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*Minnesota Council for Quality Stakeholder Update*  
*November 2003*  
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1. A Message from the President: Valuing Employees During Tough Times

Workers in today's organizations are highly stressed. We all know the recent economy has created a tightening in organizations across most sectors. And much has been written about the thousands of highly qualified professionals that have been "downsized" and are in search of employment. Though I empathize with those individuals, my thoughts this month pertain to the employees that have been "left behind" – those potentially overworked, stressed individuals who are still employed in our "leaner" organizations. My thoughts are also directed to their senior leaders.

I was having a conversation a few weeks ago with a couple of professionals in one of our member organizations. They were complaining about the sharp increase in workload they have experienced since several of their colleagues were let go. One of them commented that "although the unit was about half the size as it was two years ago, the workload was about the same." Translation: the surviving employees were left to do about twice the work. I'm sure that those employees have found creative ways to reduce waste and unnecessary activities, but it's no wonder why many workers these days are now putting in 60+ hour work weeks just to keep up... which is beginning to wear on people.

NFI Research (New Hampshire) recently published a research study on workplace morale. Surveying more than 2000 executives and managers from more than 1400 companies, this study found that 80% of managers say they are stressed, and nearly a third claimed to be "highly stressed." The reasons – in order – are budget constraints, deadlines, customer demands, and the number of hours worked. The study also found that more than 50% of the respondents claimed to have been either very or somewhat

affected by downsizing or layoffs. Remember: these are those “lucky” employees that are still employed.

But here’s the real scary piece of data out of this research: 97% of those surveyed knew someone who is looking for a job, and almost 40% of those job-seekers were currently employed. The bottom line: if top executives do not take steps to address workplace stress today, they will find that much of their workforce will eventually move to other organizations as soon as the labor market allows them to do so.

So what’s the implication? I submit that senior leaders in all types of organizations should consider (re)focusing on what is oftentimes appropriately considered an organization’s most valuable asset: its employees. As leaders, consider spending more time listening to employees’ concerns; build systematic ways of measuring employee satisfaction and well-being; spend time identifying what really motivates your staff – and then take care to address those factors; build (or rebuild) reward and recognition systems for your employees; find ways to enhance employee skills – through training or other cost-effective, creative ways; communicate – strategy, direction, goals, results, challenges, organizational mission, customer and marketplace trends, and so forth – and do so frequently; and work to reestablish confidence in the organization and in its leadership.

Addressing workplace stress and morale today will position organizations for more satisfied, more productive employees – and therefore better organizational performance – in the future. For articles and white papers on the topic of employee satisfaction and morale, visit our improvement “Clearinghouse” at [www.councilforquality.org](http://www.councilforquality.org); feel free also to add material to this Clearinghouse, as appropriate.

Yours in Improvement,

Brian S. Lassiter  
President, MN Council for Quality

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2. Improving Decision Making and Negotiations: Imation’s Use of Interest-Based Analysis – PIN Discussion 12/4

The success of any organization often depends on effective relationship building, and negotiations decision making – both inside the organization and outside the organization, with suppliers, customers, and partners. But making decisions and negotiating positions requires expertise in risk management, conflict resolution, communication skills, and strategic analysis. That is where “Interest-Based Analysis” comes in.

Interest-based analysis (also called interest based negotiation or interest-based decision-making) is a method of joint problem-solving that is built on the understanding that interests drive decisions. It involves stakeholders brainstorming and considering various possible options for satisfying their own interests and the interests of others, often

through “win-win” solutions. The flexibility afforded by interest-based negotiating allows stakeholders to consider a wide range of options for satisfying stakeholder interests. This flexibility can help stakeholders find solutions that best satisfy their interests and avoid the danger of impasse. Many Fortune 500 companies have utilized this process to strengthen relationships and increase value with business partners such as OEMs, key accounts, and suppliers.

The Minnesota Council for Quality is pleased to welcome Mr. John Shulman of Alignor LLC and Mr. Frank Russomanno of Imation Corporation to our December 4 Performance Improvement Network (PIN) discussion. Mr. Shulman will describe the concepts of interest-based analysis as well as provide examples of applications and results that companies have had using this approach. Mr. Russomanno will highlight the experiences and results that Imation has had using this process, including its experience in using it for leadership development.

The discussion is from 8:00-9:00 a.m. on December 4 (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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3. What Technologies are Needed for Business Today? – MSLF Discussion 11/25

The Minnesota Strategic Leadership Forum (MSLF), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to announce that Chris Heim, CEO of HighJump Software, will speak at their November 25 discussion. Mr. Heim’s visionary leadership and focused strategy have gained his firm unmatched momentum within the supply chain industry. In fact, The Business Journal has named HighJump one of Minnesota’s 50 fastest growing companies for three consecutive years.

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 partner rate for MN Council members). Space is limited. For more information or to register, please visit [www.slf-minnesota.org](http://www.slf-minnesota.org).

Please also note MSLF’s December event, “Making and Meeting Commitments: A Model for Project Leadership.” Julie Kaiser-Braden, Consultant, is scheduled for December 16.

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4. The Southwest Airlines Way Day – RAQC Seminar 12/3

Please join the Rochester Area Quality Council (RAQC), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, on Wednesday, December 3 when they welcome Jody Hoffer Gittel, author of “The Southwest Airlines Way” and Assistant Professor at Brandeis University.

Ms. Gittell will lead this special half-day seminar on the success of Southwest Airlines; specifically, her talk will outline how SWA has driven success by focusing on leadership, culture, and relationships. Often considered the leader in the airline industry, SWA has built strategies, policies, and processes that form deep relationships with customers, employees, suppliers, and other stakeholders.

To register, please visit [www.raqc.com](http://www.raqc.com) or call Kay Wiegert at 507-285-7560 or contact her by email at [kay.wiegert@roch.edu](mailto:kay.wiegert@roch.edu). This program is from 8:30 to noon on December 3. The cost is \$90 for members (of RAQC or MCQ); \$99 for non-members. See you there!

Also, plan ahead to attend three very special RAQC events in 2004, each focusing on a 2002 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipient: March 2 with SSM Health Care; April 13 with Branch-Smith Printing; and June 1 with Motorola Commercial, Government, and Industrial Solutions Sector.

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#### 5. Minnesota OD Network (MNODN) Announces December Events

The field of Organization Development is in transition as the founders are passing the baton to the next generations. The MNODN, an alliance partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is honored to host two of these founders in three events in December. Edie and Charlie Seashore are two award-winning national organization development leaders and practitioners. Edie Seashore, M.A., is associated with NTL Institute and American University. Charlie Seashore, Ph.D., is associated with Fielding Institute, American University, and NTL Institute. They will bring their incredible experiences and years of stories which have shaped the OD profession and have influenced the future of many client systems in a positive way. This is an amazing opportunity to experience the beginnings first hand, understand the constraints of the field in its beginnings and learn first-hand lessons learned.

12/2: "Where are we heading in Organization Development?" 3:30pm at the University of St. Thomas, Opus 201. \$20 to the public (\$10 for MNODN members).

12/3: "Use of Self: Taking Leadership in OD." University of St. Thomas, Opus 201. \$175 (\$150 before 11/15/03).

12/4: "Applying 7 Principles of Management of Change to One's Practice." University of St. Thomas, Opus 201. \$175 (\$150 before 11/15/03).

For more information on all three programs, call Peggy Bushee at 952-891-3500 or visit our Clearinghouse at [www.councilforquality.org/improve\\_events.cfm](http://www.councilforquality.org/improve_events.cfm).

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#### 6. 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):

11/17-12/9 (8 sessions): Six Sigma Green Belt Training, \$3895 (see below)

12/4-12/5: Introduction to Six Sigma, \$595

12/16-12/17: Basic Statistical Process Control (SPC), \$655

The Six Sigma Green Belt certificate is designed for anyone from any type of organization interested in leveraging the power of Six Sigma techniques. It is also appropriate for Six Sigma teams who will be supporting Black Belt projects. For more information on this program, please visit our improvement Clearinghouse in the Events section. Members can search "six sigma" keyword; non-members can find the program by searching for November 17.

For more information on any of the other courses please see

<http://www.stthomas.edu/mgmtctr/>.

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#### 7. Hennepin Technical College Announces Lean Courses; Council Members Discounted 10%

Hennepin Technical College, Eden Prairie, is pleased to announce a new 12-credit certificate on Lean Manufacturing. Lean is one of today's most popular management and improvement tools for manufacturers and non-manufacturers. The first two courses in this series will be offered this spring:

\* Fundamentals, Quality Concepts, and Systems (METS 1500): 3 credits offered Tuesday evenings from 5:00-7:00 pm from January 13-May 18 in Eden Prairie.

\* Principles and Practices of Lean Manufacturing: Lean Tools and Techniques. 3 credits offered Thursdays from 2:00-4:50 pm from January 15-May 13 also in Eden Prairie.

The instructor for both courses is Mark Paulson. Council members will receive a 10% discount on tuition. For more information, please visit

<http://www.hennepintech.edu/index.htm>.

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#### 8. Century College Announces Winter Courses; Council Members Receive Discount

Century College in White Bear Lake recently announced its spring 2004 courses. In partnership with the Minnesota Council for Quality, Council members can receive a discount to certain courses when mentioning your membership at the time of registration.

Upcoming courses include:

- 1/14-3/2: ASQ Certified Quality Manager, \$795 (members \$745)
- 1/22: Quality Basics, \$149
- 2/3: Quality Basics, \$149
- 2/9: How to Make ISO/Quality Registration Writing Easier, \$149
- 2/24: Quality Basics, \$149
- 2/26-4/1: Quality 101: ASQ Foundations in Quality, \$575 (members \$545)
- 3/3-5/26: ASQ Certified Quality Engineer, \$875 (members \$825)
- 3/30-5/11: ASQ Certified Quality Auditor, \$795 (members \$745)

For more information on these courses, contact Frank Schultz at 651-779-1740 or [f.schultz@century.mnscu.edu](mailto:f.schultz@century.mnscu.edu). Or visit our Clearinghouse at [www.councilforquality.org](http://www.councilforquality.org).

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