
Minnesota Council for Quality Stakeholder Update
March 2003

In This Issue:

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1. A Message from the President: A Time for Addressing Employee Needs
2. MN Council and St. Thomas Agree to Alliance
3. Using the Balanced Scorecard to Improve Your Organization's Performance: 3/25
4. Pursuing Perfection: Identifying a Vision for the Future: MSLF Discussion on 3/25
5. Innovation for Breakthrough New Business Growth: PIN Discussion 4/3
6. Century College Announces Spring Quality Curriculum: Discounts for Council Members
7. South Central Technical College/ASQ-Hiawatha Quality Courses: Discount for Council Members
8. Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation Offers Quality in Education Workshops

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1. A Message from the President: A Time for Addressing Employee Needs

We are a stressed nation. The economy has been soft the last two years. The stock market continues to under-perform. The unprecedented state budget deficit is cascading to our non-profits and communities. Tens of thousands of Minnesota workers have lost their jobs. We are at an elevated threat of a terrorist attack and are now on the eve of war. Anxiety is understandably high for Americans and Minnesotans these days.

And that anxiety is running particularly high in organizations across our state. Much has been written lately about the unfortunate employees who have lost their jobs. Though I empathize with them, I would like to focus today on those who still have theirs: the workers across our state who are left to face the incredible economic and organizational challenges. More accurately, my comments this month are addressed to their managers.

Do you know how your employees feel today? Seriously. Have you asked them about their job satisfaction, their well-being, or their motivation levels lately? Have you identified the factors that drive their satisfaction and determined appropriate action to ensure their well-being, security, and effectiveness?

One reason to do this today is obvious: knowing what makes your employees happy will make them more productive, more effective, and more likely to satisfy your customers and other stakeholders. But there is another – possibly less obvious, but equally important – reason to focus on employee satisfaction and well-being these days. The economy and labor market will eventually improve. And while dissatisfied employees may be content to “stay put” in their jobs under today’s market uncertainties, when the market turns they will be first to turn over. Therefore, managing their satisfaction, well-being, and motivation today will help to ensure their loyalty and retention in the future.

So why not get started now? Design an employee survey; conduct employee focus groups; implement an employee suggestion system; or just engage with your workers one-one-one or in department or team meetings. Ask them how they feel. Ask them what ensures their satisfaction and effectiveness on the job. Ask them what tools, skills, and equipment they need to be successful. And then respond to it in an appropriate way. Your organization will benefit from these efforts today and in the future; your employees will benefit immediately.

If you are interested in learning more about how to measure and improve employee satisfaction and would like to speak with a consultant (who is also a Council member) about your organization's needs, please email us at mc4quality.com.

Yours in Improvement,

Brian S. Lassiter
President, MN Council for Quality

2. MN Council and St. Thomas Agree to Alliance

The Minnesota Council for Quality, Minnetonka, and The Management Center at the University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis, have agreed to an alliance that will bring several quality and improvement courses to Council members at a discount. "This alliance is consistent with our vision of brokering organizational improvement resources across the state," says Brian Lassiter, president of the Minnesota Council for Quality. "The Management Center of St. Thomas offers many high quality courses that focus on organizational improvement. We are excited to work with The Management Center to bring these courses to our member organizations, thereby supporting their improvement efforts."

The arrangement entitles Council members to a 15% discount for all Management Center quality courses this spring and fall, including:

- * Six Sigma Green Belt (4/7-4/29)
- * Basic Statistical Process Control (5/1-5/2)
- * Introduction to Six Sigma (6/5-6/6)
- * Supply Chain Quality Management (9/11-10/23)

The first course offered is Six Sigma Green Belt, beginning April 7. Six Sigma is a customer-focused, systematic method for reducing defects to fewer than 3.4 parts per million opportunities. Whether your organization manufactures widgets or provides health care, Six Sigma offers an analytical approach to detect and eliminate defects in either goods or services at every opportunity in the process. The Management Center's Six Sigma Green Belt Training focuses on the application of Six Sigma techniques to less-advanced Six Sigma projects than in a Black Belt-level program. Specifically, you will learn to apply these concepts and tools to the service-related transactions that occur

in every type of organization. These business transactional processes offer organizations significant opportunities for improvement, often by using the simplest Six Sigma tools. By achieving Six Sigma levels of defects per million in these processes, service organizations and manufacturing companies alike can increase customer satisfaction, improve service and product reliability, and enhance financial performance. The course is \$4495 (\$3820 for Council members). For more information, please see http://www.stthomas.edu/mgmtctr/contents/program_desc_results.asp?code=6011

“We are happy with this agreement,” says Jordan Milan, Client Relationship Coordinator at The Management Center. “This arrangement will expand our visibility, increase our student base, and support organizational improvement efforts across the Twin Cities and state.”

For more information on the other three courses or any Management Center program, please see http://www.stthomas.edu/mgmtctr/find_program/default.htm

3. Using the Balanced Scorecard to Improve Your Organization’s Performance: 3/25

Hurry – time is running out to register!! Council members receive a \$100 discount.

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.

4. Pursuing Perfection: Identifying a Vision for the Future: MSLF Discussion on 3/25

The Minnesota Strategic Leadership Forum (MSLF), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to announce that Mary Brainerd, President and CEO of HealthPartners, will speak at their March 25 discussion. In her talk, "Pursuing Perfection: Identifying a Vision for the Future," Ms. Brainerd will discuss the importance of setting and deploying a vision within organizations.

The event will be held at the Minneapolis Campus of St. Thomas, Opus Hall Room 202. 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 or email keith@hornbacherAssociates.com.

5. Innovation for Breakthrough New Business Growth: PIN Discussion 4/3

In business today, there are two roads to profitability: one focuses on reducing operating costs, and the other focuses on creating profitable new business growth. Many organizations are achieving excellent results in optimizing operations and reducing operating expense by incorporating Six Sigma or other forms of Total Quality Management. However, few companies recognize that these approaches are also a powerful contributor to improve their approach for creating new business growth, which is a more sustainable way to increase profitability.

The Performance Improvement Network (PIN), a service of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to welcome Mr. Ron Kubinski, Managing Principal of Strategic Innovation Partnerships LLC to our April 3 discussion. Mr. Kubinski, with over 30 years experience in innovation and growth (most of which were spent at 3M), will discuss how organizations can measure and improve their innovation and growth processes using techniques that are more common for reducing costs and improving productivity.

The discussion is from 8:15-9:15 a.m. on April 3 (networking and continental breakfast at 8:00) in at MTI in downtown Minneapolis. Admission is free for Council members; \$15 for the public. For more information or to register, visit www.improvementnetwork.org or email lassiter_brian@hotmail.com.

6. Century College Announces Spring Quality Curriculum: Discounts for Council Members

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

- * Quality 101: ASQ Foundations of Quality 3/18-4/15 (\$30 Council member discount)
- * ASQ Certified Quality Auditor 4/1-5/13 (\$50 Council member discount)
- * ASQ Certified Quality Manager 6/5-8/21 (\$50 Council member discount)
- * Internal Quality Auditor 3/35
- * ISO 9000-2000 Transition 4/14-4/15
- * ISO 9001:2001 Lead Auditor Course 4/7-4/11
- * ISO 9001:2000 Internal Quality Auditor 4/16-4/17
- * ISO 14001 Accredited Environmental Systems 4/7-4/11

For more information on these courses and others offered by Century, please contact Elaine Wallin at 651-779-3270 or e.wallin@century.mnscu.edu.

7. 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 these unique opportunities:

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. 3/18/03

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

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.

8. Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation Offers Quality in Education Workshops

The Center for Educational Performance Excellence of MAEF is sponsoring three educational events this spring.

The first, “Gearing Up: No School Left Behind,” is a mini-conference for educators and community members involved in education. It will be held March 31 from 8:30-4:40 in Thief River Falls. The mini-conference will offer participants 5-6 different session choices. These include: Lipstick on the Bulldog or Hard-Hats; Teacher Quality: Motivating and Rewarding High Performance; Reading Anything Anywhere: A Case Study and Panel; Scorecards for Success: Measuring and Reporting Performance Results. The cost for MAEF and MCQ members: \$200 per team of five; \$50 per additional team member. Cost for non-members: \$250 per team of five; \$60 per additional person

The second, also titled “Gearing Up: No School Left Behind,” will be held April 2 from 8:30-4:40 in Fridley. Council members receive a \$50 discount for a team of five (see below). The program includes: Changemasters: Leading Education in Public Schools; Scorecards for Success: Measuring and Reporting Performance Results; How Well is Your Site Performing: Criteria for Education Performance Excellence. Cost for MAEF and MCQ members: \$175 per team of five; \$40 per additional team member. The cost for non-members: \$225 per team of five; \$50 per additional person

The third, “How Well is Your District Performing? Developing the Strategic Scorecard,” will be held May 7 in Elk River from 5:45-8:00 (dinner included). The session is designed for district-level Senior Leadership Teams and/or elected Board teams. Teams will develop a Strategic Scorecard for their district to answer key questions about performance. Most districts have a Strategic Plan, but many districts have no method for reporting goal progress at the Board-level. To be effective, goal planning cascades implementation down into schools and classrooms and other operating units. Data streams report progress and results back up to the Board-level. The cost for MAEF and MCQ members is \$12 per person (\$55 for a team of 5); non-members is \$15 per person.

For more information or to register for any of these programs, contact MAEF at maef@MNAEF.org or 651-999-7345.