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*Minnesota Council for Quality Stakeholder Update*  
*June 2005*  
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1. A Message from the President: Sharing & Using Organizational Knowledge & Skills

A few months ago, we completed a Minnesota Quality Award assessment with mid-sized organization. If you are not familiar with our process, the final step is a half-day facilitated session with the organization's senior leaders, something we call an "Improvement Planning Session." This session is intended to help leaders understand what our evaluation team found and assist them in prioritizing improvement opportunities, upon which they can focus energy and resources.

In this particular session, executives seemed to agree that they needed to improve the way the organization transferred knowledge and shared skills. This organization, like many today, is facing the strategic challenge of retaining (and spreading) organizational wisdom despite losing key staff to retirement.

While senior leaders recognized the importance of this issue, they did not see a clear way to systematically resolve it (recall from my February article that "systematic" means a consistent, repeatable, and data-based process; see [http://www.councilforquality.org/about\\_newsletter.cfm](http://www.councilforquality.org/about_newsletter.cfm)).

One executive made a comment something like: "We are absolutely faced with a crisis as our most seasoned, most experienced, and indeed most valuable employees are retiring. We have tried to share information, knowledge, and skills by offering monthly roundtables where departments share their best practices and employees can learn from each other, but it doesn't seem like we're doing enough."

"How so," asked one of our Team Leaders.

“Well, these sessions are very stimulating -- there is some sharing of information and some exchange of ideas, but then employees go back to their work areas and pretty much return to their old processes, using their old skills, and their old information and knowledge base.”

“So changes are not institutionalized,” continued another senior executive. She continued: “It’s one thing to try to share information, and something different to use that information in application.”

“How would you go about doing that,” our Team Leader continued, trying to facilitate the leaders in solving their own problem.

“We somehow need to not only create mechanisms to share information and skills, but also change the way that those skills are used in our operations. We need to fundamentally change our processes so that as the knowledge is shared it is used.”

And that’s when it seemed that the organization realized how it needed to improve: it wasn’t just a matter of changing the way that information, skills, and knowledge were shared throughout the organization, but also changing how that institutional knowledge was actually deployed and used throughout operations.

So how might organizations build mechanisms to share (and simultaneously use) skills and knowledge? Here are some ways:

- \* Change work design and structure. There are many ways that organizations can change the way work is conducted, and thereby facilitate the sharing and using of information and knowledge. The use of teams, for example, facilitates more rapid and more effective communication and sharing. So does overlapping positions: while creating inherent redundancies might be perceived as wasteful, it is an excellent way to share information between employees, units, or processes. Job sharing accomplishes similar objectives, as does job rotation.

- \* Change the way you develop employees. Traditional training is indeed useful for building skills, but cross-training promotes not only skill building but knowledge transfer. So does job shadowing, mentoring, and other more collaborative training methods. The goal here is not just to build skills, but to “get inside” one employee’s head and transfer much of that expertise to other employees.

- \* Use technology to share knowledge. Technology can be a tremendous way at capturing and disseminating knowledge. Tools like data warehouses, customer relationship databases, enterprise resource planning software, best practice catalogs, and so forth can be very effective at spreading knowledge across the organization. But be sure to make these mechanisms accessible, user-friendly, and reliable so that they are indeed used.

- \* Change reward structures to promote sharing. Many organizations have a competitive reward model, in that the most productive, most knowledgeable, most skilled employees

get the biggest rewards. Unfortunately, this encourages a hoarding behavior that is that exact opposite of the knowledge- and information-sharing culture that organizations desire. So change the way employees are rewarded, and instead recognize the exchange of information, the sharing of knowledge, and the transferring of skills. While difficult to do, this modifies behavior and encourages – indeed, reinforces -- sharing.

\* Conduct exit interviews. While this is certainly a lagging process, it is essential to try to capture not only why employees are departing, but also what information and experience they are leaving taking out the door. If all the other processes above are in place, this is step before wisdom leaves the building.

There are probably other mechanisms as well, but the point is clear: organizations increasingly share a common challenge of disseminating and using information, knowledge, and skills as the workforce continues to age. Not only should organizations focus on building mechanisms to transfer knowledge, but they should also work to institutionalize how knowledge is deployed and used. After all, organizational knowledge needs to be used to be useful.

Yours in Improvement,

Brian S. Lassiter  
President, Minnesota Council for Quality  
[www.councilforquality.org](http://www.councilforquality.org)

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2. Learn Disney's Best Practices Next Week -- Disney's "Keys to Excellence" 6/16

Time is running out to register for next week's "Disney's Keys to Excellence." This full-day workshop will focus on best practices and philosophies from the world-renowned Walt Disney World Resorts, including on leadership, management/HR, service, and customer loyalty. This is the only time Disney will visit the Upper Midwest this year, so don't miss this extraordinary learning and networking opportunity.

Why attend? Here are 5 reasons:

1) Disney is widely considered one of the world's best service organizations. Regardless of your organization's core offerings, Disney will offer dozens of good ideas that could translate to better service, delighted customers, motivated and engaged employees, better communication, a stronger culture, and improved results for your organization.

2) Concordia University is offering college credit for attending the workshop. For more information, call 651-603-6268.

3) Council members receive a discount to the event. In addition, if you or your organization is a member of one of our 20 partnering non-profits or professional associations, you are also eligible for the member discount. These organizations include

APICS-Twin Cities, American Society for Quality (ASQ: Minnesota, Madison), American Society for Training & Development (ASTD: Twin Cities, Madison, Eau Claire), Concordia University, Crow River Area Quality Council, MN Manufacturers' Coalition, MN Chamber, MN Facilitators Network, MN High Tech Association, MN Institute for Performance Improvement (ISPI), MN OD Network (MNODN), MN Strategic Leadership Forum, Society for HR Managers (Madison-SHRM, TCHRA), University of St. Thomas, and the Wisconsin Forward Award. Discounts apply despite the published early bird deadline.

4) This is a tremendous opportunity to network with other leaders and professionals interested in service, leadership, and performance excellence. Currently, registered attendees represent all sectors -- service, manufacturing, health care, education, public sector, and non-profit -- from four states.

5) This is the only time that Disney will visit the Upper Midwest this year (and it's much easier to commute to Brooklyn Park than Orlando!).

We would also invite you to visit [www.disneyinstitute.com](http://www.disneyinstitute.com) and click on "The Starting Point." This tool will allow you to evaluate your organization's current performance, enabling you and your team to determine how "The Disney Keys to Excellence" can be leveraged for your specific development.

The workshop is being hosted in partnership with the Rochester Area Quality Council and with the support of Fairview Health System, Best Buy Corporation, Concordia University, the MN High Tech Association, and Unisys.

"The Disney Keys to Excellence" will be held at the Earle Brown Center in Brooklyn Center. Cost is \$369 for the full day (\$299 for Council or RAQC members or members of our partner organizations); price includes lunch and refreshments. A half-day session is available. For more information, visit our website at [www.councilforquality.org](http://www.councilforquality.org). To register, email [kathryn.mackin@councilforquality.org](mailto:kathryn.mackin@councilforquality.org) and indicate attendees' contact information (name, affiliation, title, address, phone, and email), full day or half-day session (and which half-day), and preferred payment method (MasterCard, Visa, or invoice).

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3. Join the 2005 Board of Evaluators; Summer Training Approaching

Attention all former Minnesota Quality Award Evaluators: the summer training session is fast approaching, and we invite you back! Here are five reasons:

1) The 2005 Baldrige "Criteria for Performance Excellence" have changed: in essence, the bar for organizational excellence has been raised. So returning would be a great opportunity to learn about these changes and to refresh your knowledge of Baldrige and organizational performance excellence.

- 2) We are making our assessment process more flexible for experienced Evaluators. Though many/most Evaluators still participate in the full assessment process, some can now serve in more limited roles -- helping only with the independent review, consensus, and/or site visit. This flexibility can cut the volunteer time requested by a third or even by two-thirds, hopefully making it more attractive to those who cannot commit to the full process.
- 3) As you know, the experience is tremendous for professional development. It:
  - strengthens your understanding of what drives organizational excellence against the new 2005 requirements (remember, the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence represent a **validated** set of best practices for organizational excellence),
  - promotes networking with influential leaders and professionals from the state,
  - allows you to see “best practices” deployed within another organization -- knowledge that you could use back at your organization and/or in your career,
  - allows you to help organizations throughout the state -- many of them schools, health care providers, non-profits, public sector agencies, and certainly businesses -- improve their performance... simply get better at what they do, and
  - develops a set of other professional skills that may help you advance your career --skills such as consensus- and team-building, written communication, verbal communication and interpersonal skills, interviewing, analysis, and systems thinking.
- 4) 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. For more information, please email the Council at [kathryn.mackin@councilforquality.org](mailto:kathryn.mackin@councilforquality.org).
- 5) Given the extraordinary growth in demand for our assessment services, we anticipate needing to grow the Board of Evaluators from 100 in 2004 to at least 150 in 2005. Your participation as an experience Evaluator would bring depth and expertise to a strong and growing Evaluator pool.

The summer Evaluator training session is scheduled for June 28-30 in Rochester. Applications (which only require an update from your previous application) are due June 20 (note the extended date). We hope that you would consider rejoining the Board of Evaluators. If the summer dates do not work with your schedule -- or if you are a new Evaluator -- then mark your calendar for our third and final training this fall: September 20-22 (in the Metro).

We hope that you would consider rejoining 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](http://www.councilforquality.org/assess.cfm), email us at [kathryn.mackin@councilforquality.org](mailto:kathryn.mackin@councilforquality.org), or call 612-462-3577.

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4. 2004 Minnesota Quality Award Event May 24; Time is Running Out to Register!

The Minnesota Council for Quality recently announced the recipients of the 2004 Minnesota Quality Award. Seven organizations received recognition, three of them at the Advancement Level:

- Dover-Eyota Schools (Eyota)
- Stora Enso Duluth Mill (Duluth), and
- Winona Health (Winona).

The other four organizations received recognition at the Commitment Level:

- Allina Hospitals & Clinics (Minneapolis),
- Hayfield Community Schools (Hayfield),
- Kingsland Public Schools (Wykoff), and
- Mayo Clinic Rochester, Radiology Department (Rochester).

“The seven organizations receiving the 2004 Minnesota Quality Award represent many parts of Minnesota’s economy -- a manufacturer, three health care organizations, and three K-12 school districts,” says Brian Lassiter, president of the Minnesota Council for Quality.

The 2004 Award recipients were recognized at a public event May 24 in Bloomington. Attended by nearly 200 leaders and professionals, the event was sponsored by Xcel Energy, Micro-Tech Hearing Instruments, Benedictine Health System, and Unisys Corporation. The event also recognized 2004 Minnesota Quality Award Board of Evaluators, a team of over 100 volunteers supporting this program, each giving an average of 100 hours of service.

Dick Pettingill, President and CEO of Allina Hospitals & Clinics states: “At Allina, we are focused on improving our systems and processes so that we can improve how we deliver patient care. The Baldrige model helps us to focus our energy and resources on those issues that will drive patient safety, clinical outcomes, and other performance results. We are on a journey and are diligently working to reach higher levels of excellence.”

“This process validated much of what we thought we knew about our business,” says Pat Moore, Plant Manager at StoraEnso’s Duluth mill. “But the feedback did reveal a few gaps that we hadn’t considered, and we are now working to take our performance to a higher level of performance.”

David Groth, Superintendent of Schools for Dover-Eyota comments on why they have used Baldrige for 10 years: “Schools are facing difficult challenges -- tight funding, changing student demographics, increased educational requirements such as No Child Left Behind, and an overall more demanding society for improved education. We began

using Baldrige to improve student learning and improve satisfaction with all our stakeholders: students, parents, the community, and our partners. We have seen tremendous results, but we intend to continue our improvement efforts to increase student achievement and advance our mission.”

Founded in 1991, the primary objective of the Minnesota Quality Award is to help organizations improve their performance results. The Award also serves to recognize performance excellence throughout the state. The Minnesota Quality Award is given at four levels – Excellence (the top Award), Achievement, Advancement, and Commitment – and is the culmination of a rigorous assessment process that uses the Criteria for Performance Excellence of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Since 1991, 70 organizations have received recognition at various levels.

Organizations that participate in the process receive comprehensive feedback that outlines their strengths and improvement opportunities along several dimensions: leadership; strategic planning; customer and market focus; measurement, information, and knowledge management; human resource focus; process management; and results. This feedback is used for organizational learning, planning, and improvement.

The 2005 Minnesota Quality Award cycle has already begun, and the Council expects more than 10 organizations to receive recognition this year.

For more information on the event or the Minnesota Quality Award, visit our website at [www.councilforquality.org](http://www.councilforquality.org).

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5. Baldrige Regional Conference Comes to Minnesota -- Save the Date 9/28

The Minnesota Council for Quality, in partnership with the Baldrige National Quality Program and the Kansas Award for Excellence, is pleased to announce that Minnesota will be one of two host sites for the 2005 Baldrige Regional Conferences. Scheduled for Wednesday, September 28 (with a half-day pre-conference session on the 27th), the conference will offer a day of dynamic learning and networking with the 2004 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipients as well as Award recipients from prior years. The 2004 recipients include:

**Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton** – provides primary, outpatient, and community health care services to more than 350,000 residents in its service area.

**The Bama Companies** – manufactures frozen ready-to-use food products for the quick service and casual dining restaurant business and family dining chains.

**Texas Nameplate Company, Inc.** – produces nameplates, identification tags, and labels for a wide variety of products, including high-pressure valves, oil field equipment, and computers.

**Kenneth W. Monfort College of Business** – focuses on delivering an undergraduate-only business education through high-touch, wide-tech, and professional depth.

Spend a day learning about these role model organizations' best practices and performance strategies in all seven Baldrige Criteria Categories: leadership; strategic planning; customer/market/student/stakeholder/patient focus; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; human resource/faculty/staff focus; process management; and results.

This conference also allows for networking with Award recipients and promises that you will take home valuable tips for applying Baldrige and other improvement frameworks to your organization to improve your performance and strengthen your results.

A pre-conference workshop for Baldrige Beginners is planned for the afternoon of 9/27.

Save the date! More information will be available on the Council's and the Baldrige website in the coming weeks.

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6. Looking for a Consultant? Try the New (and Free) Consultant Referral Network

Looking for a Six Sigma consultant? An ISO auditor? A leadership coach, a diversity trainer, or a strategic planning expert?

Sometimes locating an organizational improvement expert is difficult. There are many out there, but unless you already know who they are -- or you get lucky through word of mouth – it is oftentimes challenging to find them.

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](http://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.

What makes this service unique? Two things. First, it focuses on organizational improvement. There are other tools that help you locate doctors, dentists, and plumbers. But there are very few resources available to locate organizational improvement consultants. Second, the tool allows the hiring organization (the "client") to search for vendors based on their specific needs. So rather than sorting through dozens or hundreds of possible consultants on a particular subject matter expertise, this tool will allow you to

narrow your search for the consultants that meet your specific requirements – requirements such as sector/industry expertise, location, size, and years of experience.

The process is simple. If you are a client, it takes you about 5 minutes to conduct a search (if you are a consultant, it takes you about 15 minutes to register and select your listing fee option). To learn more about the service or to use the tool, visit [www.consultantreferralnetwork.org](http://www.consultantreferralnetwork.org).

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7. No PIN Meeting in July; August 4 Topic “Improving Your Web Presence”

Due to the holiday, there is no Performance Improvement Network (PIN) meeting in July. Mark your calendars for our August 4 discussion: “Improving Your Organization’s Web Presence,” facilitated by Jon-Karl Klitsch of BullseyeMetrix. More information will be announced next month.

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8. Concordia University Announces Summer Courses

Concordia University, St. Paul, is pleased to announce their summer improvement and business courses:

Peer Group Facilitation, 6/18, 9AM-4PM  
\$100 (non-credit), \$430 (undergrad 2 credits)

Creative Problem Solving, 7/9, 9AM-4PM  
\$100 (non-credit), \$430 (undergrad 2 credits), \$630 (graduate 2 credits)

Introduction to Six Sigma, 7/16, 9AM-4PM  
\$100 (non-credit), \$430 (undergrad 2 credits)

Breathtaking Customer Service, 7/16 9AM-4PM  
\$100 (non-credit), \$430 (undergrad 2 credits)

Management Skill Building, 7/23, 9AM-4PM  
\$100 (non-credit), \$430 (undergrad 2 credits)

Managing Organizational Change, 8/6, 9AM-4PM  
\$100 (non-credit), \$430 (undergrad 2 credits)

Continuous Personal Growth and Improvement, 8/13, 9AM-4PM  
\$100 (non-credit), \$430 (undergrad 2 credits), \$630 (graduate 2 credits)

For more information, please contact Nancy Hoglelund [hoglelundn@csp.edu](mailto:hoglelundn@csp.edu). You can also find more information at [www.csp.edu/ce](http://www.csp.edu/ce).

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9. University of St. Thomas Announces Summer Courses

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:

6/21 Clear Writing That Drives Successful Projects

[http://web1.www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem\\_desc\\_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-8005005](http://web1.www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem_desc_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-8005005)

6/28 Building a Foundation of Management Skills

[http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem\\_desc\\_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-3324009](http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem_desc_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-3324009)

6/30 Business Writing Essentials

[http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem\\_desc\\_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-8016005](http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem_desc_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-8016005)

6/30 Project Management: Project Execution

[http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem\\_desc\\_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-3505003](http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem_desc_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-3505003)

7/14 Principles and Tools of the Lean Enterprise

[http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem\\_desc\\_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-5108001](http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem_desc_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-5108001)

7/15 Project Management: Optimizing Your Project Team

[http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem\\_desc\\_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-3304015](http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem_desc_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-3304015)

7/29 Project Management: Systems Thinking for Project Managers

[http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem\\_desc\\_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-3303015](http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem_desc_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-3303015)

8/17 Project Management: Project Control, Closure and Finalization

[http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem\\_desc\\_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-3507004](http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem_desc_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-3507004)

8/24-2/19 Executive Leadership Program

[http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem\\_desc\\_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=10-1001004](http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem_desc_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=10-1001004)

8/25-26 Finance & Accounting for Nonfinancial Managers

[http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem\\_desc\\_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-3014012](http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem_desc_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=11-3014012)

8/26-12/10 (five two-day sessions) Strategies for Organizational Growth

[http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem\\_desc\\_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=10-3085006](http://www.stthomas.edu/cob/execprofdev/4d/sem_desc_results.asp?profctr=depd&id=10-3085006)

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

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10. Century College Announces Summer Courses

Century College, White Bear Lake, is pleased to announce the following summer quality course:

Certified Quality Manager (CQM), Wednesdays July 6-September 14 from 6-9PM. Cost is \$795 (Council members are entitled to a \$50 discount).

For more information or to register, call Century College at 651-779-3341.

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This newsletter is provided as a benefit to Council members, friends, and stakeholders. Feel free to forward it to your colleagues. If you wish to be removed from the distribution, please email us at [info@councilforquality.org](mailto:info@councilforquality.org).