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*Minnesota Council for Quality Stakeholder Update*  
*August 2002*  
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1. A Message from the President: Building a Clearinghouse for Improvement

Minnesota has numerous experts in management, performance improvement, and organizational effectiveness. The challenge, however, is in connecting those experts to organizations that are in need of improvement assistance.

As I mentioned in June, part of the Minnesota Council for Quality's vision is to build a clearinghouse that brokers improvement-related information and knowledge. This web-enabled resource center will help organizations conduct preliminary research on different improvement techniques, learn tips and methods for improvement, and identify benchmarking resources and potential best practices. While this information exists today, it is fragmented and dispersed throughout the market; therefore, our goal is to develop a tool that efficiently brokers the information.

Last month, we invited the market to prioritize content for this clearinghouse. I thank those of you that participated in the on-line survey. More than 71% of you indicated that you were "extremely" or "very likely" to use the clearinghouse at least 5-10 times a year, and nearly 97% indicated that you would use it at least 3-5 times a year. You indicated the most important content – the information that would be most valuable for you and your organization – would be (in order):

- \* Benchmarking resources (a rating of 1.79 out of 6.0, where lower is a better score)
- \* Articles (2.17)
- \* White papers (2.22)
- \* Links to other improvement websites (2.25)
- \* Announcements of seminars and improvement events (2.37)
- \* An improvement resource center (2.51)
- \* Member directory (2.52)

We have begun building the clearinghouse and anticipate it being functional sometime in late fall. In the meantime, if you have access to articles, white papers, or valuable websites, please send them to the Council for consideration ([mc4quality@aol.com](mailto:mc4quality@aol.com)).

Sincerely,

Brian Lassiter  
President, MN Council for Quality

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2. Member Fees Reduced; Recognizing New Members

As mentioned in June, we are making changes to our membership structure. For one, we are finding ways to make it more value-added: we are building the clearinghouse, we are building a vendor database, we are offering discounts to our services, and we are forming partnerships with organizations that will offer discounts on their services to our members.

Secondly, we have reduced our membership structure to make it more attractive for a greater number of organizations. Beginning immediately, our tiered structure is the following:

Individuals/Sole Proprietors: \$100  
Supporting Members: \$250 (1-99 FTE), \$500 (100-499 FTE), \$1000 (500-2499 FTE)  
Sponsoring Members: \$5000 plus \$5/employee over 2500 (max \$10,000)

Benefits for membership increase at the higher levels. For more information on the benefits of becoming a member, please email the Council at [mc4quality@aol.com](mailto:mc4quality@aol.com).

The Council would also like to recognize the following organizations that initiated or renewed their membership since mid-June:

Chaska District 112 (Administrative Team) Chaska  
DMH Associates, Anoka  
Direct Response Insurance Administrative Services (DRIASI), Chanhassen  
Governor's Council of Development Disabilities, St. Paul  
Hearth Technologies, Inc., Lakeville  
Nuclear Management Company, Hudson, WI  
Medtronic Energy & Component Center/Corporate Quality, Compliance, & Audit, Brooklyn Park  
Minnesota Army National Guard (Corporate Office), Cottage Grove  
PDP Services, Richfield  
TCF Retail Bank (Quality Department), Minneapolis  
University of Minnesota-Duluth (ASSL)

Several other organizations have verbally committed their intent to renew their membership and will be listed in an upcoming newsletter. We sincerely thank you for

your continued support.

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3. Achieving Business Excellence: Quality 101 on October 15-16

The recent economic downturn means that the need for systemic change and improved organizational performance has never been greater. But, with so many quality and improvement tools out there -- like Six Sigma, Baldrige, and Balanced Scorecard -- which one should you select? And how do you use these tools to actually effect change?

The University of Minnesota's College of Continuing Education, in cooperation with the Minnesota Council for Quality, is offering a two-day course "Achieving Business Excellence: Quality 101." The highly interactive course, scheduled for October 15-16 in St. Paul, will explore some of today's contemporary quality and business improvement frameworks, will outline the strengths and limitations of each, will show how they overlap, and will demonstrate how they can be applied to your organization or department.

We are also pleased to announce that Council members will receive a \$100 discount for this course (\$795 instead of \$895). Please enter Code X027 on your registration form. For more information on the course or for a full fall course listing, please see [www.cce.umn.edu/business](http://www.cce.umn.edu/business).

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4. Ethics & Leadership: PIN Discussion September 5

We are in a unique period of American economic history. Faced with the recent challenges of corporate fraud and unethical accounting practices, leaders from US companies are now focusing on certifying the accuracy of their financials. But corporate ethics do not stop there.

The Performance Improvement Network (PIN), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to announce that Ron James, CEO of the Center for Ethical Business Cultures, will speak on ethics and leadership at our September 5 discussion. Mr. James, formerly President & CEO of a large division of Ceridian as well as the top executive of a division of US West, will share his views of how leadership can create an environment that encourages and reinforces ethical behavior within corporations. He will also discuss specific practices – those dealing with human resources, governance, rewards, and leadership – that increase ethical behavior within organizations. And he will demonstrate how ethics is not only the right thing to do, but – because it ensures trust, integrity, and credibility with your stakeholders – dramatically impacts business results. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP today by visiting PIN's website ([www.improvementnetwork.org](http://www.improvementnetwork.org)) or email [info@improvementnetwork.org](mailto:info@improvementnetwork.org).

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5. Time is Running Out to Become a 2002 MN Quality Award Evaluator

The second of two training sessions for the 2002 Board of Evaluators is fast approaching. One-day training for new Evaluators is Friday, September 6 and three-day training for all Evaluators is October 8-10. Both sessions will be held at Unisys in Roseville.

But hurry: time is running out to apply to this year's Board. Applications for new Evaluators are due August 23 and for returning Evaluators is September 30.

For more information on the benefits of becoming an Evaluator or for an application, please email the Council at [mc4quality@aol.com](mailto:mc4quality@aol.com).

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## 6. ISO 9000:2000 Quality Management Systems: A Primer

Forward: From time to time, the Minnesota Council for Quality will invite members to submit an article that provokes thought, presents a case study, or offers improvement-related tips. This month we are pleased to welcome Anne Ochs, President of Quest Analytical, Inc. Quest Analytical, a Council member since 1999, was established in 1993 to change the world by helping to build sustainable quality management systems. Quest Analytical services include planning, implementation, training and auditing. To learn more about Quest Analytical or ISO 9001:2000 call Anne at 952-848-1125 or check out their website at [www.questanalytical.com](http://www.questanalytical.com).

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The new ISO 9001:2000 standard has been out since December 2000. All registered companies have until December 14, 2003 to transition to the new standard. Yet according to a survey in the July 2002 Quality Digest, 73% of registered companies have not yet started the transition.

The good news: it is a better standard:

- \* It applies to service as well as manufacturing companies
- \* It is based on common business practices
- \* All pieces of the old standard still apply
- \* There is stronger emphasis on continual improvement, customer, and measurable objectives.

If you haven't started your transition yet, here are a few starting places:

- \* Order the new standard (<http://www.asq.org>).
- \* Determine scope and exclusions. It is harder to exclude processes you perform such as design & development.
- \* Define your processes. Prepare process flowcharts; they will help with several parts of the standard.
- \* Take some time to look at your processes for: 1) Customer satisfaction: you must actively obtain customer feedback including, but not limited to, complaints. 2) Training: you must measure training effectiveness. 3) Monitoring & measurement: monitor and

measure both product and processes. 4) Measurable objectives related to your product and processes are required and should be shared with everyone. 5) Look at incorporating or referencing other programs such as Environmental Health & Safety, HACCP or GMP in your system.

\* Revise procedures as needed, many have not changed.

\* Contact your registrar, discuss your transition options. Many registrars will transition all or part of your system over several visits. Get on the schedule: the transition audits may take longer and there may be problems if everyone waits until the last minute.

\* Check out websites for good ideas; ask associates or professionals for assistance.

The hardest part is getting started; now is a very good time!

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7. Network with the Baldrige Award Recipients: October 10 & 23

Two upcoming conferences will give attendees the opportunity to learn from and network with current and former Baldrige Award recipients. The 2002 Baldrige Regional Conferences will take place on October 10 at the Fremont Marriott in Fremont, California (in the San Jose area) and October 23 at The Ritz-Carlton in Dearborn, Michigan.

The conferences will feature keynote, concurrent, and town hall sessions and are value-priced at under \$500 with additional discounts for advance registration, faculty, and groups. To learn more about the conferences, including how to register, visit the Baldrige National Quality Program's Web site ([www.quality.nist.gov](http://www.quality.nist.gov)), call (301) 975-2036, or email [nqp@nist.gov](mailto:nqp@nist.gov).