
Minnesota Council for Quality Stakeholder Update
November 2002

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1. A Message from the President: Everything's a Process

My wife and I are expecting our first child in about six weeks (believe me, I do not have a clue what this will do to my established routines), and we were touring hospitals the other day. As the nurse showed us around, she described what would likely take place on "the day": first park your car ("fathers, it's a good idea to drop off moms and then park"), second check in with Admitting, third go to triage and wait to be assigned a room, then go to your laboring/delivery room. And from there the process got a bit more ambiguous and unpredictable. But I got thinking: these hospitals really have their processes in control – the "normal" predictable steps as well as the unexpected emergency contingencies.

As we left the hospital, my wife and I were talking about all the things we still had to do to prepare for junior's arrival: finish the nursery, finish the registries, pick the hospital, have some showers, pick a name, prepare an announcement, and so forth. There were many steps, and in a fairly logical sequence. We opened the door, got in the car, I put in the key, turned the key, backed-up the car, put it in first, applied a little gas, started to steer, and we were off. Get my point?

In today's chaotic business world, it is often difficult to manage or control activities and events. Some of this chaos is natural – and healthy. But some of the chaos is definitely manageable when you realize that everything in organizations is a process. What's a process? I submit that processes within organizations are measurable, definable sequences of events in which an input is received and acted upon in order to produce an output. In the birthing process, the input is going into the hospital (or maybe it begins months before!), then there are series of activities that take place to produce an output: you leaving with a baby. To drive, you get in the car and then conduct a series of events – many of which are unconscious – to produce an output...arriving at a different location. In manufacturing, you start with raw materials, produce and transform them into finished

products. In some service companies, you start with data, then analyze/modify it to produce a different set of knowledge, information, or action. In education, you start with incoming students, then do things to them (teach) to produce more educated students. In a hospital, you start with a sick patient and you end up, hopefully, with a positive outcome of a cured patient.

I submit you this: everything in your business environment is a process. Everything. I challenge you to name one that is not. Planning is. Leadership – setting direction, communicating, reinforcing, motivating – is. Managing customer relationships and ensuring their satisfaction is. Selecting, recruiting, hiring, training, organizing, rewarding, and motivating employees and human resources are. Purchasing is. Accounting is. Designing and delivering product certainly is. Even thinking and decision making is – or should be.

Once you recognize that everything in your organization is a process, you can 1) define the process (map it), 2) measure the process, 3) communicate the process to all stakeholders, and 4) monitor, adjust, and improve the process. That is powerful! You now have a better ability to explain, monitor, and manage an admittedly chaotic and seemingly unpredictable set of activities within your business environment.

The Minnesota Council for Quality has an inventory of processes that any organization should be thinking about. If you would like a copy, please email us at mc4quality@aol.com. In the meantime, good luck with managing and improving your organization's key processes!

Sincerely,

Brian Lassiter
President, MN Council for Quality

2. Please Help Us Build the Improvement Clearinghouse

As you may know, the Council is creating an improvement Clearinghouse, a web-enabled tool that will provide information and resources for improving organizational performance -- information such as whitepapers, articles, links to other sites, benchmarking resources, and announcements. The Clearinghouse is intended to be a comprehensive resource center for organizations desiring information on improvement frameworks, techniques, and tools.

Many of you have already contributed material to the Clearinghouse – and we thank you. But we would like to invite the rest of you to provide your favorite -- or most helpful -- improvement material. Specifically, we are looking for improvement-related:

- * articles,
- * white papers, and

* website links.

We are looking for any material that addresses improving organizational performance, including (but not limited to): leadership, strategic and action planning, customer satisfaction or customer relationship management (CRM), performance measurement (including the Balanced Scorecard), information and knowledge management (including technology effectiveness), human resource (hiring, training, rewarding/recognizing), process improvement and management, lean manufacturing, Six Sigma and Statistical Process Control (SPC), SEI Capability Maturity Matrix, ISO quality systems, Baldrige, or other appropriate topics.

Please provide the material (including the author and author/publisher contact information, if known) by November 30. You may either email the content to mc4quality@aol.com, or mail to the Minnesota Council for Quality, Box 13033 Ridgedale Drive, Box 156, Minnetonka, MN 55305. Thank you for helping us build a tool that helps your organization!

3. Recognizing New Council Members

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

Carol Carryer, Rochester
Century College Customized Training, White Bear Lake
Db Ink, Big Lake
Deluxe Financial Services, Inc., Shoreview
Edna Rask Erickson, St. Paul
Elk River ISD 728 Administrative Team, Elk River
Endurant Business Services, Eden Prairie
Gary Floss, New Brighton
Hazelden Foundation, Center City
Hennepin County District Court Administration Dept, Minneapolis
LGM Enterprises, MN Office, St. Paul
MicroTech, Plymouth
Minnesota Department of Revenue, St. Paul
Quality Culture Institute, Rochester
Quality Process Solutions, Blaine
Quest Analytical, Inc., Edina
Rochester Community and Technical College, Rochester
St. Cloud State University, Herberger School of Business, St. Cloud
Virchow, Krause and Company, Bloomington

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

As mentioned this summer, we have made changes to our membership structure. For one, we are finding ways to make it more valuable: we are building the Clearinghouse, we are building a vendor referral 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 (individual members are \$100 and organizational memberships start at \$250). 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.

4. Balanced Scorecard Automation Workshop: November 21

On the morning of November 21, Insightformation, in cooperation with the Minnesota Council for Quality, will be putting on a 2-hour seminar on “Using the Balanced Scorecard Approach to Create a Strategy Focused Organization.” This seminar will provide practical information on how the evolution of the Balanced Scorecard approach has resulted in a powerful set of best practices for successfully executing strategy and improving the performance of organizations. The seminar will cover several practical suggestions (and mistakes to avoid) to achieve greater success with the Balanced Scorecard. The seminar will also feature a demonstration of Balanced Scorecard automation based on the Microsoft Balanced Scorecard Framework and Toolkit, which was developed by Insightformation. Attendees will also have a chance to hear a panel discussion, moderated by Council president Brian Lassiter, and ask questions to a panel consisting of both consultants and people who have lead Balanced Scorecard initiatives in their own organizations.

The seminar will take place at the Doubletree Hotel, 1500 Park Place Blvd., in St. Louis Park, MN. Registration and continental breakfast will start at 7:30 AM. The seminar will go from 8:00 to 10:00. The cost is \$45 (members of the Minnesota Council for Quality and the Performance Improvement Network get a discounted rate of \$35 if they register and pay in advance). For more information – or to register – contact Elizabeth Brazil at 763-521-4599 x18.

5. Identifying and Managing Employee Satisfaction: MSLF on November 26

The Minnesota Strategic Leadership Forum (MSLF), a partner of the Minnesota Council for Quality, is pleased to announce that Dr. Jack W. Wiley, president and CEO of Gantz Wiley Research, will speak at their November 26 discussion. Gantz Wiley Research is a consulting firm that specializes in conducting employee and customer satisfaction surveys for international corporate clients. Dr. Wiley will share his views on measuring customer and employee satisfaction, and will also share the results of a national study Gantz Wiley conducted with the Red Cross on the effects of September 11 on employee attitudes and motivation.

The event will be held at the Minneapolis Campus of St. Thomas, 1000 LaSalle, Room TMH 203 A/B. 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). For more information or to register, please visit www.slf-minnesota.org or email keith@hornbacherAssociates.com.

6. Achieving and Sustaining Excellence in Higher Education: November 22

The University of Wisconsin-Stout, in partnership with the National Consortium for Continuous Improvement in Higher Education, is proud to announce its annual conference: "Achieving and Sustaining Excellence in Higher Education" on November 22 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Bloomington.

This event will provide with an opportunity to learn how organizations that have received state, regional, and national awards have implemented and sustained improvements. Three conference tracks allow participants to tailor their learning: one track will follow Baldrige-winning UW-Stout's journey, another track will follow other higher education institutions' quality journey, and the final track highlights professional associations that help higher education organizations improve their performance. Brian Lassiter, president of the Council, will speak on how local and state programs can help your organization improve.

Cost is \$300 after November 4. For more information or a brochure, please call 715-232-2693 or email Conference-Solutions@uwstout.edu.

7. Improving Quality in K-12 Education: MAEF Leadership Academy January-April

MAEF's Education Quality Leadership Academy's next cohort begins after January 2003. The Academy is a 5-day series spread over 4-5 months. The curricula addressed how education sites can advance from learning about quality to applying quality principles to achieving higher levels of results. Sessions address the Baldrige criteria and how to measure your site's performance using the Baldrige organizational rubric; how to lead and manage change, using the principles of highly acclaimed Change Leader Rosabeth Moss Kanter from the Harvard School of Business; how to understand and configure improvement teams based on personality preferences and styles; how to develop a measurable Strategic Plan and Scorecard. The Academy uses an interactive case study approach that combines learning with doing. Each small group activity generates a clear end-product for your team and its design is coached by the Academy faculty, Kathy Jenson, Owen Heiberg, Zona Sharp-Burk, Gary Floss, and guest speakers. For more information, contact the Center for Educational Performance Excellence at MAEF: zsharp@MNAEF.org.

8. Achieving Business Excellence: January 29-30 (Rescheduled & Discounted)

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 jhawkins@cce.umn.edu.