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*Minnesota Council for Quality Stakeholder Update*  
*September 2003*  
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1. A Message from the President: Building a Community

Last week, the Council celebrated our 2002 Minnesota Quality Award recognition event. It was an important milestone for the Council in that it erased a two-and-a-half-year hiatus for the Award ceremony (thanks to a generous contribution by Virchow Krause, we were able to resurrect the event).

With nearly 100 in attendance, it was a fun evening of learning, sharing, networking, and celebration. We recognized our volunteers – the Board of Directors, our 2002 Board of Evaluators and Team Leaders, and our Panel of Judges. We recognized and heard stories from the five 2002 recipients of the quality award: Medtronic Energy and Component Center (Achievement Level), Bethel Lutheran Church (Advancement Level), Hearth and Home Technologies (Advancement Level), Hubert Olson Elementary (Advancement Level), and Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services (Commitment Level).

But it also got me to thinking about another important aspect of the night: community building.

Much of the Council's purpose is about building community. In fact, many of our services and programs focus on connecting resources, expertise, knowledge, and best practices for the purpose of organizational improvement. For example, we are building processes to connect member organizations to other member organizations for benchmarking purposes. We are developing a service and tool to connect consultants and trainers to member organizations who desire to hire them (see Article #4 below). We match trained volunteer Evaluators to organizations desiring an assessment to identify improvement opportunities. We have built an on-line forum – our “improvement

Clearinghouse” – to share information, knowledge, and best practices (visit it at [www.councilforquality.org](http://www.councilforquality.org)). We have built physical forum – the Performance Improvement Network – for managers and professionals to share information and knowledge on contemporary improvement techniques (see Article #6), which has also become great place to network. And we have formed partnerships and alliances with 7 other organizations that all specialize in some aspect of organizational improvement (see Articles #2-3 for new alliances, as well as Articles #7-9 for continuing alliances).

Our community is strong and growing. We have seen individuals land jobs through their Council relationships; we have seen consultants and firms secure contracts and clients through their Council networks; we have seen organizations connect with benchmarking partners through other Council members; and we have seen people form genuine friendships with fellow volunteers and colleagues.

Webster defines “community” as “people with common interests.” Our community includes hundreds of individuals and scores of organizations all interested in improving organizational performance as well as the overall quality of life in our state. In fact, we now have nearly 125 members representing over 58,000 employees throughout and beyond the state. While we still have a long way to go to fully achieve our vision, the Council has come a long way in building and strengthening our community.

If you would like to explore ways of getting involved with this community, I would love to hear from you.

Yours in Improvement,

Brian S. Lassiter  
President, MN Council for Quality

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**2. Council and Rochester Area Quality Council Enter into Alliance**

The Minnesota Council for Quality and the Rochester Area Quality Council (RAQC), have agreed to an alliance that will better leverage their resources and increase the value to both organizations’ member base.

“This alliance is consistent with our vision of building a statewide network of organizational improvement resources,” says Brian Lassiter, president of the Minnesota Council for Quality. “RAQC has a terrific history of providing high quality programs and services to their members – to both individuals and organizations in the Rochester area. This arrangement allows the Minnesota Council to begin offering those services to our members at a discount. This arrangement also brings tremendous value to existing RAQC members who can now enjoy the full benefits of a Council membership at a reduced contribution rate.”

The alliance allows members of the RAQC to elect to also join the Minnesota Council for Quality and thereby have full access the Council's growing list of benefits. These benefits include recognition, access to our services (like our on-line improvement Clearinghouse at [www.councilforquality.org](http://www.councilforquality.org) and our Vendor Referral Service), discounts to our services (like organizational assessments, Evaluator training), and discounts to our other partner services. It also allows Olmsted-county based Council members to elect to join the RAQC at no additional membership fee.

"We are thrilled with this agreement," says Dan Nelson, President of RAQC and ex Officio Board member of the Minnesota Council for Quality. Nelson, also the General Manager of Hampton Inn-Rochester, continues: "This alliance will expand the value we offer our RAQC members by bringing them the beneficial services that the Minnesota Council offers. The Council offers many services we do not, like a comprehensive organizational assessment, an on-line improvement Clearinghouse, a Vendor Referral Service launching this fall, and partnerships with other non-profits and universities/colleges. RAQC members can now begin to enjoy those benefits as well as the value that RAQC will continue to bring its members."

Both organizations are also exploring ways to better share information, to market each others' services, and to offer joint programs and services. "In times such as these," says Lassiter, "it is important for non-profits to find ways to leverage each others' assets and strengths. We are two organizations that have strong reputations and services. This alliance allows us to more effectively utilize those strengths for the benefit of both sets of memberships."

The alliance begins immediately and will last indefinitely.

The Council would also like to announce RAQC's annual "Quality Day" for Tuesday, October 7. The event will feature three of the five recipients of the 2002 Minnesota Quality Award: Bethel Lutheran Church, Rochester; Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Monticello; and Olson Elementary School, Bloomington. Participants in the program will have an opportunity to hear some best practices from all three organizations. This year's Quality Day will also feature Brian Lassiter, President of the Minnesota Council for Quality. The program will be held at the Best Western Apache in Rochester. Registration and breakfast begins at 7:30 a.m.; the program runs from 8:00 AM-1:00 PM. The cost of the program is \$40 for members or \$50 for non-members (prior to October 2<sup>nd</sup>) and \$50 for members or \$75 for non-members (after October 2<sup>nd</sup>). For more information or to register, visit [www.raqc.com](http://www.raqc.com) or contact Kay Wiegert at [kay.wiegert@roch.edu](mailto:kay.wiegert@roch.edu), 507-285-7560.

For more information on RAQC in general, please visit <http://www.raqc.com/who.asp>.

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3. Council and Inver Hills Community College Agree to Alliance

The Minnesota Council for Quality and Inver Hills Community College's Center for Professional and Workforce Development, Inver Grove Heights, have agreed to an alliance that will bring several management and organizational improvement courses to Council members at a discount.

"This alliance represents part of our vision of brokering existing organizational improvement resources across the state," says Brian Lassiter, president of the Minnesota Council for Quality. "Inver Hills offers many good management, supervisory, and improvement courses. We are excited to work with Inver Hills to bring these courses to our member organizations."

Lassiter continues, "We are also excited to have a partner in the southeast Metro. Along with the U of M's College of Continuing Education, the University of St. Thomas's Management Center, and Century College, we now offer discounted training options for our members in nearly all parts of the Metro. Our focus in the future is to grow our alliances also in Greater Minnesota."

The arrangement entitles Council members to a 15% discount for all Inver Hills management courses. These courses include the 40-hour Management Academy, and seminars on Project Management, Process Improvement, Customer Service, Leadership, Business Ethics, and other related topics.

The Management Academy is an intensive, 40-hour introduction to the requirements and opportunities of management and leadership. The management academy includes 10 sessions of practical training and optional follow-up coaching that applies key principles and tools to participant's management challenges. The 10 sessions include: Introduction to Supervision, Essential Tools for Supervisors, Tailored Communication, Implementing Process Improvements, Ethical Responsibilities of Leadership, Implementing Effective Time Management, Creating a Culture of Outstanding Customer Service, Working with Difficult People and Resolving Workplace Conflict, Meeting Magic, and a Capstone course. The Academy meets Tuesdays between October 7 and December 12. The cost is \$895 (\$761 for Council members).

In addition to the Management Academy, Inver Hills offers other fundamental management courses several times each year. The 1-2 day courses are designed to increase the effectiveness of staff within an organization and to develop skills in the areas of business writing, customer service, public speaking, and time management. Course dates will be announced shortly. Council members also receive a 15% discount to these – as well as all IT-related courses.

"We are happy to enter into this agreement," says Dwayne Glenn, Customized Training Consultant at Inver Hills. "As we refine the Management Academy and expand our Leadership Development programs, this arrangement will enhance our visibility, possibly increase our student base, and support organizational improvement efforts across the Twin Cities."

For more information on Inver Hills or these courses, visit <http://depts.inverhills.edu/cect>.

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#### 4. Seeking Sponsors for Vendor Referral Service

As part of the second phase of the improvement Clearinghouse, the Minnesota Council for Quality will begin offering a Vendor Referral Service later this year. The service will be an on-line, dynamic search engine that connects organizational improvement consultants, trainers, and facilitators to organizations desiring to hire them. As envisioned, there is no tool quite like this: it will greatly accelerate a member organization's search for a qualified vendor, and will provide a legitimate channel for our member-vendors to market their services.

Design of the Vendor Referral Service is underway. Simultaneously, the Council is seeking sponsors to help fund the technical development of this valuable tool. "We have heard from the marketplace," says Craig Robinson, Council Chair, "and we recognize the strong need for a service like this. To accelerate its launch, we are looking support from companies who will benefit from the service...from members who will use the tool to identify vendors, and from vendors will be listed in it."

For a one-time contribution, your organization would be listed on the Vendor Referral Service's homepage for one year. For a contribution of:

\$250-999, your organization would be listed as a "Bronze Sponsor,"  
\$1000-2999, your organization would be listed as a "Silver Sponsor," or  
\$3000 or more, your organization would be listed as "Gold Sponsor."

If your organization would benefit from using this service (and/or if your organization would benefit from being listed in it) and are interested in making a one-time sponsorship contribution, please email the Council at [mc4quality@aol.com](mailto:mc4quality@aol.com). Our goal is to secure enough sponsorship such that we can develop and launch the tool later this fall.

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#### 5. Proving the Value of Management – Part 2

As we mentioned last month, the Council is occasionally asked for evidence of the value of Baldrige as a framework for managing and improving organizational performance. While the ultimate proof is a specific organization's results, we often point to two pieces of data to prove the case. Last month, we mentioned Robinson Capital Management's Q-100 Index that provides evidence that better managed companies will provide a greater stock return than their peer companies (see article #6 in the August newsletter on our website at [http://www.councilforquality.org/about\\_newsletter.cfm](http://www.councilforquality.org/about_newsletter.cfm)).

The second piece of evidence comes from a study completed in 1999 by Dr. Vinod Singhal of the Georgia Institute of Technology and Dr. Kevin Hendricks of the College of William and Mary. Drs. Singhal and Hendricks compared the financial performance

of nearly 600-quality award winning firms (at the national, state, or supplier level) against a control group of firms similar in size operating in the same industries. Both groups were tracked over a five-year period starting one year before to four years after the award winners won their first award.

The results? The award winners averaged significantly larger increases in several measures of financial performance than the control group. For example, Award winners experienced a 44% higher stock price return, a 48% higher growth in operating income, and 37% higher growth in sales compared to the control group. Award winners also outperformed the control group on return on sales, growth in employees, and growth in assets. These results seem to hold for smaller businesses as well (in fact, are a little larger). Admittedly, this study was conducted prior to the recent market correction and economic downturn, but one could speculate that the results would hold in either an up or down market.

The results of this study indicate that effective adoption of performance excellence principles embedded in various quality award criteria (like Baldrige and the Minnesota Quality Award) do make good economic sense. To obtain a copy of this study, contact Dr. Vinod Singhal at [vinod.singhal@mgt.gatech.edu](mailto:vinod.singhal@mgt.gatech.edu).

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#### 6. Six Sigma at Carlson Companies – PIN Discussion 10/2

The concept of Six Sigma has regained popularity among American organizations the last few years as a preferred management and improvement framework. But why did it return to prominence? How did it start? What has it grown into and what does it mean to organizations today and in the future?

The Minnesota Council for Quality is pleased to welcome Mr. Eric Anderson, Quality Leader and Certified Master Black Belt for Carlson Companies International, to our October 2 Performance Improvement Network (PIN) discussion. His discussion will outline the history of Six Sigma, will summarize his views of the tool's strengths and limitations, will examine the issue of whether it is all that new or just a repackaging of TQM, and will explore the potential future of Six Sigma once the current "fad" status begins to fade. Mr. Anderson will also share how Carlson is using the tool to improve processes and drive results across the organization.

The discussion is from 8:00-9:00 a.m. on October 2 (networking and continental breakfast at 7:30) at the University of St. Thomas in downtown Minneapolis, Murphy Hall Room 203. Admission is free for Council members; \$20 for the public. For more information or to register, visit [www.improvementnetwork.org](http://www.improvementnetwork.org) or email [lassiter\\_brian@hotmail.com](mailto:lassiter_brian@hotmail.com).

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#### 7. The Affects of both Federal and State Tax Cuts on the Business Environment – MSLF Discussion 9/23

The Minnesota Strategic Leadership Forum (MSLF), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to announce that Paul Anton, Twin Cities-based economist and consultant, will speak at their September 23 discussion. Mr. Anton will explore the affects of both federal and state tax cuts on the business environment.

The event will be held at the Minneapolis Campus of St. Thomas. Registration is 7:00 a.m, buffet breakfast at 7:30 a.m., speaker begins at 7:45 a.m., and Q&A is at 8:45-9:00 a.m. Cost is \$25 (\$15 for MN Council members). Space is limited. For more information or to register, please visit [www.slf-minnesota.org](http://www.slf-minnesota.org) or email [keith@hornbacherAssociates.com](mailto:keith@hornbacherAssociates.com).

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#### 8. U of M Announces Fall Curriculum; Council Members Get Discount

The College of Continuing Education (CCE) at the University of Minnesota recently announced its fall curriculum. As in the past, the CCE has agreed to offer a \$50 early bird discount to all Council members and a \$100 discount off the November 4 Balanced Scorecard course. Upcoming organizational improvement-related courses include the following (all prices are before Council member discounts):

9/24-9/25: Project Management Essentials, \$895

10/7-10/8: Strategic Thinking and Implementation, \$895

10/21-10/22: Win-Win Negotiating, \$895

10/28-10/29: Fundamentals of Accounting and Finance for Managers, \$895

11/4: Using the Balanced Scorecard to Improve Your Organization's Performance, \$695

11/13: A Systems Approach to Managing Your Work, \$695

12/2-12/3: The Engineer and Technical Professional as Manager, \$895

Although all of these courses are valuable, the Balanced Scorecard course offers an additional discount to Council members (\$100) because Brian Lassiter of the Council is the instructor. The course, scheduled for November 4, 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 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.

For more information on the Balanced Scorecard course (or any of these courses), visit <http://www.cce.umn.edu/business> or email Jodi Gowan at [jgowan@cce.umn.edu](mailto:jgowan@cce.umn.edu).

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#### 9. St. Thomas Offers Quality Curriculum to Council Members at a Discount

The Management Center at the University of St. Thomas recently announced its fall courses. In partnership with the Minnesota Council for Quality, Council members can receive a 15% discount by mentioning your membership at the time of registration.

Upcoming courses include (prices are before member discount):

- 9/23-9/24: The Influential Leader, \$595
- 9/23-12/9 (12 sessions): Mini Master of Quality Management, \$1695
- 9/25: Strategic Thinking, \$345
- 10/1-10/2: Lead With Your Strengths, \$995
- 10/21-10/22: The Leader as Coach and Collaborator, \$595
- 11/17-12/9 (8 sessions): Six Sigma Green Belt Training, \$3895
- 12/4-12/5: Introduction to Six Sigma, \$595
- 12/16-12/17: Basic Statistical Process Control (SPC), \$655

For more information on any of the other courses please see  
<http://www.stthomas.edu/mgmtctr/>.

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10. Building and Implementing Public Sector Balanced Scorecards – October 7-9

Insightformation, in cooperation with the Balanced Scorecard Institute, is offering a 3-day interactive professional seminar entitled “Building and Implementing Public Sector Balanced Scorecards: Nine Steps to Success.” Scheduled for October 7-9, the course will include the Institute’s award-winning balanced scorecard/performance measurement methodology and workbook, case studies, exercises, international best practices, small-group scorecard and measures development, and expert lectures. Cost for the seminar is \$1695. Because the Minnesota Council for Quality is an Associate Sponsor, Council members will receive a \$100 discount to the course. To learn more, visit <http://www.balancedscorecard.org/training/index.html>.

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