – or they get lucky through word of mouth – it is oftentimes challenging for organizations in our state to find help. Since there is no ‘yellow pages’ for improvement consultants, this service helps us bring resources to those organizations in a cost-effective, efficient manner.”

The benefits to organizations are numerous. 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.”

Casey Mackert, Executive Director for the Ohio Partnership for Excellence, states: “I frequently get calls from organizations in our state looking for help in a variety of subject matters like Six Sigma, leadership development, balanced scorecard, strategic planning, and other areas. Right now, I sift through my business cards and offer them a couple of names. But this tool will make the search process far more systematic and more useful for clients. I know that organizations in our state will benefit from this service.”

“Consultants, too, will benefit from the service,” adds Geri Markley, Executive Director for the Michigan Quality Council. “The service offers a potential channel of leads and a legitimate mechanism to create market awareness for the consultant’s services and capabilities. It is independent and unbiased – which makes it credible and fair. And it is reasonably priced for consultants to get listed.”

Consultants pay a small fee for this service, and the pricing is flexible so the consultant can choose what best matches their needs – a higher up-front listing fee with lower subsequent referral fees for projects secured through the service, or a lower up-front listing fee with higher referral fees.

The process itself is simple. Improvement consultants first enter information about their firm/practice. This information includes contact information, information on their expertise and capabilities, and billing information. Consultants are also asked to agree to a Statement of Ethics as a prerequisite for being listed, which attempts to ensure a basic

level of integrity with the firms that are listed. Once they complete the form and pay their listing fee, consultants await inquiries from organizational clients.

Organizations access this service throughout the year, seeking various subject matter experts that fit their requirements. Those consulting firms that best match the organization's requirements are reported to the organization for each search. The organization can then interview, research, negotiate, and select the consultant that best meets their specific needs before finalizing the scope, solution(s), and terms of an engagement.

"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."

3. 2004 Minnesota Quality Award and Disney Institute Dates Set; Seeking Sponsors

The Minnesota Council for Quality is pleased to announce two special learning and networking events this spring. Save the date for both!

The annual Minnesota Quality Award event, scheduled for Tuesday early evening May 24, will feature the 2004 Minnesota Quality Award recipients: Allina Hospitals & Clinics (Minneapolis), Bethel Lutheran Church Administration Department (Rochester), Dover-Eyota Schools (Eyota), Hayfield Schools (Hayfield), Kingsland Schools (Spring Valley), Mayo Clinic Radiology Department (Rochester), Stora Enso (Duluth), and Winona Health (Winona). The evening is an excellent opportunity to recognize these organizations' accomplishments, to thank our Board of Evaluators and other key volunteers, and to network within our growing community. The event location and other details will be announced soon.

The Council, in partnership with the Rochester Area Quality Council, will also host the Disney Institute on Thursday, June 16. This event will focus on Disney's keys to excellence in leadership, management, service, and loyalty.

The Council is also seeking sponsors for both events. If your organization is interested in learning more about sponsorship opportunities, please email brian.lassiter@councilforquality.org.

4. Looking for Experts to Join the 2005 Board of Evaluators

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, the summer training 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 (dates will be set soon).

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.

5. 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).

6. New Possibilities in New Product Development Research -- PIN Discussion 4/7

Most new product development processes start with lengthy lists of potential features, usually obtained from interested parties within an organization or from different external "Voice of the Customer" processes. At some point, a development team must begin the march toward a final set of features -- ones that will be so attractive to customers that they justify an investment in development, manufacturing, and distribution.

So how does an organization identify product and service features that satisfy customer needs? And how do you sort through the various features to select the ones that eventually merit an investment in resources?

The Minnesota Council for Quality is pleased to welcome Vince Farace, co-Founder and CEO of Satisfaction Management Systems, to the April 7 Performance Improvement Network (PIN) discussion. Vince will lead a non-technical review of some of the major research tools that a new product development team can use to help them reach their ultimate goal -- product success. Examples, case studies, and lessons learned along the way will be part of the discussion.

The discussion is from 8:00-9:00 a.m. on April 7 (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.

7. Position Your Products to go Further -- MSLF 3/22 Discussion

The Minnesota Strategic Leadership Forum (MSLF), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to announce their March 22 discussion "Position Your Products to go Furthers." The discussion will be facilitated by Bob Freytag, president and co-founder of Introworks, Inc.

In this meeting, Bob will show you how to take a pragmatic approach to your strategic planning and translate your strategy into powerful communications. Explore strategies to effectively integrate the voice of the customer and choose the right marketing tactics to move the needle. You will learn how to: identify which strategic factors make the most impact on your product launch; establish a strong strategic foundation for your marketing communications; and select the right marketing communications vehicles.

Bob Freytag is president and co-founder of Introworks Inc., a twelve-year-old marketing communications firm known for going further to uncover the key insights that move brands measurably forward. Introworks is a firm specializing in product and corporate introduction. The company served on numerous integrated product launch teams, taking a pragmatic approach to product introduction communications for clients such as Boston Scientific, Cargill, GE Capital, ATS Medical, SurModics, and many others.

The discussion will be held Tuesday, March 22. Registration, networking, and breakfast is 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 201. 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>.

8. Seeing Systems; Unlocking the Mysteries of Organizational Life -- MNODN Session 4/6-4/7

The Minnesota OD Network (MNODN), an alliance partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to offer a unique opportunity for internal and external change agents to work with Barry Oshry, a system thinking pioneer, whose work focuses on understanding power and systems, as well as identifying leverage points for successful system intervention and change. The workshop is April 6-7.

On the first day, participants will come away with a solid understanding of human systems -- what powerful systems look like and what regularly gets in the way of their developing. Furthermore, attendees will see their roles in creating such systems. Attendees will also gain critical knowledge and tools to help diagnose issues in client systems and new strategies and tools we and our clients can use on a daily basis to make organizations healthier, more productive places to work.

The second day of the workshop will focus on the common situation where one organization acquires another, looking to strengthen itself in the marketplace. This common occurrence creates the need for two previously distinct businesses to find a way to work together more effectively. A workplace is becoming increasingly diverse. In each of these scenarios, different cultures come face to face. The challenge is to use the unique strengths of the parts to create a more powerful and effective whole.

Barry Oshry is a distinguished educator and a pioneer in the field of human systems thinking. Barry's area of research and writing has been the human systems dynamics arising when people are in top, middle, bottom, and customer relationships with one another. He's been exploring with special interest the issue of "middles" in organizations for over 20 years, and he's written extensively on the subject. His research has also led him to investigate the dynamics at play when dominant cultures interact with "other" cultures.

The workshop will be held April 6 and 7, from 8:30-4:30 both days at the Carondelet Center, 1890 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul (next to the College of St. Catherine Campus). Cost for the two day workshop is \$350 for members; non-members are \$375 (a \$25 discount for both if registering before March 18). Cost includes buffet lunch and coffee. The cost for one day is \$250.

For more information, visit <http://www.mnodn.org> or contact Charlie Bisanz, 612-344-1789 or cfbisanz@visi.com. To register, call Peggy Bushee Services at 952-891-3500.

9. The Influential Leader: Unlocking the Power of People -- RAQC Session 4/29

The Rochester Area Quality Council (RAQC), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is hosting a special live global leadership event on April 29: "The Influential Leader: Unlocking the Power of People." The full-day event is a live broadcast from the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

Join over 70,000 business professionals around the country for an unforgettable day of leadership development training. Renowned coaches, authors, and leadership experts such as: John Maxwell, Marcus Buckingham, Patrick Lencioni, Jackie Freiberg, Coach Bobby Bowen and Coach Mike Kryzewski, will motivate you through compelling leadership concepts and personal leadership techniques. Your team will learn how to ignite team synergy, build a positive corporate culture through a shared leadership

experience, and improve relationships among peers and customers. You won't want to miss this event!

This event, scheduled from 7:30-4:00, will be at Rochester Community and Technical College, Heintz Center Room HB 117. Early bird registration (before April 1) for RAQC/RACC members is \$125; non-members is \$160. After April 1, the cost is \$140 for members or \$175 for non-members. Cost includes breakfast, a lunch buffet, and a glossy program workbook.

For more information or to register, contact the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce (RACC) at 507-288-1122 or email chamber@rochestermnchamber.com.

RAQC is also pleased to announce its normal monthly meeting: an April 5 program featuring the Rochester Honkers will be held from 7:30-9:00 a.m. Please check www.raqc.com for details and to register.

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 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):

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 Business 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:

* 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.

14. How to Build a Balanced Scorecard and Strategy Maps -- 4/13-4/14

"How to Build and Develop a Balanced Scorecard and Strategy Maps," a two day workshop scheduled for April 13-14, goes beyond the theory and case studies to give you hands-on experience with the process of designing and deploying strategy maps and balanced scorecards. The goal of this two-day course is to allow you to participate in, and learn the process of, building a balanced scorecard with a strategy map for a hypothetical company. As you participate, you will deepen your understanding of the key concepts and best practices of this powerful methodology of strategic performance management. Most of your time will be spent in a small group of 4 to 6 people, guided by a dedicated instructor, so you will be actively engaged in a rich learning environment.

The session will be led by Bill Barberg, president and founder of Insightformation, Inc. Founded in 1991, Insightformation has been a pioneer in helping organizations bridge the balance scorecard methodology and technology to improve performance. In 2001, Insightformation was hired by Microsoft to create the Microsoft Balanced Scorecard framework (BSCF).

The workshop will be held at the Reserve Conference Center in Plymouth, near the intersection of Highway 494 and Highway 55.

The Workshop fee is \$995 for the first person from an organization and \$795 for each subsequent person from the same organization. Members of co-sponsoring organizations -- including the Minnesota Council for Quality -- get an additional \$100 discount per person. You can register on-line at www.insightformation.com (see the Seminars section). The workshop is limited to 40 people; registrations must be received by April 10.

For more information, contact Mike Gromacki at 763-521-4599 x19 or E-mail mike.gromacki@insightformation.com.

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