
***Minnesota Council for Quality Stakeholder Update
July 2005***

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1. A Message from the President: The Importance of Strategic Alignment

I read in one of the local papers last week that nearly 90% of American companies have reward and recognition programs as part of their human resources strategy (source: World at Work, http://www.councilforquality.org/improve_websites.cfm). In the same study, only 60% of those companies had a written strategic plan. So, I thought to myself: what in the world are those organizations rewarding their employees for? For showing up to work? For not making mistakes? For being cordial and agreeable?

Of course, I'm being a little sarcastic. But I do so to make a point.

While there are many things on which employees could be rewarded, performance management systems -- employee feedback, compensation, reward, and recognition -- should be aligned with organizational strategy.

Alignment is one of those hard-to-define notions in organizational science -- one of those "I'll know it when I see it" things. Webster defines alignment as "the proper positioning or state of adjustment of parts in relation to each other." In an organizational context, the Baldrige Criteria says "alignment refers to consistency of plans, processes, information, resource decisions, actions, results, and analysis to support key organization-wide goals."

Paraphrased, alignment is when various parts of an organization are congruent with each other -- they are consistent, in agreement, in balance. So you could define "strategic alignment" as the state of having your organizational systems aligned with your organizational strategy.

Why is strategic alignment important? Without it, I submit, organizational results are sub-optimized. If actions do not support goals...if decisions do not support strategy...if processes do not support strategic direction, then waste is created. Wasted time, wasted money, wasted materials, wasted energy.

So back to the recognition example. If an organization's recognition system was in alignment with its strategic plan, then employees would be rewarded for accomplishing the organization's strategic objectives (or for specific actions/behaviors that presumably lead to accomplishing those objectives).

Here are some other ways that managers can create strategic alignment within their organization:

- * Align your organization's work systems to strategy. Make sure that your organization's structure, your communication mechanisms, and your culture all reflect the vision and direction of the company. For example, if one of your strategic objectives is innovation, then eliminate barriers to employee creativity and reward risk taking. Or if your objective is speed of service, then eliminate unnecessary levels of hierarchical approval.

- * Align your organization's training to strategy. Work to identify the skills and competencies your employees need to accomplish your strategy, both now and in the future. Again, if your objective is innovation, then perhaps training on problem solving or brainstorming techniques makes sense. If your goal is service speed, then perhaps training on Lean methods to eliminate waste will help you get there.

- * Align your social responsibility systems with your strategy. It is important for companies to be good corporate citizens, but most do not take the time to identify their key communities and align their citizenship activities -- their volunteer time, their financial contributions, and their other means of support -- with programs and causes that reflect their mission and goals. For example, the Rochester Area Math and Science Partnership, a partner of ours, is supported by IBM and the Mayo Clinic. Why? My guess is those two companies want to create the next generation of mathematicians and scientists, skills that align with their core competencies.

- * Align your measures with your strategy. Senior leaders should review performance on metrics that help them monitor progress toward strategy, and probably not the tactical data that other employees are using to run the day-to-day operations. (Presumably, they should be linked, which creates alignment.)

I'm sure there are dozens of examples of how organizations can create strategic alignment. But my point is this: if your organization has taken the time and effort to create a strategic plan (and apparently 60% of companies have committed their plans to writing), then leaders can be more effective in executing that plan if they focus on aligning various parts of their organizations to it.

Yours in Improvement,

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

2. This Your Last Council Newsletter (In This Format)!

After hearing stakeholder feedback, the Council will change our newsletter beginning next month to a more visually-appealing HTML format. The newsletter will still provide 8-12 articles that offer tips, announcements of our events, and announcements of partner events that focus on organizational improvement. And the newsletter will not contain attachments or complicated graphics that consume memory and reduce loading speed.

However, we are a little concerned that some of our stakeholders may not be able to receive the newsletter due to spam filters and/or corporate requirements prohibiting HTML emails. If your organization or ISP does not permit HTML-formatted emails from being delivered, please let us know (info@councilforquality.org), and we will find an alternate solution. You may also continue to find past editions of our newsletter at http://www.councilforquality.org/about_newsletter.cfm.

One final note: it has been brought to our attention that at least one spam package recently made a change that is filtering out our legitimate emails. To continue to receive our monthly newsletter, we ask that you add @councilforquality.org to your “safe list” so that we can continue to provide you with useful information on organizational improvement.

3. Recognizing Second Quarter Council Members

The Council would like to recognize 35 organizations and individuals who joined or renewed their membership in the second quarter. These individuals and organizations became members last quarter (asterisks indicate renewal members):

Alexandria Extrusion Company, Alexandria, MN*
Ted Amundson, Hastings, MN*
Dean Andrew, St. Paul, MN*
Applied Quality Solutions LLC, Hudson, WI*
Nancy Blasberg, Eagan, MN
Ceridian Quality and Productivity Department, Minneapolis, MN*
Designs for Learning, St. Paul, MN*
Douglas Watsabaugh Consulting, Eden Prairie, MN*
Dunwoody Institute, Minneapolis, MN*
EHS Management Partners, Shorewood, MN*
William Graves, William, Minneapolis, MN
Hennepin County Department Community Corrections, Minneapolis, MN

Hennepin Technical College, Eden Prairie, MN*
Ross Johnson, Minneapolis, MN
Joshua Tree Consulting, Eagan, MN*
Kaposia, Inc., St. Paul, MN*
Sue Link, Mounds View, MN*
Management Consulting in Healthcare, Burnsville, MN*
Mandley Enterprises, Albuquerque, NM
Memorial Blood Centers of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN*
MnSCU Office of the Chancellor/System Office, St. Paul, MN*
Nancy Hoglund, Shoreview, MN*
D. William O'Brien, Maplewood, MN*
PATH , Incorporated, St. Paul, MN*
Performance Improvement and Quality Management, Minneapolis, MN
Plunkett's Pest Control, Fridley, MN*
Quantum Performance Group, Palmyra, NY*
Bill Scherkenbach, Austin, TX
South Central Technical College, North Mankato, MN
Kevin Stone, Big Lake, MN
The Credit Department, West St. Paul, MN
The Solution Exchange, LLC, Minnetonka, MN*
True North pgs, Inc., Walla Walla, WA*
Unisys Twin Cities, Roseville, MN*
Lynn Willenbring, Oakdale, MN*

We thank all members for their support. As of June 30, the Council represents a growing community of about 230 members representing over 150,000 employees. A complete list of members is available at <http://www.councilforquality.org/member.cfm>.

Why should you or your organization consider membership? There are many reasons. Your or your organization receives:

* recognition (in this newsletter, in press releases, on the website, and with a certificate/letter);

* discounts to Council services (Evaluator training, organization assessments);

* access to Council services (Clearinghouse, Consultant Referral Network, and free admission to Performance Improvement Network discussions); and

* discounts to our partners' services (other improvement-related non-profits, universities/colleges, and professional/trade associations).

Individual memberships are \$100 and organization memberships begin at \$250. For more information on the benefits of becoming a member, please visit www.councilforquality.org/member.cfm or email the Council at info@councilforquality.org.

4. Learn from 10 Role Model Organizations -- Baldrige Regional Conference 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 10 organizations visiting Minnesota in late September represent a collection of role model organizations from nearly all sectors,” says Brian Lassiter, president of the Council. “This is a tremendous opportunity to learn from the best in business – both manufacturing and service – as well as health care and education.”

Leaders from the following organizations will participate in the conference:

- * Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton; health care; 2004 Baldrige recipient
- * The Bama Companies; manufacturing; 2004 Baldrige recipient
- * Kenneth W. Monfort College of Business; education; 2004 Baldrige recipient
- * Caterpillar Financial Services Corporation; service; 2003 Baldrige recipient
- * Community Consolidated School District 15 (Palatine, IL); education; 2003 Baldrige recipient
- * St. Luke’s Hospital of Kansas City; health care; 2003 Baldrige recipient
- * SSM Health Care (St. Louis); health care; 2002 Baldrige recipient
- * University of Wisconsin-Stout; education; 2001 Baldrige recipient
- * Pearl River School District (New York); education; 2001 Baldrige recipient
- * Sunny Fresh Foods (Cargill); manufacturing; 1999 Baldrige recipient

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
- * results.

The conference is an excellent way to network with and learn from Award recipients. You will undoubtedly discover valuable tips for applying Baldrige as well as hear other ways to improve your performance and strengthen your results.

Advance (before September 8) registration is \$445 (\$495 regular). An additional \$50 discount is available for faculty or groups of five or more registering at the same time. A pre-conference workshop for Baldrige Beginners is planned for the afternoon of 9/27; registration is \$100 for those attending the conference (\$150 for those who are not).

Both events are at the Sheraton-Bloomington (formerly the Radisson South, Hwy 100 and 494). A block of rooms has been reserved at a special \$129 rate, but register before 9/6 to take advantage of the room discount.

For more information, visit http://www.baldrige.nist.gov/2005_Regionals/Regionals.htm or call 301-975-2036 (email nqp@nist.gov).

To register, visit <http://maccinc.com/brc2005/>, call MACC at 215-822-6319, or visit http://www.baldrige.nist.gov/2005_Regionals/Regionals.htm and fax the registration form to 215-822-3332.

5. Join the 2005 Board of Evaluators; Fall Training Approaching

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 fall training session will be September 20-22 (in Roseville). In addition to the full three-day training session, new Evaluators are also required to attend a one-day orientation (either 8/24, 8/25, or 8/30). Applications for new Evaluators are due 8/17.

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.

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, 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.

7. Improving Your Organization's Use of the Internet -- PIN Discussion 8/4

A little over a decade old, the Internet is still considered a new frontier of marketing opportunities. As more and more individuals – and companies – use the Internet to gather information, share knowledge, and conduct commerce, the Internet continues to increase in its legitimacy as a retail channel and information-sharing vehicle. Therefore, organizations of all types – all industries, all sectors, and all sizes – are using the Internet for commerce. However, many organizations are sub-optimizing their use of the Internet: they are not being seen by enough (or the right) market, they are not effective in facilitating user travel within their site, and/or they are not successful at leveraging the tool as a way to increase sales or program use.

But knowing what techniques to use and which pitfalls to avoid can take years of research. The Minnesota Council for Quality is pleased to welcome Mr. Jon-Karl Klietsch, President of Bullseye Metrix, to the August 4 Performance Improvement Network (PIN) discussion. Jon-Karl has presented to many audiences a series of techniques which will help your website be discovered and more effectively used.

You don't need to be online retailer to benefit from this information. Chances are, you or your organization already has a website; this presentation will focus on how to bring more visitors to your website. Jon-Karl will discuss search engine marketing (how to optimize your website), ROI Measurement (how to work with web stats), email marketing options, and affiliate marketing programs/options.

The discussion is from 8:00-9:00 a.m. on August 4 (networking and continental breakfast begin at 7:30 a.m.) at the University of St. Thomas in downtown Minneapolis, Opus Hall Room 201. 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.

Also, mark your calendars: our September 1 PIN meeting will feature Scot Webster, vice president of quality at Medtronic, who will discuss Medtronic's Lean Sigma effort.

8. Getting 'Clued In' to the Practice of Experience Management -- RAQC Session 8/9

Good, bad, or indifferent, every customer has an experience with your company. But most organizations don't understand how to manage that experience for maximum value. Now, the thought leader who launched the experience movement shares exactly how to engineer world class customer experiences, from start to finish.

Please join the Rochester Area Quality Council (RAQC), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, for their next monthly meeting on August 9 on the topic of "Getting 'Clued In' to the Practice of Experience Management." Lou Carbone, a management pioneer and noted author, will facilitate the discussion.

Lou Carbone is an experienced management pioneer, a brand thought leader and noted author. His book "Clued In" provides a powerful roadmap for leaders to create and manage more valuable experiences. Lou's passion is contagious! Don't miss this program!

This breakfast meeting will be held at the Ramada Conference Center, 1517 16th Street SW, Rochester 55902. Breakfast and networking begins at 7:30 a.m., followed by the presentation between 8-10am. 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.

9. Beginning of Strategic Planning: Visioning -- MN Facilitators Network 8/18

The Minnesota Facilitators Network (MFN), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to announce their August 18 discussion "Beginning of Strategic Planning: Visioning." The discussion will be facilitated by Cheryl Kartes, who will share more about a visioning process. The meeting is from 5:30-9:00PM at a location to be determined. For more information, visit <http://www.mnfacilitators.org/>.

10. Concordia University Announces Summer Courses

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

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. You can also find more information at www.csp.edu/ce.

11. 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:

7/15 Project Management: Optimizing Your Project Team

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

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

8/24-2/19 Executive Leadership Program

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

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

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.

12. Century College Announces Fall Courses; Council Members Get Discount

Century College, White Bear Lake, 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 at your worksite. Century College is pleased to announce the following fall quality courses:

Certified Quality Improvement Associate (CQIA); Quality 101: ASQ Foundations in Quality; Tuesdays, October 4-25 from 6-9PM. Cost is \$575 (\$525 for Council members).

ASQ Certified Quality Auditor (CQA); Mondays, September 26 through November 21 from 6-9PM. Cost is \$795 (\$745 for Council members).

ASQ Certified Quality Engineer Program (CQE); Wednesdays, August 31 through November 16 from 6-9PM. Cost is \$875 (\$825 for Council members).

ASQ Certified Quality Manager; 35 hour course, fall dates TBD (visit www.century.edu/cect and click on the Quality link for more information). Cost is \$795 (\$745 for Council members).

ASQ Certified Quality Manager Test Prep Refresher; October 8 from 9:00am-3:30pm; \$165 (\$138 for Council members).

ISO 9001:2000 Internal Quality Auditor; September 20-21 from 8:30am-4:00pm; \$595 (\$545 for Council members).

Six Sigma Executive Overview; November 9 from 9:00am-12:00pm; \$119 (\$69 for Council members)

To register, contact Century College at 651-779-3341. For more information, contact Lorrie MacGillivray at 651-747-4048 or l.macgillivray@century.edu or visit www.century.edu/cect.

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