
Minnesota Council for Quality Stakeholder Update
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1. A Message from the President: Why All the Fighting Over Quality Methods?

If I read one more article, see one more book, or attend one more seminar that touts the merits of one quality/improvement method while attempting to criticize all the others, I'm going to scream. Perhaps it is a necessary byproduct of effective marketing. When a consultant wants to hype the value of her Six Sigma method, for example, she might find the need illustrate the flaws of reengineering. Or when an author wants to sell his book on the Balanced Scorecard, he tries to show the limitations of Baldrige to make his approach more appealing. Or when a speaker wants to emphasize the value of Baldrige, he shows the drawbacks of ISO 9000.

What amazes me is this: many individuals and organizations are looking for the "or" in performance improvement rather than the "and."

There are numerous improvement techniques in practice today: Baldrige, ISO 9001:2000, Six Sigma, Balanced Scorecard, Lean Manufacturing, and many more. These methods all have their relative strengths, but they all have their relative limitations as well. In fact, you could say that each method is designed – and is appropriate – for its intended objective. For example, Six Sigma is a wonderful way to significantly improve process performance and reduce errors; however, it is not a good way to improve team dynamics. ISO is a solid approach for ensuring a minimum standard of performance across many organizational processes, but it really is not effective at helping an organization achieve breakthrough or world-class levels of performance. Balanced Scorecard is a logical approach for aligning organizational measures with strategy, but is not a good way to translate customer requirements into products and services.

Each method has its intended use. And I believe organizations that have “solved” the improvement-alphabet soup have figured out a way to effectively integrate the various concepts. They may use Baldrige as an overall framework for assessing and identifying system-level improvement opportunities, but then a Scorecard to deploy and monitor strategy and improvement actions, Six Sigma to focus improvement efforts on specific processes, ISO to ensure a minimum standard of performance on the rest of their key processes, and so forth. Finding a way to integrate these approaches allows organizations to better leverage each method’s strengths, rather than just picking one and trying to force square pegs in round holes.

If you would like to learn more about how today’s contemporary improvement approaches can fit other into an integrated effective improvement system for your organization, consider attending the University of Minnesota’s College of Continuing Education course, “Achieving Business Excellence” on January 29-30. For more information, please see Article 3 below.

Sincerely,

Brian S. Lassiter
President, MN Council for Quality

2. MN Council for Quality and Performance Improvement Network Combine – Next Meeting February 6

The Minnesota Council for Quality and the Performance Improvement Network (PIN), have agreed to a combination that folds PIN’s educational services into the Council’s portfolio of programs and services. PIN’s core product is a monthly breakfast discussion in which a local speaker shares information on various improvement-related topics such as leadership, planning, customer focus, measurement and information, process improvement, and human resources. Meetings are usually attended by 50 or so senior executives, middle managers, and professionals.

“This combination makes sense for members of both organizations,” says Brian Lassiter, president of the Minnesota Council for Quality and former president of PIN. “A major part of the Council’s vision is to broker knowledge and resources relating to organizational improvement. PIN provides a proven, successful vehicle for sharing expertise among professionals and managers throughout the Twin Cities.”

Current PIN members have become members of the Council. Members of the combined organization are entitled to free attendance at the monthly improvement discussions, usually \$15 per month. Members also enjoy a variety of other benefits, such as discounts to other Council services, discounts to Council partners’ services, and recognition.

“In a difficult business climate, the benefit for our members is obvious,” continues Lassiter. “Not only does this arrangement save about \$150 a year per employee, but the value in terms of increased knowledge sharing, learning, and networking is immeasurable.”

PIN’s next meeting is Thursday, February 6. The topic is “Selling Organizational Improvement and Change.” We will feature a panel of 3-4 executives/managers that represent different types of organizations and sectors. Panelists will be able to share strategies (both successful and unsuccessful) of how they sell the need for change in their organizations, how they motivate employees, and how they manage expectations (both up and down the organization). Networking is at 8 a.m., the discussion is from 8:15-9:15 at Mill Place. For more information, please visit www.improvementnetwork.org.

3. Achieving Business Excellence: January 29-30 (Discounted for members)

Hurry – time is running out to register for this valuable course. Council members receive a \$100 discount – read on!

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 course has been rescheduled for January 29-30 in St. Paul. The highly interactive course 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 course description, please see www.cce.umn.edu/business or email aking@cce.umn.edu.

4. Recognizing New – and Thanking All – 2002 Council

The Council would like to recognize the following organizations that initiated or renewed their membership in November and December:

B.F. Goodrich Sensors Division, Burnsville
Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services (CMJTS), Monticello
Insightformation, Inc., Golden Valley

Lois Mackin, Plymouth
Management Partners & Associates, Eagan
Sheldahl Managers and Quality Department, Northfield
Jim Stahley, Burnsville

As of January 1, the Council had 67 organization and individual members representing over 13,000 Minnesota employees. Our membership has grown THREE-FOLD in 2002, and we sincerely thank you for your support. We will publish a complete list of members when our website/Clearinghouse goes live next month.

Why should you or your organization consider membership? There are many reasons: you get recognition (in this newsletter, in press releases, on the website, and with a certificate/letter); you get discounts to Council services (Evaluator training, organization assessments); you get access to Council services (Clearinghouse, Vendor Database, and free admission to Performance Improvement Network discussions); and you get 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 email the Council at mc4quality@aol.com.

5. Strategic Skills for Corporate Officers: MSLF on January 28

The Minnesota Strategic Leadership Forum (MSLF), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to announce that Mr. Henry May, regional consultant and senior program director, The Gartner Group, will speak at their January 28 discussion. In his talk, "Strategic Skills for Corporate Officers," Mr. May will report on the latest findings of the Gartner Group's annual CIO survey and will highlight what qualities make a good corporate executive.

The event will be held at the Minneapolis Campus of St. Thomas, Opus Hall Room 202. Registration is 7:00 am, buffet breakfast at 7:30 am, speaker begins at 7:45 am, and Q&A is at 8:45-9:00 am. Cost is \$25 (\$15 for MN Council members).

Minnesota Council members receive a \$10 discount. Space is limited. For more information or to register, please visit www.slf-minnesota.org or email keith@hornbacherAssociates.com.

6. 2003 Evaluator Training, 1-day 2003 Criteria Orientation Dates Scheduled

The Minnesota Council for Quality has set dates for the spring Board of Evaluators training. New Evaluator applications are due Friday, February 21 and orientation training

is Tuesday, March 4. Applications for returning Evaluators are due Friday, March 21 and training is scheduled for April 1-3. Times and locations will be released shortly.

There are many benefits to becoming an Evaluator, including strengthening your ability to use the Criteria for Performance Excellence for organizational assessment and improvement, networking with peers across the state and enhancing your own professional growth, forming relationships with evaluation team members that oftentimes last for years, reviewing performance of organizations throughout the state – possibly identifying best practices for your organization, and developing other skills such as analysis, consensus- and team-building, interpersonal, written communication, interviewing, and systems thinking. If you are interested in learning more about the benefits of becoming an Evaluator or would like a 2003 application, please email the Council at mc4quality@aol.com.

The March 4 orientation is also open to the public, for anyone interested in learning more about the significant changes to the 2003 Criteria for Performance Excellence. The cost is \$300 (\$250 for members) for those not serving as Evaluators.

7. Century College Winter Curriculum Announced: Discounts for Council Members

Century College's Continuing Education and Customized Training, a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, has announced its winter course curriculum. Providing a full array of training for quality professionals, Century will offer the following courses:

- * ASQ Certified Quality Manager (CQM)
- * ASQ Certified Quality Auditor (CQA)
- * Quality 101: ASQ Foundations of Quality
- * ISO 9000-2000 Overview
- * Internal Quality Auditor
- * Print Reading for Manufacturing, Geometric Dimensioning & Tolerance (Basic and Advanced, two courses)
- * Certified Mechanical Inspector Review
- * Gage Calibration Methods
- * ISO 9000-2000 Transition
- * ISO 9001:2001 Lead Auditor Course
- * ISO 9001:2000 Internal Quality Auditor
- * ISO 14001 Accredited Environmental Systems.

Some courses begin in January and the winter term runs through May. In general, all employees of Council member organizations are entitled to a \$40-50 discount on each course. For more information, including timing, course descriptions, instructor bios, and cost, please contact Elaine Wallin at 651-779-3270 or e.wallin@century.mnscu.edu.

8. Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation Offers Quality in Education Workshops

The Center for Educational Performance Excellence of MAEF is sponsoring two upcoming sessions for educators and community members involved in education. Council members receive a discount (see course description). For more information or to register, contact MAEF at maef@MNAEF.org or 651-999-7345.

HOW SENIOR LEADERS BUILD AND SUSTAIN HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOLS, January 27, Benson Public Schools, Benson MN, 6 to 9 pm. The session focuses on ways senior leaders can use the principles of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to strengthen their local schools to meet the new federal mandates of “No Child Left Behind.” The session will address how schools perform as organizations, how processes and systems within schools can be used to improve classroom learning, and methods for determining how well your schools are performing in order to prevent low performance. Dinner is provided. Cost for MAEF and MCQ members: \$20.00 per team of five; \$5.00 for each person over five. Cost for non-members: \$ 10.00 per person.

DESIGNING AND USING THE STRATEGIC SCORECARD, February 18, Elk River Public Schools, Hallway Cafe at Elk River Senior High, 5:45 to 8 pm. This session is designed to help school district senior leadership teams design and use a STRATEGIC SCORECARD to measure, monitor, and report progress against the district's strategic aims. Teams will bring their strategic plan, and during the workshop, develop the SCORECARD, including data streams that flow to and from schools and classrooms. Dinner and materials are provided. Cost for MAEF and MCQ members: \$50.00 per team of five; \$10.00 for each additional team member. Cost for non-members: \$15.00 per person.

9. Using the Balanced Scorecard to Improve Your Organization’s Performance: March 25

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) has become one of the most popular management tools of the last decade. Thousands of organizations are using the framework and thousands more are considering it. The intrinsic value of the BSC is obvious: it helps organizations think about their business from a variety of stakeholders' perspectives including financial, customer and market, internal process, and learning and growth. The BSC also focuses on leading and lagging indicators of performance, helps align organizational activities by integrating planning, performance management, and rewards/compensation.

The University of Minnesota’s College of Continuing Education is pleased to offer “Using the Balanced Scorecard to Improve Your Organization’s Performance.” Scheduled on March 25, 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 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.

The course will be taught by Brian Lassiter, president of the Minnesota Council for Quality. Mr. Lassiter has worked with dozens of organizations in a variety of industries to help them improve their performance and competitiveness. Brian has assisted the implementation of the Balanced Scorecard in about 10 organizations, and has given talks on the topic around the U.S. and in Asia.

The cost is \$695 per person or \$595 per person for organizations sending three or more people. Minnesota Council for Quality members also receive the \$595 price. Tuition includes program materials, breakfast, lunch, and certificate of completion. Training is at the Earle Brown Continuing Education Center, St. Paul campus.

For more information or to register, please see http://www.cce.umn.edu/business/using_scorecard.shtml or email aking@cce.umn.edu.

10. South Central Technical College/ASQ-Hiawatha Section Announce Courses; Council Members Receive 10% Discount

South Central Technical College and ASQ-Hiawatha Section 1214, southern Minnesota's leaders in providing affordable & professional quality training for local industries, are pleased to announce their Winter/Spring training schedule. Minnesota Council for Quality members will receive a 10% to all courses if you mention your membership at the time of registration. The schedule includes day-time seminars for ISO 9001 implementation and skills development, as well as evening review classes for ASQ certifications. Highlighting the winter/spring schedule are four unique opportunities:

Applied Quality Fundamentals – This is a new course covering all the bases you need to implement an effective QA program. Ideal for those wanting the full set of tools, or newly assigned to quality assurance responsibilities. Consider it a “mini-masters in QA”. 2/17-21/03

Introduction to Six Sigma – Another new offering, sponsored in conjunction with the University of St. Thomas. This 2-day seminar will give you the full picture on the six-sigma methodologies and the financial returns possible. 3/10-11/03

Quality Audits & Corrective Action for Improving Performance – The Hiawatha Section of ASQ brings to you a nationally recognized expert, Mr. Martin J. Jaeger, to present this critical topic for effective quality systems. This is a must-attend session! Door prizes for early registration. Please call for a brochure. 4/24/03

Implementing Management Responsibilities of ISO 9001:2000 – A unique course to give you insights into effectively implementing ISO 9001 for continual improvement. Highly praised by attendees. Bring your top management with!! 3/18/03

South Central is also offering six ASQ Certification review classes and 11 quality systems and skill development seminars. Prices and dates vary. For more information or

to register for any of these courses, please contact Laura Hardy at the Faribault Campus of South Central Technical College at 507-332-5802 or hardyl@sctc.mnscu.edu.

11. Announcing Baby Lassiter

We are pleased to announce the birth of Minnesota Council for Quality's president Brian Lassiter's son, Alexander James. Alexander was born December 20 at 2:41 pm, weighing 6 pounds 1 ounce and measuring 19 inches. Brian and his wife, Gianna, are enjoying the new challenges and rewards of parenthood, and have plans for little Alex to join the 2030 Board of Evaluators!