

Quality Progress Discussion Board Archive
Share your ideas and observations about articles, columns, letters and other material published in the magazine.
July 2003 – December 2003

17402 Re: Re: Letter: Clear Explanation of Split-Plot Designs

Michael Heaney

Dec-24-03

I also agree this was a very good article and a follow up explaining how to modify ANOVA to incorporate the different variance used for testing would be helpful. For those who need to know right now, I have attempted to give a quick summary as follows: In Table 1 you can see two replicates of the design (Trials 1 - 16 as replicate one and Trials 17 - 32 as replicate two). As mentioned by the authors if replicate two had been performed at a substantially different time period, one might consider them as two different blocks. Since Factor A is the unrandomized variable (referred to as the whole plot), the error term to test this factor can be estimated by the interaction between replicates and A. This leaves the rest of the residuals for testing the other model terms. I did the analysis using R language, but it can be done with other statistical packages. I defined the replication as Block and then forced Block, A, B, C, D to be factors (might need to do something similar in other programs). I defined an additional error term (Block:A) to give the Error for testing A. Out of curiosity, I did a second analysis with Block included in the model (reduced the error variability, but Block and A factors still not significant.

Analysis 1:

```
> split.aov1 = aov(Y~A+B+C+D+A:B+A:C+A:D+B:C+B:D+C:D+Error(Block:A))
```

```
> summary(split.aov1)
```

Error: Block:A

	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F value	Pr(>F)
A	1	85.48	85.48	1.521	0.343
Residuals	2	112.39	56.20		

Error: Within

	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F value	Pr(>F)
B	1	45.36	45.36	4.637	0.0443
C	1	41.18	41.18	4.210	0.0542
D	1	75.95	75.95	7.765	0.0118
A:B	1	1.09	1.09	0.111	0.7424
A:C	1	78.44	78.44	8.019	0.0107
A:D	1	62.44	62.44	6.383	0.0206
B:C	1	27.94	27.94	2.856	0.1074
B:D	1	2.94	2.94	0.301	0.5899
C:D	1	43.95	43.95	4.492	0.0474
Residuals	19	185.86	9.78		

Analysis 2:

```
> split.aov2 =
```

```
aov(Y~Block+A+B+C+D+A:B+A:C+A:D+B:C+B:D+C:D+Error(Block:A))
```

```

> summary(split.aov2)
Error: Block:A
      Df Sum Sq Mean Sq F value Pr(>F)
Block  1  84.83   84.83  3.077 0.330
A       1  85.48   85.48  3.101 0.329
Residuals 1  27.57   27.57
Error: Within
      Df Sum Sq Mean Sq F value Pr(>F)
B       1  45.36   45.36  4.637 0.0443
C       1  41.18   41.18  4.210 0.0542
D       1  75.95   75.95  7.765 0.0118
A:B     1   1.09    1.09  0.111 0.7424
A:C     1  78.44   78.44  8.019 0.0107
A:D     1  62.44   62.44  6.383 0.0206
B:C     1  27.94   27.94  2.856 0.1074
B:D     1   2.94    2.94  0.301 0.5899
C:D     1  43.95   43.95  4.492 0.0474
Residuals 19 185.86    9.78
Hope this helps,
Michael Heaney
mdheaneyphd@yahoo.com

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17399 Re: Letter: Article on Human Change Is Excellent

Steven Prevette

Dec-23-03

A good starting point is his website at <http://www.dbharmony.com/> He has authored quite a few things for the ASQ Stats Division also.

Steve Prevette

ASQ CQE

17398 Letter: Article on Human Change Is Excellent

ASQ Staff

Dec-23-03

"Handling the Human Side of Change" by Davis Balestracci (November 2003) is an excellent article! I have ever read on the issue of change management in regards to causes of resistance of change and the description of the dysfunctional ingrained organization culture which promotes such behavior and attitudes in the organization. It could be unintentionally promoted behavioral patterns. I am a member of ASQ and am an international member from Thailand and would like to enquire if there are any other articles by Balestracci available and if there are from where an how could I obtain them.

Navin Pawa

Business Processes & Quality

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17392 Re: SAAS in your career

Steven Prevette

Dec-22-03

Having reviewed the article in QP, and reviewing some basics of Myers-Briggs, I would agree that the Myers-Briggs was not a good example for the author to use.

1. It is not skills based, it is personality and attitude based. 2. Myers-Briggs can be useful, but can also be abused. This is why you are supposed to be certified in order to give the indicator test to others. To classify Myers-Briggs as something a person goes to the internet and self-administer is a bit incorrect also. Yes, there are self-administered tests, and yes, I have placed in the same result after having been given the MBTI twice by two different certified instructors. But, I would not suggest going and self-administering the test as your first experience with MBTI.

Steve Prevette

ISTJ

17390 Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: SAAS in your career

Gerald Brong

Dec-19-03

Agreed! QUALITY PROGRESS editorial support staff are great.

Jerry Brong

17389 Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: SAAS in your career

Steven Prevette

Dec-18-03

I would like to at least stick up for the QP staff. Having written a few articles, the editors do help in editing the article. However, I have always received the edited version prior to publication and get a chance to check for any changes of context. So far, I have been very pleased with the edits and had no differences of opinions.

Steve Prevette

died-in-the-wool ISTJ

17387 Re: Re: Re: Re: SAAS in your career

Wesley Bucey

Dec-17-03

From Wes Bucey, Quality Manager

Thank you, Richard. I have now read the article. Ed is correct in that TERESA A. WHITACRE miswrote <i>(or was misquoted by a zealous QP editor trying to shorten the article for fit)</i> in defining Myers-Briggs as a "skill test" when it is more appropriately described as an "attitude test." The fact of the matter is most psychologists report that, when administered correctly, such a test will give a strong indication of the type of life traits you exhibit, but makes absolutely no prediction as to whether you are good at them. Just because you state you <i>prefer being in the company of others to working alone</i> does not necessarily mean you make good company for those other people to be with.
-Wes Bucey

17386 Re: Re: Re: SAAS in your career

Richard Ickler

Dec-17-03

The article is the Career Corner article in the December issue of Quality Progress. It is a decent article but I really thought that she made a strange distinction between ability and skill.

Richard Ickler

17383 Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Publishing Bar Charts

William Pflanz

Dec-17-03

Steve,

You are right, I did not see your smiley face. All of us have probably experienced the problem that someone has a hammer and everything looks like a nail. Each type of chart has a useful purpose and should be used appropriately. I have an interesting story about the red bead experiment. When I first started learning about quality concepts I had an opportunity to go to one of Dr. Deming's one day seminars. During the seminar he selected people from the audience to demonstrate the bead experiment and act as the workers, manager, recorder and inspector. After a few cycles, he got to the inspector and asked for the red bead count. All of a sudden he ordered the person off the stage and asked someone else to come up. The "inspector" at first just smiled until he realized Deming was serious and very angry. He sheepishly left the stage. I was there with a statistician and asked what was going on as if it was part of the demo. His response was that the inspector had lied about the count. I was so new to the concept of control chart theory I asked how Deming knew. Of course, the answer was that it was statistically unlikely for the count to be right based on the years of data Deming had on the experiment. Later when I understood more of Deming's theory, I also realized it reinforced his feelings about setting quotas which could cause lying and manipulations. It was an experience I never forgot and taught me the value of understanding control charts. I still have my handwritten notes from that seminar.

Bill Pflanz

Section 801

17382 Re: Re: SAAS in your career

Coury Ferguson

Dec-17-03

Let me put my two-cents in on the use of Personality Tests. One of my favorite people here on the ASQ Board told me that the personality test should be used to develop further questioning of the skills and personality during a face-to-face interview, and should only be used for that purpose. However, many companies use these tests to screen personnel for employment. I have taken numerous personality tests and have been accused of selecting the answer on what I think they want to here or see. These tests are suppose to eliminate the chance of this. I lost a position based upon a personality test. The personality test in my opinion IS NOT FAIR, because some people think most people are honest until that honesty has been broken, and the majority of people in this world are not out to get the company or people. As for Wes's comment: "What article are we talking about?"

Coury Ferguson

17381 Re: SAAS in your career

Wesley Bucey

Dec-16-03

From Wes Bucey, Quality Manager

OK, Ed. What article is this in reference to? Most of us readily agree Myers-Briggs is a personality test. Folks can even Google the term "Myers-Briggs" to take an on-line version to see where they fall or intersect in the four major categories of personality. Look also for the term "Keirsey Temperament Sorter." In view of the type of test, would you agree that personality type is a valid factor in how well someone can perform a particular task day in and day out? I can envision some folks whose personality would make it impossible for them to sit at a bench day after day staring at an optical comparator, but that doesn't mean that they wouldn't score super-high on the pure skill of operating an optical comparator. Let's have some dialog on the topic.

-Wes Bucey

17380 SAAS in your career

Edward Harris

Dec-16-03

I don't think that the Myers-Briggs is a good example of a skills assessment test; it's more of a personality-type assessment.

17379 Re: Re: Re: Publishing Bar Charts

Richard DeRoeck

Dec-16-03

|Bar charts are useful for comparing different categories etc but are a poor choice as a time series. Control charts are the premier tool as they provide an operational definition as to "When A Change Has Occurred?" The charts focus on the underlying process instead of just the outcomes and are under-utilized especially with business data.

My .02\$

Rich DeRoeck

17377 Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Publishing Bar Charts

Steven Prevette

Dec-16-03

Gee, didn't you see my smiley face :) after my SPC comment? I also didn't expect to ignite a minor fire storm of thought. But since the topic is out there, I will relate one anecdotal story. A project here a few years back had a significant increase in their injury rates. Blew the upper control limit on the SPC charts. But nothing was done. We are just now recovering from the injury increase and its causes (an ergonomic issue with automated equipment that had failed, and the manual workarounds put in place). In the words of one of the project personnel - "The workers don't understand SPC". So they were taking the SPC charts they were provided and changing them to moving averages (actually cumulative year to date). Since the increase happened fairly late in the year, it was not detectable on the moving average. The moving average gave the answer that certain management wanted - there was no problem. Five months into the increase when I visited the facility, the only safety information on any bulletin board was the moving average chart, and it still showed no apparent problem. OK, so at least it wasn't a bar chart :) (please note the smiley face) By the way, I have put more than 1,000 "workers" here through the red bead experiment. They understand SPC plenty well. I also teach evening statistics courses at City University. Anyone who has completed one of my stats courses, or even just the Red Bead Experiment, begins to see things through a different "lens" after that. It does take some effort to create a critical mass of savvy persons, but it is well worth the effort.

Steve Prevette

ASQ CQE

Fluor Hanford

17375 Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Publishing Bar Charts

Carl Keller

Dec-16-03

I am pretty much inline with you Wes. I would add this, you should not underestimate the intelligence of your audience, but don't overestimate it either. Chart after chart and

complex ones to boot are going to end up boring the audience after a while, regardless of their "intelligence". Your point will be lost. Charts should enhance a presentation by displaying a collection of data in an EASY to read format. The objective is to support a theory or subject with objective evidence. As far as use of the charts and copyright protection goes. We DO pay to use the charts. I pay my dues every year to the ASQ. I don't see them giving me much else for my money. I see nothing wrong ethically with reprinting charts or articles if needed for presentation at work. Legally? I think the ASQ has better things to do than sue some poor Quality Manager who made 20 copies of a chart to show to a group of half asleep trainees at a company training. As long as you are not using it for a copyrighted journal or book and you give credit, the ASQ should be happy you are giving them the exposure. Regards to all. Happy charting.

Carl W. Keller
CQMgr

17374 Re: Re: Re: Re: Publishing Bar Charts

Wesley Bucey

Dec-15-03

From Wes Bucey, Quality Manager

In fairness *<i>[What? Wes is fair?]</i>*, there is such a concept as "Fair use" under American copyright law. Many foreign countries have widely ranging variations in respect to "fair use." My guess is Bridget was not thinking about what a wonderful opportunity she could have had to introduce the rest of her team to the joys of membership in ASQ so they could have their own copies. Alternately, I think my two "original" suggestions offer the best opportunity for Bridget to accomplish her original purpose:*<i> 1) copy magazine with a color scanner and print in color 2) print pages on color printer directly from ASQ website</i>* To make a few copies for discussion or teaching purposes is probably OK. To make wholesale reproduction for inclusion in someone's teaching syllabus is just flat-out wrong, especially if that person is a professional earning a fee for specific teaching of the material versus as an adjunct to incidental training of one's own staff or supplier's staff. Some of us maintain our QP issues in a library for reference and don't tear out pages for distribution. I'd be willing to bet a substantial sum Bridget Robertson never dreamed the topic would evolve to copyright law and the efficacy of bar charts. Heck, even I am somewhat intimidated by Steve Prevette when it comes to competent presentation of statistical material. In any event, this is an interesting thread, considering how sparse the pickings have been here in the Forums in the past few months. Nice to see activity in the Forum.

-Wes Bucey

17373 Re: Re: Re: Publishing Bar Charts

Steven Byers

Dec-15-03

Not to put words in my friend's (Mr. Prevette) mouth, but I bet he would agree that bar charts are often subjected to all the magic effects that Microsoft can offer. Edward Tufte calls these effects, collectively, chart junk, and tells us to avoid it. Three dimensional bar charts with Moire effects are particularly annoying. Tufte also advises us not to underestimate the intelligence of our audience. Quantitative information should be presented in a "data rich" environment or format. And, just for the record, I support the copyright restrictions. Pass the magazine around instead of copying, so people can appreciate the whole context.

Steven Byers
Olympia, WA

17364 Re: Re: Publishing Bar Charts

William Pflanz

Dec-09-03

Steve,

I just wanted to note for Bridget's benefit that copying articles is copyright protected. I will concede that since ASQ allows copies for a fee than they should make the charts readable on a black and white copier. A control chart cannot be used to communicate all information. Histograms and Pareto charts are bar charts and it is not unusual to use bar charts to communicate information to non-technical people and management since it is easier to understand.

Bill Pflanz

Section 801

17363 Re: Letter: Clear Explanation of Split-Plot Designs

Rob Kinnear

Dec-09-03

Thanks Peter. I agree with you. I tried analyzing the data myself to see if I could reproduce the Variability numbers in Table 2. I could not reproduce them. Do you know how the numbers were obtained?

R. Kinnear

rkinnear@borgwarner.com

17362 Experimental Design-Split Plot

Rob Kinnear

Dec-09-03

In the Nov 2003 magazine, how was the Variability calculated in Table 2 on p. 66? I tried it using ANOVA and my numbers don't match.

17361 Letter: Table Useful for Airline Maintenance Audits

ASQ Staff

Dec-09-03

The "Top 10 Tips for Shop Floor Audit Readiness" (Peter E. Pylipow, November 2003, p. 52) was an easy to follow, straight-forward article that can be used at all levels. It is just as applicable to repair and remanufacturing operations as it is to pure manufacturing. I found the Table on p. 53 very useful for the maintenance audits we conduct here at US Airways.

Anthony Boerio

Anthony_Boerio@usairways.com

17360 Letter: Maintenance Is the Real Concern

ASQ Staff

Dec-09-03

(Matther Jochums, "Quality in the First Person: A Quality Way To Lose Weight," December 2003, p. 89) Seems like an excellent first step, and an excellent example to compare quality programs with weight loss. In both there is initial enthusiasm and remarkable progress. After the first rush of success, the trick is to maintain the current level, then move forward to the next. Question--how many started in the competition? With only two left at the end, that sounds like a reasonable comparison to some quality programs. The real test is to see the measurements a year later, after the next holiday season. Also, I wonder just how much of a weight problem the guy had who was training for the River to River Run... Thanks for the article. It was thought provoking. Next let's see one on personal efficiency related to scads of e-mail to churn through, while trying to do actual work, achieving good communication and maintaining face recognition with those folks that live at the house, uh, oh yeah, your family.

Fred E. Lyons, LTC, VC

Chief, Product Services

Defense Supply Center Philadelphia, European Region

Fred.Lyons@dla.mil

17359 Letter: Change Issues Finally Understandable

ASQ Staff

Dec-09-03

What a fine article by Davis Balestracci ("Handling the Human Side of Change," November 2003, p. 38). He made the issues seem so understandable. If only we could overcome those barriers. I will use the article for reference, no doubt!

David Fischer

Mgr., Total Quality

WW Ag Div, Moline, IL

FischerDavidN@JohnDeere.com

17356 Re: Publishing Bar Charts

Steven Prevette

Dec-08-03

Regardless of copyright issues, it is always good planning on the part of an author (or more generally, any chart maker) to set up charts so that if they are slapped on a black and white copier, the message will still come across. Personally, I think that if a bar chart is so complicated that it needs multiple colors to keep the chart straight, the bar chart is too complicated. Besides, we should be using control charts, not bar charts :)

Steve Prevette

ASQ CQE, maker of about 1,500 charts monthly.

17355 Re: Publishing Bar Charts

William Pflanz

Dec-08-03

Bridget,

Your request is somewhat interesting in that the normal participants to this discussion board have no control and probably minimal influence on how articles are printed.

More importantly, there is a photocopy authorization that must be complied with. It is in the first few pages of each Quality Progress and requires a \$1 fee per copy. More than likely it is routinely ignored but asking ASQ to make it easier to copy articles does not help control the copyright protection of ASQ or the contributing authors so I doubt if they would be willing to change. If the copies are used internally, your company usually asks you to comply to copyright rules also. Obviously if it is used in another publication you would need permission first.

Bill Pflanz

Section 801

17345 Re: Publishing Bar Charts

Wesley Bucey

Dec-05-03

From Wes Bucey, Quality Manager

With a nod to "mistake proofing" and a recognition that a significant number of folks, especially men, are color blind, I echo the concept the charts should have texture added WITHOUT any regard to whether "fair use" copying may be the ultimate goal.

<i>[picture tongue planted firmly in cheek at this point.]</i> For those who are NOT color blind, I can suggest scanning the page into a computer and then printing copies with a color printer (not cheap, but effective) with the added benefit the copy can be sent electronically. Alternately, members could visit the ASQ website for *<i>Quality*

Progress and copy the graphic and print it directly with a color printer for "fair use."
-Wes Bucey

17343 Publishing Bar Charts

Bridget Robertson

Dec-05-03

When articles are copied out of QP to share with the rest of my team the color coding on bar charts does not copy very well and some columns are the same shade of grey. Please consider in the future to perhaps add texture to each category so if copied the data can still be copied and shared, even with similar shades of grey

17337 Letter: Gayle McElrath Will Be Missed

ASQ Staff

Dec-04-03

I visited the ASQ web site today and learned that Gayle McElrath has passed away. I graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1957 with a BSIE degree. Professor McElrath was my advisor. I will always remember his quick sense of humor. He made industrial engineering seem very much alive. When I became active in the Minnesota Section I also remember Gayle's positive contributions. Since moving to Florida I lost contact with Gayle. I will remember his smile and the warm person he was.

Bill Cook

Sr. Member

Bcooktampa@aol.com

17336 Letter: Turn Baseline Into State Monument

ASQ Staff

Dec-04-03

After reading "Measuring the Land" by Philip Stein ("Measure for Measure," November 2003, p. 74) and realizing the perilous state and fate of this finely tuned geodetic instrument, I suggest it be proclaimed a State of NJ Monument, well secured and even turned into a park. For once gone, it will be an irrecoverable loss not only for the profession but for everybody else there. Besides, the road could curve around it a little for much a less cost than of how much the State of NJ would eventually lose.

DeSegnac

desegnac@comcast.net

17333 Re: Re: Re: Re: Top 10 Tips for audit readiness

Hershal Brewer

Dec-03-03

Folks,

Most of you know by now that I work for an accrediting body (AB)....although not one that does 9K registrars, thank God.... Believe it or not, there are international standards that an organization can be accredited to that make 9K seem exceptionally prescriptive. Still, I have to agree with Carl that the registration process is not what it should be.....especially since I also worked with a reputable registrar when I was Corporate and have seen the pay-for-paper ones also. The reality is that the ABs that accredit 9K registrars do not crack down on the registrars. ISO Guide 62, which will be superseded soon by ISO/IEC 17011, has requirements that would help if they were followed. And with respect to getting ready for an audit, I give the same advice I always give.....get the standard and read it yourself! Do your own self-assessment, then you have a better idea where you are....BEFORE the audit. Just my thoughts.....
Hershal

17332 Re: Re: Letter: Slight Modification to Definition of Root Cause

Carl Keller

Dec-02-03

Bev,

I would wholeheartedly agree! I have been in the situation on more than one occasion when upper management chose the "root cause" when one or two others in the meeting completely disagreed only to find the true root cause was exactly what the minority had observed. The root cause could indeed be the "belief of only one person" if he or she is objective while the remainder arrive at "consensus" by subjectivity and emotion. As Aldous Huxley said: Ignoring the facts does not mean that they cease to exist"
Nice job picking up on that one.
Carl-

17331 Re: Letter: Slight Modification to Definition of Root Cause

Beverly Daniels

Dec-02-03

...In the September 2003 issue of Quality Progress, John Dew ("The Seven Deadly Sins of Quality Management," p. 59).| offers a definition for root cause.... Arthur P. (Art) Geist commented on Mr. Dew's Definition: "The main point is that the root cause is the consensus of a group, not the belief of only one person. Otherwise the one person can easily, by erroneous thinking or sheer force of personality or power of position, establish a false root cause for the organization." He then asks for comments... While I agree that the root cause is not determined by a single person's opinion, I would also offer that it is not determined by consensus of a group either. That is still an opinion. As I remind my students and engineers "the laws of physics have never been changed by popular opinion or democratic voting processes". My personal definition of a root cause is that actionable factor - or interaction factors - which, if proper corrective action is taken, will prevent re-

occurrence of the Problem. It is important to also note that the corrective action does not have to be taken against the root cause. It may be taken against another factor that will compensate for or robust against the root cause. Typically root causes are detected and *verified* by good analytical investigation techniques. You will have reasonable confidence that you have determined the root cause when you are able to 'turn it on and off' at will thru experimentation. Consensus is a method of determining which factors to investigate first, but it alone cannot determine the root cause. However, I do practice in the manufacturing world and there are times when consensus and yes, even the opinion of a single individual, is sufficient 'evidence' to implement a corrective action against a "guess of a root cause" IF the corrective action is relatively cheap, easy and quick to implement given the severity of the Problem.

Bev Daniels

bdaniels@berkshiremfp.com

17330 Re: Re: Re: Top 10 Tips for audit readiness

Carl Keller

Dec-02-03

Coury,

Yes, there are a few Registrars with integrity and ethics. I have worked with several. I have worked with some "hacks" too. Here is the problem: The standard is fraught with so much interpretation and subjectivity, the decent registrars (as well as the "hacks") couldn't pull your certificate if they wanted to. Think I am full of it? Look up the numbers on initial registrations that fail to get a certificate. Need more? Look up the number of certificates that have been pulled by a registrar, not the ones that have lapsed, just the ones that have been revoked for not meeting the standard. Now one COULD make the argument that companies have made such an investment that they make sure that the system is correct before original certification and they fix any "Findings" before they become critical, but what is the probability that ALL of these companies do so? Seriously, TENS of THOUSANDS of registrations in the U.S. and not ONE fails to be registered? If memory serves me, only about 30 in the last 5 years have had the registrations pulled! The best advice is put together a system that is beneficial to your company and don't worry about passing the audit, the odds are definitely with you that you will be hanging the certificate as long as your bank account can cover the payment. I have said it many times, the standard is a pretty good document, the registration process is a sham.

Carl-

17328 Re: Re: Top 10 Tips for audit readiness

Coury Ferguson

Dec-01-03

Carl,

I don't agree with you on this matter of paying the bill you will pass. Even though there

are some Registrars that would live by that statement, but there are the other Registrars that have integrity and ethics.

Coury Ferguson

17327 Letter: Quality on a Global Level

ASQ Staff

Dec-01-03

I have just read the "Up Front" column in the November 2003 issue of Quality Progress (Debbie Phillips-Donaldson, "Globalization: Good for Quality?" p. 6). Globalization is currently a matter of debate and resides many pages of different articles to be written about, but there are some important facts and figures which had been forgotten or overlooked. A recent survey done on ISO (by DEVCO) has revealed the following:

? 80% of ISO members are in developing countries or countries in transition (DC)

? 40% of these DCs are governmental bodies which represent the membership in ISO.

? 70% of these DCs' standards are not based on international standards.

? 42% of these DCs do not participate at all in any ISO technical committees or sub-committees.

? 69% of National Standard Bodies (NSBs) in these DCs do not issue any technical regulations.

Given the above findings, how are we going to talk about quality at a global level? What kind of improvements need to take place in order to alleviate the Conformity Assessment costs at the international level? Who should take care of the costs involved if the above picture continues in future? We may have efficient elements of quality in one country or region, when it goes to free trade and there are not similar quality structures in all countries, the human being (society) will bear all the costs. May I invite quality professional to tackle the case at the global level? What type of mission, vision and strategies are needed, in order to have a quality world? Most people will make business from "Quality" who should take care of the realities at macro level?

Malek Reza Malek Pour

Malekpour@neda.net

17326 Re: Top 10 Tips for audit readiness

Carl Keller

Dec-01-03

Gregor,

While the article was well written and I think the author believes in the concept, the only real tip you need is to pay the registrar. Unfortunately, as long as you pay the bill, you will pass the audit.

Carl-

17325 Top 10 Tips for audit readiness

Gregor Cloerkes

Dec-01-03

Right after I read the article I made two copies and mailed them to colleagues which are going to be audited next week. The article is helpful and its narrative style invites to read it to the end. However, after a couple of hours I am starting to wonder if these tips are focussing enough on the new revision. Don't we have to mention customer requirements, continuous improvement and process management as well in manufacturing. To follow these 10 tips seems to be the easy way out.

17313 Re: Letter: Clear Explanation of Split-Plot Designs

John Chakmakas

Nov-25-03

I agree. I thought it was an excellent article. I would also recommend a follow-up on the analysis.

John Chakmakas

GE Power Systems

17312 Letter: Need Clarification on How Samples Are To Be Taken

ASQ Staff

Nov-25-03

In reference to Forrest Breyfogle's article "Control Charting at 30,000 Foot-Level" ("3.4 Per Million," November 2003, p. 67), I suggest he clarify the how the samples are to be taken to calculate the standard deviation for the XmR chart for Natural Log of Std Deviation. These data need to be taken in a manner such that the effects from factors that are deemed to be common cause of the process are included. In Breyfogle's example cited in Table 1, which assumes the five samples are taken from the same day (to make his point re: XmR on the mean), these data would not be appropriate for his charts in Figure 4 because the standard deviation calculated will only reflect the within-day variation.

Alex T. Lau, Blending Performance Specialist

ExxonMobil Research & Engineering, AOD/CAAOS

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17305 Letter: October Issue the Best Ever

ASQ Staff

Nov-24-03

The October 2003 issue of QP is simply superb. I think it may be the very best since I joined ASQ about 10 years ago. The articles commencing on pp. 27, 34, 41, 44, 50, 59,

67, 87 and 92 are terrific. And the cover is really good, too. Another valuable element is the "In 50 Words or Less" at the beginning of each feature article.

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17304 Letter: Quality Helps Countries Compete in Global Economy

ASQ Staff

Nov-24-03

With reference to Debbie Phillips-Donaldson's excellent editorial on outsourcing in the November 2003 issue of Quality Progress ("Globalization: Good for Quality?" p. 6), I'm a Westinghouse retired quality engineer. I spent four months in India teaching ISO 9000 to Indian engineers, so I have firsthand knowledge of working with Indian engineers. I was impressed with their intelligence and their grasp of the importance of quality as a strategic tactic in improving their process. A few months after I left India the company I was working with was certified to ISO 9000. My point is to caution U.S. industry not to belittle the outsourcing of projects to India as a tactic that is lacking in quality techniques. I think in the long run the Indian engineers will be like the Japanese were 50 years ago, not only do they have lower wages but they have higher quality awareness of the importance of quality as a strategic tool to compete in the global economy.

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17303 Letter: Quality Tools Are Universal

ASQ Staff

Nov-24-03

I have just read Debbie Phillips-Donaldson's editorial comments in her "Up Front" column ("Globalization: Good for Quality?" November 2003, p. 6) and have some experience and thoughts to share on the subject. Over the past decade, I have held various positions in supply chain management and international sourcing. For the past year, I have been a member of an international procurement team as a Supplier Quality Engineer. The team's purpose is sourcing of finished goods in Asia. In support of new product launch, I have spent substantial time in China and am astounded at the rapid growth of manufacturing facilities there. The trend of US companies to "outsource" will only continue at an accelerated pace as they continue to chase the "cheap labor" - from Mexico to Asia to India - to stay competitive and maintain/sustain market share. From that standpoint, there appears to be growing demand for quality professionals with experience in supply chain management in manufacturing. Process control is process control, no matter where the process is located. Tools currently employed in the management of quality are applicable across the globe. Fortunately for quality

practitioners, the language of quality is universal - numbers and statistics are easily shared. The hard part comes in subjective measures such as appearance items but even then, digital pictures are worth a thousand words. Global sourcing provides unique challenges and requires employment of a broader set of skills. The differences in cultures, language, time and customs requires understanding and tolerance. The work is often painstaking and, by its nature, detailed and slow, requiring a shift in working hours (and sometimes sleep patterns) but the opportunities to create new partnerships and friendships has been very rewarding.

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17289 Letter: Companies Struggle To Define Special Characteristics

ASQ Staff

Nov-20-03

I read R. Dan Reid's "Standards Outlook" column on Characteristic Management, and he's right on target (November 2003, p. 71). I've been working with many companies on the TS transition, from the consultant and registrar side, and companies do an abismal job of identifying their "special" characteristics. Many of them identify only those that are identified as "significant" by their customer, and completely miss the definition of special characteristic where it talks about fit, function, performance or subsequent processing of product. They choose not to manage process variance and then wonder why their PPM are so high. Or they take the approach reducing PPM by containment, but still have high internal nonconforming product. There seems to be a real hesitancy to identify the significant characteristics associated with their processes, for fear of the SPC or other requirements associated with these words. This is unfortunate, as it results in their losing the value associated with reducing variance and waste. TS can go a long way towards addressing this resistance, and it's up to the registrar auditors and consultants to help organizations to gain the maximum value from their management systems. Once again, good article and timely discussion.

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17288 Letter: Author Brought Humor to Emotional Subject

ASQ Staff

Nov-20-03

I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed Davis Balestracci's article titled "Handling the Human Side of Change" (November 2003, p. 38). Davis was able to bring humor as well as insightful information into a very emotional subject. He also provided some very

practical tools to us "corporate pinatas" on maintaining a proper mindset in handling. I found especially helpful his discussion on the of the Pyramid of Quality and how these tools fit into the Pyramid model. I have been an pinata lately and I want to thank Davis for brightening my day.

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17287 Letter: Surface Response Method May Be More Appropriate

ASQ Staff

Nov-20-03

This is in reference to Statistics Roundtable article "One Way To Moderate Ceiling Effects?" in the October 2003 issue (Richard F. Gunst and Thomas E. Barry, p. 84). While reading this article I was really confused. The confusion did not come from the relatively simple statistical treatment and associated arithmetical calculations, but from the problem presented in this article as an example. Let's put statistics apart and first understand the problem or its background. If one was ever involved in putting together a questionnaire to customer or consumers regarding satisfaction with product or service provided, then it would be obvious to one to ask what are the factors that are affecting satisfaction levels. Obviously it would come to issues related to performance, on-time delivery, delivery method, longevity, maintainability, applicability or suitability, after-sales support, responsiveness and of course cost, which by itself is associated with immediate or ticket cost, procurement or acquisition cost and ownership cost. These are the minimum attributes that have to be examined, but not limited to. Other factors, mores subtle, but not less critical, are overall competitive level with similar products or services in the market, as the specific consumer views it, and market saturation with specific product or service. Now send such a complex questionnaire to your customer and see if they have the time and dedication to fill it out properly. Many are to busy and do not have patience for questionnaires, thus at the best they will provide the answers as their current mood dictate. But, nevertheless, this is why we have statistics and having large enough ensemble or using appropriate weighting we could get some reasonable composite numbers and can construct a scattered chart. What we get is a mess of numbers and do not necessary will see their relationship. One aspect is for sure, since the numbers are composite and we do not have a slightest idea what are the real weighting factors, as the consumer views it, we should not assume any "linearity" and even more advanced relationships that result in "planar" structures. This is nothing to do with the ceiling effects, which no doubt add an additional impediment. Unfortunately ceiling values is all what we have in our life. Lets say, most of our measured parameters have some type of ceiling. The subject is related to the simple question - is simplistic modeling an answer to the original question and what is the meaning of the answer in terms of everyday values. The question is quite simple "do we do well by increasing the effort to improve the

?quality?at this level, which cost significantly more for incremental improvement? The answer is related to different statistics as it has only meaning in terms of overall sales levels and made profits, i.e. the answer is in financial more than quality domain. However, if one still insists to dazzle executive management with complex methodology and statistical mambo-jumbo, I do recommend to assume that such a behavior between Customer Satisfaction and Purchase behavior is certainly not ?linear? or ?planar?, but rather has ?local maximum?, similar to table cloth distorted with a vase pushed from beneath. I do recommend using Surface Response methodology to study such behavior, since it might be more applicable to the case discussed. If the parameters are properly chosen it might well be that one will find the eternal truth ? some levels of ?satisfaction? increase will lead to increased sales and some not, or perhaps even ?paradoxical? decrease, which is more resembling real life cases.

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17285 Letter: Auditing Article Helped Alleviate Anxiety

ASQ Staff

Nov-19-03

Top 10 Tips for Shop Floor Audit Rreadiness was GREAT! GREAT! GREAT!!!! (Peter E. Pylipow, November 2003, p. 52) Just what I have been looking for. I am sending it out to all the supervisors to cover with their reports. We are just in the middle stages of the ISO process and confusion abounds. This article is the answer to my prayers. Everyone on the floor is nervous about what the auditor will ask and how to answer. This should help to alleviate their anxiety. Please, please, please, find more articles like this.

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17284 Letter: Clear Explanation of Split-Plot Designs

ASQ Staff

Nov-19-03

The article by Scott Kowalski & Kevin Potcner on split plot designs in the November 2003 issue is the clearest I have ever seen on the subject ("How To Recognize a Split-Plot Experiment," p. 60). It is so good that I recommend a short follow-up that includes the detials of the analysis.

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17278 Re: Handling the Human Side of Change

Catherine Cronin

Nov-17-03

This article will become a classic. It's going to be required reading for all the curmudgeons in my organization!

Gerarda Cronin

Winnipeg, Canada

17268 Letter: Stats Columns Useful to Newcomers

ASQ Staff

Nov-14-03

The "One Way To Moderate Ceiling Effects" article was interesting and well-written (Richard F. Gunst and Thomas E. Barry, "Statistics Roundtable," October 2003, p. 84). I wanted to comment that, as a newcomer to statistics, I find the "Statistics Roundtable" columns very useful -- they go one step beyond what the typical introductory textbook offers, but are not beyond the understanding of those of us who have moderate education in the subject. Keep up the good work!

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17262 Re: Handling the Human Side of Change

Steven Byers

Nov-13-03

In case this is the first time you have encountered Davis Balestracci, let me refer you to his other works. In particular, I recommend reading, and rereading, and sharing around, his paper published by the Statistics Division called "Data Sanity". Also, the book mentioned in the brief bio at the end of the article should be on every quality manager's desk.

Regards,

Steven Byers

17257 Letter: Additional Analysis Sheds Light on Results

ASQ Staff

Nov-12-03

I enjoyed the article "How to Recognize A Split-Plot Experiment" (Scott M. Kowalski and Kevin J. Potcner, November 2003, p. 60). It provided some straightforward examples

of why you would want to (or need to) include blocks within designs. It also pointed out clearly that you need to understand the experiment before applying statistical tools that may not be appropriate. In an effort to practice DOE data analysis, I decided to look at the data for Example C (a full factorial study of the strengths of plastics). After exploring the data, I feel some additional analysis sheds further light on the results. From the data set presented one might infer that the data itself is questionable, so any analysis based on it is also questionable. The first 16 runs constitute a full factorial experiment, while the next 16 runs replicate all of the measurements. However, the replicate set is quite different from the first set, as revealed by a simple two-sample t-Test. Block 1 (runs 1-8) and Block 4 (replicates in runs 25-32) are fine. These were both done at the high temperature setting and the mean strength of the plastic is the same for the two blocks.

Two-sample T for Block1 vs Block4

	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
Block1	8	62.94	6.26	2.2
Block4	8	64.34	4.78	1.7

Estimate for difference: -1.40000

95% CI for difference: (-7.41544, 4.61544)

T-Test of difference = 0 (vs not =): T-Value = -0.50 P-Value = 0.624

However, Block 2 and Block 3, done at the low temperature setting, are problematic. The means are quite different, well outside the 95% confidence interval. In a nutshell, the replicate experiment didn't produce replicate data.

Two-sample T for Block2 vs Block3

	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
Block2	8	57.81	3.05	1.1
Block3	8	62.96	3.06	1.1

Estimate for difference: -5.15000

95% CI for difference: (-8.45230, -1.84770)

T-Test of difference = 0 (vs not =): T-Value = -3.37 P-Value = 0.005

This implies a few things. First, it isn't surprising that it is difficult to determine which of the factors - particularly temperature - are significant, since the blocks aren't behaving as expected. Second, the data is most likely suspect, as evidenced by the lack of repeatability. Possible explanations might be: 1) There is a significant, uncontrolled factor at play here. 2) A mistake was made with the preparation and/or handling of the samples. 3) An error was made in the data entry.

In any case, the data strongly suggests rechecking at least part of the experiment, especially the parts at the low temperature setting. These problems cast doubts on what was otherwise a valuable article.

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17256 Handling the Human Side of Change

Cyndy Berrones

Nov-12-03

I have just finished reading the article "Change Management- Handling the Human Side of Change"- twice! This piece is so completely on track with the challenges we find ourselves in as Quality Professionals/Change Agents. I found myself often nodding in agreement with the author as I read the piece. I believe it is important to mention that organizational cultural change needs to be driven by the top levels of management. "Talk the talk, walk the walk." If you want people to learn a new way of behaving, you must show them through your own behavior. Without top management leading the way and bringing accountability to the table, all of the same old baggage continues to work precisely the way it was designed to, 100% of the time. Thank you for the great article. This one is a keeper.

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17250 Letter: Globalization Is Not To Fear
ASQ Staff
Nov-11-03

The long term success of free trade for mankind will certainly overshadow the small price we pay as individuals. Quality professionals should be worried about complacency and a growing belief, even in Quality folks, that Quality pro's are no longer needed. The focus on the short term in the US has taken away the only support Quality could count on - The Customer. The cycle has been broken, by Quality Managers - eager to move into more direct responsibility - who claim that the Quality dept. is no longer needed, because the Quality Manager is now the Production Manager one-in-the-same... Amen. CEO's see the cost benefit and are lulled into a state of organizational decay that ultimately leads to the demise of the organization. Since the American model of business has the shortest focus possible, no one can see beyond their next Bonus, raise, promotion or position. OEM reduces the Quality staff because the Product Quality is Great! Suppliers reduce the Quality staff because the Quality is Great! A few problems creep into the system, while no one is watching. A new product is released with a ton of defects, customers take their business elsewhere, and the cycle is complete. Except this time the march to failure was led by the Quality/Production Mgr. CEO's and President's should beware the delusions of grandeur proposed in the Production/Quality Mgr. The President's greatest fear is deception. It is always the things you don't know that will bite you. Without a Quality Manager on the ground level to call foul, you will be wearing the emperor's new clothes. Would you want your suppliers to take that risk? Think about it.

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17249 Letter: Globalization Is a Misnomer

ASQ Staff

Nov-11-03

Globalization implies that there is a global market for goods and services. There is not. How many countries have significant imports of American manufactured automobiles. Darned few. Yet, we manage to out-source auto work out of country. Hence that many more American workers are dismissed from value added employment. Japan has plants in the US because Americans buy the Japanese automobiles. By sending production out of country, American companies not only dodge big wages (as if \$10 an hour is a big wage), but OSHA and EPA and Corporate taxes as well. It's no wonder that China is spewing forth pollution like we did in the 1920's. Quality Management Systems in a communist country? I doubt it. I have a feeling that if somebody raises a quality issue they will, just as in this country, be branded a non-conformist and banished. Quality implies empowerment of the worker (you will recall that this has been a documented issue since 1848). Much in the manufacturing world has improved since then, but if we are not generally empowered in the US (with resulting low sigma quality) do you really believe that foreign suppliers are any better? It seems, after observing the stock market, for the last several years that most publicly owned corporations don't actually care about long term anything, but only about their own particular stock. As long as the CFO/CEO's remuneration is based on stock valuation they have not incentive for doing anything else. Indeed the incentive is to out source to reduce price (note choice of words) by what ever means possible and don't worry about who has the ability to purchase the product. On "costs"; "cost" should be renamed "investment." What level of investment is a company willing to make to provide the appropriate level of goods and services. Let's look at the ubiquitous toilet paper. Now, our bean counters, would suggest that the net investment should be no greater than the cost of used phone books (common in parts of the world), of course they are myopic. There is usually a synergy, in this case the tender parts of the anatomy, the ego of the employees (staff gets the same goods), and the utter frustration of the kind folks in the sanitation group. They have to physically remove the pages from the system because it plugs it up. Now looking at this investment in paper, ego, and customer the phone book page might not be a good investment. We have not even got into the hygiene of it all. Until costs are looked upon as an investment with a measurable return, we are doomed. Ultimately is our investment in foreign outsourcing (globalization) going to give us a long term return. I do not think so.

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17248 Letter: Article Helped Engineer Communicate With Quality Professionals

ASQ Staff

Nov-11-03

The article in the September 2003 issue entitled "The Proven Way" by Louis DiOrio Sr. was certainly a eye opener for me (p. 46). I am a graduate engineer and have over 30 years of experience in engineering and have for the last 13 years been consulting (much of

it in ISO 9000). I practiced the process approach years before ISO 9001:2000 implemented it. I had noted years ago that in ISO 9000-1:1994 paragraph 4.6 the "Concept of a Process" was defined. I employed this method as well as the flow chart system for years. I could never understand why quality professionals in the companies I consulted with could not understand what I was trying to tell them. DiOrio's article made me realize I was speaking "engineering-ese" to mostly quality professionals and they weren't understanding what was so obvious to me. I have now re-engineered my own method to make it understandable to the nonengineering individuals.

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17247 Letter: Slight Modification to Definition of Root Cause

ASQ Staff

Nov-11-03

My hat is off to the author of the subject article in the September 2003 issue of Quality Progress, John Dew ("The Seven Deadly Sins of Quality Management," p. 59). He gives a definition of Root Cause. After reading several publications on Root Cause Analysis, his is the first publication I have read on the subject that offers a definition for root cause. I offer a slight modification: "A root cause is a basic causal factor which is agreed to by consensus of a group of several persons knowledgeable in the situation and which, if corrected or removed, (strike "will") is held most likely to prevent recurrence of a situation." The main point is that the root cause is the consensus of a group, not the belief of only one person. Otherwise the one person can easily, by erroneous thinking or sheer force of personality or power of position, establish a false root cause for the organization. I invite other members' comments on this.

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17246 Letter: Can Quality Prevent Corporate Misconduct?

ASQ Staff

Nov-11-03

I found the question posed on the cover of the October 2003 Quality Progress to be quite thought provoking and relevant for our times. I have been a quality professional for nearly 25 years, and I am a zealous proponent of quality management principles and techniques. I absolutely believe that the philosophies of Deming, Juran and the like are crucial to business success. Here's the rub, however: I do not believe that the lack of these philosophies or the absence of incorporating CSR into them is the root cause of the problem. I use "root cause" here, intentionally, to gain the attention of all the quality professionals. Do I have it? Allow me to explain. The first, fundamental question in our root cause analysis is, "Why does it happen?" (The "it" is events such as Enron, WorldCom, etc.) I would suggest that it is not related to the lack of a quality philosophy or CSR intertwined with a quality standard. It is really much simpler than that. Could it

possibly be greed or perhaps selfishness? If the hearts of those at the top of Enron and WorldCom were selfish and greedy, a plan for CSR would have meant and done little, if anything, for those companies. Their main stakeholders were "me, myself and I." The Ten Commandments preceded the top quality philosophies by thousands of years. Two thousand years ago Jesus summarized the Ten Commandments by saying that the greatest commandment was "love God" and the second greatest was "love your neighbor as yourself." If the top dogs at Enron and WorldCom could ignore time-tested truths such as these, what evidence is there that a CSR policy would have made them "see the light"? It is a matter of the heart. The second fundamental question is, "Why would they think it (greediness, selfishness) is OK?" The answer to this question is a matter of societal values. Societal values, taught at school, seen on network news, viewed at the movie theatre and learned in the home, are what shape the way we think. Let's look at some of the prevalent, societal values that are having an impact on people today.

? Value #1: Evolution is a scientific fact; we are mere products of blind chance. Survival of the fittest is how life works.

? Human Response: I've got to look out for #1 because nobody else will. The Enron/Worldcom guys were just making the most of evolutionary processes.

? Value #2: There are no absolutes. What is true for you may not be true for me.

? Human Response: Don't try to push your moral values on me. "Well, that depends on what the meaning of is, is" begins to sound like a reasonable statement. Greed and selfishness are bad? According to whom?

? Value #3: All forms of life are equal, but all stages of life are not. A fetus isn't really a baby and old people really don't contribute much to society. They are expendable.

? Human Response: The executives are at a higher stage in their career development than all those working Joe's, so all those Joe's are just expendable resources.

When our society proliferates values such as these, why should we be surprised when some people care little, if at all, for others? Let's face the facts: everyone has values of some kind. Everyone implicitly understands the concepts of good and bad, right and wrong. If you disagree with that, I suggest that you have fallen prey to Societal Value #2. We can choose to embrace the good and fight the bad, or travel the road of Enron/WorldCom. Therein lies the root cause, when that choice is made. Can quality prevent corporate misconduct? No. There are values that transcend the philosophies of Juran, Deming and CSR standards. Those values, and only those values, can begin to cure the woeful ethical and moral problems in our corporate culture today.

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17226 Letter: Statistics at Work

ASQ Staff

Nov-04-03

In his "Statistics Roundtable" column "n," Lynne Hare demonstrates, in an exceptional way, what statistics is all about (August 2003, p. 72). The insight on what got Ralph to ask about the required sample size of tomato sauce cans needed for identifying the

percentage with accidental onion inclusion (his boss). The calculation using attribute data followed by calculation using continuous can weights is showing how statisticians can contribute significantly to industry. Showing statistics at work, in the large sense, is the specific mission of "Statistics Roundtable," "World View" and Quality Progress in general. Hare has provided an excellent example of how it can be done - thank you Lynne!

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17225 Letter: Potential Process Audit Questions

ASQ Staff

Nov-04-03

While reading "Failure Mode Effect Analysis," Second Edition by D.H. Stamatis (ASQ Quality Press, 2003), I noted the book contains useful audit questions. Although the book is obviously aimed at assessing potential risks, many of the lists suggest pertinent questions for an ISO 9001:2000 process audit. Following are page references:

? pp. 86-87 (13 questions)

? pp. 132-133 (9 questions)

? pp. 160 (13 questions)

? pp. 191-192 (14 questions)

? Appendix B (87 questions pertaining to design review)

? Appendix B (200+ questions pertaining to different aspects of design)

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17222 Letter: Auditors Must Be Independent

ASQ Staff

Nov-03-03

I would like to comment on the article "Ethics, Auditing and Enron," by Dennis Arter and J.P. Russell in the October issue of QP. In the second section of the article, the QP editor asks, "Must auditors be independent?" to which Arter responded, "No." The QP editor followed up on the negative response by asking for specifics. The author then explained that in the financial field the auditor is a CPA and works for the auditing company. He goes on to say that outside auditing firms are hired by the client company and they are paid for their services when the client accepts the audit report and at that point the relationship stops. Then he puts in the little disclaimer that the relationship did not stop at Arthur Andersen. I do not believe that the relationship stops when the audit report is accepted and I think the evidence is contained in the author's own words, "the company hires the auditing firm." So in essence the

auditing firm is an employee of the firm it is auditing. Do you think the "employee" is going to bite the hand that feeds it? If the auditing firm wants to continue to be employed by the client they will tend to see things the same way the client does. For this reason I think that auditors MUST be independent. How can this be achieved? A simple and inexpensive approach would be to have the auditing firm selected at random and assigned to the client company. In the case of business audits the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants or some other professional organization could perform this task. Then each year a company would probably have a different auditing firm. This approach breaks the employer-employee financial link. Unfortunately the Sarbanes-Oxley bill does a poor job of addressing this issue. Their solution is to have the governments over site auditors audit the auditors. This creates another layer of government bureaucracy (which we taxpayers fund) and it still leaves the good-old-boy financial auditing program firmly in place (you just have to be a little more careful or wait until they cut funding to the government auditors).

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17191 Re: Letter: One Tool Won't Solve All Your Problems

Steven Prevette

Oct-23-03

As a perpetrator of the series, I would agree with you. It was my view that ASQ QP had been focusing on one tool (Six Sigma). This set of articles was set up in order to catalog some other tools and theories that are available in the "toolbox".

Steve Prevette

ASQ CQE

17190 Re: Letter: One Tool Won't Solve All Your Problems

Carl Keller

Oct-23-03

Scott,

I know a guy that removed an engine from a Dodge Dart with nothing but a pair of vice grips, does that count? Seriously, I think the best approach would use a combination of systems, or tools within a system matched to your particular needs. We are usually not afforded the luxury of all the resources we would like, so sometimes we have to make do. If you have an air wrench, full socket set, combination wrenches, power driver and diagnostic equipment that's great, but you can do wonders with a crescent wrench and some screwdrivers if you think "out of the box" sometimes. Your statements make perfect sense to me.

Regards,

Carl-

17188 Re: Letter: Three Drawbacks to Taxonomy Article

Robert Nix

Oct-23-03

I do not believe John Dew's article was a "jeremiad" lament nor do I believe his categorization was flawed. Most companies performing root cause analysis seldom go as deep as his seven origins for typical problems. Many CARs I've seen cite "employee didn't read instructions" or "used faulty valve". Indeed, his seven categories mirror very closely Deming's 14 points. Your point #1: With ANY "root cause" you can always probe deeper, but it has to be a driver you can do something about. Your point #2: Much wasted energy goes into trying to be exhaustive. It's exhausting. Remember pareto analysis. Your point #3: I agree with this, but I do not see any real problem with it. While the article was not all-inclusive, it did provide food for thought, which is what a good article should do.

17184 Letter: One Tool Won't Solve All Your Problems

ASQ Staff

Oct-23-03

The "Multiple Choice: What's the best quality system?" article (July 2003, p. 25) was interesting. I believe the systems discussed in the article, as well as the others provided in follow-up letters in "QP Mailbag," could more accurately be described as tools. Each scenario presented dealt with resolving a problem, improving a current situation, or creating a business structure. I am not suggesting any specific quality tool, nor do I have a favorite, or preferred, quality tool. My response to the question, "What's the best quality system (tool)," is simply, "The one that solves the problem!" There are many quality tools or systems available to today's quality practioners. Many tools, when applied independently to a specific problem, arrive at the same solution, but just via a different path. Therefore, in beginning a quality program, I would recommend focusing more on talented people than a specific quality system (tool). The greatest impact of a quality program on the company, will come from the people in the program and not the systems or tools used. It is my opinion the most effective and efficient quality practioners have very strong leadership skills coupled with keen abilities to diagnose a problem, determine the root cause, recommend solutions and identify and utilize a quality tool that will achieve the desired results. Here is my recommendation for anyone starting a quality program with just one quality system or tool. Go talk to your local auto mechanic and ask him to pick one tool out of his tool box. Then, take away all the other tools and tell the mechanic they must continue repairing car problems, but they can only use the one tool chosen. Watch and listen to their reaction. Auto mechanics have a vast set of tools that have a specific purpose in fixing a specific problem. Quality practioners should be a lot like auto mechanics and their tool boxes.

Scott Kirkendall, Certified Quality Engineer

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17183 Letter: QMS and EMS Are Not Standalone Systems

ASQ Staff

Oct-23-03

Each new issue of Quality Progress has an article on the integration of the various quality management systems (QMS) into a single operating system, and again in October we have another: "Management System Integration: Can It Be Done?" By Mary McDonald, Terry Mors and Ann Phillips (p. 67). The quality community's QMS and environmental management system (EMS) are not standalone systems, but subsystems within the total management system (TMS), such as the digestive system or circulatory system are subsystems of the human system. How can they exist without being integrated into an overall system? How can one structure a management subsystem, such as the QMS or EMS, without first constructing the framework for the TMS, and have them fit within the system? The ISO standards point this out as follows: *ISO 9001:2000 Introduction 0.4 Compatibility with other management systems states: "This international standard is intended to be compatible with other international recognized management system standard. It is aligned with ISO 14001:1996 in order to enhance the compatibility of the two standards for benefit of the using community. This international standard does not include requirements specific to other management systems, such as those particular to environmental management, occupational health and safety management, or financial management system with related management system requirements. In some cases, it may be possible for an organization to adapt its existing management system(s) in order to establish a quality management system that complies with the requirements of this International Standard". *ISO DIS9000 3.11 Quality Management Systems and other management systems focuses, further states: "The quality management system is that part of the organization's management system that focuses on the achievement of outputs (results), in relation to the quality objectives, to satisfy the needs, expectations and requirements of interested parties as appropriate. The quality objectives complement other objectives of the organization such as those related to growth, funding, profitability, the environment and occupational health and safety. The various parts of an organization's management system might be integrated together with the quality, into a single management system using common elements. This can facilitate planning, allocation of resources, definition of complementary objectives and assessment of the overall effectiveness of the organization. The organization's management system can be assessed against the organization's management system requirements. The management system can also be audited against the requirements of International Standards such as ISO 9001 and ISO 14001. These management systems audits can be carried out separately or in combination." Total system design is not a new or unique concept, but one that has been around for more than 40 years. The method is well documented in the Air Force System Command (AFSCM) 375 Manuals. AFSCM 375-5 "System Engineering Management Procedures" provides a framework for system design.

Although, this document was originally constructed to assist in the definition of an aerospace program, it serves well when constructing a business' operating system. The manual is not a '1,2,3 cookbook' of how to, but the framework is there, and it is compatible with the requirements of the ISO International Standards. The same framework is available in the ISO International Standard 9000, if one will take the time for analyses. Every business has a management system, documented or implied, to eliminate waste, confusion and lost profit, and an orderly progress of processes throughout the manufacturing cycle, in all departments, is vital to a company's success. Each task in the cycle must be identified, and an input, process and output established. Once you have identified the system, the requirements of the various standards may be considered and integrated. From this established flow of information, parts and materials and process findings, the necessary manuals, procedures and work instructions may be prepared for the TMS.

Ted Hillberg

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17182 Letter: Quality Cannot Prevent Corporate Misconduct

ASQ Staff

Oct-23-03

I do not believe quality can prevent corporate misconduct! Only ethical people acting responsibly can do that. The article "Ethics, Auditing and Enron" (Dennis Arter and J.P. Russell, October 2003, p. 34) demonstrates there are more Enrons and Arthur Andersens lurking out there in a variety of Industries and Professions. Why should the insurance industry push for "some sort of self-evaluation privilege"? unless they expect to have self-evaluations carried out which expose practices and procedures that are less than minimally acceptable, but which they do not plan on correcting or improving or abandoning? How in the world can it be demonstrated that "the auditee failed to act on noncompliance areas identified in an audit report," when there is no routine availability of the self-evaluation findings? There is only one way: the auditor becomes a whistle blower with all the career jeopardy that entails. So, four states including mine have already erected data shields for the insurance industry. I've taught managerial ethics at the undergraduate level. Be assured the great majority of my students, once made aware of the implications of whistleblowing on the person's career, were unable to commit to becoming whistle blowers. I cannot recall one instance prior to Enron & A.A. where ASQ or Quality Progress criticized the auditing firm for also having a consulting firm serving the same company. Was that merely lack of foresight or blind faith in the responsible nature of CPA firms? That is why I believe quality auditing will not solve the ills of some corporate managements.

Glenn S. Wilson

Woodstown, NJ

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17181 Letter: Three Drawbacks to Taxonomy Article
ASQ Staff
Oct-23-03

John Dew provided an entertaining jeremiad in his article "The Seven Deadly Sins of Quality Management" (September 2003, p. 59), but his root cause taxonomy has at least three major drawbacks. 1. His root causes are not "root," in that they are obviously the effects of deeper underlying causes that he has not addressed. 2. His set of taxonomy elements is not jointly exhaustive, i.e., there are other similarly "rooty" causes that he left out. 3. His taxonomy elements are not mutually exclusive, in that a given specific behavior could be classified in more than one of his categories. And there is a more fundamental problem with the use of taxonomies in root cause analysis, even if the taxonomy in use is not seriously flawed. This problem is that the use of taxonomies in root cause analysis encourages rooticians to find causes that have been previously accepted. His example of "inadequate management oversight" makes my point.

The key issue here is not that people before John Dew were using the wrong taxonomy or that John's taxonomy is also wrong, but rather the use of taxonomies in root cause analysis is not, and never has been, a path to understanding what it is about the way an organization does business that causes adverse consequences. The first law of air navigation applies: Look at the ground, then at the map. (Aviators that look at the map first tend to get lost.) And as Korzybski warned: The map is not the territory. To be cost-effective a root cause analysis must identify a tightly linked, unbroken, chain of influences from the consequences to the root causes. And this chain must be consistent with reliable evidence.

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17168 Re: Letter: Why Is
ASQ Staff
Oct-21-03

DENNIS ARTER AND J.P. RUSSELL'S RESPONSE:

There is a difference between independence of the auditor and independence of the audit program. I am of the opinion that it is very difficult, if not impossible, for auditors to be independent of what they are auditing. On the other hand, it is absolutely necessary for the audit program to be free of undue influence from parties with a vested interest in the audit results. Unfortunately, many auditors interpreted the ISO 9001:1994 words on independence literally. They wrote nonconformities because internal auditors were examining controls within their own functional department. Just because the quality audit and inspection functions report to the same manager, doesn't make the auditor incapable of examining inspection controls in an objective and unbiased manner. To take this line of reasoning to the extreme, external auditors reporting to the purchasing manager would be prohibited from auditing suppliers.

Dennis Arter
J.P. Russell

17167 Letter: Why Is
ASQ Staff
Oct-21-03

Very entertaining article by Dennis Arter and J.P. Russell ("Ethics, Auditing and Enron," October 2003, p. 34). I am puzzled by their claim the word "independent" is "awful." Audit, by its definition, is independent. On what basis is independence an awful word? Could it be that they see independent as an absolute term? Perhaps Arter and Russell would argue absolute independence is only possible when no transaction (money) has passed between the auditee and the auditor, for example, when an insurance company audits their insureds to assess how they manage risk before determining the price of their policy (seems sensible but an uncommon event). The Arthur Andersen debacle with Enron was reported to be precisely due to their lack of independence. Practically, independence is a relative term when applied to audit as I believe the following three examples illustrate. 1. Internal auditors do not audit their own work. 2. Financial auditors do not provide financial consulting or training. 3. Accredited registrars do not make the systems they certify depend on them for conformity. I look forward to learning why we have an "awful word" in our definition of audit.

John R. Broomfield
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17142 Letter: A Truly Integrated System
ASQ Staff
Oct-17-03

This article (Mayr McDonald, Terry Mors and Ann Phillips, "Management System Integration: Can It Be Done?" October 2003, p. 67)) made some excellent points about combining the subsystems for assuring quality, improving safety and preventing pollution. Combined subsystems running alongside the business management system are not really integrated. The more correct term, "combined," comes from ISO 19011 which provides guidelines for the combined auditing of quality and environmental management systems. Indeed, the article mentioned industry management systems but did not mention the unique business management system actually used to run each and every organization; perhaps by adding value faster and preventing loss sooner. For our clients, a truly integrated system is the process-based management system that is used to add value faster and prevent loss sooner while conforming to any system standard (including to ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and their derivatives).

John R. Broomfield
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17136 Letter: ASQ Has Grown, Improved Tremendously
ASQ Staff
Oct-15-03

I received my October 2003 issue of the Quality Progress yesterday and, after already reading it from cover to cover, have to say this issue has to be one of the best in the past several. I found all the featured articles to be extremely interesting and very helpful to me. I have been a member of ASQ since 1990 and a charter member of the Measurement and Audit divisions and have to also say that ASQ has grown and improved tremendously since then. Keep up the great work and efforts to provide us quality professionals with this great information. Thank you so very much.

Pat Fremont
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17126 Re: Re: Re: Re: Radical change in system of health services
Jennifer Kirley
Oct-10-03

Recently it was reported that a local employer, Cianbro, has enjoyed two years of flat health costs following an intense employee wellness program that includes quitting smoking. While some thought employees would rebel against a Stop Smoking command from an employer, overall the experience has been very positive. The employees have lost a collective 1,000 pounds, report feeling much better and that they enjoy their change. They also still enjoy having health insurance coverage. While this program won't solve the problem by itself, everything matters in the entirety of the struggle. It will be interesting to try to note long term cost savings from lifestyle changes. I should note that this state is among the nation's "fattest" so this is rather a big deal.

Jennifer Kirley CQE CQA
Central Maine Solutions

17115 Letter: The Obvious Case for Quality
ASQ Staff
Oct-10-03

Kudos for your focus on corporate social responsibility and quality! While each article was informative, "Corporate Social Responsibility" (Denis Leonard and Rodney McAdam, October 2003, p. 27) and "Quality's Path to the Boardroom" (Paul Palmes and Sandford Liebesman, October 2003, p. 41) were, for me, quite compelling. Hurrah for Leonard and McAdam and Palmes and Liebesman for the articles! One reason I have

remained committed to ASQ is its "no kiddin'" emphasis on its Code of Ethics. Leonard and McAdam drove home the point very well with their quotes from Ishikawa to Keim. I think every ASQ member has horror stories about lip tribute to quality from the CEO-level, I watched several Air Force Generals or future Generals lose their own ethical battles when they relegated "quality" and "customer" to the bottom of their priorities. Then along came Palmes and Liebesman eight pages later to fire me (and I hope a good percentage of our membership) up with the obvious case for quality as a defense against corporate misconduct. No kidding -- the quality community should be briefing everyone everywhere in the boardrooms across America on combining Sarbanes-Oxley with quality audits.

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17106 Re: Re: Re: Re: Radical change in system of health services

Steven Byers

Oct-07-03

Yes, in fact, I think about improvements in healthcare a lot. My wife is a nurse and is often frustrated by the lack of systems thinking where she works, so we talk about it frequently. One thing to consider is our terminology. Our current "healthcare" system is about providing medical care (after something has gone wrong) rather than maintaining health. So we can all start by using honest language. Not that anyone is trying to mislead, but when we ask the question about the aim of the system, operational definitions are important. Aside from vocabulary, which is really a minor thing, I think we should be encouraged by the work being done by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). Don Berwick is the leader, and he is ably assisted by Tom Nolan (one of the authors of The Improvement Guide). This organization is about collaboration, about spreading solutions, about learning. I think they are doing all the right things. If I was a manager in a "healthcare" organization struggling to make things better, I would hook up with the IHI, either to learn from what they have done or to collaborate on something new. One thing in particular I like about IHI is their willingness to look outside their system for help and ideas. Some would call this "thinking out of the box" but the reality is that there is always another box (a larger system). That is, they recognize they are part of other larger systems, and that enables them, I think, to learn more effectively. For example, they studied flight crews on commercial aircraft to learn about ways for surgical teams to work better together. Finally, for today, I recommend Dr. Ackoff's new book, written with a Dr. Rovin (a medical doctor), titled "Redesigning Society." They discuss government, education, healthcare, communities. Change is hard because you can't change a system by changing a part here and a part there. Things are connected. How are doctors and hospital administrators educated? What are the regulations that govern the delivery of medical care? What are the expectations of communities? And so on. I am,

on the whole, optimistic about healthcare improving, but that is partly because I am a systems thinker and know that I will ask the right questions when I have personal medical decisions to make (see Clare Crawford-Mason's recent essay on that topic, on the DEN).

Steven Byers
Olympia, WA

17097 Re: Re: Re: Re: Radical change in system of health services

Wesley Bucey

Oct-06-03

From Wes Bucey, Quality Manager

I'm happy to see the thread has redirected toward a "root cause" approach to correct systemic problems rather than focus on individuals or groups of individuals. Deming was right and continues to be right - most quality problems are attributable to the management of the system rather than to the individuals who perform the tasks. Certainly, the blame should not be put on the customers who use the products and services of the system!

-Wes Bucey

17094 Re: Re: Re: Radical change in system of health services

Steven Prevette

Oct-06-03

I imagine that any event that could remotely lead to a doctor being removed from the medical scene would be not reported, covered up, and no lessons learned from such events. I imagine that doctors will become even less "team players" as they refuse advice from nurses or technicians for fear of them being held accountable for a teammates "error". Doctors will become even more "god like" and more susceptible to error. Hospitals will have no incentive to fix systems that lead to errors, since they have a fix (fire the person closest to the problem). I should point out that these sort of things are trying to be prevented by the Joint Commission (JCAHA I believe is the acronym) which is trying to use a surprisingly Deming-like approach to improving health care.

Steve Byers - any thoughts?

- from Steve Prevette

Fluor Hanford

17089 Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Radical change in system of health services

Wesley Bucey

Oct-05-03

From Wes Bucey, Quality Manager

The analogy of car insurance is not valid. Equating a car with a human life can NEVER be valid. The analogy fails on several other levels: 1) Auto insurance companies

routinely assign higher rate or refuse insurance on entire classes of people (youths, elderly, previous accident, geographic area, etc.) <i>Does this sound similar to my earlier diatribe about 'blaming' entire groups of people for problems?</i> People thus "redlined" are forced to cease driving or risk driving without insurance. In some states, it is illegal (jailable offense) to drive without insurance. Do you propose to also enact laws to jail people who are unable to get insurance, but get sick anyway? 2) How much lower might the death and injury rate from auto accidents be if everyone had vehicles completely maintained in good mechanical condition? If drivers were routinely retrained in driving skills and had access to aids to help them remain safe drivers? If the death and injury rates were lower, might not the property damage be lower, too? And if all those costs were lower, could the insurance premium be lower as well? Further, just because insurance programs were one way when I was born during WWII, do we completely eliminate the concept of continuous improvement? Were things better then or now? I once had the privilege of meeting old Henry J. Kaiser. He struck me as sincere when he talked with tears in his eyes of how proud he was for instituting full service health care for his employees and then said with a twinkle in his eye that he had a much lower rate of lost time for sickness after the plan had been in force for some time and he'd do it again in a heartbeat for the profit it brought in. My gramps introduced him to me as "Hurry Up Henry" and we talked for about 20 minutes about what I planned to do in life after college. He seemed so nice. I'm sorry to learn from you, John, that he only put the health plan in effect to snatch employees from other companies. Lack of follow-through by patients and/or doctors on an individual voluntary basis is strictly an anecdotal argument. It is not supported by any data I can find to be a systemic factor in health care. I will concede that increased education of doctors and patients and how they interact can probably be demonstrated to be cost-effective in preventing many kinds of health problems which flourish in an atmosphere of superstition and ignorance. Thus said, it seems to me that governments and insurers have a high stake in the positive outcome of complete health care for the general population. I still maintain that the PREVENTION or EARLY INTERVENTION is much more cost-effective than the DETECTION and treatment of catastrophic illness or injury. This is the reason we have training and safety programs in industrial settings - not because of some altruistic feeling, but because it is cost-effective to do so!

-Wes Bucey

17088 Re: Re: Re: Re: Radical change in system of health services

John Harrison

Oct-04-03

Wes, sometimes the responsibility for prevention lies on the one most responsible. I like to define "responsible" as the one most able and capable to respond to a given situation." In this case, it is the individual, not government or the insurance company. My second point is to once again compare health insurance to car insurance. Right now your car insurance is not responsible for oil changes, new tires, tuneups, etc. all which if not taken care of (preventive maintenance) could lead to a catastrophic failure and possible liability for the insurance company. If your auto insurance did have to pay for preventive

services, I am sure the cost of your car insurance would be as much as health insurance - latest average around \$5,500 per employee. How many cars could you afford to insure with insurance rates like that? The double digit rise in the cost of medicine is driving more and more employers out of providing health insurance to employees or making them take a more significant share of the cost. To make health insurance affordable, (which has a mutiplicity of causes) one way is to take some of the routine meidcal costs out and place them back on the individual. You can not have Lexus coverage at Neon prices. I like my car and I like my life - I am the one who should be responsible for the preventive maintainence of both. I agree there are those who have less resources and that is where government should have a way on allowing them to access affordable preventive care -- but that is a political problem which I am not going to get into on this listserve. Even when government does that, and even now for those of us with "good" insurance, when preventive care is affordable, it isn't done by every individual for two reasons - lack of personal individual responsibility to have it done and lack of follow-up by physicians to remind individuals to have it done. You know, when I take my dog to the vet, on the receipt I get when I leave is listed all the preventive things my dog should have and when they are next due. The last time you visited your Primary Care Physician, did your receipt list your preventive procedures and when they were due? Prevention is worth a pound of cure, but the QMS in human medicine doesn't push it. I know of an Internal Medicince who took pride in the way he cared for his diabetic patients as this was an area of special interest for him. He thought he had his diabetic patients well controled and was going to show his colleagues. He did a study of his diabetic patient records to determine what their A1C levels (blood test to tell how well controled one's diabetes is over a period of time). To his suprise, his patients were no where near controled as he had expected. As a result of this surprising finding, he then taught his patients how to use run charts with desired UL and LL and how to use them to get their blood sugars in control. He had a significant impact on getting his patients where he wanted and finally got them to where he originally thought he had them. Medicine could use quality tools not only within the management of medical organziational business and implementing evidenced based medicine, but also as a tool for helping patients help themselves to prevent diabetic complications. Yes, Wes, prevention is good if it is used. Quality can have a significant role in that. But, in the end, if the diabetic patient doesn't use the run chart his doctor provides him, no one can make him. He wil end up with blindness and micro-circulation problems which will lead to amputations of feet and/or legs. As a quality professional, I would like to see medical care become more consistent, managed (by the provider not the govenment or accreditatoin agencies), effective, and definitely more efficient. Gee, sounds like what IWA-1 is supposed to help happen! Maybe we ought to be pushing IWA-1 and excellence to our individual Primary Care Doctors when we see them. BTW, Wes, until WW II, health insurance was as Walmart has it now -- only for covered catastrophic events and then only by a few employers. The use of health insurance as a benefit changed because wages were frozen during the war and the only way an employer could entice the scarce labor force to work for them was to offer benefits not frozen by Congress. This is where health insurance became a general benefit and the benefit has been increasing ever since. HMO's started with Kaiser Permanente during the war too but HMO's really didn't catch on until employers trying to implement cost containment had Congress enact the HMO legislation in the early 1980s.

John Harrison

17087 Re: Re: Re: Radical change in system of health services

Wesley Bucey

Oct-04-03

From Wes Bucey, Quality Manager

I happen to be one of those who believes in the Deming precept: Prevent, not detect, discrepancies <i>[disease?]</i> In keeping with that precept, it seems to make more sense from a Quality standpoint (and probably from a financial standpoint) to reduce the cost of preventive care for individuals to a sum of zero, rather than raise the cost (in Walmart's case, to \$1,750) of routine medical care. Employees, especially in the low income brackets like the majority of Walmart "associates" often have decisions to make like <i>"Buy supper tonight or pay \$63 to have Dr. check Ed's nagging cough? After all, it's probably just a cold, and if it is cancer, we know the most we'll pay before Ed dies is \$1,750, even though a checkup today might save his life."</i> I really wonder if EVERY employee in the Walmart organization has exactly the same terms in his/her policy. Many corporations have a better, more comprehensive program for executives. The reality is that medical expenses are high in the USA because of a variety of factors. Here's just a few: 1) We have a wide disparity in availability of care - too many doctors and hospital beds in some high income areas, few or none in low income areas (extreme rural, Indian reservations, ethnic ghettos, etc.) However, intense competition doesn't seem to act like normal market forces to reduce prices, rather they raise prices because need to recapture investment in capital equipment and medical school education is spread between fewer patients per provider. 2) High rate of innovation in facilities, training, instruments, pharmaceuticals, demands shorter time spans in which to recoup costs of development, experimentation, and marketing/education before the next innovation renders the previous one obsolete. 3) Poor coordination and policing of incompetents and frauds who drain off large sums of cash from worthwhile providers. 4) Unequal utilization of providers by "haves" (with insurance) over "have nots" driven by fear <i>("I need to stay healthy and use as much of my insurance as I can while I have it, because I could lose my insurance next week and be a 'have not.'")</i> Do I have answers? No. But I do know that pandering to fear by trying to point a finger of blame at some segment of our universe of people is akin to Hitler blaming troubles onto an ethnic segment of his population. <i> Most certainly, punishing the low echelon of employees (who can least afford it) by raising the cost of medical care is just like singling them out for extermination.</i> Too many people have a short-term view of giving up a right. The whole thing smacks of Ethnic Pogroms during WWII. I vaguely recalled words by a Lutheran minister during that period and took the time to look them up because they have pertinence to this discussion:

Martin Niemoller

<u>QUOTATION:</u><i> First they came for the Jews. I was silent. I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists. I was silent. I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists. I was silent. I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me. There was no one left to speak for me.</i> ATTRIBUTION: On resistance to Nazis,

recalled on his death 6 Mar 84 So, my dear fellow Quality folk, we must always be vigilant against each small incursion into our collective rights, lest we be the ones with no one left to speak for us.

-Wes Bucey

17085 Re: Re: Radical change in system of health services

Jennifer Kirley

Oct-03-03

If patients are to become customers, doctors' performance records must become transparent enough to enable the consumer to make an intelligent choice. This business of moving from state to state after losing a license must stop. The AMA must show an aggressive drive to raise accountability among its members, not protect them in privacy. Imagine what effect it would have if doctors who perform gross malpractice were removed from the medical scene from market pressures. Although only a small percentage of malpractice cases become court-bound lawsuits, I wonder how controlling the practitioners through market pressure would lower their insurance rates on the whole.

Even though I think this is actually a very small component of runaway medical costs, it is the political squeaky wheel. I am thinking the policy makers are busily sticking grease into every possible crevice except the one that needs it.

Jennifer Kirley CQE CQA

Central maine Solutions

17084 Re: Radical change in system of health services

John Harrison

Oct-03-03

There are "forces" working ever so slowly to change the operative forces of medicine. Dr. Merry is correct that a new paradigm is coming and not in the too far distant future. Back on Sep 15, 98 there were two articles related to healthcare - one stated that the cost of healthcare was going to double to \$2.7 trillion by 2007 and a seperated article about a woman in Florida who needed a breast biopsy but was without insurance coverage because she was between jobs. Because she utilized the services of an intermediary company and was able to use her Visa card, her breast biopsy cost her \$1,400 instead of the billed charges rate of \$5,600. The difference was because she was able to pay "cash on the barrel head" with her Visa card. I read both articles and I noted that on one hand healthcare costs were going out of control and on the hand at the same time, someone was able to save about 70% of her healthcare cost by paying cash. If healthcare costs are going to change and it has to, that little factoid was going to come into play. Fast forward to recent two recent news articles. United Healthcare is in the process of purchasing Golden Rule Insurance, the largest MSA insurance company because it believes Congress will pass the MSA legislation this year. MSA (Medical Savings Accounts) are like

Flexible Savings Accounts that most of us are used to except that what you don't use at the end of the year, you KEEP, not lose. It is like a Medical IRA - withdraw money for medical expenses without penalty and is covered by all other IRA rules. It HAS to be associated with a high deductible insurance policy for coverage of catastrophic health events that would financially ruin an individual. It is currently only available to individually self employed and the small (<10) employees. The second news article was about Walmart, the largest employer with over 500,000 employees. Their philosophy is health insurance is for catastrophic illnesses only. Walmart believes health insurance should prevent financial ruin of an employee when he has a very costly health event. Should not cover routine medical costs. They have only high deductible (\$1,750) with 100% coverage after that with NO CAP on costs. There is a lower amount where there is an 80.20 split below the \$1,750. What that means is that in the near future, patients will become customers because they will be paying out of their own pockets/savings accounts and will be looking for cash discounts and good service for their routine care. The other point is compare the way you are treated now by your Primary Care Doctor's office and by the staff of your vet's office when you bring in your pet. Bet there is a lot of service difference there! By the way, think of how much your auto insurance would cost you if it had to routine things like oil changes, new tires, 30K mile maintenance checks, etc. Add to that, you only want to pay a \$10 copay when you get these services. The cost of your auto insurance would be a lot more than it does now. That's the change that is coming which will have a significant effect on fostering Dr. Merry's paradigm shift.

17068 Letter: Automated Phone Maze Not Necessary

ASQ Staff

Sep-30-03

Thanks for the "A Model for Customer Service" article in the August 2003 issue (Susan E. Daniels, p. 30). It shows that it IS possible to treat customers like you really value them when they call. I dare say the "automated phone system maze" is one of the most irritating experiences most people have to put up with these days. Your article shows it isn't necessary and the article truly does serve as a model for so many others. It also gives well deserved recognition to your CS reps. Thanks!

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17063 Re: Letter: Software Quality Will Improve When Managers Are Educated

Anthon Pang

Sep-24-03

I have to disagree with Johanna Rothman's critique of Trudy Howles' article, "Widespread Effects of Defects", (Quality Progress, Aug 2003) claiming "[the] root

cause [of most software defects] is that most project managers and managers don't understand how to manage software projects". To attribute management as the root cause is to misplace blame that must be shared by all. While I do support the education of managers -- especially when technical managers are often promoted from within, drawn from a candidate pool comprised of software developers -- trained managers can't overcome a failure to communicate expectations, not sharing some 'common' understanding (e.g., what is quality?), the absence of a coherent product vision, or the loss of a key project member. Crosby writes, "Errors are caused by two things: lack of knowledge and lack of attention." (Quality Is Free, 206) In software development, these human shortfalls extend to both software developers and managers at every level. Better educated managers can't correct a programmer's lack of attention (e.g., neglecting to release some system resource in an obscure function/method/routine). For that, we must still depend on such practices as testing, static analysis, and inspection. Likewise, better educated managers can't close a knowledge gap inherent to software development -- that is, software development is essentially an exercise in acquiring knowledge. (See: Peter Naur, "Programming as Theory Building".) To paraphrase Robert Glass, "you [can't] manage quality into a software product." (Facts and Fallacies of Software Engineering, 158-159) And as Peter Drucker writes, "[quality in a product] is what the customer gets out and is willing to pay for." (Essential Drucker, 172) Software quality will only improve when attitudes change ... when we expect more of ourselves, of others, and from the products we develop and use.

17061 Re: Letter: Why Not Just Say So?

ASQ Staff

Sep-24-03

LYNNE HARE'S RESPONSE:

In my final note, I state that "As a general rule of thumb, it is safe to use the normal approximation to the binomial distribution when np is greater than or equal to 5 and $n(1-p)$ is greater than or equal to 5." This is not intended to place limits on p but rather to put limits on np and on $n(1-p)$. When these limiting criteria are not met, the difference between binomial calculations and the corresponding normal calculations are substantial. I hope this clarifies any confusion.

Lynne

17060 Letter: Why Not Just Say So?

ASQ Staff

Sep-24-03

I thoroughly enjoyed Lynne Hare's August 2003 "Statistics Roundtable" column. If the purpose of the last equation in the last statement in the Note ($n(1-p) \leq 5$) is to ensure $p < 0.5$, why not simply state for $p < 0.5$? Would like to some enlightening from Lynne.

Alex T. Lau

Blending Performance Specialist

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17047 Re: Letter: What About Executive Compensation?

ASQ Staff

Sep-22-03

JOHN DEW'S RESPONSE:

The taxonomy offered in the article is a work in progress. I think Ms. Kirley makes an excellent observation, and with her permission, I will include this very useful perspective on entitlement in future discussions on this topic.

Dr. John R. Dew

Director for Continuous Quality Improvement

The University of Alabama

17046 Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Jennifer Kirley

Sep-22-03

Sure it makes sense, Wes. You're not deluded at all. 1) Career specialists advise to only apply for posts where requirements are matched, degree for degree, certificate for certificate. If job searchers don't do this, they are likely: a) Desperate enough to try for even a long shot, feeling that maybe their resume will be so alluring that the lapse will be less important. b) Unaware of the HR managers' vexation at being bombarded with resumes from "unqualified candidates" either through a lack of training or concern. c) Thinking that the pool of applicants is unlikely to be large enough or appealing enough to overshadow their other qualifications. 2) This should be true. It is an unknown, however, in many younger systems in which misunderstanding and mythological thinking rules, particularly outside the QA Department. This is why many people I have read like to go around the HR door, and penetrate the department they are trying to be hired in. 3) Correct, but the candidate should do the footwork necessary to get some clue about the company's level of progress. This isn't always possible to nail, but it is helpful for preparing the resume, cover letter and interview. Please keep in mind that I am basing my comments on a rural labor market, where quality practices can be a good 15 years or more behind their more urban counterparts. It requires a different approach and certainly a different set of expectations. The hiring employer can ask for experience and certificates, and not have any real idea or what they mean or even any intention of using them.

Jennifer Kirley (Would like to be a Quality Engineer again)

17044 Letter: What About Executive Compensation?

ASQ Staff
Sep-22-03

I was interested to note, as I so often do, that when discussing "entitlement" attitudes John Dew did not similarly examine management compensation expectations ("The Seven Deadly Sins of Quality Management," September 2003, p. 59). With top executive pay having shot up to an average of 500 +/- times that of his or her average worker, I am surprised that so few people appear to have done the math. How is such massive executive compensation justifiable during stress-induced layoffs, and how does that disconnect affect remaining employees? performance and spirit? Instead, the pundits describe a competitive environment for "top talent" that has exponentially raised executive pay, and awards exit packages regardless of why they leave--often after only a few years of service. It is such a startling contrast that I marvel at how little discussion it is receiving. In "The Sin of Wages" William Abernathy goes to great lengths in describing the ills of a demanding work force. Marshall & Brigg's "Labor Economics (6th ed.)" seconds the motion. I have heard it echoed among many conversations as well. Worker compensation is being tied to all sorts of strategies, now the white-collar outsourcing included; but with those trends, the quality of the new workforce strategy is still undetermined. What data we have is still mostly anecdotal. My mother-in-law, for example, has decided, after three maddening hours on the phone with a heavily accented Dell computer help-desk technician, that the new strategy has earned three frowny faces. Yet the focus so far remains, as it so often has, on short-term dollars. During my research project I have found employee surveys, such as one done by Gallup Poll and Information Week, which suggest the entitlement theory is way off target. Gallup noted that employees ranked pay as the 4th most important aspect of their work. "Feeling like I am a part of things" was #1. Information Week ran a survey (not statistically significant, it must be noted) that showed "base pay" again ranked #4 in employee interest. For these IT workers, who are being laid off and outsourced based on their perceived outrageous pay expectations, "Challenge, Responsibility and Stability" were the top three wishes. Those who have been engaging in layoffs as a market performance strategy should note Monster.com's recent survey, which found that about 40% of the remaining U.S. workforce cites crushing job stress and dissatisfaction. They are planning to job shop once the labor situation improves. How many of our companies go to the trouble of collecting, and responding to employee input on what would help them perform better? I vote the leadership strategy includes emerging from their offices and getting to know their workers.

Jennifer Kirley, CQE, CQA
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17043 Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Coury Ferguson
Sep-22-03

Wes,

To answer your questions, here is my input: Question # 1: You are right. If the position requires a certificate and the certificate is lacking in your resume, than why waste your time and the company's time. Question # 2: Again you are right in this thought. If an employer would like to have this person to have this certification then they might be willing to listen and keep the open mind in regards to what you can do for the company, and if you can meet the needs of the company then they would most likely either pay for the certificate up front or reimburse the potential employee. Question # 3: You are right again. If the company is silent then they would expect that the applicant bring the benefits of the certificate for them.

Coury Ferguson

17042 Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Wesley Bucey

Sep-21-03

From Wes Bucey, Quality Manager

Let me clarify my position on certificates of whatever stripe or color or flavor - this includes certificates or registrations for individuals <i>(CQM, CQE, Black Belt, etc.)</i> and organizations <i>(ala ISO, QS, or TS)</i>: 1) If possession of the certificate is the minimum buy-in to be considered for a contract or job opening, why waste your time applying if you don't have the certificate? 2) If possession of the certificate is listed as "nice to have," that means the employer is aware of the Body of Knowledge behind the certificate and has an open mind and therefore is willing to listen to an applicant's tale of what he/she can do for the hiring organization. 3) If the information about the opening is silent on the matter, it means you, the applicant, must tie the possession of the certificate to possession of a skill or knowledge which will provide a benefit to the hiring organization. <i>(Odds are, if the certificate wasn't mentioned up front by the hiring organization, they don't have a clue what the requirements are for earning such a certificate [the Body of Knowledge.] If they don't know, they are likely only to be irritated by the mention of the certificate, especially only by initials, without some explanation of how the certificate will be beneficial to them.)</i>

Does any of this make sense? Or am I completely deluded?

-Wes Bucey

17041 Re: Re: Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Jennifer Kirley

Sep-21-03

Right on all counts, Wes. I indulged myself in a momentary vision of a sudden, Oz-like ability to show a tangible, miracle-looking stunt, based on my lucky possession of one of your magnets. "See, I can make that refrigerator move out of your way with Quality."

Super-Q. The extent of how much or why managers and HR people view our professional certificates may often be a clue of their progress in QMS. Where in the early stages, the certificate can be (several years ago, GE SS certificates were quite a nice bullet for the resume) viewed through the misty golden light of promise in "What we can do now that you will be here to help us" where they don't have the knowledge or culture to do it on their own. They may, or may not progress depending on where their hearts really lead them. In more mature systems, where more people understand and use the systems that are now not just a QA Department function, a certificate is more likely to signal a demonstration of understanding behavior and tasks associated with the job. This is why it is so important to feel these things out before agreeing to work for a company. I would not want to work for another company that considered my existence (as an inspector) the main indication that they had a Quality Program. Here in Maine, QMS is operating at a less mature level, more of the time, than one would find in more urban areas. That is no doubt contributing to my frustration in finding work.
Jennifer Kirley

17034 Re: Letter: People Surveyed Didn't Understand Quality Systems

Kevin Mader

Sep-19-03

Jim,

Here are my thoughts:

With regards a QMS being the foundation for the creation of a new supplemental top management system, I have to respectfully disagree with you. It is my belief that the foundation of any system is built upon ?values.? Values in turn create organizational mindset, or culture, where by if you are Quality minded, you have a Quality Culture. Having a QMS registered under any label is, in my opinion, irrelevant to organizational competitiveness on the grounds of improved product/service quality. A QMS of a particular label generally only improves your competitiveness if the perception of the industry/market that you are in is considers it a necessary requirement. It is a marketing/sales mandate. Not having a QMS of any label is not the culprit in loss of competitiveness. Lack of vision and leadership are. If your argument were that a top-level business management system could be built around the framework of so noted QMS guidance, then I would agree with you, but with reservation. Would it improve anything to build around new guidance if your mindset has not changed? I'm not sure of what point Mr. Karaszewski was trying to make with his article, but his interest in determining whether or not there is significant correlation between large corporations and perceived need of a Quality Management System seems appropriate. We learned that the surveyed organizations in general, believe a QMS is a key strategic need. I would have been more interested in the article if it were known how these organizations pitted it as a strategy: for gains in efficiency and quality (excellence and innovation), or more likely, as a strategy for being able to sell in key markets (it is my guess that most respondents view a QMS as you did, i.e. ISO, QS, etc). For example, we have all used a screwdriver or chisel to open a can of paint, but were these tools created to do that job? Were the QMSs you mentioned conceived for a different purpose than how they are currently used? We

know the answer to that. So knowing this, would basing the top-level management system on a QMS yield a different result? Again, I assert that if the mindset has not changed, the results will not change. As a colleague of mine noted, the best a QMS like ISO will be able to achieve is "localized optima" a danger in itself. I couldn't have said it any better. Personally, I didn't find much value in Mr. Karaszewski's article. The article only serves to conclude what we already know: Quality Management is an important element and can improve competitive as well as economic position of an organization. This is true whether or not it is viewed as the top level or support management system or if the organization is large or small. For me, an organization's competitive position is reliant on vision (including values and a future state), mindset (philosophy and culture), and leadership. A QMS can help to support these and is a necessary tool, but in no way is this supplemental to them.

Regards,
Kevin

17029 Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Robert Nix
Sep-18-03

This dead horse has been beaten so badly it has turned into glue, and now we're all stuck here!!!

|17026 Re: Re: Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

William Pflanz
Sep-18-03

Since the horse is still not dead, I will take another whack. Wes, since you are acknowledging there are basically lazy individuals out there, I would argue that the first pass on looking at resumes would be for certifications. Those that have them get in the second look pile, those that don't get into the round file. Now if a hiring manager was smart he would look at the actual experiences that the person has. If the only way you can get them to look at your portfolio of work is to have some letters after your name then that is the game. If you "buy" a black belt and get a Six Sigma job than you will either succeed because they won't have a clue of what you do or you will fail because you don't have a clue and they will realize it. In either case someone loses. Even the ASQ certifications are meaningless without the right knowledge, experience and skills. During tough times it is still better to have a certification than not since it opens doors. Again, I would suggest you look at some of the ASQ literature and other Six Sigma books. I believe you will find a lot of commonality. Just throw out the hype and the buzzwords and use the rest.

Bill Pflanz

BS, MBA, CQM, CQA and CSSBB??

PS Those who die with the most letters win.

17024 Letter: This Practical Approach Has Been Lacking in Seminars

ASQ Staff

Sep-18-03

John Dew's 7 taxonomies are the most fundamental, down to earth and practical observations I've read on root cause analysis ("The Seven Deadly Sins of Quality Management," September 2003, p. 59). I am an active member in Nadcap and a voting member on the Nadcap Heat Treat Task Group. Root and cause and corrective action has been the single greatest area of weakness identified in the entire defence contractor base. Dew deserves a standing ovation for this article. When he states that "An appropriate rule of thumb is....to dig until you reach the point of admitting something really embarrassing about the organization"... is something he obviously has earned from experience. This practical approach is what's been lacking in industry seminars and classes. We live in a real world with real people performing real jobs. The mechanics of quality control should never overshadow the understanding that people still manufacture, perform, and are responsible for making quality decisions every day.

Stuart Sherman

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17023 Letter: People Surveyed Didn't Understand Quality Systems

ASQ Staff

Sep-18-03

When I read Robert Karaszewski's "World View" column "Quality and the World's Largest Corporations" (September 2003, p. 86), it appeared the people in the survey were not educated in the present quality management systems. Below is an analysis of what I feel is the way the system really works. If management is properly trained I believe they will see it as I do. Please let me know your feelings about this. If we look at the various management systems used in a business, they can be listed as follows: A? Top management system: At this level the system starts with the owner or board of directors. It is the policies established to guide and measure the organization and to insure that the planning for the future is under control and that a feed back process exist from the customer, the stock holder, the suppliers and the community to insure they are happy with the company. Every owner or board of directors has a process, which is very complex to get information that allows for good decision-making. The processes below are supporting systems for top management.

- a. Sales management system,
- b. Accounting or financial management system,
- c. Human Resource management system.

- d. Design /Development management system,
- e. Planning and Logistics management system,
- f. Procurement management system,
- g. Information Technology management system,
- h. Environmental, health and safety management systems,
- i. Manufacturing management system (for companies still performing internal production),
- j. Facility management system,

B? Quality management system (ISO9001: 2000, QS9000, or TS16989: 2002): These systems only complement the top management system and look for the link to provide a level playing field for all functional areas. The quality management system looks to see that all the systems are working from top to bottom and that the customer is satisfied with the performance of the company. This is done by Audits, Design Tools Measurements, Employee competency measurements and training, and by analysis of data. So based on the above premise that the quality management system is the basic foundation for top management to use to supplement the top management system, it seems that the people that were surveyed for the article were not knowledgeable of the fact that today?s Quality Management System is really the total Business systems that they use daily. It seem like they are thinking in terms of Quality Control/Quality Assurance. It is the catch that support everything in the company. From this we need to do a better job training top management in the requirements of the standard.

James (Jim) Hooper

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17022 Letter: Process Evaluation Requires Only One or Two Key Characteristics

ASQ Staff

Sep-18-03

Comments to S.K. Vermani?s article ?Capability Analysis of Complex Parts? published in July 2003 (p. 64). 1. One or maximum two Key (quality) characteristics are recommended for a process evaluation. A large number of key characteristics are nonproductive and time consuming, even for tutorial purpose. 2. Capability indexes Cp and Cpk are good for most process capability evaluations. As long as Cpk alerts us if process is centered or not indicating the direction where the process mean is located (LSL or USL) using Cpu and Cpl looks to me like an unnecessary luxury. A Scatter Diagram (Plot) is a tool for charting the relationship between 2 variables to determine whether there is a correlation between them. Fig 5, which erroneously presents a correlation of the same variable ?J?, should be actually a Correlation between J diameter grip and K length grip. Of course the variables and their scale values on horizontal and vertical must be changed accordingly. I suggest that ?J? to be on vertical starting from a minimum of .3 and ?K? to be on horizontal starting from a minimum of .4, that can cove eventually out of tolerance measurements.

Petre Bosneanu

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17021 Letter: So, How Do We Change Healthcare?
ASQ Staff
Sep-18-03

The thought provoking September 2003 article by Dr. Martin Merry, "Healthcare's Need for Revolutionary Change" (p. 31) leaves one asking, so, how do you change it? The medical establishment is caught up and weighed down in more than key assumptions and beliefs. It is caught in a codependent relationship with an unhealthy health financing system, if that morass deserves the title of a system. Medical care is shackled by irrational payment mechanisms. Until health financing itself is reformed, Merry's proposed paradigm shift will sputter ineffectively. To achieve those laudable aims requires a complete overhaul of the medical financing system starting with a professional oversight body free from political and commercial pressures, able to encourage rational cost-effective quality care by incentives rather than Biblical regulations. This may be possible. For those interested please check, "An Innovative Proposal for the Health Care System of the United States" by Austin and Burnett, published in the May 2003 issue of Pediatrics. It is available to the public on line at:

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/111/5/1093.pdf>.

Dr. Merry is to be congratulated for thinking outside the box. Let's examine these issues more closely and see if it may possible to achieve such revolutionary concepts to enable affordable quality.

Glenn Austin, M.D., F.A.A.P.
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gamd@easystreet.com

17019 Re: Re: Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Carl Keller
Sep-18-03

Wes,

I would concur with everything you have stated (except the rare earth magnet part, I prefer to use the freebie refrigerator magnets you get from real estate offices so I can charge them an advertising fee for walking around with them stuck on my noggin!) Jennifer,

You are correct, ISO can, and is used as a marketing tool. I think the difference is there is a standard associated with it. One could argue (and I have) that the interpretation of said standard is questionable, but at least there is some attempt at uniformity.

The CQE, CQA, CQMgr etc have a stated body of knowledge and a formal testing procedure. I am unaware of any certifications (In the U.S. at least) from other sources which carry those designations. What is the criteria for achieving a six sigma black belt

certification? The ASQ version may be fine, but what about the other versions?
As far as being in the "correct" forum to discuss this, everyone can see the header, if they choose not to join in, they don't have to. I agree with both of you completely.

Carl-

17017 Re: Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Wesley Bucey

Sep-17-03

From Wes Bucey, Quality Manager

Carl and Jennifer, I have some of those super powerful rare earth magnets left over from a shopping spree at one of those science warehouse outlets. If you need all the iron pulled out of your brain cells, these turkeys will do the job! These are the kind of magnets where the refrigerator moves if you try to take one off the door. I agree in part that this may not be the proper discussion forum for the way the string has turned, but I also agree that by no means is it played out. I see two burning issues: 1) Does having a "quality" certificate of any kind from any source give a candidate a better chance at landing the job where the company with the opening has NOT specifically required such a certificate? 2) Do those companies which list certificates among job qualifications really know what on earth that certificate really measures? In other words:

- a) Is the requirement there because some knowledgeable Quality person felt the general skills implied for a certificate holder are what's necessary to do the job? or
- b) Did some idiot at a job recruiter add the requirement because he didn't have a clue what else to ask for in terms of qualifications? In my experience, CQE, CQM and other certs from ASQ are usually requested because someone has a good idea of the general Body of Knowledge required for such certificate. In my further experience, requests for Black Belts and Green Belts are usually from a company in the throes of entering into a 6S initiative. The request is from a Master Black Belt looking for his own little empire. Requests for Master Black Belts are almost always generated by some recruiter who has no real understanding of the 6S methodology. His use of the term MBB is like my grandson with a hammer - everything begins to look like a nail! Given the current fractured nature of our Discussion Forums, I believe this forum is as good as any to carry on the thread if folks choose to add comments. Re: ISO - I think the concept of a Standard like ISO or QS9000 or TS16949 is excellent, if an organization actually follows the Standard. I do not agree that a buyer should dictate that all his suppliers have to purchase certificates if those suppliers can adequately demonstrate they are self-declared compliant. My experience is that such buyers are really lazy and hope the certificate will relieve them of the responsibility of examining and approving a supplier. Same sort of brain dead notion as asking for a Harvard degree instead of interviewing a candidate to determine if he can do the job. Check me on this, but I believe there are a lot of Harvard graduates in many fields who are fired despite the prestigious degree because they can't do the job. Same thing applies for ISO-registered organizations. They lose contracts all the time because they can't deliver.

-Wes Bucey

17016 Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Jennifer Kirley

Sep-17-03

I'm running off to the refrigerator for a magnet to tape on my head. Now that was funny-- I needed that, thank you. As for the one about stupid managers, I've never had one who was that confused but like it or not, I would have to agree that SS can be used as a marketing tool. Some very smart people feel that ISO is similarly exploited drivel. I have stayed away from Six Sigma because it carries such a strange odor. (Think Cheech and Chong: "Hmm, look like Quality...smell like Quality...taste like Quality--must be Quality--good thing we not step in it!") I was once interviewed by a man at a locally respected company, who was hired in his Quality Manager position because of a GE Six Sigma certificate (his Bachelor's degree was Computer Science). He did not win high remarks from a coworker I spoke with later. I hear he's gone now. Perhaps it is a sad statement of how, after all this time, it is still so hard for us to make ourselves understood by management. If this or that certificate will win their affection so we can get something positive done, then fine, especially since outside of manufacturing all most of them really understand is how to pronounce it. If I thought it would win me enough points I would also do it, even though a CQE is said to be more potent. Even that hasn't helped me find new placement, so now I'm wondering if I should bother recertifying anymore. A penny for your thoughts on this, anyone! (It's all I can afford, unemployment ran out years ago)

Jennifer Kirley CMI CQT CQA CQE

17013 Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Carl Keller

Sep-17-03

Bill,

I am not sure whether continuing the string is value added or not, however the horse is anything but dead. While ASQ certification may add some credence to the process, don't kid yourself, this type of "pay no attention to the man behind the curtain, this is the all powerful OZ" approach is damaging to our profession. Some may find fault with TQM, or ISO, or Baldrige, but they are evidence and data based systems/tools. Six Sigma is pure quackery akin to strapping a magnet to your forehead to cure a brain tumor. The only useful purpose of Six Sigma Black Belt certification is to find a job at a company whose upper management is too stupid to realize it is a sham, or realizes it is a sham and want a "BB" on board for marketing purposes. If that is your reason for the certification, I say go for it. If I can help let me know.

Carl-

17012 Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

William Pflanz

Sep-17-03

To All Who Have Commented,

I don't know the value of continuing the string (why beat a dead horse) but allow me some further comments. 1. Out of interest I started researching Six Sigma and now have decided to get ASQ certified as a black belt. I may as well get some credit for my research. 2. Many articles repeat the story of Motorola and GE but give very little information on the Six Sigma process. 3. Much of the Six Sigma focus is on senior management buy in to spend \$\$ on training to save even more \$\$\$\$ on improvements. The other focus is identifying "high performers" as demonstrated by the Six Sigma savings so they can be promoted. I doubt if Jack Welch knew or cared how it was accomplished as long as he was convinced it was a savings. 4. When the books and articles do get into details on the Six Sigma process, it is always a listing of all the usual quality tools with a heavy emphasis on Design for "Six Sigma tools" like DOE and FMEA. 5. The vagueness of the Six Sigma calculation should bother any statistically trained person. If someone says they are operating at Six Sigma you would definitely want the operational definition of it. That said, I have previously asked a question on how you would detect a basically defect free process. As soon as you find the first defect, you are probably operating at less than 3 sigma unless you were very fortunate in finding one of the 3.4 defects per million. Even with a solid sampling plan it would take some time to verify 6 sigma. Thanks for all of the good discussion.

Bill Pflanz

17010 Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Coury Ferguson

Sep-17-03

Well Guys and/or Gals,

Let me put my opinion on the "six sigma, dogma:" It appears that there are a lot of opinions on this six sigma. The bottom line here is that there is no defined criteria for the six sigma certification. Each company has their own criteria for what is company specific defined criteria. There also isn't any objective evidence available to "validate" the savings on a six sigma project that I have found. At least if the ASQ offered six sigma certification, than there would be defined criteria (as with all of their certifications) that would be acceptable to the quality community, and companies throughout the world. I have talked to numerous companies that have an opinion that this six sigma is just another way to increase revenues for firms that claim to have the knowledge, the training abilities and defined criteria for six sigma certification. That the place to start saving dollars is in the processes and techniques used throughout the company. In conclusion of my opinion, there should be acceptable defined criteria for Six Sigma certification.

Coury Ferguson

17008 Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Carl Keller

Sep-16-03

Bill,

Yes, if they asked for an ASQ Six Sigma black belt it would be better. At least then you would know what criteria were used to certify the individual. Most job postings I have seen do say ASQ CQE, CRE, CQMgr etc. or it is implied that it is an ASQ certification. That is not the case with six Sigma. If you were going to be operated on by a doctor would a Witch doctor from some far off country be OK? or maybe a veterinarian? or do you want an AMA physician? Right now, the floodgates are wide open. Anyone can certify someone as a black belt. It is just plain silly and makes us (the Quality community) look foolish.

Carl-

17007 Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Steven Prevette

Sep-16-03

Gee, you guys throwing a six sigma party and didn't invite me? Just as a matter of interest - is anyone a member of ASQ's "Six Sigma Forum"? They are supposed to have really user-friendly discussion boards according to their hype . . . I wonder if they got the top-class stuff from ASQ and we got . . .

Steve Prevette

ASQ CQE

Demingite

17006 Re: Re: Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

William Pflanz

Sep-16-03

Carl,

You have noted that you are a certified quality manager. ASQ also has other certifications. It appears that you are accepting ASQ has an official body for certification. If a company asked for an ASQ Six Sigma Black Belt, would that be better? I would have to look at more resumes but I believe most just say they want a Six Sigma Black Belt not someone certified. You get what you pay for. Andrew's comments about how six sigma is calculated for a company, plant, department etc. is what I would have expected. If you read Harry's book, he goes on and on about "assume you are at 1.5 or 2.3 or ..." but he never actually defines how it was determined. Do they average all the six sigmas or choose one like Andrew's example or what is their calculation? If you ignore the hype and could actually implement a lot of the concepts, it would be an

interesting company to work for. Sorry to stir up another hornet's nest about Six Sigma.
Bill

17005 Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Carl Keller

Sep-16-03

Robert,

No problem, Here goes: 1. In the last 12 months, how many hours of study have you devoted to the tools used in six sigma methodologies? 2. How many Sigma are in Six Sigma (Trick question because the right answer is wrong. hint: think PROCESS SHIFT) 3. How would you like your name to appear on the certificate? That's it. Answer the above, make check payable to me (for postage and certificate paper) and give me your mailing address. I'll have it shipped right out to ya!

Regards,

Carl-

17004 Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Robert Nix

Sep-16-03

I for one want to take Carl's "6 sigma for dummies" examination (e.g. 1. How many sigma are in six sigma?; 2. What color is a black belt?)and get my very own embossed certificate, ready for hanging (I already own a black belt). To answer the original question, there IS NO single "quality system" that is better than any other. Six Sigma, ISO-9000, Malcolm Baldrige, Theory of Constraints, etc. cannot be compared one to another. Each has elements within them that may or may not fit into any one company's unique structure. What it takes is wide range of education and experience on the part of one or (preferably) many people within an organization regarding all of the quality tools & techniques available, and then choosing what will work best - implement it - measure the success - continually improve (all with the passionate buy-in of upper management). The whole issue is like asking, "What is the best form of transportation?"

17001 Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Andrew Nutt

Sep-16-03

Very well stated Carl.

When I first learned about six sigma I was working for a large corporation in 1996 as a quality engineer, and there was a new group from corporate beginning the process of blackbelt training. Our quality group was very curious about what was being taught, so

we requested a meeting to get some information. A statement was made at the meeting that overall, our plant was running at a Cpk of about 1.3, so we were not quite at six sigma yet. I was confused, knowing full well most of the capabilities of the critical characteristics we were tracking on our internal processes at best would have average .8 - .9. I asked how the 1.3 was calculated and was told it was based on number of complaints received versus units sold. How is that for sound science. It was then I realized there was a lot of hot air and packaging associated with six sigma, some of it good but in the long run, as you pointed out, has the potential to damage the credibility of ASQ. It seems to be somewhat of a trend these days, the dumbing-down of requirements, and the more certifications the better. It appears to be happening with Baldrige now as well. My personal preference would be to see criteria made more difficult, and certifications harder to get. I also believe a larger area for quality improvement would not come from six sigma, but the systemization of a good product development process under the umbrella of the ISO9k2k guiding principles.

Andy

17000 Re: Re: Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Wesley Bucey

Sep-16-03

From Wes Bucey, Quality Manager

I find it hard to believe that any organization worth working for hasn't figured out there is a difference between BBs (Black Belts) from one certifying body and another.

They certainly make a distinction between a Harvard degree and one from a school that advertises on matchbook covers. I believe each organization has an obligation to do one of two things: 1) train in-house (if economically feasible) or 2) require or pay for outside training AFTER determining the value or worth of that training, especially from a particular organization or instructor. <i>(Where do you want your brain surgeon or heart surgeon trained?)</i>

-Wes Bucey

16999 Re: Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Carl Keller

Sep-16-03

Bill,

I hear what you are saying. Let me better define my statement: "there exists NO criteria for training or certification for a Six Sigma Black Belt." ASQ may have a book that sets forth criteria, but Motorola has a set of criteria, and consultants A, B and C all have their own criteria, all of which can differ greatly. There is no standard. I don't see any job postings stating "ASQ Black Belt certification required", they just want a belt. Would you be comfortable if Pharmacist certification were handled the same way? Sorry, the Quality community and businesses in general should be ashamed of themselves to buy

into the certification process. I say we should all get "certified" as black belts as quickly as possible by the least expensive method available. The belt is worth the same so what is the difference? Many of the tools are sound, the certification in a sham.

Regards,
Carl-

16997 Re: Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

William Pflanz

Sep-16-03

Carl,

I agree that expensive black belt training may seem unnecessary but I disagree that "there exists NO criteria for training or certification for a Six Sigma Black Belt." ASQ has published a book of knowledge and tests for black belt certification. Since you are a Certified Quality Manager, I will concede that you probably have the knowledge and ability to be a black belt or possibly even teach it. You won't learn much new except for some unique Six Sigma terminology and approaches but it is good for refreshing yourself on quality concepts and techniques. In spite of Mikel Harry's hype, I doubt if there is a "six sigma" company out there. Everyone is picking on Six Sigma. If you want to see another quality concept that is being pushed then look up Theory of Constraints. They are attempting to build an entire field of study for it and lean manufacturing concepts.

Bill Pflanz, CQMgr

16992 Re: Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

Carl Keller

Sep-15-03

Bob,

I am with you 100% The whole thing is ludicrous. I am going to go a little further. I have only been doing this quality thing for about 15 years, so I guess that makes me a novice, however it is my opinion that ANYONE who knowingly promotes Six Sigma is violating the ASQ code of ethics fundamental principles. Specifically the part where it says "Will strive to increase the competence and prestige of the profession". How anyone can continue to support this is beyond me. That being said, you need a job and my advice is to go to the least expensive, hack Six Sigma training that will sign a certificate that you are a Blackbelt and pay for the diploma. The whole concept is fraught with ineptness and corruption anyway so you should see all manner of consultant willing to train you. As a matter of fact, as an ASQ Certified Quality Manager and considering there exists NO criteria for training or certification for a Six Sigma Black Belt, I am more qualified than most of the people handing out "black Belts". I would be willing to do a "credit by exam" and give you a basic online test and present you with a suitable diploma. If you are interested, let me know.

Carl W. Keller

ASQ Certified Quality Manager

16990 Letter: Article Should Be Part of All Training Programs

ASQ Staff

Sep-15-03

John Dew's "The Seven Deadly Sins of Quality Management" (September 2003, p. 59) is so perceptive it should be included in all quality management training programs.

Clarence Harris

Sun City West, AZ

16989 Letter: Thoughts on Lack of Training in Latest Quality Systems?

ASQ Staff

Sep-15-03

I've been an ASQ member for several years and recently all I've been reading about is "what quality system is the best to use?" This can be a very perplexing dilemma and one that could be costly if not carefully considered. I believe, or should I say I know, sometimes the best quality system is the one that assures continuous improvement for all aspects of the business. It doesn't matter which system is used as long as it actively pursues continuous improvement. Now, this is beginning to hit home. I have been recently unemployed and find it difficult to find employment with several companies because I lack Six Sigma or lean manufacturing training and experience. It's not that I don't know the concepts, understand or have put into practice several of the techniques or the principles but that I have not been formally trained. Both of these systems require very costly training and in some cases several firms (at least the ones I worked for) can not afford to put these systems in place. It's not to say I wouldn't want to be trained or continue my growth as a quality professional but that I can still be highly effective without the training. Don't get me wrong. It's nice to see more and more companies get on the quality bandwagon, however without understanding the basics, it's difficult and confusing to implement a program of this type. What (as a quality professional and a statistician) is the bottom line figure that shows how Six Sigma and lean manufacturing has dramatically improved company performance? The Baldrige award has shown improvement by out performing Standards and Poors Index by 3-4 times. Can the same be said for Six Sigma and lean manufacturing? I would like to know anyone else's thoughts on this dilemma I have over the lack of training in the latest quality systems.

Thank you,

Bob Dieter

Fresno, CA

robertdieter@comcast.net

16988 Re: Letter: Zero Defects Day Shouldn't Be Trivialized

ASQ Staff

Sep-15-03

Until I read Wayne L. Kost's letter, I didn't realize that companies still practiced such concepts as Zero Defects Day. Transforming an organization into one that provides high quality products and services takes a long time, a lot of training and education, and a great deal of reflection by management regarding their policies and actions that interfere with continual improvement. Transformation is a discontinuous process for management and the organization. One cannot simply flip a switch and become committed to delivering defect-free products. If you continue to evaluate and rank employees, select suppliers based on price, and focus on spreadsheets instead of the operation, you can celebrate your commitment all you want, but quality will not improve. The Red Bead Experiment used by W. Edwards Deming in his seminars included a zero defects day to demonstrate that such an event has no effect whatsoever on the quality of products produced. My experience with the concept is that it is actually detrimental to the organization because of the letdown people experience later when they realize that management has not changed and quality continues to run a distant second to short-term financial measures. Holding a celebration to management's new commitment to quality is similar to a smoker celebrating the day he decides to quit smoking. Nothing has changed. Until he is able to understand the reasons he smokes (and there may be many), and is able to fundamentally change his beliefs and behavior so the reasons are no longer valid, he is still a smoker. We must stop oversimplifying the process of transforming an organization. Workers will respond when they are convinced of our commitment. This will require action, not public relations.

Gregg Stocker

ICO Polymers

Houston, Texas

gstocker@icopolymers.com

16987 Radical change in system of health services

Rex Green

Sep-13-03

﻿Dr. Merry:

I was pleased to see that you wrote this article for Quality Progress. Now, all ASQ members can begin considering what must be done to improve the quality of health services nationwide. Our Healthcare Division is eager to support ASQ's efforts to improve service quality by sharing existing quality tools with healthcare providers. However, we are not that optimistic that there is a way to reform the entire system. Given the entrenched interests that depend for their income on the way the current system operates, to wit: healthcare professionals may not want to see a change in income level or role, pharmaceuticals prefer to recoup research costs with slightly revised and newly patented medicines, government feels obligated to micro-manage services and set prices in order to placate voters, hospital chains need to fill their beds with not-so-sick patients, medical device companies prefer government-set prices that remain high over time rather than face competition from similar offerings, and so forth, why are you so confident that

this second wave is clearly underway? You said, "...the best in healthcare is yet to come." In other words, why are you optimistic that an information rich, patient centered, integrated system of care will emerge?

Rex S. Green, Ph.D., CQE, RHIT
Healthcare Division Region 6 Coordinator

16975 Letter: Need Some Suggestions Regarding eSigs

ASQ Staff

Sep-11-03

I just read Mikel Janitz's response to questions from Trenton Argante ("QP Mailbag: The Data Duplication Demon Strikes Again," August 2003, p. 10-11) and noticed the brief discussion of electronic sigs. Does anyone have specific suggestions for eSigs that meet current FDA requirements (21 CFR Part 11) for a server based doc storage system ala Janitz's system? Oh to work for an industry where 'some trust in the system' is adequate. Thanks for any pointers.

Doug Finner

Bristol, NH

dfinneratwork@netscape.net

16955 Re: Re: Re: Letter: Process Management Article Enforces Bad Advice

Carl Keller

Sep-09-03

Robert,

Very well put. I would tend to agree with most of your points.

Regards,

Carl-

16952 Re: Re: Letter: Process Management Article Enforces Bad Advice

Robert Nix

Sep-09-03

Carl, At the risk of sounding like Tevye from Fiddler on the Roof, you are right also. A comfort zone often has the same shape as a rut. We end up following the path of least resistance to our doom. But concerning the key points mentioned: 1. A process is anything that has the following - "inputs > activities > outputs". Accounting fits. Customer Service fits. HR may be too broad, but "hiring" or "training" fit as processes. 2. Process Improvement teams for accomplishing tasks: Fundamental to accomplishment is cross-functionality (interaction of functions is inevitable). At least one member of management MUST be involved as a champion, at the very least attending a meeting or two to ensure buy-in, and in the end, acceptance. The facilitator is the key (as Carl says) since they control the "diverse priorities" David mentioned. Experts are also needed. But

the team cannot be too large or they WILL fall under their own weight as David states. Overall, I thought Tom Dolan hit on a number of excellent points; especially his emphasis on the importance of the human element (it is far more important than the techniques chosen) and the advantage of the internet for research. However, I think we have to be careful when using the internet & benchmarking. It is great for jump starting ideas, but it is fraught with pitfalls - e.g. another company's process improvement is highly situation or environment dependent, statistics can be misleading depending on circumstances, or the hype can be larger than life. Benchmarking is important to prevent reinventing the wheel, but make sure the wheel is used the same way. Also, the "six-sigma" nomenclature is as superfluous as parsley garnish. I don't like it, but I guess I have to live with it. Therefore, all of you are right! I appreciate the interplay.

16947 Re: Letter: Process Management Article Enforces Bad Advice
ASQ Staff
Sep-09-03

TOM DOLAN'S RESPONSE:

Mr. Williams seems biased against corporate-style improvement methodologies. The intent of the article was to share information about best practices in process improvement currently in use today. One of my objectives was to encourage readers to take an active role in process improvement and to encourage management to provide the appropriate resources and time required for change. Process improvement is not something that can be delegated to an outside consultant. Recommendations in this article were gathered from over 560 people around the world who are actively involved in process improvement projects. For additional information, readers are welcome to visit <http://66.124.245.170/Surveys/Tbe1/results.cfm> to see the summarized survey responses.

Regards,

Tom Dolan

tom@benchnet.com

16944 Re: Letter: Process Management Article Enforces Bad Advice
Carl Keller
Sep-09-03

David,

I agree with you. A company that is unwilling to change their paradigm and refuses to think "out of the box", will ultimately fail at this process "team" approach.

HOWEVER: For those of us that may work at a company that is a bit more progressive, Tom makes some excellent points and has some savvy advice. Accounting IS a process. It is the process of accounting for the companies financial transactions. It also happens to be a department. The same with Customer Service. It is the process of interaction with, and service of the customer accounts. A process improvement team should ABSOLUTELY be comprised of the most diverse group possible. The key is the facilitation. Once the hourly employees, supervisors, managers and the rest of the team

feel comfortable that they can express their view, including disagreement with the VP's when appropriate, you will start to see progress. If they work in an atmosphere where upper management is comprised of a bunch of pig headed executives who care about nothing but their bonus, you might as well not even attempt process improvement at any level. They will not listen. You get a group of Directors and VP's together to make a process improvement and all you are going to end up with is ego, smoke and mirrors and cost cutting. "This goes against the basics of Six Sigma." ??? I have yet to see proof that six sigma ever improved any process. Some of the tools are there, unfortunately the process is hung up on "cooking up" numbers to justify the cost of the training and initiating the project in the first place. In any case, as with any article, or book, not every point will apply to all companies. You have to separate what will work for your company at a particular point in time.

Just my 2 cents.

Regards,

Carl W. Keller

ASQ Certified Quality Manager

16935 Letter: Process Management Article Enforces Bad Advice

ASQ Staff

Sep-08-03

I was disappointed in Tom Dolan's article "Best Practices in Process Management" (August 2003, p. 23). In part because it had very little new to say, but more so because it served to pass along some bad, very common, advice. There are too many to address in a short letter; they ranged from small to large. A couple worth mentioning: 1. Of the 10 processes identified on p. 25, only three (maybe four) are processes, the remainder were departments or programs. HR, accounting or customer service and satisfaction are not processes, no matter how many times the thousands of members from the Benchmarking Exchange might have mistakenly thought they were. 2. A process improvement team made up of representatives from all functional groups, all customers, all stakeholders will sink under its own weight. It sounds nice but has a variety of flaws: * Customer needs and requirements are best represented with accurate, reliable data and then followed up with focus groups or focused work groups. Customer representatives on teams expect to be listened to - even if they don't represent all of your customers. This goes against the basics of Six Sigma. * Mixing employees and managers on a team will not bring out the best in either. Contexts of knowledge and priorities will be too diverse. It may sound like a good idea but will bog a team down. Team membership should be based on expertise on the process, as it is, as it must become and what is required to get it there (if that is already decided). It may sound undemocratic, but then process improvement isn't necessarily a voting issue - getting results is what counts. I look to Quality Progress for good ideas. This article was way below your standards.

David N. Williams

davidw@williamsalliance.com

16930 Re: Re: Re: Letter: All ASQ Members Should Keep a Copy of This Article

Wesley Bucey

Sep-05-03

From Wes Bucey, Quality Manager

I always type directly in the box. I do not cut and paste from my word processor.

When I do use HTML [rich text], I haven't noticed a difference. The question marks never used to appear. I have not been doing anything different than what I have been doing for at least two years. The question marks NEVER APPEAR when I preview the text. The only thing I did change (and that has been for over one year, now) is that I right click in the text box, left click on "select all" then left click again and right click on "copy" before I click on "Preview" because I lost about fifty messages when trying to return from the preview screen to make a modification. In HTML, here is

BOLDFACE with apostrophe (') and quote (")

<u>UNDERLINE with apostrophe (') and quote (")</u>

<i>ITALICS with apostrophe (') and quote (")</i>

I have checked this in preview and all quotes and apostrophes appear proper. However, it is a good thing I went through my "copy" procedure, because the text I entered in the entry box just stone disappeared when I returned to type in that the quotes appeared OK!

-Wes Bucey

16926 Curly Quotation Marks -> ?

Timothy Folkerts

Sep-05-03

Often this problem occurs when using a word processor that automatically uses curly quotes. Let's check. Here are ?curly quotes? curly apostrophe? cut and pasted from Word. Here are "plain quotes" plain apostrophe' typed within this reply. I can clearly see both as I type this. Furthermore, they look different from each other on this screen and in the "Preview Message" screen. However, the curly quotes are not standard ASCII characters, so some applications insert a question mark when they don't recognize a character. I bet that's what is happening here. (We'll see when this goes through.)

MSWord allows you to turn off this feature (check the help info). You could just type your response within the ASQ screen, but then you can't do a spell check :-)

Tim Folkerts

16925 Re: Re: Re: Letter: All ASQ Members Should Keep a Copy of This Article

Steven Prevette

Sep-05-03

| Sorry about the multitude of question marks (???). I | thought the problem was fixed.

Also, I see the problem applies to full quotation marks as well.

Though I can type apostrophe's (""") on my computer and quotation marks (""""") without hitting question marks. I notice you are using some html formatting while I am probably

using plain text. When you preview the message, do you see ' or ?
Steve Prevette
doing a little troubleshooting

16924 Re: Re: Letter: All ASQ Members Should Keep a Copy of This Article

Robert Nix

Sep-05-03

Sorry about the multitude of question marks (???). I thought the problem was fixed. Also, I see the problem applies to full quotation marks as well.

16923 Re: Letter: All ASQ Members Should Keep a Copy of This Article

Robert Nix

Sep-05-03

I do believe these seven "deadly sins" should become a standard among quality professionals, just as Deming's 14 points are. (NOTE: Interestingly, the context about which Deming created his 14 points was recognizing that the "root cause" of problems lie 80% with management) Perhaps Dew's list could more correctly be called the "seven deadly root management causes for systemic problems", or, boiled down further, "the seven deadly root causes". In some areas, Deming's and Dew's points converge. Dew's #1 is Deming's #4 [budget ahead of quality]. Dew's #2 resembles Deming's #10 & 11 [schedule/numerical quotas over quality]. Dew's #3 is Deming's #8 [drive out fear causing politics] which Dew references. Dew's #4 may be included in Deming's #9 [Being arrogant; at least in creating huge barriers between executive management vs. everyone else in the organization], although Dew adds much that Deming does not address. Dew's #5 is Deming's #6, 7, & 13 [Training, knowledge, education, research, etc.] Dew's #6 loosely relates to Deming's #2, 3, & 5 [Share information with participating employees to prevent "entitlement" mentality] When discussing point #5, Deming states, "Management will improve a process by active participation with [employees]". Dew says similarly, "Employee participation is a positive attribute" and encourages management to share business and performance information with the workforce (which is the gist of Deming's #2 & 3). Dew's #7 is Deming's #12 [Barriers that create "endullment"] Deming's points #1 and 14 basically embrace the other twelve. Way to go John Dew! I will include the article's information in my next management report and in my problem solving training materials (Yes, Wes, it is in my ammunition pouch).

Rob Nix

Quality Aficionado

16921 Re: Letter: All ASQ Members Should Keep a Copy of This Article

Richard DeRoeck

Sep-05-03

Wes,

Having just finished reading this article, I couldn't agree more. I especially agree with the statement "THE PROBLEM IS NOT THAT QUALITY PROFESSIONALS DO NOT SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT, BUT THAT IN SOME ORGANIZATIONS, SENIOR MANAGEMENT DOES NOT KNOW THE FUNDAMENTAL LESSONS OF QUALITY AND IS NOT INTERESTED IN LEARNING." Interesting, considering the recent discussions here on how quality professional need to think like management.

Rich DeRoeck

16910 Re: Letter: ISO 9000 Is About More Than Process Documentation

T. Kubiak

Sep-04-03

Barry,

Perhaps, my interest in brevity resulted in an oversimplification. However, I fully recognize that ISO 9000 is more than documentation as noted in the opening paragraph of the ISO 9000 section of my portion of the article. Also, look at the linkages cited in Table 3, page 45, ISO column. The fourth bullet, in particular, refers to the 8 management principles included in the 2000 version. Collectively, they work toward helping the management system achieve the organization's objective.

Best regards,

Tom Kubiak

Director, Six Sigma

tkubiak@sears.com

16909 Re: Letter: ISO 9000:2000 Emphasizes Continuous Improvement

T. Kubiak

Sep-04-03

Excellent comments.

Best regards,

Tom Kubiak

Director, Six Sigma

tkubiak@sears.com

16908 Re: Re: Letter: CMMI Is an Alternative to ISO 9000

T. Kubiak

Sep-04-03

My contribution to the "Multiple Choice" article was intended to identify some common approaches and demonstrate how they can work in harmony, not in opposition to one another. CMMI along with probably many others did not make the list. This was not due

to a preference of ISO over CMMI, but a practicality of limited space and a focus on writing for the general readership.

Best regards,
Tom Kubiak
Director, Six Sigma
tkubiak@sears.com

16907 Letter: All ASQ Members Should Keep a Copy of This Article

ASQ Staff

Sep-04-03

Rarely do I "gush" about anything, let alone articles in Association publications. I want to make an exception in this case for John Dew's article "The Seven Deadly Sins of Quality Management" in the September 2003 issue of Quality Progress (p. 59). My only suggestion for improvement would be to eliminate the word "Quality" from the title and let it apply equally to ALL management. Certainly, schedules, politics and budgets are more the purview of general management than of quality management, while arrogance and autocratic behaviors have universal application. In my opinion, every member of ASQ should have a copy of this article in his or her ammunition pouch when dealing with management on any issue.

Wes Bucey
Quality Manager
Armstrong Aerospace
wes.bucey@armstrongaerospace.com

16905 Re: Letter: Nuclear Power Generation Is a Viable Solution

ASQ Staff

Sep-04-03

JOHN DEW'S RESPONSE:

Gary Beal's comment is correct. Having worked most of my career in the nuclear industry, I share his perspective and acknowledge that it was an inaccurate choice of words on my part.

Dr. John R. Dew
Director for Continuous Quality Improvement
The University of Alabama

16904 Letter: Nuclear Power Generation Is a Viable Solution

ASQ Staff

Sep-04-03

While I thoroughly enjoyed the intent of John Dew's article "The Seven Deadly Sins of Quality Management" (Sept. 2003, p. 59), I find a sentence in the second paragraph of

background section to be incorrect. The incident at Three Mile Island was not a meltdown; there was no breach of the containment device. Admittedly, there was a small release of alleged radioactive materials. I believe nuclear power generation is a viable solution to this country's on going power needs and it pains me when I read articles containing incorrect information.

Gary Beal

Operations Manager

Rubber Associates

garyb@rubberasc.org

16890 Re: Letter: Software Quality Will Improve When Managers Are Educated

ASQ Staff

Sep-03-03

TRUDY HOWLES' RESPONSE:

Dear Johanna:

This is in response to your comments regarding the article in the August publication: I echo your sentiments regarding scheduling and management's role. However, not all software problems can be traced back to these sources. Without a doubt, schedules and a company's management are driving forces and certainly set the tone of the quality culture within the organization. However, management (and indirectly the schedule) can not take full blame. Educators, designers, system and development engineers, testers and team leaders (just to mention just a few) all have the ability to recommend improvements and identify deficiencies. Providing an organization adequate and well trained management and a limitless budget and schedule still would not guarantee a quality product. The product would only be as good as the work products from the weakest link in the development cycle. Everyone in every job must continually strive to improve both their own personal work and the work products within their organization, work to be more productive, and become more customer oriented. Responding to the recent computer viruses Watts Humphrey, I believe, hit the nail on the head when he said that we need to inject more discipline into software writing and identified a " ... need to focus on the practices of the individual engineers." (The Wall Street Journal, Aug. 26, 2003, p. B1) Every contributor needs to examine practices and tools and strive to become better and more efficient at what they do. I do not feel that one can identify a single source as the root cause of all software development's woes. Certainly, there are enough problems (and enough finger-pointing) to go around.

Trudy Howles

tmh@cs.rit.edu

16889 Letter: Software Quality Will Improve When Managers Are Educated

ASQ Staff

Sep-03-03

I just finished reading Trudy Howles' piece in Quality Progress, "Widespread Effects of Defects" (August 2003, p. 58), and I disagree with most of her conclusions. It's possible there are some developers who don't know how to test their code. However, it's not the developers who create the schedules or determine the practices, just as it's not the quality staff. The managers decide on the schedule, frequently before the project is even estimated, certainly before the requirements are defined. In Howles' example one, many of us with gray hair have known for years how to prototype and test performance. I suspect many of the developers on that project, would have tested prototypes, *if they had the schedule time* to do so. Howles never said why the project staff didn't detect the problem until late in development. Was the performance never defined as a requirement? In the second example, the fact that the software was written in an OO language is irrelevant. OO products have been around since the 1980's, and in general development by 1990 or so. Howles is referring to inadequate project management, to detect when each object, module, or component was actually complete before it was checked into the configuration management system. The root cause of most software defects is not the developers' actions. The root cause is that most project managers and managers don't understand how to manage software projects. They don't know how to determine the focus of their project, they don't know how to choose a lifecycle that manages the risk of their project, and they don't know what to measure during a project. This doesn't make them bad people, it just makes them bad project managers. So they manage to the one thing they can measure -- the schedule. Managers manage to the schedule, because they can't figure out what else to measure. And, because the public has made bad software a huge market. If the public accepts just-barely-usable software, why should the managers manage differently? It's wrong to blame the developers or testers for bad software. Management has made a business decision that bad software is acceptable, and that customers will pay for it. Most of the time, managers make those decisions out of ignorance, not out of malice. Until we educate the managers about what software quality is, and how to obtain it, there will be no change. You and I can demand better software, but unless we are willing to buy software that is substantively better, the large software makers will still have the profit margins to continue to sell bad software. We don't need to apply quality improvement tools; we need to educate managers. That's when software quality will improve.

Johanna Rothman

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jr@jrothman.com

16888 Letter: ISO 9000:2000 Isn't Much Better

ASQ Staff

Sep-03-03

At the risk of being labeled a Quality Heretic, I am compelled to offer my thoughts regarding the much-heralded 2000 version of the ISO Quality Management System standard, ISO 9001. The glowing accolades promulgated by numerous people, mostly consultants, remind me of the classic child's story of The Emperor's New Clothes. As an active RAB and IRCA certified QMS Lead Auditor working for several very

reputable Registrars, in addition to doing some consulting in the area of quality management systems, I have visited numerous companies both before and after the issuance of ISO 9001:2000. In doing so I have yet to see where the USER has enjoyed a NET benefit resulting from the 2000 version. Yes, there are several improvements in the 2000 version, but I submit that they are outweighed by the unnecessary time and cost incurred by users to make the transition. As I understand it, the major force for change were the complaints that the 1994 version required too much documentation (paperwork), and it didn't lend itself to easy use by companies that did not make widgets. To address these issues, the standard supposedly cut the documentation requirements by reducing the number of mandatory procedures to six, and it promoted the use of the process approach - the latter being touted as just about the greatest thing since sliced bread. The price paid for these "improvements" was a complete restructuring of the standard. Now let's examine the practical results of these "improvements." First of all, every company I have audited has rewritten, at least, their top tier quality manual, an effort that is not insignificant in terms of time and money. Many companies have engaged consultants to help them, myself included. Secondly, I have yet to see one company that has reduced its documentation. In fact, most have added to it at the procedure level in order to address the added requirements. So much for the reduction in documentation! I will agree that the use of a process approach is a better way for a nonwidget manufacturer to approach the standard, however, the 1994 version did not preclude that. And a process approach could have been encouraged by simply adding that wording to the 1994 version in an introduction just like what's in the 2000 version. So, users have so far spent a great deal of money in rewriting and adding documentation, hiring consultants and having to undergo more extensive reregistration audits. Let's also look at the key changes in the 2000 version and how they might have been incorporated into the 1994 structure thereby eliminating the need (or perceived need) for a rewrite of the quality manual. Promotion of the process approach, requirement to describe the organization's processes and interaction of them: Most organizations are doing this with a flow chart. The same requirement could easily have been worked into 4.1 or 4.2 of the 1994 structure. Reduction from three standards to one, with certain exclusions allowed, if justified: Element 4.2 in the 1994 structure could easily have included this. Strengthening the Management Review by requiring action items and follow-up to be included: This language could have easily been added to 4.1.3 of the 1994 structure. Added customer focus ? customer communication, understanding customer's perception of quality performance: This could either have been added to 4.2, or an added element, 4.21 could have been incorporated. Requirement to evaluate training effectiveness: A minimal wording addition to 4.18 would have accomplished the same thing. And let's look too at how the auditing is performed to the 2000 version. With all the emphasis on the process approach, there is little process auditing being done. A few companies I've visited have gone to a true process audit approach. However, how are the registrars auditing? Well, of course, they are auditing to the standard and therefore still auditing to each and every clause of the standard. Just look at the matrices that many registrars include in their audit documentation. In order to certify compliance to each requirement of the standard, how can they do otherwise? So a true process approach for registrar's auditors is a figment of somebody's imagination. When one cuts through all the hype about how great the 2000 version is, and understands that a significant amount of the changes were in wording only

and not substantive as regards the real requirements, one conclusion becomes apparent: the USERS have been hoodwinked into expending a disproportionate amount of time and money to make the transition to the new version with very, very little benefit. Several articles have been written that indicate a fair number of companies will not, or cannot, make the transition. This has generally been rationalized by the consulting community as being just the companies with weak quality systems or lack of management commitment, and certainly there are some of those. However, has it ever occurred to those critics that some company managers may have also seen that the Emperor's clothes are not new, but that in fact, he's not wearing any?

Herb Courtney
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16875 Re: Re: Re: Letter: CMMI Is an Alternative to ISO 9000

Stephen Rooney
Sep-02-03

I recently finished an ISO 9001:2000 implementation project at the Transportation Security Lab in Atlantic City, NJ. They had already begun iCMM implementation when I started the ISO registration project. My understanding is that iCMM was developed specifically for software development within government organizations, namely, the FAA. It is also my understanding that the "i" designates this capability maturity model as specific to the FAA & software development. Also, I believe being registered to ISO 9001:2000 is the equivalent to level III of iCMM. During the project I worked on, we absorbed the relevant processes already developed under the iCMM project into the ISO QMS. Funny thing... since they became ISO registered, the organization has dropped iCMM. I don't think it is because one is "better" than the other, I think it is because iCMM was developed for software & ISO, being more generic, is more broad based in what it can be applied to.

just my 2 cents!

Stephen Rooney
JIL Information Systems

16872 Letter: Five Biggest Process Improvement Problems

ASQ Staff
Sep-02-03

This is in reference to the article "Best Practices in Process Improvement" by Tom Dolan (August 2003, p. 23). What caught my eye immediately was the statement in the second paragraph, "The focus of this article is the human side of managing and implementing an improvement project." I continued reading, turned the page and examined Figure 2; a bar graph of the "Biggest Process Improvement Problems" based on 300 responders most frequent answers to a question asking them to identify their biggest problems when implementing process improvement projects. The responders answers are as follows:

52% said acceptance of results by senior executives, 68% said acceptance of results by department heads, 91% said lack of human resources to implement changes, 61% said lack of financial resources to implement changes, and 60% said communicating results. This information comes as no surprise to me; I have experienced each and every one of these obstacles in my career and regrettably, continue to. So I continued reading hoping for a new strategy or novel approach toward eliminating these implementation problems. I found none, other than the tried and failed "keep pounding your head against the wall, those bricks will loosen up sooner or later." In my experience, upper management decides on what, if any, process improvement projects get the green light. And also in my experience, any projects allowed to move forward tend to be either a desperate attempt to quell a raging inferno, or some safe, side process that won't disturb the status quo nor cost anything. So, even if upper management green lights a process improvement project, you still have the five big problems to hurdle before any improvement can be realized. While I don't have the answer to surmounting these problems, I do have a method to determine the causes. I believe we in the quality/process improvement world have the cart before the horse (as Figure 2 clearly shows). Instead of continually approaching upper management with a proposal for an improvement project for process X, Y or Z, why not apply some or all of the Top 10 Process Improvement Tools in Use (Figure 3) to determine the root cause of the Five Biggest Process Improvement Problems and the corrective action required to eliminate them. For example, what is the root cause of the failure of senior executives to accept the results of a process improvement project? Maybe some benchmarking, cause and effect analysis, process mapping, etc? will help. You can ask the same of the other four problems, what is the root cause and what is the corrective action required to eliminate each implementation problem? Now that is a process improvement project I'd pay to see the results of! This is not meant to take anything away from Tom Dolan's article which I found to be detailed and informative. I started to think about the five problems listed and the more I thought about them, the more they seemed to become constants rather than variables. What I'd really like to hear are some corrective actions that could eliminate them. This is where the phrases "change the fundamental way you do business?" and "paradigm change?" come to mind. Are we in the quality community prepared and courageous enough to determine the root causes and corrective actions needed to eliminate these problems (not that upper management would allow the corrective action to be taken)?

Stephen Rooney

JIL Information Systems

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16871 Letter: ISO 9000:2000 Emphasizes Continuous Improvement

ASQ Staff

Sep-02-03

I have the following comment on the "An Integrated Approach System" section of the article "Multiple Choice" (July 2003, p. 25) Kubiak states, "ISO 9000 asks an organization to document what it does and to adhere to that documentation. If the processes an organization follows are bad or not suitable for the products and services,

ISO9000 will not improve quality." This was right in the previous edition of ISO 9000 standards published in 1994, if you stick to the written words in the standard but if you believe in the spirit of the standard and implement it taking this spirit into consideration as many companies had done there won't be any problem in transition to the new version of the standard published in 2000. The year 2000 version emphasizes the continuous improvement process, and it was revised based on the following eight quality management principles:

- 1- Customer focus
- 2- Leadership
- 3- Involvement of people
- 4- Process approach
- 5- System approach
- 6- Continual improvement
- 7- Factual approach to decision making
- 8- Mutually beneficial supplier relationships

If any you would like more information about ISO 9000:2000, visit www.bsi.org.uk/iso-tc176-sc2.

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16864 QP July: Multiple Choice

Juan Cevallos Ampuero

Aug-30-03

The article is very good. It is very interesting for the treated topic, but it requires bigger deep. Matters as systems thinking, theory of the chaos and theory of restrictions they require more detail. The topics of Baldrige, ISO 9000, Lean and Six Sigma we know them more. It is also required of a proposed or cases by means of which are integrated the techniques or systems. I think that over there goes the future of the quality in the XXI Century. The knowledge spreads to be integrated. Efforts should be promoted for it integrated the diverse ones technical. I still don't receive the number of August, please, to revise. In other months I received the magazine QP at the beginning of the month.
Juan Cevallos, of Lima - Peru.

16863 QP July: Multiple Choice

Juan Cevallos Ampuero

Aug-30-03

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Juan Cevallos, of Lima - Peru.

16843 Re: Letter: Process Identification Article Missing Something?

Russell Scott Hehn

Aug-29-03

Yes, these were my thoughts as well, although I like the idea in general as it quickly and easily shows the SIPOC, it does not cover the interaction of the processes which I would say is one of the main issues of the new standard. I would very much like to see the author reply to this issue.

Russ Hehn

16801 Letter: Lands End Handles a Myriad Customer Concerns

ASQ Staff

Aug-22-03

As an active ASQ member, I regularly read Quality Progress and always look forward to articles related to customer service and the contact center industry in general. A comment in Susan E. Daniels' most recent article leaves me a bit perplexed, though ("A Model for Customer Service," August 2003, p. 30). After talking about the difficult job your 18 CSRs have in deciphering the wants and needs of customers, you state, "It's certainly not like taking orders over the phone for Lands' End, the giant catalog and internet merchant." Wow! Clearly your small team of CSRs deals with some tricky questions, but try fielding questions and directing calls that range from PETA members unhappy that we sell leather products to vendors wanting someone in our B2B division to purchase their trinkets. Of course those calls are not the majority; a more likely scenario is a customer who is leaving on vacation, doesn't know what the weather will be like or what the dress code will be, and would like a new wardrobe including a swimsuit to fit her particular body style. Add to the daily routing the fact that Lands' End products are now appearing in nearly 900 Sears full-line stores across the nation and you have a whole host of new questions from product assortment to state sales tax rates (which vary wildly and are now collected due to our physical presence in most states). To quote your article, "It's not easy," but somehow we manage to train and communicate with nearly 2,000 CSRs in 5 contact centers. And maintain world-renown customer service that makes all the internal processes virtually transparent. Like your center, Lands' End does not use any automated phone systems, cross-trains reps in all aspects of customer service and provides extensive training (four weeks for new hires and 20 hours per year on-going). Unlike your center we are open 24/7, with domestic operations spread across four cities and international operations in four countries. I will continue to be a regular reader of Quality Progress and hope that my email has given you some insight into daily life at

Lands' End.
Alyssa Yogerst
Communications Manager
Customer Sales & Service
alyssa.yogerst@landsend.com

16800 Letter: Questions Regarding Aug. 2003
ASQ Staff
Aug-22-03

I have read and reviewed my textbooks on sample sizes recently. Then, I read Lynne Hare's article in the latest Quality Progress magazine ("Statistics Roundtable: n," p. 72) and I have the following questions: 1) Does the second formula for sample size you used in the article apply only to data with normal distributions? I have textbooks that do not declare the kind of distribution underlying the discussions related to the formula you used. You indicate a normal distribution was required p. 74. LH: Strictly speaking, the formula depends on normality. For mild departures from normality, it still holds, but as departures from normality become more extreme you should seek a different solution, either directly from the distribution, if known, or using a normalizing transformation.

2) I am working with the results of a survey question where the answers are "1, 2, 3, 4, or 5", the distribution of the values is very negatively skewed, the mean is 4.54, the $s = 0.83$. Am I allowed to use your formula for sample size even though the distribution is very negatively skewed? LH: Not to make you sorry you asked, but again, it depends on what you are trying to say. For example, if you are trying to estimate the mean with a confidence interval, the second formula works because means from even a badly skewed distribution approximate normality more and more closely as the sample size increases. 3) Some textbooks use "E" for allowable error in the formula for sample size and state a given value (such as \$100, 0.01 inches, etc.). You used W and "+/-" to explain that in the article. Does "+/- 4" equal an allowable error range of 8? Or, is the value needed in the formula understood to be the same as "within 2 of the true value" = $+2$ or $-2 = 4$?

LH: Sorry if I was not entirely clear about this point. My W is the half-width of the confidence interval. So, plus or minus W would be the full range of the confidence interval. Ralph's plus or minus 4 grams results in a confidence interval range of 8 grams.

Larry G. DeVries
ASQ Member
Eden Prairie, MN

16797 Letter: Reader Would Like Input on Essay
ASQ Staff
Aug-21-03

I am working in Turkey as a industrial engineer. My major interests are six sigma, lean production and simulation. Now I am studying on a combined method of both six sigma and lean production. I was planning to use simulation programs as a tool in this combined method and after reading Matthew Greenfield's article "Process Mapping's Next Step" in the September 2002 issue (p. 50), I really got convinced and now I want to share my

opinions. If you give me some feedback about the following essay I will be very glad. Thanks for your interest. VSD(value stream design) is a good LP tool to start a project. Because, it gives a close understanding to BB and enables BB to see the obvious improvements. But after that point it becomes obsolete. Because it uses snapshot data collected from the shop floor. In other words statistics like variance and average is not used instead just the data from one single moment is used. Will this data be enough to deal with complex problem? The answer is surely no. But the only solution is not to perform the six sigma statistics analysis from the scratch. This will be waste of time and afford. Instead you may simulate the VSD and then automatically you can do the statistical analyses by the output analyzer of simulation programs(like siman(arena) output analyzer). In addition, simulation will support you accurate analyses of complicated processes by a simple computer program. It will indicates bottlenecks and excess capacities in terms of machines, workers, cycle time or any other resources. Furthermore, by the help of just single a computer you can animate any process(es) that takes so long time in the actual production line. With minute changes on the simulation model you can run the processes to observe any improvements that you recommend. Since every things is hold on computer without incurring real costs, you can evaluate the results of the improvement without taking any risk that you take in the real life implementations. In other words, you can see the performance and potential risks of the improvements without really incurring them. Since all the real life cases inevitably includes complexity, independence and variations, it is impossible to accurately evaluate any production system without using simulation. LP has no advanced data analyses and six sigma deals with individual processes and ignore the independence of processes within a production line. However, this independence will affect the overall performance of processes. Thus, simulation is a good solution. Besides all its benefits mentioned, animation of the production and statistical reports of performance measures are very convincing evidence for the top manager.

Ferhat Muhtar

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16792 Re: Re: Letter: CMMI Is an Alternative to ISO 9000

Richard Ickler

Aug-20-03

We are currently implementing CMMI as a "management system", initially for software and system engineering but for all areas over the next year and a half. There are actually 2 models. The original model was CMM (no 'I') and we have several software design groups which have Level 5 certification. CMM-I (Capability Maturity Model - Integrated) is the extension of CMM as a generalized management model. Raytheon is implementing CMMI because they are getting pressure from DoD to implement it with Level 3 being the minimum acceptable. If you are interested, check out the SEI website at <http://www.sei.cmu.edu/cmmi/>. There is a lot of overlap between CMMI and ISO9000. If you meet CMMI Level 3 you also are fully compliant with ISO9001:2000. Actually CMMI is just the latest model which attempts to be the next step beyond ISO9000. Motorola has had their Quality Systems Review for about 10 years, there is the Baldrige

Award model, Ford has its Q1 model, I understand that there is a healthcare QSR, etc. All of them share the concept of maturity levels and management systems rather than Quality Management Systems. One difference in CMMI is that they define maturity in levels where each level indicates increasing numbers of functions in place rather than scoring the organization based on the maturity of each function.

16787 Letter: Member Receives Outstanding Customer Service From ASQ

ASQ Staff

Aug-20-03

After reading the article in the August 2003 about ASQ's Call Center (Susan E. Daniels, "A Model for Customer Service," p. 30), I had to write about another ASQ team member who is deserving of special recognition for the excellent customer service he provides. I don't know what department he is with, but most of the time when I send in a question or request via e-mail, the individual on the receiving end at ASQ is Alan Zukrow. I have had a lot of questions in the past nine months or so, as the local AQP chapter recently merged with ASQ Section 614, and I am now an elected officer with the ASQ section. As a member of both organizations, I have had many questions about membership, the "affiliation" and related things. I have also needed assistance with membership lists, mailing labels and more. These days, it seems that good customer service is often hard to find. I have never received anything less than GREAT service from Alan. He is professional, friendly, and usually able to answer my question(s) right away. For other items, he refers me to the appropriate person(s). It is clear to me that Alan really cares about his customers.

Jo Haberstok

Vice Chair, ASQ Section 614

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16786 Re: Letter: CMMI Is an Alternative to ISO 9000

William Pflanz

Aug-20-03

Tony,

You are totally correct in your assessment that CMMI is more demanding. CMMI was developed by DOD because ISO 9000 was too vague in how it applied to software and also they wanted to go beyond the minimum standards. The levels of progression for CMMI are a response to the perceived weaknesses. CMMI also acknowledges that there are many similarities with ISO 9000 since it is trying to encourage the same needs for quality management and improvement. I would agree that it could be used as a model for non-software systems if someone wanted to convert it into non-IT language (and bring us back full circle). I do find it overwhelming to understand the 700+ pages of CMMI so it has its drawbacks also. As far as you being the "expert", I always define an expert as someone that knows at least one more thing than others. With that as the definition, you may be the expert on this board until you are replaced.

Bill Pflanz
Section 801

16784 One Good Idea - Process Identification

Joseph Reinhardt

Aug-20-03

By using the table does this not avoid all of the benefit to the organization? I realize it makes a fine table for the auditors, but should we not have a deeper understanding of our internal processes?

I have seen time and again organizations that avoid all of the positive aspects of the management systems while maintaining the facade of the system for the auditors.

Anyone else see what I see?

16775 Widespread Effects of Defects August 2003

Sidney Schaaf

Aug-19-03

Definition of Software Engineers:

The article in the August 2003 issue of ASQ brought to mind the many misgivings that software engineers are faced with. Perhaps before you start the bashing you should analyze in more detail what exactly is a software engineer. I think you will find that there is a vast overlap of multiple disciplines. The following is being supplied to help explain the many unknowns that we software engineers face. What is a software engineer? Well this particular discipline covers a wide area of expertise. A software engineer will often have to perform many different tasks. These tasks or duties include but are not limited to the following:

- ? Must have an encompassing knowledge of the process or the system being controlled, developed, modified, or monitored.
- ? Must be able to understand mechanical devices along with the mechanical sequencing associated with different processes.
- ? Must be able to understand electrical devices and the electrical control components used to control the system or process.
- ? Must be able to develop and write software for the processes or systems. The software used is as varied as the electrical components required to control the systems. Examples of the electrical hardware include Programmable Logic Controllers (PLC?s) Computer Numerical Controls (CNC?s). Personal Computers (PC) used both in the Computer Aided Designs (CAD?s) and Computed Aided Manufacturing (CAM?s) sub systems.
- ? In my particular field it is extremely helpful to understand real time programming.

Potential Problems:

In developing a new product or system, there seems to be an abundance of problems or challenges that arise. One of the most difficult problems to resolve is the ?dreaded software problem?, or an occasional ?computer hardware? problem. We have all either

heard or have even used the following statement as an excuse. "I couldn't finish what I needed to do because of a software problem or a computer problem." Did you know that this excuse is one of the most accepted excuses used in the workplace? Do you know why this excuse is typically accepted? It is because software is treated as a black box. Most people do not understand software and therefore they find it easier to pass the buck onto the software engineers or programmers. And besides who is there that can challenge this claim? (Most bosses I know can't argue the point, thus the excuse usually is accepted.) At some point in their careers, people will tend to use this excuse at least once. Using this excuse does not necessarily mean that a problem truly exists. Let me expound or substantiate this comment with the following questions that your article failed to address. What was the true error for the computer you claimed simply stopped responding? Do you know how the PC manufacturer rounds off numbers? Do they round up from 5 or simply drop the additional digits? What is the machine's epsilon? And most important what typically happens when you divide an extremely small number by an extremely large number? When you understand and can answer these questions or concepts, then you are ready to discuss the shortcomings of software engineering. With this being said, it opens a new line of questions that you may not have considered. For instance once software has been installed and operational for say 6 months, why all of a sudden do people immediately think that when something doesn't work it must be a software problem? You started to consider this in the article but did not fully expound upon your views. I can say quite honestly, that software does not magically change over the course of time. Questions need to be asked as to what has changed within the process or use. Only then can a user start to understand the full potential of what might have happened. Please don't get me wrong I have debugged my share of Microsoft code, that I do understand many of the pitfalls that transpire when generating code for specific applications. Over the course of my career I have seen a version of Microsoft C++ compiler that can't add 2 long numbers together properly. When challenged, Microsoft merely indicates that they will fix this in the next version. At this point I do agree that we as users of PC systems seem to be conditioned to a point that allows people to invoke the nebulous excuse that I have computer problems. However, I still believe there is a multitude of other problems that are at the true cause of why things do not work the way us users believe they should. Another point I want to make is there is truly a distinction between (Hardware Descriptive Language) called HDL or VHDL and used by many companies to configure their (Programmable Logic Devices) PLD's. Although the HDL does a great job in defining the Finite State Machines, Truth Tables, and other Boolean Equations, it simply falls short of true software. The PLD hardware now performs many of the software functions. I bring this up simply to point out that there are innumerable areas for problems to exist within a system be it a PC or a dedicated control system. The average operator has no clue as to what is transpiring behind the scenes and really doesn't need to. But people should be made aware that the quality of the software is not always the true problem when things just stop working. One last point that I want to bring up that your article seemed to have missed. In a real time environment software can what I call cover up a deficiency in mechanical design. This is simply stating that real time programmers have and usually have to adjust their code to compensate for the mechanical shortcuts or omissions that mechanical engineers may have missed. For the average person this means absolutely nothing. But for the mechanical engineers and

software engineers working together, they truly know and usually speak very little about this subject. It is kind of an unspoken acknowledgment between the disciplines.

I just wanted to add my two plus cents worth.

Sid Schaaf

Project Engineer

Software / Electrical

16772 Letter: ASQ's Customer Service Is Top Notch

ASQ Staff

Aug-18-03

I just read Susan E. Daniels' article "A Model for Customer Service" in the August 2003 issue of Quality Progress (p. 30). I've been a frequent caller to ASQ headquarters for many years and have been very happy with the service. I've told others about it and encouraged them to give it a try. I like talking to a knowledgeable person so please don't switch to an automated system. Customer service is doing a terrific job!

Joseph Ludford

Senior Member

White Hart Associates

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16771 Re: Re: Letter: CMMI Is an Alternative to ISO 9000

Carl Keller

Aug-18-03

I'll second that! I believe Tony Brown to be an expert in CMMI and can't wait to read his upcoming article! Sounds like an interesting topic. I would be very interested.

Regards,

Carl-

16768 Re: Re: Chicken soup issue

Laurence Thayer

Aug-18-03

Thanks Lynne, The original post was responding to what I thought was a poorly documented article. I know there is limited space in a magazine article, but if we are going to sell the results I think we need to document clearly the solution and the problem. If we just sell the solution, it can come off as motherhood and applepie which are great things but do they apply to every problem? Thanks for the verification.

16763 Re: Letter: CMMI Is an Alternative to ISO 9000

Steven Prevette

Aug-15-03

The "multiple choice" series came about in part due to my taking issue with the apparent single minded focus on six sigma. I would like to encourage you (and I believe the ASQ QP editorial staff will also encourage you) to write an article on CMMI, or find an expert who is willing to write an article. Note you may find yourself thrust into the role of "expert".

Steve Prevette

ASQ CEQ

16758 Letter: Table With Total System Functions Difficult To Work With

ASQ Staff

Aug-15-03

The identification table in Russ Westcott's "Back to Basics" column entitled "Process Identification" (August 2003, p. 104) is very simple; however, if total system functions are included it will soon become very difficult to work with. This is one of the major reasons for flowcharting the system -- you can drill down to the depth required to completely define your system. Think of it as a three dimensional outline, constructed to track/guide the flow of data, materials and products throughout the manufacturing cycle. A sample QSP would assist in the complete understanding of this approach. In any event, the inclusion of accounting, not included in the standard, is an advancement towards a management system. It is assumed that the accounting department is included in QSP-01, because they must be brought aboard at the start of any project.

Ted Hillberg

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16757 Letter: CMMI Is an Alternative to ISO 9000

ASQ Staff

Aug-15-03

The July 2003 addition of Quality Progress was excellent, and I particularly liked the article about "Multiple Choice" (p. 25). However, I do have to take issue with the exclusion of CMMI as a plausible alternative to ISO 9000 as quality management system. There are many large organisation, my own included, that are exploring it's possible application as a generic management system. Despite it's background in software and latterly systems engineering, the underlying quality management principles are evident in many of it's clauses. The DOD also make it a mandatory requirement for level three on development contracts with a heavy systems and software content. The system of regulation is far more rigorous than the ISO 9000 assessments. The escalating maturity levels based on improved process capability makes it more demanding than achieving

ISO approval. It would be interesting to see what the other members views on this topic are and its practical application.

Tony Brown

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16754 Re: Chicken soup issue

Lynne Hare

Aug-14-03

Believe me, I know. As it turned out, I later went to work for that same company but in a different capacity. I saw the failure first hand!

Lynne

16734 Letter: Good Point Made in August

ASQ Staff

Aug-13-03

I think Russ Westcott's "Back to Basics" column, entitled "Process Identification" (August 2003, p. 104), presents a good idea in using a simple table to present so much data. Also, his point about ISO not requiring the process needing to be documented in a process map is a good point. To make a QMS accepted by the organization, the parts of the system need to be complete, correct and consistent and presented in a manner easily understood by the corporate culture. I would also suggest that companies try "front ending" their process maps with a "process model" such as one with IDEF0 as the notation. This gives visibility into the many boundaries of internal process activities so better process maps can be derived. Hence a scenario with IDEF0 and a table such as Westcott proposes would be highly effective. Try playing with combinations of IDEF0, flowcharts, tables, IDEF1 and 3 etc and see how much can be easily communicated. These would also be good to have as a basic for a corporate Process Asset Library (PAL). (Note: It is always good to use multiple model types to communicate what is taking place in a system since one needs a functional view, a behavior/temporal view all in an easily communicated fashion).

Just my two cents.....!!!!

Robert (Bob) P. Hanrahan, ASQ CSQE, ISO CLA, CCP

Program Manager

Systems Support Division

Modern Technologies Corporation

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16733 Re: Letter: Need To Get to Root Cause of Customer Complaints

ASQ Staff

Aug-13-03

I absolutely agree - any customer input is an opportunity. Reducing the number of complaints should not be the focus. The emphasis should be on - What is being done about the feedback? What new avenues are being implemented to collect customer feedback? Is everything possible being done to listen to the customer, to meet their needs, to prevent unhappy customers before they lodge a complaint?

Catherine Wano

DENTSPLY

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16728 Letter: Process Identification Article Missing Something?

ASQ Staff

Aug-13-03

This is in reference to the "Back to Basics" column entitled "Process Identification" by Russ Westcott (August 2003, p. 104). This appears to be a very effective and concise presentation of a QMS, but I'm not sure it fully defines the interaction as required in clause 4.1, item b and clause 4.2.2, item c. There seems to be much discussion that many problems happen at the hand off from one process to another. Hence the reason to make sure the interaction is defined and evaluated.

Al Gerber

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16727 Letter: Revolutionary Approach to Process Identification

ASQ Staff

Aug-13-03

REVOLUTIONARY! I loved Russ Westcott's out-of-the-box approach in his August "Back to Basics" column titled "Process Identification" (p. 104). I agree that this format is so much more easier to maintain, especially for the smaller organizations. The only aspect missing is if this approach would meet independent auditor requirements for ISO certification.

Bridget Hamilton

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16719 Letter:

ASQ Staff

Aug-12-03

The article "Multiple Choice" in relation to quality systems in the July 2003 issue of Quality Progress was excellent (p. 25). It provided pertinent information to the current systems in quality management and how they can be utilized in a variety of different organizations. Presentation of information in this format is worthwhile for those who are

new to the quality arena, as well as a review for those who are experienced in the area.
The system choices was a job well done for a quality appetite.

Sandra E. Ward, RN, MA, MS, CPUR
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16718 Letter: Standard Does Not Require Six Documented Procedures

ASQ Staff

Aug-12-03

I appreciated reading the "Standards Outlook" column by Sandford Liebesman, "Auditing a Process Based System," in the August 2003 issue of Quality Progress (p. 90).

However, on p. 91 under item 3, Liebesman states, "The standard requires only six documented procedures: Control of documents (4.2.3) Control of records (4.2.4)

Internal audit (8.2.2) Control of nonconforming product (8.3) Corrective action (8.5.2)

Preventive action (8.5.3)." The standard does not require six documented procedures.

From the ISO Document ISO/TC 176/SC 2/N525R, Guidance on the Documentation Requirements of ISO 9001:2000, found at <http://www.iso/>, the requirement is stated as:

ISO 9001:2000 specifically requires the organization to have "documented procedures"

for the following six activities: 4.2.3 Control of documents 4.2.4 Control of records

8.2.2 Internal audit 8.3 Control of nonconforming product 8.5.2 Corrective action

8.5.3 Preventive action These documented procedures have to be controlled in

accordance with the requirements of clause 4.2.3. Some organizations may find it

convenient to combine the procedure for several activities into a single documented

procedure (for example, corrective action and preventive action). Others may choose to

document a given activity by using more than one documented procedure (for example,

internal audits). Both are acceptable.

Robert D. Zaczewski

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16710 Letter: Quality's Many Flavors

ASQ Staff

Aug-11-03

Sometimes we quality practitioners think we work in a business of supplying many flavors of quality. We all know that there is a flavor, or program of the year. Many of us have seen, taught, consulted and defended these flavors of quality. From my observations, all of the flavors developed over the past 25 years can produce a better quality product, improve our service quality and increase productivity while reducing the cost to the organizations that correctly implement the flavor(s). As Quality Progress begins to look at this complex and often confusing dilemma, the dialogue that is getting into print in the last several years, i.e. Quality 101 in the July 2002 issue (p. 25) and

"Multiple Choice" in the July 2003 issue (p. 25), may surely help us better understand what has and is occurring. Let us be cautious in this dialogue. Many of our newer practitioners are not fully trained and lack experience in all of the past flavors and, as in the past, will often jump on the newest flavor as "The Flavor" and tout it as the ultimate Flavor. The point is, that no one flavor will provide quality for an organization or client. The quality professional has to select the correct flavor at the proper time to improve quality. For instance, using a Club (Six Sigma) when a small tack hammer (SPC) is needed can just mess up everything. When processes are not yet stable or have not even reached three sigma, why even consider using Six Sigma methodology. It is our responsibility as quality professionals and practitioners and our organizations, like the ASQ, to be ever mindful of this dilemma. It is the journey. Let us not get hooked on the latest flavor of the year, or the latest standard or the latest guru to come our way.
Gene Tomlinson, CQA and ASQ Fellow
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16699 Re: A Model for Customer Service

Wesley Bucey

Aug-07-03

From Wes Bucey, Quality Manager

For what it's worth, check out <http://www.ebenchmarking.com>

In a newsletter early this year they announced a benchmarking study was underway for call centers: <i>"The Benchmarking Network and the International Contact Center Benchmarking Consortium (ICCBC) announced they will be kicking off a new study in the area of Call Center Operations Best Practices. Now is the time to join Capital One, Metlife, Toyota Financial Services Corporation, and Verizon Communications and become involved in setting the focus and direction of the study. This is a "best practices" study that will include site visits to top performing companies. The study will focus on such areas as:

- Call Center - Inbound/Outbound
 - Physical characteristics of call center
 - Cost of staffing
 - Employee retention
 - Monitoring
 - Coaching time
 - Supervisor/staff ratios
 - Hiring criteria
 - Compensation measures
 - Career progression measures
 - Training times
 - Available time
 - Time per call
 - Peak management measures
 - Resolution rate
 - Meetings (quantity and length)

- Call Centers - Inbound
 - Queue management (time, etc.)
 - Staffing and skill measures
 - Multi-product sales
 - Segmenting calls
 - Document imaging (quantity/cost)
 - Customer satisfaction
 - Toll lines used
 - Expected service level measures
 - One-stop service
 - Call reduction
 - Call back rates
- Technologies Used to Support Call Center Operations
- Cell Center Performance Measures
 - Key metrics
 - Time to answer
 - Abandon rate
 - Length of tree - loss rates
 - Time tolerances
 - % of work off-line/time off-line

To receive detailed information on the content and focus of the study contact the ICCBC Director via phone at 281-440-5044, or via e-mail at info@iccbc.org. I submit this info "as is" - I have no idea if the study was performed or completed - you investigate and determine if they have info to help you get the answers you seek.

-Wes Bucey

16698 A Model for Customer Service

Greg Bloemke

Aug-07-03

I enjoyed this article and am wondering where one might go to learn about how success has been achieved in an incoming only Customer Call Center. Where might I go to read about successful award winning call centers? Is there such a place to learn about their methods and procedures and how they set up their successful center? Again, this is for an inbound customer service center, not an outbound telemarketing call center.

16688 What I Learned on My Business Trip (QP 08/03)

Gary Mach

Aug-06-03

Author William C. Parr accurately details some of the customer service frustrations many of us see almost everytime we travel or enter a retail establishment. While I commend his decision to write about it, I think hw should also send copies of the article to both the

airline and hotel at issue. As Quality Professionals is it not our civic duty to point out these failures to the our fellow quality professionals who undoubtedly are starved for accurate data about the cusomter service at each of these business institutions? I make it my personal mission to write letters to all companies who either disappoint or delight me with their attention to quality porcesses and service. Supplying this information is the only way we can expect these situations to improve.

16671 Re: Letter: Questions Regarding

ASQ Staff

Aug-04-03

WILLIAM MEEKER'S RESPONSE:

I am sorry for the delay in answering your questions. I volunteered to answer, but have been traveling a good deal this summer and it slipped through the cracks for a while. The details for the computations for the graphs are treated in several different books (including the Nelson 1990 and Meeker and Escobar 1998 references). I will give specific references to formulas in Meeker and Escobar. Most users of these methods, however, use available software to do the computations. After the maximum likelihood estimates for the regression parameters (β_0 , β_1 , and σ) are obtained, the quantile life function (10%, 50%, 90% lines) were obtained from equation 17.7 of Meeker and Escobar, using $p = 0.1, 0.5, 0.9$. The proportion failing as a function of time, for different voltages was obtained from equation 17.6. In both equations, the value of $x = \log(\text{voltage stress})$, where \log is base e (natural logarithm). The Phi function used here are for the smallest extreme value distribution because of the relationship between the Weibull and smallest extreme value distribution (the logarithm of a Weibull random variable has a smallest extreme value distribution). See section 4.7 and 4.8 for explicit definitions of these functions. I hope that this helps.

Bill Meeker

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16670 Letter: Questions Regarding

ASQ Staff

Aug-04-03

I enjoyed the article titled "Speedier Reliability Analysis" by Gerald Hahn, William Meeker and Necip Doganaksoy in QP's June 2003 edition (p. 58) and have a couple of questions listed below. Can you either forward these questions to the authors of this article or provide me their e-mail addresses to send these questions to?

Thank You!

Kenneth Lee

Mgr. of Product Integrity

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QUESTIONS:

Can you walk me through step by step how the 10%, 50% and 90% Time To Failure Estimates graph (figure #3 in the article) was created? The explanation was rather brief.

Also, can you explain to me how you created the Estimated Failure Probabilities graph (figure #4 in the article)?

16659 Re: Letter: Zero Defects Day Shouldn't Be Trivialized

Kevin Mader

Aug-01-03

Did Mike trivialize the concept, or more accurately, did he portray management trivializing it through their ignorance? I doubt many here would disagree that having a day of 'celebration' or recognition of management commitment to a quality vision might be a good thing. But I think that Mike has got it right - it would only be for one day and a convenient day at that. It is interesting to observe senior management routinely squirm for a couple of days when ISO auditors come for a visit, that is to say that they consider it important enough to be there for the audit. On these two days and perhaps for a few hours during a Management Review, we catch a glimpse of what management commitment to Quality might be. Many here can describe repeat performances in their own facilities. The reality is that there is significant management commitment only it rallies around a different cause and a different theory.

Kevin

16651 Letter: What About 5S?

ASQ Staff

Jul-31-03

I loved the "Multiple Choice" article in the July 2003 issue (p. 25), and the cover was very eye-catching too ... but I didn't see a mention of 5S. That's the technique I use a lot, partly because I specialise in helping small businesses and they need something very basic. So, seeing as you ask for a short letter or even shorter letter about readers' favourite quality methodology, here's my offering: 5S: the first step I introduce quality to small businesses. Really small businesses. That's the sort which has a man, a car and a second hand computer stuck in an attic somewhere. Well, the car might be in the street. Of course, they don't know about quality, they often don't know where the next pay check is coming from and they're, quite literally, terrified. The technique I use is 5S. Anyone with a small business who is operating in limited space will know that the smaller their

territory, the more important it is to know exactly where everything is, immediately. But 5S isn't just about housekeeping. A quality initiative has got to impact on the bottom line, and if the bottom line doesn't get affected, I don't get paid. So I make quite sure that the business does benefit! I have two and a half aims with 5S. I need to show the company how it can save time and resources by adopting 5S, which is relatively simple - sorting out what is essential and junking or archiving what is not, then coming to an agreement how things can be kept in the most efficient way. Next, I show how processes can be mapped, documented and standardised, which takes a bit longer, as I play the part of the country visitor, asking just how things are done and why they are done in a particular way, before reaching an agreement on the simplest and most efficient way to carry out their processes. And, finally, (this is the half aim), I show the company just what they've saved, present my bill, get paid and ride off into the sunset to find another desperate customer. Oh yes, and I aim to leave a satisfied customer who has a basic, but robust, quality management system, the beginnings of an audit trail, and some hope for the future.

Jenny Glover

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16647 Letter: ISO 9000 Is About More Than Process Documentation

ASQ Staff

Jul-30-03

In the July 2003 issue, Tom Kubiak's otherwise interesting article "A System of Approaches" (p. 25) perpetuates the misconception that ISO 9001 is primarily about documenting processes and rigorously adhering to those procedures to achieve the desired end result of consistent (good or bad) performance. Of course we know that the ISO 9001 standard uses the documentation tool as one of its many planning, implementation and evaluation tools to ensure its stated end objective - that a management system must effectively achieve the organization's defined and measurable product and service quality objectives. It is pretty disheartening to hear quality professionals misconstrue basic quality concepts in the nation's premier quality journal. In this case, the peer review process did not achieve ASQ's publication quality objectives.

Barry Grimm

Hernandez Engineering

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16646 Letter: Zero Defects Day Shouldn't Be Trivialized

ASQ Staff

Jul-30-03

Everyone at Philip Crosby Associates II got a good chuckle over the Mr. Pareto Head cartoon in the July 2003 Quality Progress (p. 11). Having said that, it's disconcerting to

see Mike Crossen trivialize this useful management concept. When Philip Crosby invented the concept of a Zero Defects Day, he clearly stated that it was not expected to be a day where no defects or errors occurred. Rather, it was to be a day where the organization's management pledged its commitment to quality improvement and the vision of delivering defect-free products and services to customers and associates. We routinely visit companies that celebrate 200+ days with no lost-time accidents, but could not conceive of even a single day without a missed shipment or a scrapped assembly. The difference is not a lack of ability to achieve a Zero Defects performance standard, but the lack of commitment and vision. For that reason, Philip Crosby Associates II rededicated the concept of "Zero Defects Day" in 2000 and renamed it "Celebration of Commitment." It remains a vital part of the Quality Improvement Process that is Philip Crosby's legacy to the quality profession.

Wayne L. Kost

President and CEO

Philip Crosby Associates II

Winter Park, FL

16640 QP Article-July 2003

Coury Ferguson

Jul-29-03

After reading the article, I was just wondering why ISO 9004:2000 wasn't mentioned? David Shipley, Carl Keller, James Bossert, Steve Prevette, Duke Okes, Dale Crownover and Tom Kubiak all had convincing discussions. I like each any everyones point. However, doesn't ISO 9004:2000 take all of these issues and combines them into one standard to choose from? Did anyone consider writing about the benefits of developing a Business Management System (BMS/QMS) within the guidelines of ISO 9004:2000? Not that I would volunteer to write such an article but there should be some better experts on ISO 9004:2000 than me.

Coury Ferguson

Manager, Quality Management Systems

16635 Capability Analysis of Complex Parts Article

Sheri McClintic

Jul-28-03

Am I missing something? According to the July 2003 article "Capability Analysis of Complex Parts", the number of capability indices can be reduced to one. First of all, since you are collecting all the data for each characteristic, why not just calculate the associated indices? (According to the author, this is quite a task. In fact, it takes just as long for a statistical software package to calculate one index as it does multiple.) When it comes to process improvements, you need the individual indices to know where to work. I think the concept of using yield to predict capability (given the error in estimation - considering a majority of manufacturing processes run toward nominal) is unbeneficial.

I would be interested in hearing others thoughts on this topic.

Sheri

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16619 Letter: Quality Professionals Need To Use Their Management Skills

ASQ Staff

Jul-22-03

Steven Prevette's article "Systems Thinking - An Uncommon Answer" in the July 2003 issue was a very welcome assurance that I was not alone in this thinking ("Multiple Choice," p. 25). Unfortunately the world around us does not match up with this common sense approach to dealing with business and life in general, creating a highly stressful environment in which to be able to exercise proper professional and life judgements. We are living in the midst of a "I want it now" and "me only" generation. Just look at the stock markets and the importance of quarterly earnings, companies live and die by them. Who wants to invest in a company that states, "We will be here for many years, just be patient with our current losses because here are the action plans for recovery."? Maybe just some astute investors will bank on this one, but the masses will simply drop it like a hot potato. So if the investors themselves want immediate satisfaction, the board of directors, CEO's and all other levels of management will need to follow suit. So where does that put the quality professional or anyone for that matter who sees the real benefit in systems management? It puts us in a position where we have to use our management skills to the fullest, balancing daily what needs to be done immediately for real and for effect, and keeping the real long term activities on the front burners by ensuring you solicit enough support to do so.

Steve Pirosko

Manager, quality and customer service

GDX Automotive, Welland Ontario

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16611 Letter: Quality Systems Article Sparks Interest

ASQ Staff

Jul-21-03

I read with great interest the analysis of various quality/productivity programs in your magazine and wish to comment on Six Sigma and lean ("Multiple Choice," July 2003, p. 25). It is interesting that the article about lean and Six Sigma is written by a Six Sigma chief of a bank--not a manufacturing operation. One broad summary of lean is to eliminate muda, mura and muri, that is "waste", "variation" and "excess". Six Sigma is addressing the mura. Tom Kubiak's article (another chief from a non-manufacturing company) honestly mentions the ongoing debate about the 3.4ppm--and telling you frankly, a six sigma calculated to 3.4ppm is just as phony as a three-dollar bill. If we use the infinitesimal probability associated with something six sigma away to demonstrate a desire for high quality, zero defects, then we should be conceptually precise. Is it one tail

or two tails? Why 1.5 shift, why not 1.4? Why shift only one direction, that is why not 6.8ppm? How can we measure 3.4ppm quality, or correspondingly, how can we measure what is sigma? Is it sigma short term, sigma per shift, sigma on a day, how sigma changes? By the way, the lean principle of muri, no excess (minimal inventory) requires near zero defect and stable process. How effective is Six Sigma? On p. 42 Tom Kubiak writes that Motorola introduced Six Sigma in the early 1980s and GE followed suit in the mid-1990s. I looked at the stock prices of Motorola and GE in those periods. I would consider it a success if the stock price outperforms the rest of the crowd, such as Dow Jones or S&P. I got the idea from your magazine, p. 14 article on S&P beating Baldrige Index. It appears as though Motorola outperformed the market in the mid 1990s, then has fallen back to the average. GE started to outperform the market in the 1980s. If Six Sigma is effective I would think GE started it in the early 1980s and Motorola followed it with a failed effort in the mid 1990s. On the other hand, if we consider Toyota (TPS, TPM, Lean...), they really succeeded in manufacturing, bringing manufacturing jobs to the United States! I think corporate managers should hire engineers and managers who understand standard deviation and variance, who can perform simple regression (correlation, ANOVA) analysis and who have learned a structured problem solving approach, instead of hiring consultants who train their employees the same and call it total this and sigma that. One important aspect of TPS, TPM, lean is recognizing the knowledge and experience of the people on the production floor: employee involvement, empowerment, teaching them simple problem solving and teamwork techniques.

Janos G. Komaromi

MME, MBA, PE, with a leather belt

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16582 Letter: Each Article Filled With Hype

ASQ Staff

Jul-18-03

“Multiple Choice”

“What’s the best quality system?” (p. 25)

This is the lead article in the July 2003 issue of Quality Progress, and I had a ball with it! The article begins with two questions: “How would you answer this question? How would your colleagues? The editor found seven practitioners willing to have their answers published. The reason I had a ball with the article is that each answer was filled with hype concerning how good the system is. There is another side of the coin from the hype side. There is the negative side usually blaming Top Management for the reasons the advertised system didn’t work all that well. This side is often subtle—it is palpable in these articles. Carl Keller, in his piece, wrote: “There are many quality initiatives floating around, and a lot of hype surrounds some of them. Some initiatives border on being fads and gimmicks, while some have a bit more impact.” I’ve personally used the term hula-hoops to describe many of the miracle solutions that have come down to us through the years. I recognized our tendency for hype long before hula-hoops were the craze. I’ve been reading QP since 1949, and I believe I would be hard pressed not to find a share of hype and management bashing in every issue down the years. Thus, for my

eyes, Keller's comment stood out from the page. The subtitles for each piece were great! "User Friendly" "A Simple Method for Big or Small" "Synergy Made in Heaven" "An Uncommon Answer" "Complexity Theory Simplifies Choices" "It's Easy, Free and it Works" There was one that might be the way to go, or it might simply include the collective hype. In his essay, An Integrated Approach System, Kubiak made three quotable comments. "Over the last 20 years or so, many quality tools, techniques, strategies or approaches have come and gone." "In a few years, one fad is out, and a new one is in." "The various quality approaches are not independent of one another but can work in a mutually supporting and integrated manner." "It is not necessary or productive to leap from fad to fad as so many organizations have done." Steven S. Prevette's piece, "Systems Thinking—An Uncommon Answer," is the only one that speaks to a sound theory. It's old, but it's basic. The concepts of Deming and Ackoff and many of their early contemporaries have been forgotten and trampled on. I'm cheering for Prevette. It's my belief that systems thinking needs to be pursued further to include Living Systems, the work of James Grier Miller. I was attracted to Miller's work in 1972 and have used his Living Systems as a mental model tucked away in my head and used as a base for my work in quality control, operations research, sales, and the ministry ever since.

Olin K. Smith, PE

Las Vegas, NV

I'm a retired member of ASQ, member since 1949

I hold a Professional Quality Engineers license from the State of California

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16577 Re: Re: Letter: Scarcity of Articles From Quality Professionals

Steven Prevette

Jul-17-03

In my case, I did have to clear "Cleaning up with SPC" two years ago with my employer's legal department, and even the Department of Energy. This is because we listed specific performance by Fluor Hanford. It really wasn't too bad to get the clearance.

For the Systems Thinking article, the company did agree that I was only writing about general quality theory and they did not see the need to "clear" the article.

- Steve Prevette

Fluor Hanford.

16576 Re: Letter: Scarcity of Articles From Quality Professionals

Carl Keller

Jul-17-03

Anthon,

I agree. Precisely why I did not include my company name in the article I submitted for the July issue of QP. Write the article and leave the company name out of it. Describe your position but do not mention the company you work for. The VP here asked why I

did not mention the company in my article, I told him flat out, it would have been a hassle to get it past the legal department and I would get no benefit by doing so, so what is the incentive? My suggestion is to write all the articles you want and leave their name out of it.

Free speech is a beautiful thing.

Carl W. Keller

ASQ Certified Quality Manager

16572 Letter: Scarcity of Articles From Quality Professionals

ASQ Staff

Jul-17-03

Navigating the legal minefield can be a daunting task for the quality professional. Consider some of these obstacles to getting an article approved internally prior to any submission to an external publication: 1. Nondisclosure agreements (NDAs) or confidentiality agreements may contain broad definitions of "proprietary information", i.e., including not only intellectual property (patents, copyrights, trade secrets) but also ideas, formulas, processes, know-how, etc. 2. Insider trading policies that warn about tipping--the act of an insider disclosing nonpublic information regarding the company that might be used by another to profit in the trading of securities of companies (to which such information relates). The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has imposed large penalties even when the disclosing person did not profit from the trading. 3. Lawsuits in litigation or under appeal. Ahem...no comment. =) Is it any wonder there is a scarcity of articles from the quality professionals in the "trenches"?

Anthon Pang

apang@telus.net

16570 Re: Letter: Management Must Learn How To Succeed

Kevin Mader

Jul-17-03

I overlooked this letter initially, but I agree with Doug's assessment. I especially like his inclusion of Peter Drucker's comments on what a business is in business to do. It is an important message, or "critical" as Doug has put it.

Kevin

16550 Letter: The Latest Philosophy Isn't Always the Best

ASQ Staff

Jul-16-03

I want to add an "Amen" to Debbie Phillips-DONaldson's July 2003 editorial and comment that "striving for continuous improvement and performance excellence requires more than just announcing 'we're going to do Six Sigma'" ("Not the Program du Jour," p. 6). I have been in consulting and corporate management long enough (30+ years) to have

seen numerous “management philosophies du jour” come and go. With all due respect to the gurus like Deming, Juran, Crosby, Peters and many others and the insight they have provided, we, as the users of their studies, latch onto each idea as the universal, one-and-only approach. When a newer, hotter idea is presented we jump to that. The result is a hodge-podge of management philosophies guiding our companies and our country different directions. Businesses fail to create the optimum growth (success) atmosphere because management is busy chasing the latest ‘philosophy’. Company management should adopt “continuous improvement and performance excellence” as their raison d’etre then use the ‘philosophies’ as “tools for business process improvement” as Charles C. Cobb points out in his book. As you subsequently comment, “...companies must also find and use the tools that make the most sense for them.” My mission and passion in my position with Allen, Gibbs & Houlik, L.C. here in Wichita is to convince the middle-market companies, not-for profit organizations and governmental entities which we serve that they can be a “World Class Performer.” I have adopted this term to describe a company that has embedded the continuous improvement and performance excellence philosophy in its culture. I have given several presentations locally, which I created, to let these entities know that they can do this successfully even though they are small. As I point out in my presentations, certainly the first caveman who manufactured and sold flint tipped spears to his neighbors was focused on continuously improving his product and being the best spear producer in the world. So this really is nothing new ... we’ve just lost sight of it. Thank you for your editorial and the accompanying articles. Hopefully this will get the word out.

Frank L. McNeny
Special project manager
Allen, Gibbs & Houlik LC
FLMcNeny@aghlc.com

16535 Re: Letter: Knowing the Basics Is Just as Important as Knowing the Theory

Carl Keller

Jul-14-03

Bob,

I can't say that I disagree with you, however I will say this, the table of contents stated: "Multiple Choice Our Authors examine seven quality systems or combinations to help you determine what will work best for your organization" Like sports, if you don't know the rules to begin with, you might want to get some help before you start playing the game. I wrote my article from the point of view that quality professionals would be reading it and probably already had at least some idea of the basics. In my opinion, Quality 101 would definitely be a prerequisite before choosing one, or a combination of the Quality systems mentioned.

Carl W. Keller

ASQ Certified Quality Manager

Author of QOS-A Simple Method For Big or Small

16531 Re: Letter: Knowing the Basics Is Just as Important as Knowing the Theory
Steven Prevette

Jul-14-03

I certainly agree that you must know both the basics and the theory. Knowing only theory without any basics can have its shortcomings, as well as knowing the basics without any theory. I would suggest the second case is more "dangerous" than the first. Knowing the basics without any theory behind them generally creates a "hack" (Dr. Deming's used this term for this situation). I can say my intent was only to provide an introduction to the concepts in Systems Thinking, and to introduce the reading that there are other concepts out there than just Six Sigma. I did provide some internet and book references so that those who would like to continue onwards and learn the basics can do so. I myself would be plenty willing to write follow-on article(s), but I don't know if I could do justice to the great books that are already out there, especially The New Economics and Out of the Crisis (by Dr. Deming).

Steve Prevette

one of the authors of the "multiple choice" articles.

16526 Letter: Knowing the Basics Is Just as Important as Knowing the Theory

ASQ Staff

Jul-14-03

I just finished reading "Multiple Choice" in the July 2003 edition of Quality Progress (p. 25). The statement was made in the opening comments that you were looking to meet customer needs, one in particular being the many requests for help in "starting a quality program." I don't believe those articles would help. In fact, I sometimes feel the quality literature has lost its way because there is much diversity preached but not enough foundational information. Sports and quality have one key element in common; you must be grounded in the fundamentals. For someone trying to establish a quality system, they must have all of the basics covered. In sports competition, you have many teams that all play under the same rules. It seems the perennial winners have a high level of discipline for the fundamentals; physical training, practice over and over until you really have it down and making the fewest errors. My title is quality "assurance" which means I'm responsible for "assuring quality." In years past it was quality of the product through establishing a good quality practices. It has now expanded to quality of the systems, including those outside of quality. To do that you must have a thorough understanding of the various processes and systems. All the literature preaches continual improvement and adding value. However, unless you have control of the processes and systems, you can't improve them. It's no different than the basis of SPC; you can't determine capability if it's not in control. All of the systems discussed, except for the ISO 9001 standard which defines minimum requirements for a quality system, are refinements of this. They deal with performance, optimizing processes and systems, and the theoretical. As a general statement, most of us are in business to deliver products and services while consultants and educators deliver theory. Theory is excellent as a catalyst for change, but you must

have the basics down. Did you ever really think about what the meaning of "the more I learn, the less I know"? Just like in sports, I believe it tells us to keep going back the basics because that is where the winning tradition comes from.

Bob Pfannerstill

Divisional Quality Assurance Manager

Briggs and Stratton Copr.

bstills@charter.net

16515 Letter: The Best System Pays Attention to People

ASQ Staff

Jul-10-03

Over my 30 years of pharmaceutical quality control experience, I have been part of two ISO 9000 implementations and several continuous improvement programs. I have come to prefer an eclectic quality system ("Multiple Choice," July 2003, p. 25). Not only because I like to say eclectic, but because I am pragmatic in choosing what systems will work for the specific needs of an organization. My overall goal has been to implement a continuous improvement quality program utilizing several different quality and statistical methodologies. However, whatever system is chosen, it is people that implement and execute the process. The soft or people part of a quality system equation will make or break any quality effort. People have impact on at least 50 % of the system equation. I have found that the quality system can only be effectively implemented and improved by well informed, well trained people. Workers, supervisors, managers and executives must realize that they are all in it together. And, if they work together, they can accomplish almost anything. To be successful you need upper management support. It's a cliché but valid. "What's in it for the company/stockholders?" Management needs to demonstrate this support not only by words but by money and action. "Walk the talk." "Put your money where your mouth is." You will need the buy-in of the workers. "What's in it for me?" Training is a critical requirement. People should be trained not only in the methodologies of the chosen quality system, but in group dynamics and how to work in a team environment. People must learn to work in a team environment where there is person to person interactions. It is amazing how effectiveness is increased when people are trained to work as a team. Everyone must understand the benefits to the company as well as themselves. It should be easy to communicate to the participants that, if the company cannot compete in the marketplace, it will not be able to sell product. Therefore, no product, no company, no job. If the company can compete successfully, and even excel based on its quality improvements, there is job security with the possibility of personal advancement. At a minimum, there will be more to add to your resume. It is not just the methodologies and systems that create a successful quality system. There is a total infrastructure of policies and procedures that must be in place that include attention to the soft, people side of the system as well as the hard, methodology/hardware side. Bottom line - the best quality system is the one that pays attention to the people.

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16502 Letter: Management Must Learn How To Succeed

ASQ Staff

Jul-08-03

QUALITY SYSTEMS – The Language of Senior Management

The last few years have been tough going in business. In general, sales and profits certainly have not been what was hoped for, nor do they reflect what many organizations are capable of doing. Where we go in the next few years will be determined by management's vision of the future and how effectively we can bring this paradigm to a reality. "How to Speak the Language of Senior Management" (Stephen George, May 2003, p. 30) says to me that the paradigm and pathways to success are not clearly understood by many and that senior management needs to learn and practice the language of effective management not the other way around. The seven rules outlined in the article are good ones but it is management that needs to learn how to succeed. The role of management is very clearly concerned with the future of the organization and in developing the plans and capabilities that will get us there. There are many pathways to the future, but the clearest and most appropriate one that uses the assets wisely will be the best one. What are our assets? There are four critical assets: 1) People – "the doers" - without the people we have nothing 2) Resources – financial, property, raw materials, equipment etc. 3) Knowledge – the means to get where we want to be 4) Customers – "the goal" In order to effectively manage our capability as an organization, all of these assets must be properly managed within the right framework or system. Everyone needs to understand Deming's Profound Knowledge and apply it in building organizational capability. Good companies are built on a strong foundation of skills in managing these assets. We need to understand what the real drivers of the business are and then focus on developing these. Leadership and integrity are vital. Constant reorganization and change for the sake of doing something is not a good sign of the future. Are changes just window dressing or do they address the fundamental needs of the organization? Having a clear vision of where we want to be and knowing how to get there by proper utilization and development of the assets is the objective. Just as a sports team needs to have the right players who are inspired, proper facilities, knowledgeable players and managers, an effective strategy and fans in the seats so does a successful company. It is easy to blame the players or coaches for not winning but it is usually the entire organization that needs to be revamped when this is the case. Do we know that our strategies are correct, are the people motivated and properly trained, is management focusing on the right issues? Do we know how to get to where we want to be? Quite often quality and business improvement efforts are aimed at parts of the business such as manufacturing quality or sales and service initiatives and not the whole enterprise including management systems. In order to succeed, the entire system needs to be working together in an inspired way with clearly defined goals. ISO-9000 is a good example since usually this form of quality system implementation is applied to the manufacturing or service activities and not the

organization as a whole. The same principles of good management within a quality system should apply to the entire management system within the organization. This can be a tremendous opportunity. Just as recent examples at Enron or Worldcom have shown us, that integrity and accountability are important issues to a company's survival, these are a vital element within all quality and management systems. In these cases the issues were financial, but monitoring of activities in developing the four assets discussed above are just as important. How well do we train employees? Do we fully utilize employee skills and knowledge? How clearly defined is our vision and the specific roles for success? What do our customers think about us? How effectively do we solve problems? How well do we leverage our intellectual capital? The answers to these questions are critical and should be part of the processes within the management system. Clearly defined financial goals are certainly important and can be an effective means of helping to implement a strong quality system and to help achieve the vision mentioned above, but... The focus on utilizing tools to eliminate waste and reduce costs may provide important savings and benefits but does not address the bigger picture of developing an effective management system. It is the system that will ensure quality products and services by means of consistent optimized processes throughout the organization. The use of tools to optimize processes in conjunction with the system approach can be very productive. I agree with Peter Drucker that the purpose of business is to maintain and create customers (QP May, 2002). The business may add value and create wealth but the purpose is not to obtain profits. The difference is critical. The process of maintaining and developing customers is what provides the profits. The goal of the management system must be tailored towards providing and optimizing customer value and the focus of the organization must be on developing the system to do this. Senior management has a tendency to be preoccupied with (and accountable for) share price and thus the focus of the organization is often on the resources, cost control and the financial side. However, the real potential of the organization can only be realized when all of the above are optimized in a systematic approach. It is important to understand that profits are a result of the organizational system and are achieved indirectly through customers. To be successful the capability of the system must be optimized and profits will follow. Developing organizational values and communication skills are great ideas and if applied to the critical assets, can go a long way in helping companies succeed. Speaking a common language (senior management and all employees) and applying these principles through the process approach to improvement as part of the overall management system can work wonders. The point is that in order to succeed the organization needs to have an effective management system that optimizes the processes of providing customer value. System knowledge is one aspect of Profound knowledge as described by Deming and is an essential part of fundamental management practices. Building successful quality and business systems involves a wide range of knowledge, processes and tools that need to be developed, practiced and reviewed at all levels throughout the company. This is the language of senior management.

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16480 SPC: From Chaos to Wiping the Floor

Chet Haibel

Jul-03-03

Overall useful "human" article to put a little perspective on Shewhart's original intent becoming so ruled-based and argumentative. I did have a little heartburn about the comment on rational subgroups and Structural Variation. As I interpret the words, the six-lane stamping machine might have six tools in parallel making six parts every so often. These parts may be structurally different because of differences in the six tools. This would give an artificially high spread in the subgroup and an artificially high spread in the control limits -- the data would then be what we call a "dead worm," unlikely to look out of control when it might actually go out of control. Seems like a rational subgroup would be six parts in a row (consecutive in time) off one of these lanes rather than the six parts that come off the six tools at once. The rational subgroup should NOT span: a change in raw material sheet stock, change in operator, a break time, etc.

16451 Letter: NQI Is Not Canada's Main Quality Related Association

ASQ Staff

Jun-30-03

Having just read "ASQ's WorldPartners" (Kristen Johnson, June 2003, p. 42), I was quite surprised to learn NQI is the main quality related association in Canada and not ASQ Region 4 - Canada. It was my impression that ASQ Region 4 - Canada held this role and distinction, not only at a local and regional level but nationally and internationally, as well. The National Research Council of Canada recognizes ASQ, as a nonprofit in Canada, and has an affiliate of the Canadian Technology Network since their involvement with the CTN web program in 1997. (go to <http://ctn-rct.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca>, then click on "All CTN Members," then "National Members.") Please recognize the unique distinction and privilege our organization has. Some of our supporters, members and sections have a considerable history with the Canadian Awards for Business Excellence (CABE)--long before the inception of NQI. And, many of them, in one form or another participated in founding NQI. I feel it is rather unjust or perhaps even an insult not to recognize the historical contributions and the hiccups along the way to ensure a positive relationships and future outcomes otherwise we create a deja vu scenario. From a community development perspective, what an organization can accomplish cannot be understood without an understanding of it's history. By the way, it appears NQI has 74 member organizations, not 102.

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