
Minnesota Council for Quality Stakeholder Update
July 2006

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1. A Message from the President: Searching for Quality (and Results from the "Predictive Market" Consensus Experiment in the May issue)

(The results from the May "Predictive Market" Consensus experiment appear at the end of this column.) Last month, Google introduced "Google Trends," a spot on their website that allows you to see how frequently certain topics, words, and phrases have been searched on Google. You can also see who (by city and country) are searching for specific topics. So I played around with it last week and found some interesting facts (which will probably only help me if I become a contestant on a game show someday). For example, I found that the residents of Salt Lake City searched most frequently for "Pirates of the Caribbean." And Sydney, Australia led the world in searching for "bad breath." And Miami led the US in searches for "athletes foot," trailing only Melbourne in the world (Dublin, Ireland led in "smelly feet"). But then I had a more productive thought: this tool could actually have some insight for organizations or entrepreneurs wanting to know the "hot spots" for current or future products.

For example, it might be helpful to know that Atlanta shows the most interest in "peanuts" (no surprise there), followed by Orlando, DC, St. Louis, and Tampa. And that Portland has the most searches for "diapers," followed by Pleasanton CA, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, and Seattle. Or that Phoenix, Dallas, Minneapolis, Denver, and Atlanta are the top five for "golf." (But I wonder why folks from Scotland, Ireland, or Augusta aren't searching for golf...maybe they are on the tee-box rather than on-line.)

I also found some interesting insights for consumer product organizations. It's not a big surprise that St. Louis comes up number one for the word "beer" (thanks to Anheuser Busch), that Denver comes up third (thanks to Coors), or that Boston comes up sixth (thanks to Boston Brewing Co, the maker of Sam Adams). But why is Philadelphia second, Minneapolis fourth, or Austin fifth (maybe thanks to the Quakers, Gophers, and Longhorns?).

You'd think that Kentucky would rank high for "bourbon" (Lexington was third), but why on earth (pun intended) would Porto Alegre, Brazil be ranked first? Or why would three of the top five cities come from Brazil? (A quick search on, of course, Google, informed me that "bourbon" is also a type of coffee bean, so now the ranking makes sense.)

It might be helpful to know that St. Louis is tops (pun intended) in "baseball cards," that Cambridge MA delivered the most searches for "Chinese restaurants," or that Denver cast the most searches for "fly fishing" -- all very helpful for a company starting or running a business with these products.

So then I began to search for topics that are related to organizational improvement and quality. I started with the word "quality": Chennai, India came out number one, followed by Dublin, Ireland (a bit surprising); Mumbai, India; Washington DC; and Ottawa, Canada. Then I thought the word may be too vague, so I tried "total quality management," and the results were a bit startling: five out of the top 10 were Indian cities, and not one of the top 10 were from the US (they were all from India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Pakistan).

"TQM" gave similar results: the top 10 included Bangkok, New Delhi, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, four other cities in India, and even Tehran. Now obviously India has four times the population of the US, so perhaps there are just more people "googling" to improve their companies. But the fact that Americans are doing far more searching on diapers than quality may explain why some perceive our competitive edge slipping.

The results for "Six Sigma," one of today's most popular improvement tools, were similar: the top six cities were from India, and Singapore and Hong Kong were also included in the top 10. At least there were two American cities among the top 10: Minneapolis (number 8) and Washington DC (number 10). In fact, on a national basis, we ranked eighth in the world searching on "Six Sigma."

"Lean" didn't give me a conclusive insight (Atlanta was ranked first, but they were also recently named one of the fattest American cities, so I suspect that "lean" might mean something to Atlantans other than eliminating organizational waste). So I tried "lean manufacturing," and the results were a little more conclusive: four of the top 10 were Indian cities, but the US had a little stronger presence (Minneapolis at number 6, Chicago at number 7, and Atlanta at number 9). Overall, the US ranked sixth.

More people from Malaysia searched for "statistical process control" than any other country in the world (India second, Philippines third, Singapore fourth, and Indonesia fifth). The US was not in the top 10 (but Chicago and Atlanta ranked ninth and tenth for cities).

I'm not sure what all this tells us (I will admit that I was hoping for a lighter article for the newsletter in the middle of summer). But I'll offer three thoughts:

* First, I am amazed at how interested developing countries are in organizational improvement techniques. And I'm even more amazed (perhaps even worried) about the relative low rankings of the US.

* Second, there appears to be some American cities that are more interested in quality than others. Minneapolis is clearly among the top. So are Washington DC, Chicago, and Atlanta.

* Third, there are some countries that I would have expected to see in the rankings but didn't (such as China, Japan, Russia, and parts of the EU). I'm not sure what their absence means to me, but I will say this: once they start "searching for quality," the US had better be ready.

In my May newsletter column, I focused on "predictive markets" and the power of consensus (see: http://www.councilforquality.org/about_newsletter.cfm). I thank the 123 respondents that took a few minutes to offer their input on six different questions. Here are the results...

Certainly, the collective wisdom was dead wrong on one question: 50% picked the Detroit Pistons -- largely considered the favorite in Vegas -- to win this year's NBA title, but Miami won the title (picked by only 8% of our respondents).

The consensus pick on another question was too close to statistically call: 52% predicted that the Federal Reserve would NOT raise rates at their June 29 meeting (the Fed did raise rates, but this was essentially a 50-50 prediction with no clear consensus).

One consensus pick seems to be correct: 59% predicted that President Bush's approval rating would be between 30-37% on July 1 (31% predicted that it would be below 30%, and 10% predicted over 37%). There are many approval rating pools, but most taken in late June or early July show is approval in the mid- to upper-30s).

We'll have to wait on the other three questions. By the end of fall, we'll know how many named tropical storms we'll have in the Atlantic. Thirty-four percent predicted between 21-25 by October 1, 33% predicted between 15-20, 17% predicted under 15, and another 17% predicted over 25.

We'll also know by October whether the 83% who predicted that we will NOT attack Iran were correct (remember that this survey, administered in mid-May, was before the North Korean and Israeli/Palestinian conflict).

And we'll have to wait a little more than two years to know the outcome of our next presidential election. John McCain garnered 28% of the votes; Hillary Clinton received 16%; Rudy Giuliani got 7%; and Al Gore and John Kerry got 2% apiece (Dick Cheney received no votes). Seven percent thought a Republican (other than those listed) would win, and a whopping 39% thought another Democrat would win. Adding up the votes along party lines, 57% predicted a Democrat to win and 43% a Republican. Remember those numbers in November '08!

Yours in Improvement,

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

2. MN Council for Quality Elects Roy Bauer and Dr. Peter Carryer to Board of Directors

The Minnesota Council for Quality, Minneapolis, recently announced the election of Roy Bauer, President and COO of Pemstar in Rochester, and Dr. Peter Carryer, Chair of the Mayo Health System in Rochester to its Board of Directors.

The caliber and credibility of the Council's Board was instantly increased when Mr. Bauer and Dr. Carryer accepted their nominations," says Brian Lassiter, president of the Minnesota Council for Quality. "Both are leaders in their fields and highly respected in their communities. And both have a wealth of experienced to share in shaping the Council's future direction."

Bauer joined Pemstar in 2001, and has successfully led an effort to return Pemstar to profitability. Prior to joining Pemstar, Mr. Bauer was employed by IBM for 24 years, holding various management positions in manufacturing, product development, quality and site operations. As Director of WW AS/400 System Quality and Customer Satisfaction, he led the IBM Rochester site in winning the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in 1990. Since leaving IBM in 1992, Mr. Bauer has authored several books on quality, strategy, managing organizational change, and product development, and has consulted with a number of Fortune 100 companies on these topics. Mr. Bauer was appointed to the Panel of Judges of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Program in 2003, serving as Chair in 2005. Mr. Bauer holds a B.S. in Industrial Technology and an honorary Doctorate of Science from the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

Dr. Peter Carryer is Chair of Mayo Health System Board and Mayo Health System Operations. Joining the Mayo Clinic staff in 1980, Dr. Carryer also serves as a consultant in the Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Gastroenterology, and as an assistant professor of medicine at Mayo Medical School. He holds both a master's degree in business administration (Washington University in St. Louis) and a medical degree (University of Oklahoma College of Medicine), providing him with a unique perspective on Mayo Health System operations and the value of Mayo Health System to the numerous communities served. Born in Rochester, he completed both his residency in internal medicine and his fellowship in gastroenterology at Mayo Clinic. Dr. Carryer has authored several articles, served on numerous committees at Mayo Clinic, and has been very instrumental in bringing quality healthcare to residents of the many communities served by Mayo Health System.

3. Join the 2006 Board of Evaluators; Fall 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 2006 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 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 2006 Board of Evaluators, the fall training session will be October 3-5 (in Roseville). In addition to the full three-day training session, new Evaluators are also required to attend a one-day orientation (either September 7, 12, or 13).

Applications for new Evaluators are due 9/1. Applications for returning Evaluators (which only require updates from your most recent application) are due 9/22.

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. Council Recognizes 43 Members in Second Quarter

The Council would like to recognize 43 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*
Alliance of Computer Professionals, Inc, Bloomington, MN
Ted Amundson, Hastings, MN*
Andrew Tool and Superior Tool and Machining, Plymouth, MN*
Dean Andrew, St. Paul, MN*
Applied Quality Solutions LLC, Hudson, WI*
Business Architecture, Inc., New Brighton, MN*
Cargill Health & Food Technologies, Wayzata, MN
Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services (CMJTS), Monticello, MN*
D.L. Coleman & Associates, Inc., Golden Valley, MN
Designs for Learning, St. Paul, MN*
William Graves, Minneapolis, MN*
Doug Guse, Eden Prairie, MN*
Independent Packing Services, Maple Grove, MN
Insight Fusion, Inc., Minneapolis, MN
Joshua Tree Consulting, Eagan, MN*
Kaposia, Inc., St. Paul, MN*
Liberty Charter School, Blaine, MN*
LIM Sales & Consulting, St. Joseph, MI
Management Consulting in Healthcare, Burnsville, MN*
Memorial Blood Centers of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN*
Minnesota State Colleges & Universities (MnSCU) Office of the Chancellor/System Office, St. Paul, MN*
Minnesota State University-Mankato, Mankato, MN
Nancy Hogle, Shoreview, MN*
Nuclear Management Company, Corporate Headquarters, Hudson, WI*
William D. O'Brien, Maplewood, MN*
Omnispan, Eagan, MN
Padilla Speer Beardsley, Minneapolis, MN*
PATH , Incorporated, St. Paul, MN*
PDG Consultants, Inc.*
Performance Improvement and Quality Management, Minneapolis, MN*
Plunkett's Pest Control, Fridley, MN*
Quantum Performance Group, Palmyra, NY*
Reward Reporting, Inc., Eden Prairie, MN*
Sales Growth Specialists, Long Lake, MN*
Rick Shomion, St. Paul, MN*
Michael Sicard, Minneapolis, MN
The Credit Department, West St. Paul, MN*
The Studer Group, Woodbury, MN
Unisys Twin Cities, Roseville, MN*

Reed Wahlberg, MN*
WestHealth Leadership Council, Plymouth, MN
Winland Electronics, Mankato, MN*

We thank all members for their support. As of June 30, the Council represents a growing community of over 250 members representing over 160,000 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).

A current Council member recently called to say that his organization is saving \$6000 from a discount to a local university partner of the Council's. Their annual membership fee is \$250, so that's not a bad return on membership!

Individual memberships begin at \$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.

5. Leveraging Performance Management to Become World Class -- PIN Discussion 8/3

World-class companies like GE, 3M, and Medtronic use performance management to increase their profits by creating alignment, knowing what drives their profits and value, and understanding their business from their customer's perspective.

The Minnesota Council for Quality is pleased to welcome Mr. Dave Aasen, founder and CEO of Visuel LLC (www.uncoveringprofits.com), a Minnesota-based performance management company that specializes in uncovering profits of emerging to midsize companies. Dave will share metrics that world-class companies use (which you can use to benchmark your business against), outline the top three leadership challenges companies face (and what you can do to solve them), and reveal the success strategies of one midsize company that tripled profits in less than one year using Visuel's approach. Dave will also share some tips to overcome obstacles to increasing profits from using conventional process improvement tools – such as lean, Six Sigma, Kaizen, and Theory of Constraints. You will leave with ideas you can use at your company right away.

The discussion is from 8:00-9:00 a.m. on August 3 (networking and continental breakfast begin at 7:30 a.m.) at the Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC), 1501 Hennepin (15th and Hennepin), downtown Minneapolis, Room L3000 (Wheelock-Whitney Library). Parking is available at their ramp across Hennepin (for \$5). Admission to PIN is FREE for Council members; \$10 for partner organizations; \$20 for the public.

Space is limited so register today by emailing brian.lassiter@councilforquality.org.

6. Improving Business & Healthcare Using Six Sigma, Lean, Baldrige, and Balanced Scorecard -- 11/2 Save the Date!

The Minnesota Council for Quality, in cooperation with the Minnesota Healthcare Quality Professionals (MHQP), is planning a full-day educational workshop this fall. Scheduled for Thursday, November 2 at the Holiday Inn Bloomington, the workshop is titled "Improving Business & Healthcare: How Six Sigma, Lean, Baldrige, and Balanced Scorecard Can Advance Excellence in Your Organization." Save the date!

As a result of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Compare and contrast the strengths and limitations of Six Sigma, Lean, Baldrige, and Balanced Scorecard
- Describe the challenges and success factors organizations have encountered implementing the various improvement frameworks
- Learn how multiple improvement frameworks can be successfully integrated
- Identify tips, tricks, and techniques for implementing quality in your organization
- Describe the impact validated/reliable measurement has on process improvement
- Identify contacts and network with other business and health care leaders interested in organizational improvement

We expect about 125 professionals from both business and health care to attend; attendees will represent all organizational levels (senior leaders/administrators, mid-level managers, quality professionals, practitioners). Some will have experience with contemporary improvement frameworks, but many will not.

The workshop will feature a morning keynote address, which will outline the four improvement frameworks (Six Sigma, Lean, Baldrige, and Balanced Scorecard); this talk will set the context for the day. We will then hear six organizational case studies -- three health care and three businesses -- that have implemented one, two, three, or all four frameworks. The organizations will highlight what worked for them, what challenges they endured, and what results they have seen thus far. We will also showcase a plenary speaker who will focus on the human side of measurement/data -- a factor important to all four frameworks.

Pricing and registration will begin next month. Save the date!

7. Try the Free Consultant Referral Network to Find Improvement Experts

The Minnesota Council for Quality encourages anyone seeking an improvement expert to use our free on-line Consultant Referral Network®. Located at www.consultantreferralnetwork.org, the Consultant Referral Network is a dynamic, web-enabled search tool that connects improvement experts to the organizations which seek them. This service allows organizations 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 organization can also weight the relative importance of each variable, and the tool will then identify up to five consultants or firms that best match the client's needs. There is no charge for organizations to use the tool to find improvement experts.

Refinements recently made to the tool now allow clients to also conduct directory searches. For example, these searches allow clients to see all consultants with a specific subject matter expertise (such as Six Sigma, leadership, or strategic planning), all consultants with particular sector/industry experience, or all consultants located in a specific state.

“Use of the Consultant Referral Network continues to grow,” says Brian Lassiter, president of the Minnesota Council for Quality. “With over 100 consultants listed in the service, the tool has good breath and depth of improvement experts, making it more valuable for organizations seeking assistance in improving their business. And with the additional functionality of the tool, clients now have the choice of how they search for consultants.”

The Consultant Referral Network was officially launched March 1, 2005, and is managed by a consortium of state quality award programs in Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Washington, and Wisconsin. Per month, the Network now averages over 11,000 hits, nearly 1500 independent visits, and about 25 client searches. Six consulting engagements have been secured through the tool -- relationships that likely would not have been made without the brokering through this network.

Says Susan Hyde, director of Organization Development with HealthPlus in Michigan: “[The Consultant Referral Network] was a very useful tool in identifying the best fit for our organization's needs.”

For more information on the tool, visit www.consultantreferralnetwork.org.

8. Baldrige Recipient Jenks Public Schools Visits Minnesota -- RAQC 8/25

The Rochester Area Quality Council (RAQC), in cooperation with the Rochester Area Math and Science Partnership (RAMSP) and the MN Council for Quality, are pleased to host Jenks Public School (JPS) District, a 2005 Baldrige National Quality Award recipient in education, on Friday, August 25 from 7:15 AM to 11:00AM. The session will be at the Rochester Public Schools' Education Service Center (ESC), 334 16th Street SE, Rochester.

In an interactive session, Diane Bosworth, Ed. D. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and School Improvement, and Shan Glandon, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, will share some of their best practices for achieving extraordinary levels of student achievement, as well as some of their strategies for improving financial/budgetary performance, operational performance, and faculty/staff-related performance. More information on Jenks can be found at http://www.nist.gov/public_affairs/baldrige_2005/jenks.htm.

This session will have a focus on achieving excellence in K-12 education, but the best practices translate to other sectors and industries.

Cost is \$10 for the first hour overview or \$49 for the entire morning; breakfast is included. For more information, visit www.raqc.com. To register, contact Kay Wiegert at kay.wiegert@roch.edu or 507.285.7560 (include name, organization, email, billing address, whether you are attending the first hour only or the entire morning).

9. Balanced Scorecard Course and other University of Minnesota College of Continuing Education Summer Courses Announced

The College of Continuing Education (CCE) at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, is pleased to announce their summer improvement and business courses. Council members receive a 10% discount on all CCE courses.

One course, “Using the Balanced Scorecard to Improve Organizational Performance” on August 10, will be led by Brian Lassiter, president of the Minnesota Council for Quality. The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) remains one of the most popular management tools. Thousands of organizations are using the framework and thousands more are considering it. This course 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 in any marketplace. Through a highly interactive discussion, this course will also provide the participant with tools that can be taken back to your job to help you design and use a scorecard.

Upon successfully completing this program you will be able to:

- * Understand what the Balanced Scorecard is and how it can be used in your organization, department, or team
- * Learn how to build a BSC to reflect your organization's strategy and priorities
- * Discuss different approaches for BSC automation, measurement analysis, and reporting
- * Explore the strengths and limitations of the BSC and determine whether it is right for your organization
- * Hear case studies of how organizations have used BSC
- * Network with other organizations that are interested in performance measurement, improvement, and the Balanced Scorecard

Mr. Lassiter has helped more than 10 organizations design and implement a balanced scorecard.

Other courses offered by the University of Minnesota include:

- 7/19 Successfully Dealing with Conflict at Work; \$395
- 7/25-27 Principles of Supervision; \$995
- 7/27 Data Driven Decision Making; \$395
- 8/1 Personal Influence and Leadership: Making a Difference; \$395
- 8/3 The HR Audit; \$395
- 8/8-9 Advanced Supervision; \$750
- 8/10 Using the Balanced Scorecard to Improve Organizational Performance; \$395
- 8/15 Negotiating for Agreement; \$395
- 8/16 Succession Planning; \$395
- 8/17 Principles of Employee Compensation; \$395
- 8/22 Recruiting Strategies; \$395

For more information on any of these courses or to register, visit the University of Minnesota's College of Continuing Education's website at <http://www.cce.umn.edu/professionaleducation/> or call 612-624-4000.

10. 5S: Applying workplace organization to office support functions -- Manufacturers' Alliance
8/10

5S, a key part of Lean Manufacturing that stands for Sort, Simplify, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain, is about workplace organization, housekeeping, and discipline. The Manufacturers' Alliance, an alliance partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to announce their Monthly Educational Program on August 10, from 7:30 - 9:30 AM at Dunwoody College in Minneapolis. The session will focus on 5S: Applying workplace organization to office support functions.

Presenters are Jim Dow, president of Diversified Plastics, Chad Tripp, project manager from Banta Corporation, Cory Zupfer, global sourcing from Imation.

Cost is \$30 for non-members of Manufacturers Alliance. Council members (from manufacturing companies) are entitled to one free pass per monthly educational program; visit www.mfrall.com/free_pass.htm to print a free pass. For more information or to register, visit www.mfrall.com.

11. International Association of Facilitators Conference -- MN Facilitators Network 7/20

The Minnesota Facilitators Network (MFN), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to announce their July 20 session. This month's meeting will feature a mini report-out of the International Association of Facilitators Conference. The session will feature the five latest trends used by experts to facilitate great meetings.

Judy Sharken-Simon and Kathy McGrane (and others from Minnesota who attended the IAF Conference in Baltimore) will present in a Mini Session style what they learned from attending conference sessions. Attendees will have an opportunity to get a taste of some topics presented to the international group of facilitators who gathered to learn new skills, tools, and strategies.

You will have an opportunity to do this through hands-on activities, practice, and feedback. MFN's plan is for you to: leverage and build on existing skills; avoid and solve problems; expand abilities; and/or improve communications, teamwork, participation, and build capacity to manage daily pressures. Come spend the evening ready to participate and take away something you may apply to your facilitation skills, tools, and strategies.

The session will be July 20 from 5:30-8:30 PM (program from 6-8PM). A light dinner will be served. The location is Salem Lutheran Church: 610 W 28th Street (corner of 28th and Lyndale Ave S. in Minneapolis). Cost is \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members.

For more information or to register, visit <http://www.mnfacilitators.org/> or contact toddjanderson@hotmail.com.

----- 12. ASTD Regional Conference -- Save the Date & Call for Sponsors/Exhibitors

ASTD-Twin Cities Chapter, a partner of the Council, is proud to announce its Regional Conference: "Designing the Future: Business Savvy, Influence and Skills for the Learning & Performance Professional." The conference will be held Thursday, November 16, 2006 (pre-conference November 15), at the RiverCentre in St. Paul, Minnesota. The conference and expo will be marketed to over 700 ASTD-TCC members, as well as more than 1500 members of other ASTD chapters in the region and local professional organizations for the learning and performance industry.

ASTD-TCC is pleased to announce Kevin Oakes, Board Chair of ASTD's National Chapter, as the opening keynote speaker for the conference. Oakes is President of SumTotal Systems, the largest provider of learning and business performance technologies and services. Kevin has served as chief executive officer, President and a Board member of technology-based training companies since 1997. Kevin's keynote presentation, "*What will the future look like for learning and performance professionals?*", will examine traditional trainers to strategic partners in developing, designing and accomplishing strategic business goals. To learn more, go to www.sumtotalsystems.com.

John G. Miller, author of "*QBQ! Question Behind the Question and Flipping the Switch*," will be the closing speaker for the conference. He is the founder of QBQ, Inc., an organizational development firm based in Denver, Colorado, dedicated to helping organizations make personal accountability a core value. He has been actively involved in the organizational development industry since 1986. John's concluding remarks will challenge us to take the next steps to design the future and use QBQ to apply our newfound skills and knowledge for professional and personal growth.

To learn more, go to www.qbq.com.

In addition to the keynotes, the conference will feature 15 breakout sessions and a wine and cheese expo for networking.

The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) represents approximately 70,000 training and development professionals in more than 100 countries. Of ASTD's more than 150 local chapters worldwide, ASTD-Twin Cities Chapter (ASTD-TCC) is one of the top ten with more than 700 members. Members specialize in areas including instructional design, group facilitation, training delivery, organizational development, performance improvement, career development, sales and marketing, computer-based training and total quality management.

Cost is \$145 (ASTD member) or \$195 (non-member) for the 11/16 conference only. Cost for the 11/15 pre-conference only is \$85 (member) or \$125 (non-member). For both days, the cost is \$195 (member) or \$255 (non-member).

To learn more about the ASTD-TCC Regional Conference, please visit www.astd-tcc.org.

13. University of St. Thomas Announces Summer Courses

The Center for Business Excellence at the University of St. Thomas Minneapolis Campus, an alliance partner of the Council, is pleased to announce their spring improvement curriculum. Council members are entitled to a 15% discount for the following courses:

7/19 Project Execution; \$395
7/24 Mini MBA® in Health Care Management; \$1795
7/27 Systems Thinking for Project Managers; \$325

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

South Central College, Faribault and Mankato campuses, in cooperation with Ridgewater College-Hutchinson, is pleased to announce their fall quality and performance improvement curriculum. Council members are entitled to a 10% discount.

The following courses will be held at the Faribault campus (prices before member discount):

9/11-10/16 Certified Quality Technician (CQT) Review; \$300
9/11-10/9 Certified Mechanical Inspector (CMI) Review; \$250
9/19-10/17 Certified Manager of Quality/Organizational Excellence Review; \$450
9/25 Applying SPC & Statistical Tools; \$235
9/26 Technical Writing for the Quality Professional; \$125
10/11 Project Management; \$235
10/12 Microsoft Project 2003; \$235
10/16 Electrostatic Discharge Basics; \$235
10/24 Supplier Quality Management & Improvement; \$235
10/30-11/27 Certified Quality Improvement Associate (CQIA) Review; \$250
11/1-11/29 Certified Quality Auditor (CQA) Review; \$250
11/8 Understanding & Implementing ISO 9001:2000; \$235
11/9 Internal Auditor Skills; \$235
11/14 Food Safety Management Systems ISO22000; \$235
11/15 Planning & Conducting Food Safety Audits; \$235
11/30 Problem Solving Tools & Methods; \$235
12/12 AIAG FMEA & Control Plans; \$235

The following courses will be held at the Mankato campus (prices before member discount):

10/10 Problem Solving Tools & Methods; \$235
10/17 AIAG FMEA & Control Plans; \$235
12/5 Project Management; \$235
12/6 Microsoft Project 2003; \$235
12/19 Supplier Quality Management & Improvement; \$235

The following courses will be held at the Hutchinson campus of Ridgewater College (prices before member discount):

9/27 Understanding & Implementing ISO 9001:2000; \$235
9/28 Internal Auditor Skills; \$235
10/17 Calibration Processes; \$125
10/17 Calibration of Dimensional Gages; \$125
10/18 Gage Repair; \$235
11/13 Electrostatic Discharge Basics \$235

For more information, please contact Laura Hardy at 507-332-5802 or at laura.hardy@southcentral.edu or contact Brian Knutson at 507-332-5874 (brian.knutson@southcentral.edu). You can also find more information on the Council's Clearinghouse at www.councilforquality.org/improve_events.cfm.

15. Annual Minnesota Section ASQ Conference -- Save the Date 10/9-10/10

The Minnesota Section of the American Society for Quality (ASQ), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to announce their 53rd annual Minnesota Quality Conference on October 9-10 at the Minneapolis Airport Marriott.

The keynote presentation, "The Top 10 Quality Mistakes," will be led by Craig Cochran, author of "The Continual Improvement Process: From Strategy to the Bottom Line." The easiest way to improve is to learn from the mistakes of other people. Craig Cochran has spent the last 20 years analyzing, investigating, and helping to fix quality mistakes in a wide range of organizations. Please join us for an entertaining and engaging discussion of the most common quality mistakes and what can be done about them.

In addition to Craig, Monday highlights include concurrent sessions and an exposition. Topics are Six Sigma, quality tools, supplier quality, Voice of the Customer, and leadership. Tuesday's highlights include full-day workshops for more advanced and hands-on learning.

Cost for one day (ASQ or MCQ member) is \$300 or for non-members is \$350. Cost for both days is \$500 (member) or \$600 (non-member).

For more information or to register, visit <http://www.mnasq.org/MNQualityConference.htm>.

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